

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from Finlandia University to all delegates and guests of the 2009 Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assembly.

As you gather to do the business of the church in God's mission, it is my hope that your worship and study inspire faithfulness to the Gospel and your deliberations to wise action.

The faculty and staff of Finlandia seek ever more faithfully to carry out their vocations in higher education. We are grateful for the companionship of our synodical partners throughout Region 5 and 6, and beyond, and particularly for the relationship Finlandia enjoys with Bishop Tom Skrenes and the congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

Let me share a few highlights from the Finlandia University campus ...

- ⊗ In the 2009-10 academic year, Finlandia continues to affirm her leading role in providing private, church-related higher education to families with the greatest financial need. By a large margin, Finlandia leads all ELCA colleges and universities in serving the largest enrollment percentage of students who qualify for federal Pell grants.
- ⊗ We welcomed a large class of new students to campus this past fall, achieving a 22 percent jump in new student enrollment over the previous fall.
- ⊗ Finlandia's strategic collaboration, *Campus and Community: Together for Good*, received national attention for its innovative and creative stewardship of community resources. This long-term commitment provides tuition remission for our local high school graduates, and adds to Finlandia's campus two school district properties that will fuel and accommodate growth in our College of Health Sciences and Division III athletics programs.
- ⊗ Finlandia's Jutila Center for Global Design and Business completed a \$1.6 million expansion of its small business incubator late last fall, creating additional real-world learning opportunities for our students and supporting economic development in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan.
- ⊗ At the start of the Fall 2009 semester, we welcomed Soren Schmidt (Class of '94) as Finlandia's new university chaplain. Soren has enthusiastically embraced his new calling.
- ⊗ In December 2009, Finlandia's Elementary Education program advanced its pursuit of professional accreditation from the Michigan State Board of Education, receiving full, probationary approval – the second of three steps to full accreditation.
- ⊗ Finlandia's students continue to experience the uncommon attention of our dedicated faculty, staff, and administration -- personal attention that affirms their academic potential, nurtures their personal growth, and prepares them for productive and meaningful careers and lives.
- ⊗ Please visit our website, www.finlandia.edu, and click on University News to read a bi-weekly newsletter that keeps our friends up-to-date about Finlandia activities and accomplishments.

In closing, I ask that our companions in Regions 5 and 6 continue to pray for Finlandia's students, staff, and faculty, and that you stubbornly advocate for Lutheran higher education in your homes and congregations.

Sincerely,



Philip Johnson
President