



The culmination of the recently completed reaccreditation process was the site visit by the team assigned to make the accreditation recommendation to Christian Schools International, our state-approved accrediting agency. As the seven-member team shared their “commendations” at the end of the visit, they noted the vital role of parents in the CCS community, built on the high levels of “parent ownership, engagement, and enthusiasm.” They returned to that theme as they commended the “strong sense of community on each campus,” built on “teacher relationships with students and the development of student relationships to each other.”

The site visit team also affirmed the School Improvement Plan (SIP) created as part of the reaccreditation process. The plan includes a number of the initiatives under this goal statement, “CCS will build a stronger sense of ownership among stakeholders.” We recognize, then, that we must continue working to extend the CCS community beyond Calvin’s campuses, growing the broader CCS family from the rich soil of engagement, enthusiasm, and ownership that exists among staff, students, and parents.

Communication and Public Relations

Building a stronger sense of ownership among stakeholders will require continuing to enhance our communication channels and tools. Plans call for growing readership of our monthly newsletter—*Connections*, now in its second year—by giving it a home on our website, along with online subscription opt-in functionality. We also plan to undertake initiatives to increase the accessibility of information about school finances and major initiatives, along with enhancing opportunities for two-way communication with stakeholders.

Social media will continue to be central to our efforts. For the quarter ending on April 30, our average Facebook reach was 2,975 per week, with our community seeing an average of 1.5 posts per day. Looking ahead, we hope to grow those numbers, as well as our number of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram followers, primarily by increasing the variety of posts, providing a broader window into life at Calvin Christian School.

The regularity, even immediacy, of communications such as newsletters and social media may be key to maintaining connections with parents and students as they move into the ranks of former parents and alumni. We also intend to go beyond communication, seeking new ways to increase alumni and former parent participation in the CCS Challenge, CCS Fellowship Dinner and other school related activities.

Development and Fundraising

The Fellowship Dinner is vital to both our community-building and our development efforts, demonstrating that, for many in the Calvin Christian community, ownership includes investing

financially to help meet the needs of CCS students. Last November’s Fellowship Dinner brought together around 375 friends of CCS for an evening of inspiration, face-to-face community-building, and giving. The event grossed a bit over \$155,000 (the amount above goal, as indicated below, was applied to the Annual Fund). The planning committee is now looking ahead to the 2017 Fellowship Dinner, scheduled for Saturday, November 18, at the Earle Brown Center in Brooklyn Park.

This year’s budget calls for \$625,000 in donor contributions, including goals for the Annual Fund, Fair Share support, and the Fellowship Dinner. Following is the progress toward those goals through 5/20/2017:

	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Raised</u>	<u>Needed</u>
Annual Fund	\$ 375,000	\$ 197,657	\$ 177,343
Fair Share Support	\$ 150,000	\$ 162,726	- \$ 12,726
Fellowship Dinner	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 0
TOTAL	\$ 625,000	\$ 386,232	\$ 164,617

With a little over two months remaining in the fiscal year, we will engage a variety of efforts toward meeting the donor support goal, including personal contact with donors along with a direct mailed and emailed requests for support.

This year’s efforts to raise the visibility of the endowment fund and planned giving opportunities culminated with the fifth annual Legacy Society Dinner. Almost 80 CCS friends attended the May 9 event at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. With this marking the second year of healthy growth in attendance—after last year’s dinner at the Museum of Russian Art—we look forward to continuing to offer the dinner in an “attraction” venue, providing another benefit to our faithful supporters who gather to celebrate God’s blessings on the CCS and learn more about the impact of the Calvin Christian endowment and of legacy giving.

Not included in the development goals listed above are fundraising revenues, raised through the CCS Challenge, Calvin Business Partners (CBP), a handful of small “passive” programs, such as Boxtops for Education and Amazon Smile, and occasional special fundraisers, such as the recent online auction, which brought in about \$6,000 additional fundraising revenue in the 2016-17 budget.

After seeing their efforts raise a record \$85,000 last fall, the Challenge planning committee and fundraising coordinator Melissa Kamp are already working on and promoting next year’s community gathering and run/walk/ride fundraiser, which will return to Lake Harriet on Saturday, October 7.

The CBP program is seeing a growing number of businesses take advantage of the opportunity to support CCS while gaining exposure within the school community. CBP members and others within the business and professional community have also enjoyed networking at the quarterly breakfast gatherings that have been added to CBP programming this year.

Admissions

This year was a proverbial “rebuilding year” in the admissions office, as we needed to fill the open admissions director (.60 FTE) and admissions assistant (.25 FTE) positions. The office was back to full strength by November, with Bethany Brewer filling the director position and Kari Zylstra, the

admissions assistant role. The new team has already demonstrated their talents for building relationships with prospective parents and students, a central part of their role. We look forward to spending the summer months taking advantage of their newly gained experience, fresh perspective, and management skills as we plan for next year. Big picture goals include improving and documenting systems—how we manage the communication, data, and responsibilities involved in the admissions process, from generating a prospective family’s first inquiry to finalizing their enrollment. Specific activities will also be on the planning agenda for the summer, including open houses at our elementary campuses and the middle school/high school “WeRCalvin” events, which have proven effective at fostering a single-community mentality and giving middle schoolers insight into the high school’s learning distinctives.

The coming weeks will also be busy with finalizing enrollments for fall 2017. May is time when enrollment numbers change daily, as the admissions office works to get a few remaining returning families registered and move incoming families through the application and enrollment process. They are also busy with new inquiries, a task that will continue through the summer and, God willing, bring still more new families into the Calvin Christian community, allowing us to start the new school year with strong enrollment.