**Calvin Theological Seminary: Addressing Economic Challenges**

**Facing Future Ministers**

**Key Objectives of Lilly Endowment Grant:**

1. Research on the financial ecology of Calvin Seminary and our sponsoring denomination, the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), drawing from a “core group” of resources and leaders within our ecosystem, to assess:
   1. Student debt before, during, and after Seminary (engaging our key feeder colleges)
   2. Calvin Seminary’s financial health/risk matrix of income: tuition with discounts; ministry share support from the CRCNA; endowment income; annual gifts and grants.
2. Financial Formation for Ministry: a three-course sequence of practical and theological inquiry that explores and engages the following intersecting course domains:
   1. My heart and my money
   2. God’s heart and our money
   3. Shepherding hearts for generosity
3. Research and design vocational development services that will position graduates with effective career navigation tools and skills to apply over a lifetime of vocation.
   1. Assess needs and expectations of Calvin Seminary graduates for vocation or career development services.
   2. Propose data-based, outcome-driven recommendations to address findings.
   3. Select best implementation model of vocational/career development services that are cost-effective, best-practice aligned, and well-suited to the Calvin Seminary community.
4. Develop a Stewardship Council of leaders from affinity churches, outside the CRCNA denomination but in the “regional neighborhood” of Calvin Seminary. Involve them in the life of the Calvin Seminary and encourage their investments in the mission of “their” Seminary.

**Significant activities of project to date:**

1. Presenting N.T.Wright at Mars Hill Bible Church in November, 2013, as a visible indicator of our intent to partner with major churches outside our sponsoring denomination.
2. Collaborating with the Barnabas Foundation (Orland Park, IL) on their resources and ideas for course development, expanding on their use of Crown Financial Ministries curriculum for personal financial training.
3. Launching the research aspects of the grant with key personnel, clarifying scope, timeline, and deliverables.
4. Securing a Stewardship Council champion to work with us on prospects and launch.

**Most important resources discovered or produced**:

1. Center for Social Research at Calvin College is even better than we assumed to assist us in developing our research tools and providing the analysis. Director Neal Carlson is a wealth of wisdom and encouragement.
2. CRCNA is piloting a career assessment tool for practicing pastors to help them align their ministry passions over the course of their ministry careers; we want to be at the planning table in order to coordinate our own career development services in a cooperative fashion.

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