

October 8, 2014
Bethany College Press Release

Written by Rick Guenther
Photos by Darlene Klassen



Update On The Discernment Summit

On Saturday, October 4th, a group of college, church, and denominational leaders gathered to discern key trends and opportunities relevant to the future of Bethany College. The day was filled with great discussion, open interaction, and illumination. At the beginning of the meeting, President Howie Wall referenced James 1:5 ("If any of you lacks wisdom...") in a request to receive insight from God during the meeting. We believe this prayer was answered.



Meeting Facilitator: Rod Schelleneberg (*Lead Pastor, Hepburn MB Church*)

Rod Schellenberg, pastor of Hepburn MB Church, led the group through a number of important questions about Bethany's mission and how that is perceived within the wider context of the church. There was general affirmation that Jesus' call to make disciples was a vital and ongoing function of the church. Bethany College has been a strategy to accomplish this task for 88 years and the key discussion surrounded how much this strategy may need to change within the current context.

It became very clear throughout the discussion that the need for community involvement and mentorship of young adults was still a significant concern for churches. This was coupled with the notion that for Bethany to help accomplish this jointly-held mission, a stronger connection with local churches was necessary, perhaps in some kind of integrated programming format.



Left: Randy Klassen (*Instructor, Bethany College*), Terrance Froese (*Director of Ministry, SK MB Conference*), Todd Hardy, (*Moderator, SK MB Conference*) | Right: Paul Loewen (*AB Conference Minister, AB MB Conference*), Susan J Schmidt Goerz (*Instructor, Bethany College*)



Left: Nathan McCorkindale (Pastor of Discipleship, Philadelphia MB Church), Ron Toews (Director of L2L (Leaders to Learners), Canadian MB Conference), Lisa Braun (Associate Director of Advancement, Bethany College) | Right: Luke Heidebrecht (Instructor, Bethany College), Bryan Born (President, Columbia Bible College), Howie Wall (President, Bethany College)

As well, a call for seeing something different, particularly towards more pragmatic, experiential discipleship training for entry-level students, was heard. There was recognition that to implement any kind of significant change will take time, but to work hard to build on the momentum of this meeting, and to keep the conversation going between schools, local churches, and denominational leaders.

The next steps for the leadership of Bethany College are to interpret the information and data that came out of this meeting, and to present a plan of action to its Board of Directors in the next few months. As planning goes forward, the college will need to test their ideas and the needs those imply with their church and denominational partners.

We would be very grateful for your continued prayer support as the leadership of the college works hard to digest what this specifically means for its future. We were encouraged by the strong passion for young adults, discipleship, and the church that was voiced by the participants of this summit, along with a deep hope for the future.

On behalf of,

Howie Wall, President, Bethany College
Terrance Froese, Director of Ministry, SK MB Conference
Paul Loewen, Conference Minister, AB MB Conference