Chapter 3

25 LEADERS FOR 25 YEARS

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Concordia’s division chairs in 1995.
(L to R) Carl Schoenbeck, Stephen Stohlmann, Bruce Corrie, Roy Kramer, Dale Trapp, Harvey Slaughter, and Kim LaFontaine.
Concordia has been blessed with many outstanding servant leaders over the past twenty-five years, women and men who, in a variety of ways, have contributed to the transformation and development of the campus community as well as its smooth daily operation. Whether staff, administrator, or faculty, CSP has benefitted—and continues to benefit—from the broad talents of numerous individuals.

This chapter features a representative list of twenty-five of these servant leaders, and illustrates the diversity of talent we have at the university. Here are builders of programs and offices, visionaries, communicators, stewards of resources, and more. The number twenty-five matches the overall theme of this project—because, of course, this chapter could include many more people.

You’ll likely notice the absence of our two presidents from the 1993-2018 years, Bob Holst and Tom Ries; both requested to be omitted. As President Ries put it, “This allows for the inclusion of more great people. Anyway,” he concluded, “it’s my job to lead.” President Holst said much the same.

This chapter is conceived to be more than just a subjective list of names. During 2017-18, I reached out to a number of people across campus, as well as retirees, and asked for input in identifying these servant leaders. Plenty of names were shared, and slowly some general consensus began to emerge. I used that information to create this list. The brief entries by each name were written by members of the campus community.

Names are listed alphabetically. Positions listed identifies the more significant ones held, and may not include every position. Information is from Human Resources and the CSP website, checked August 2018.

**GRETCHEN BEECROFT (1973-2009)**
*Executive Assistant to the President*

Gretchen Beecroft was a kind, informed, well organized and faithful servant leader. She skillfully served Concordia working with three presidents—Harre, Johnson, and Holst—and also keeping records, taking phone calls, and arranging meetings for faculty, staff, Board of Regents, students, parents, graduates, business people and government officials. Somehow Gretchen knew when to be patient and when to be firm. She also was the key person in building our commencement ceremonies to what they are today. Gretchen understood well the complex dimensions of Concordia’s mission and ministry as well the personalities and idiosyncrasies of so many both on and off campus.

- Bob Holst

**JEFF BURKART (1979-2011)**
*Positions included faculty, Associate Dean of the College of Vocation and Ministry, Director of King’s Players*

For over three decades Dr. Burkart has made a significant and lasting impact on Concordia. Jeff’s creativity, wit, wisdom, energy, and passion for Lutheran education inspired countless students and colleagues. His gifts in music, drama, public speaking and writing impacted the campus and made him a public voice to the church at large. He connected students to the ministries of congregations and schools across the country. Jeff was an effective classroom teacher and organized the first office to provide campus-wide instructional support. He used his humor and energy to motivate students in the classroom and colleagues in the lunchroom.

- Carl Schoenbeck
CHERYL CHATMAN (2000 TO PRESENT)
Executive VP, Dean of Diversity

Dr. Chatman understands people extraordinarily well. She willingly and effectively faces realism with hope and hope with realism. Cheryl senses when students face pain and works effectively helping with healing. When students are not reaching their potential, she’ll push honestly and forcefully, helping them succeed. She “mends fences” but also holds a spotlight exposing misunderstanding, inaccuracy, unfairness and prejudice. Cheryl is an optimistic idealist but, as her acronym powerfully proclaimed in her 2016 Poehler Lecture, she wants realistic action and achievable positive results. NMI! Now Move It! She lives in God’s love and wants others to do likewise.

- Bob Holst

Campus Chaplain

Pastor Coleman, with his African-American heritage and urban experience as pastor, brought important experiences and insights to the CSP worship and campus life. His services effectively combined the love of Christ with a caring demeanor and empathetic outreach. At the piano, the Holy Spirit inspired his nimble fingers. Dancing on the keys before the chapel service, one could sense that worship would be a time of enthusiastic celebration. At other times, one knew that they were calling us to engage in solemn reflection or gentle encouragement. Singing “The Lamb” found added meaning not only because it came from author Gerry’s poetic soul but also in words such as, “He rose! He rose! My heart with thanks now overflows.”

- Bob Holst

KIM CRAIG (2005 TO PRESENT)
Positions include Associate Director of Graduate/Degree Completion, Associate VP of Cohort Enrollment Management

Throughout her time at Concordia, Dr. Kimberly Craig (a three-time CSP alumna) has built, fostered and maintained some of the most impactful partnerships in the university’s history. Kim’s passion for student access and success guides her motivation to recruit, retain and graduate learners. Collaboration with faculty has resulted in significant enrollment growth, extending the Concordia community among many new students and colleagues. Kim also inspires excellence among her co-workers. As a leader on campus she has raised up many new leaders, identifying potential in new staff and faculty and investing in their professional growth.

- Eric LaMott
BOB DEWERFF (1986-2012)
Positions included faculty, chair of several CSAL programs, Dean of Graduate Continuing Studies, and VP of Academic Affairs
Dr. DeWerff was an effective member of the leadership team during a period of rapid change at Concordia. Bob earned the respect, trust, and confidence from his colleagues through his ability to listen to others and develop creative solutions to challenging problems. He helped to define and articulate the importance of applied liberal arts teaching and learning across the expanding programing at Concordia. His impact spanned several administrative and academic areas. Bob was an effective leader in the continued development and growth of cohort-based undergraduate degree completion and graduate programs.
- Carl Schoenbeck

GREG HAUG (1986-2017)
Chief Engineer
As chief engineer for over thirty years, Greg Haug became the embodiment of the institution’s property, plant, and equipment. He often kept buildings and machinery going with sheer ingenuity and creativity when the university had minimal resources to invest in them. In later years, as finances improved, he shrewdly stewarded the available dollars to address and eliminate most of the deferred maintenance needs of the campus. As his parting gift to the university before retiring, Greg helped prepare his successor well in order that the tradition of a sound infrastructure would continue for decades to come.
- Tom Ries

ERIC LAMOTT (1994 TO PRESENT)
Positions include faculty, Professor and Chair of Kinesiology, VP for Information Technology, Senior VP, Provost and COO
When Eric LaMott joined the faculty in 1994, the university was unaware that he would become one of the most significant leaders in its 125-year history. After arriving to teach in and chair the emerging Department of Kinesiology, his administrative and project management skills quickly became evident. He was asked to take oversight of the university’s rapidly expanding technologies, and was named to the newly-created position of Vice President for Information Technology in 2001. Today, as Provost and Chief Operating Officer, there is scarcely any aspect of the university that is not influenced by his leadership. He is one of the key reasons for the institution’s growth and maturity as a major private university over the past two decades.
- Tom Ries
CRAIG LIEN (1997 TO PRESENT)
Positions include faculty, Assistant Professor of Marketing, Chair of MBA, Associate Dean of MBA
Craig has innovatively led the MBA program for the past 10 years. He designed and built the MBA mentoring program, a model for the industry. When most MBA programs are on the downslide, ours grows under the nurturance of Craig. He is an upbeat person to work with, and always looks for the bright side of any situation. He has taken on the most difficult of student situations and solved the problems. Craig helps students grow and helps them grow in the right direction. Most importantly, as a manager and an employee, he has had my back like no other. You know that he is on your team!

- Richard Brynteson

MIRIAM LUEBKE (1994 TO PRESENT)
Positions include faculty, VP for Student Services, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, VP for Assessment and Accreditation
Dr. Miriam Luebke, Concordia’s Associate VP for Assessment and Accreditation, is the leader, champion and standard-bearer for assessment. CSP’s recent Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation report (2018) noted the high quality of assessment of student learning outcomes and the use of data for improvements. For many years, Dr. Luebke has led initiatives and training, working tirelessly and sacrificially with collegiality, competence and professionalism. Although at times she might have felt that she was the voice of assessment crying in the wilderness, her efforts have been instrumental in transforming CSP’s culture and attitudes about the importance of assessment.

- Marilyn Reineck

KAY MADSON (1983–2007)
Positions included faculty, Executive VP
In her role as Executive Vice President from 1993 through 2001, Dr. Kay Madson was a key member of the leadership team that guided Concordia’s formative years as a university. She earned the respect of colleagues and students as an outstanding classroom teacher and scholar in the field of sociology. Kay inspired confidence in Concordia’s mission during a period of significant and rapid change. While maintaining a heavy administrative workload, she continued her passion for classroom teaching and scholarship in her discipline. Kay’s wisdom, warmth, and ability to listen resulted in students, faculty, and staff frequently coming to her for personal and professional advice and consultation.

- Carl Schoenbeck

Lonn Maly has distinguished himself as a servant leader during his tenure at Concordia. He has served as Dean of what is now the College of Education (in multiple forms over the years) as well as Vice President of Academic Affairs. He is known as an honest, forthright man whose door is always open, who will listen carefully, respond thoughtfully, and receive criticism without grudge-holding. Lonn has been tireless in his efforts to maintain and promote our Lutheran identity, was highly effective in administering Concordia’s Charter School Advisory Council, and was instrumental in the creation of several Education-focused graduate programs which have enjoyed tremendous growth since 2007.

- Paul Hillmer

Kelly Matthias has worked since 2008 to develop a broad range of experiential learning experiences that help CSP students explore and connect with the community and the world. Service-learning and study abroad opportunities have now become a regular and accessible part of the curriculum. Another CALL Center program is the IGNITE Leadership Development Certificate. This events-based leadership program creates additional ways for students to get off campus, and into the community. To date, more than 120 students have completed the certificate program. Kelly’s work with the CALL Center helps, as our mission statement says, “to prepare students for thoughtful and informed living.”

- Thomas Saylor

David Mennicke has been the driving force behind the Concordia Music Department. He has demonstrated unfailing commitment to Concordia music students, to his colleagues, and to the power of music to bring people together. Through choir tours to Europe, Africa and Asia, David has empowered CSP music students to share and grow in faith through their music. David is a tireless promoter for our department. Through countless emails and phone calls, he connects with prospective students and enthusiastically shares with students what CSP has to offer and how the music program can be a part of their education.

- Monica Murray
Football coach, Athletic Director

A hard worker who nurtured strong personal relationships, Dan O’Brien was a visionary who made a positive and lasting impact. From the start, he saw CSP competing and winning at a higher level, and worked to make this a reality. Dan was instrumental in convincing President Holst—correctly—that moving up to NCAA Division II would benefit Concordia, through increased exposure as well as enrollments. As Athletic Director, Dan oversaw a sharp increase in the overall number of student-athletes. He also hired several of CSP’s all-time winningest coaches (McKenzie, Fessler, Currier, and Starkey). O’Brien laid the groundwork for many later successes.

- Tom Rubbelke

GLENN OFFERMANN (1967-2001)
Positions included faculty, Librarian, University Archivist

Dr. Glenn Offermann led a revolution in library science and practice at Concordia. He moved the school from the card catalog era into the computer age. As a leader in establishing CLICnet [now CLICsearch] connecting area college and university libraries, he envisioned new campus opportunities supporting research, teaching, and learning possibilities with easy access to other libraries. Glenn’s experience, expertise, research, ideas, vision and care also guided and blessed Concordia’s construction of the Library Technology Center. In addition to his campus labors, he guided the library in preserving historical documents for the LCMS and other area groups.

- Bob Holst

Marilyn Reineck has enjoyed a long and distinguished career at CSP, beginning in the 1980s as a faculty member in Communication Studies. She served fourteen years as Chair of that department (1995-2009), helping to build a robust program, then two years (2009-11) as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences before spending four years in a senior role at Concordia Chicago. Marilyn returned to CSP in 2015 and began her tenure as VP for Academic Affairs. In this role, she helped to coordinate the university’s successful HLC re-accreditation effort, which was completed in 2018. In addition, Dr. Reineck has an extensive record of research, presentation and publications, both regionally and nationally. Above all, her passion is for quality education and supporting faculty in using their gifts to help students discover and affirm their call to be what God has created uniquely for them.

- Eric LaMott
**TOM RUBBELKE (1983-2016)**
*Positions included Softball coach, Athletic Director*

Tom “Rubes” Rubbelke was a fixture at CSP for more than three decades. He began as an assistant Softball coach in the early 1980s, and became head coach in 1998. Tom retired from this role following the 2004 season to become Athletic Director, a position he held until his retirement in 2016. During his twelve-year tenure as AD, Concordia won several team championships, including seven national championships in Volleyball. Tom was named the NCAA Division II Athletic Director of the Year following the 2011-2012 school year. Rubes possesses a welcoming personality that made him easy to like, and to admire. He and his bride Barb exemplify everything that is good about CSP.

- Mark McKenzie

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**SHARON KRUEGER SCHEWE (1981-2017)**
*Positions included Residence Life Manager*

Sharon dedicated thirty-six years of service to CSP. She spent her career in the Office of Residence Life, matching around 5,000 students with their roommates, mentoring and training over 600 Resident Assistants, and serving as a support to students and employees in a role she referred to as “Aunt Sharon.” Sharon stated many times that she had been an “aunt” to students (she didn’t want to be their mom), as an aunt is able to tap a student on the shoulder and gently help them along the way. Concordia was blessed by Sharon’s handling of a continually challenging and demanding position with Christ-care, grace, wisdom and professionalism.

- Jason Rahn

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**BARBARA SCHOENBECK (1978-2005)**
*Positions included faculty, Chair of Early Childhood Education*

Barb Schoenbeck joined CSP to fulfill the dreams of many and position the institution at the center of the early childhood world in Minnesota. She was the architect of a high quality program for our most vulnerable—the young children. She was instrumental in establishing the Hand in Hand Child Care Center on campus and was a pioneer introducing one of CSP’s first online graduate degrees. The degree, of course, was focused on creating better educators for early childhood environments. Barb was always “a student’s professor” and a true minister of the Gospel. She operated from a single perspective, by asking, “What is best for the children?” When you look closely at Barb Schoenbeck you can catch a glimpse of Jesus and his love for children.

- Lonn Maly

Barb Schoenbeck (right) with Emily Moore (left) and Ellie Heginbotham (center) at the 2004 graduation ceremonies.
CARL SCHOELENBECK  
(1978-2008)  
Positions included faculty, Dean of Faculty, VP of Academic Affairs  
Dr. Carl Schoenbeck excelled as professor, head of the Education Department, and Vice President of Academic Affairs. His deep faith served well keeping Concordia’s educational goals, maladies and means always in the context of the Christian Gospel. He understood and pursued valid goals, methods and results promoting student learning. Carl led and/or was greatly instrumental in the challenging changes moving CSP from college to university structure, quarter to semester schedule and making CSP a “laptop campus.” He also served on various church and community committees, including supporting a vibrant CSP community relationship with ARTS-Us.  
-Bob Holst

MARK SCHULER  (1994 TO PRESENT)  
Positions include faculty, Chair of Theology and Ministry, Director of Honors program, Director of Hippos Excavations program  
Mark Schuler has played a singular role in CSP’s recent history. His academic breadth and innovative teaching have enabled him to be the anchor of the university’s church work programs. His archaeological fieldwork in Israel has provided incomparable opportunities for students and colleagues and has won him well-deserved international recognition. Mark developed and taught in an innovative honors program that recruited and mentored some of the university’s best and brightest students. All the while, he has been a steadfast advocate for policies and practices that have been faithful to the totality of the university’s mission statement, especially its integrating final clause, “all within the context of the Christian gospel.”  
-David Lumpp

BRADY STARKEY  (2000 TO PRESENT)  
Volleyball coach  
Brady Starkey exhibits a calm demeanor on the court, but he is an intense and focused competitor who achieves winning results. Starkey focuses strongly on practice and game day preparation, as well as creating a positive chemistry among his student-athletes. Through his methods, he consistently elevates teams to be more than the sum of their parts. This approach has paid dividends: Brady has coached Volleyball to nine national championships, including an NCAA-record seven in a row. His players perform in the classroom, too, annually achieving some of the highest team GPAs on campus. The success of the Volleyball program also has brought the university regional and national recognition.  
-Tom Rubbelke
**EUNICE STREUFURT (1988-2003)**

*Positions included faculty, Coordinator of Student Academic Activities*

The phrase, “Still, she persisted,” is an apt slogan to describe Eunice Streufurt. Eunice championed innovative ideas for practices and programs that have benefited students at Concordia, often persisting in the face of strong attachments to the status quo. Her development of first-year student programming put CSP at the cutting edge of such innovations in higher education. Her leadership built a faculty advising program that put student satisfaction figures significantly above our peer institutions. Eunice was prescient in promoting student retention as a vital institutional goal. Her ongoing study of teaching, learning, leadership, and organizational life modeled the importance of life-long learning.

- Miriam Luebke

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**KRISTIN VOGEL (2003 TO PRESENT)**

*Positions include Director of Traditional Admission, Associate VP of Traditional Enrollment Management*

Kristin Vogel models kindness and patience, and her passion for students permeates everything she does. Her student-first approach sets the standard within Admissions, as there is nothing Kristin puts before helping a student and their family. She has a keen understanding of higher education, and is always at the forefront of educational opportunities and concerns. Her vast knowledge makes her an invaluable resource for staff and students alike, and allows CSP to continuously adapt in an ever-changing market. Kristin also was instrumental in the design, strategy and execution of the tuition reset. Her work has helped to lift Concordia from a regionally-known institution to being part of a national conversation on affordability and access.

- Eric LaMott