

Press Release of the Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary held on January 13, 2022.

Opening and Roll Call.

The chairman of the Board, Rev. J. Louwarse, led in opening devotions. The meeting was held via Zoom. All governors were present, except for one who was absent with notice and another who was late on account of his internet being down. Dr. J. Van Vliet was present as Principal and administrative assistant L. Kuizenga was present to take the minutes of the meeting.

Memorabilia

Information was shared about the personal circumstances of emeriti professors, as well as widows and families of professors.

Minutes and Agenda

The minutes of the regular meeting held on September 9, 2021, as well as follow up meetings on September 28, 2021 and October 21, 2021 were approved. The agenda for the meeting was established. Outstanding matters on the action log were reviewed.

Decisions, Reports, Agenda Items

1. A letter from the Deputies for Training for the Ministry of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia was discussed. Their synod gave them a mandate to explore the feasibility of an Australia CRTS affiliate. The Board appointed the principal and a board member from the Academic Committee and from the Finance and Property Committee to determine what the Australian churches are seeking and to gather pertinent information from knowledgeable sources to determine the feasibility of their request.
2. The Board reviewed the one-page Strategic Plan updated in September 2021 and made a few minor additions to it.
3. A final report was received from a committee which examined the possibilities of Expanding the Pastoral Training Program (PTP). Since the appointment of this Committee, General Synod 2019 approved a proposal allowing students to obtain consent to speak an edifying word after second year. The COVID-19 public health restrictions also forced the speedy development of distance education. The long-term impacts of receiving preaching consent after the second year of study on student workload, wellness, and preparation for the ministry is not yet known. The effectiveness of the PTP for distance students as compared to on-campus students is also not yet known. One of the outcomes of a recent Association of Theological Schools (ATS) visit is that CRTS will need to do a comprehensive review of the Master of Divinity Program. The Board agreed with the recommendation that there should not be any significant expansion of the PTP at this time, and that the report of this committee be forwarded to the Master of Divinity review committee, so that a modest expansion of the PTP could be considered holistically. This committee also reported on a significant increase in Dr. A. de Visser's workload with regards to the PTP, especially considering the large increase in student numbers in recent years. The Board needs to address this issue, and it is added to the Board Action Log.
4. An update was received from Dr. T. Van Raalte concerning his health circumstances and a report was received from the Executive Committee recommending his teaching load for second semester. The Board accepted this recommendation.
5. The Academic Committee passed on the minutes of their past meeting. They were received for information.
6. Revs. J. Louwarse and M.H. Van Luik reported on lecture visits to CRTS on November 23-24, 2021, as well as on visits with professors. Due to Dr. Van Raalte's health circumstances the Board had appointed a Teaching Assistant to help with faculty workload. Various

professors reported on how beneficial this was for them to deal with workload issues. This teaching assistant will continue to provide support in the second semester. The Academic Committee proposed, and the Board agreed to establish a permanent Teaching Assistant position for 15 to 20 hours per week to assist the professors with workload. This will begin in September 2022 and be reviewed after the 2022-23 academic year.

7. The Finance and Property Committee provided minutes of the recent meetings they held. A short update was given with respect to renovation plans. The Board expresses its great appreciation to the churches for the generous response to the fundraising drive for maintenance and renovations to the buildings. The Finance and Property Committee reported on difficulties finding enough men to nominate to General Synod for positions on the F&P Committee (they need one further suggestion as an alternate). Part of this is due to the fact that men appointed to the Board of CRTS are normally expected to serve for nine years (three Synod appointments of three years each).
8. The Search Committee, appointed to find a replacement for Dr. A. de Visser due to his upcoming retirement, reported on their work. The Board agrees with the work done by this committee. A final confidential report to General Synod 2022 needs to be drafted.
9. The final General CRTS Report has been submitted to Synod. The Board agreed to send a supplementary Report to General Synod concerning support for needy students from the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa. In the past various General Synods have encouraged CRTS to support the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa in the training of their seminary students but have never specified how this would be supported financially. In the coming years, CRTS can expect up to six students from South Africa, and the Foreign Student Bursary Fund does not have the finances to provide for these student's living expenses while in Hamilton. The supplementary Report to Synod gives some suggestions about how this support could be provided.
10. The Governance Committee made proposals to change the CRTS Handbook to reflect changes with respect to Memorandums of Understanding, Book Allowance, the Foreign Student Bursary Fund, the task of the Principal, Conference Attendance and Funding, Support for Teaching and Administrative Skills, and Admission Standards. These proposals were adopted.
11. Dr. J. Van Vliet presented his principal's report, and this was received with thankfulness. He also provided an oral Report of the Covid-19 Committee, stressing the importance of technology in allowing CRTS to function during times when in-person attendance is not possible for some or all the professors or students.

Press release and Closing.

The completion of the Press Release was delegated to the vice-chairman in consultation with the Executive and the Principal. Rev. C. VanderVelde closed the meeting with prayer.

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary,
Rev. J. Poppe (Vice-chairman/Corresponding Clerk)

