



augustine college

faith seeking understanding

1997 – 2001

The First Five Years

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the Lord helped us." - I Sam. 7:12

In September of 1997 Augustine College welcomed its founding class of 17 students. To date 55 students have participated in the programme. The curriculum provides one year of enriched study in the foundations of Western intellectual and cultural tradition with special attention being given to the role of Christian faith in its development.

Core curriculum

The scope of study includes integrated historical surveys of:

- Music
- Art
- Biblical Themes
- Mathematics
- Science and Medicine
- Ideas (as developed in philosophy and literature)
- Latin is also a required course.

For students continuing in the humanities the programme provides a solid introduction and coherent framework for future studies. For students proceeding to the sciences and professions this is an invaluable exposure to the broader societal and philosophical issues that impact the various disciplines.

Evening courses

During the past 5 years an evening course, open to the public, has been offered each year. Some courses have been additional to the core curriculum but for the last three years a core subject has been offered in the evening because of

expressed interest in the material. These have been well received and attended and provide the college with a public presence in the community as well as a modest additional source of revenue.

Topics have included:

- Jesus and the Gospels
- The Apostle Paul and Biblical Archaeology
- Greek and Roman Civilisation
- A Survey of Church History
- Art and Theology in the Christian West
- History of Mathematics
- Philosophical and Literary Classics

Other events and activities

Visiting Artist Each year an artist is invited to spend time with the students and the wider Augustine College community. A public event such as a concert, exhibition, reading, or performance is featured as part of the visit.

Our visiting artists have included:

- Michael O'Brien, author and painter
- Sandra Graham, mezzo-soprano
- Maria Gabankova, artist
- Wesley Warren, organist and choirmaster
- Jason Hildebrand, actor

The Annual Weston Lecture is given by invitation to a person whose field of endeavour is pertinent to the Augustine College programme and of interest to a public audience. The lecture has been made possible by a generous grant from the Weston Foundation.

Lecturers have included:

- Ian Hunter, Professor of Law
- David Livingstone, Professor of Geography and Intellectual History
- Michael Coren, author and journalist
- Frederica Mathewes-Green, author and commentator

Hymn Sing The college sponsors an annual hymn sing at St. Barnabas' Church in Ottawa. The evening consists of a combination of congregational singing and special music complemented by reflections on a theme presented by college faculty and staff. The event raises awareness of the college and is a modest

fund raiser. The contribution that this has made to the spiritual lives of the participants has been much appreciated.

Redeemer /Augustine Presentation For the past four academic years we have made a joint presentation with Redeemer University College. A speaker from each institution is featured followed by discussion with the audience and a simple reception. This has raised the profiles of both colleges locally and is an important continuing liaison with Redeemer.

Governance and Administration

Augustine College is federally incorporated in Canada and a registered charity with Revenue Canada. The corporation consists of its members who elect the Board of Directors from their number.

The members meet monthly as the Members Committee to provide management and policy oversight. The board fulfils the financial and legal responsibilities of the corporation and meets regularly with the Members Committee.

The Augustine College Advisory Board provides invaluable support and wise counsel to the Members and Board. Its membership is voluntary and its role advisory only.

Board of Directors

Wayne R. Nimigan, MD, FRCP(C), President
Paul H. McKechnie, BComm, CA, Treasurer
Robin MacKay, BA, LLB, Secretary
Delos R. Hansen

Members' Committee

Frank Johnson, V.P. Administration, Chairman
Delos Hansen
Edith Humphrey, PhD, Acting Dean
Graeme Hunter, PhD, Dean
Robin MacKay, BA, LLB
Paul MacKechnie, BComm, CA
Wayne Nimigan, MD, FRCP(C)
John Patrick, MB, BS, MRCP, MD (Lond)
Robert Sears, PhD, Publicist
David Stewart, PhD
Alumni Association Representative
Friends of Augustine College Representative - Robert Kidd, MD

Advisory Board

David L. Jeffrey, PhD, FRSC, Chairman
Larry Eshelman, Chief Librarian, St. Paul University, Ottawa
Rev. Dr. Andrew J.B. Stirling, PhD
Rev. Douglas C. Ward

Registrar

Patricia Bullis, BA

Alumni, Supporters, and Donors

We have an ever-growing number of Augustine College alumni. Of the 50 students who have already passed through Augustine College, almost all have gone on to further education in universities and colleges throughout North America. An **Alumni Association** has been formed to help keep past students interested and involved in the community as the years pass. The association has representation on the Members Committee.

We have been blessed with a large and growing group of supporters who contribute their time and energies to various aspects of college life. Recently the college approved the formation of a support group, **Friends of Augustine College**. This step was taken in order to organise our network of supporters more intentionally and improve communications with them. Dr. Robert Kidd is heading this initiative with an initial focus on formation and organization of the Friends. He is also directing his effort to enhancing student recruitment. The Friends also have representation on the Members Committee.

We continue to be grateful for the financial support we receive from **individual donors** as well as the generous gifts we have received from **foundations**. A core library has been made possible by a grant from the Donner Canadian Foundation. The Weston Foundation has made possible our Weston Lecture as well as contributing to our Collegium Fund that is used to fund teaching honoraria for the faculty. Also, the Spaenaur Inc. has been very generous in support of various aspects of our operation. Significant donations have also been received from other sources requesting anonymity.

Looking ahead ...

Strengths

- **This project is intrinsically worthwhile** and makes an important impact on the lives of young people that extends well beyond their year at Augustine College. As well, it is making an important contribution to a

wider group of interested people who benefit from a variety of our courses and activities.

- **A committed community of volunteers** continues to contribute of their time, money and energies to see the college succeed.
- The **quality and uniqueness** of the Augustine College programme evokes a consistently enthusiastic response from students both during and after completion. The experience of learning in a small community with such ready access to high-level academic teachers is not easily reproduced. This positive experience contributes greatly to the encouragement of friends and siblings to attend and promotes continuing participation in the life of the college on the part of alumni.
- The preceding is only possible because an **extraordinary and dedicated faculty** has been committed since the outset to their own vision of what Augustine College should be. They have given of themselves unstintingly year after year in addition to other heavy teaching commitments and responsibilities of all kinds. They have been prepared to teach without any guarantee of commensurate remuneration and receive honoraria as funds are available. Beyond that they also contribute in personal ways to the community life of the college.

(A detailed list of faculty and their qualifications can be found on page 5 of the information booklet or the college website: www.augustinecollege.org)

Weaknesses

- As with many start-up projects so much time and energy has gone into the whirlwind of conceiving and inventing the college that a **number administrative loose ends** need to be addressed as we move forward. Dr. Frank Johnson, our mathematics professor and president of Richard Brancker Research, volunteered his services and was appointed Vice President of Administration. This has been a large step in the right direction with the benefits already apparent.
- The **financial uncertainty** of starting such an ambitious project on a shoestring continues to be a reality from year to year. We continue to be dependent on large donations for specific components of our operations and smaller donations, tuition and residence fees for day to day cash flow requirements. Enrolment is unpredictable from year to year so revenues can be precarious. We are dedicating more attention to identifying and approaching donors who would be interested in Augustine College as well as improving our communications with present donors to keep them abreast of developments.

- **Unpredictable enrolment** is a problem. Not only does this affect revenues directly but logistical planning for the college becomes more complicated. Planning for and supporting residence space is especially difficult because of this. Also, the expectation that a class may be very small can be a deterrent to suitable students who might otherwise come. Our target maximum class size of 25 students has yet to be reached. The actual quality of the academic programme does not depend on class size -- this year we have only five students and they seem to be enjoying it immensely -- and the quality of community life seems to depend more on group dynamics than absolute numbers. However, students this age prefer a certain critical mass for class size and it is clear that we need to strive for consistent enrolment.
- Until this year **we have been erratic in our efforts to get the word out** about Augustine College. We have made various forays on the publicity front which have had sporadic success and generous offers of help in this regard. Much has been accomplished by word of mouth and the enthusiastic recruitment of our professors when they travel or attend conferences. However, we have not had any disciplined central planning or coordination of the publicity effort and undoubtedly this has hurt us. Also, we have been reluctant to commit major funds from our small budget to advertising. However, a strategic decision has been made to allocate \$20,000 this year to college development and Dr. Robert Sears has been assigned to the publicity portfolio. Our database has undergone a complete overhaul, the website has been redeveloped and a more aggressive but targeted approach taken to advertising in various periodicals.
- **Augustine College is almost completely a volunteer organization.** Pat Bullis, our registrar, is our only paid person and she has such a passion for the college that her efforts and commitment have exceeded anything we could have reasonably expected from mere hired help. While this spirit of volunteerism is one of our great strengths our complete dependence on it has some disadvantages. Augustine College is a very demanding commitment and over time volunteers can be worn out and lost to the project if not given relief. It may be that we need to consider funding one or two strategic positions in the college in order to take some of the weight of day to day management of college life and special events off volunteer shoulders.
- **Lack of universal accreditation for Augustine College courses** is a relative barrier to enrolment for many students. Although we have transfer agreements with some institutions and students have been successful in negotiating complete or partial credits with others we are not eligible for blanket recognition at public universities in Canada as an unaffiliated one-year programme. We need to increase efforts to address this issue.

Opportunities

- **Targeted short courses** are being considered as a way to reach a larger audience interested in our courses. As an initial move in this direction Augustine College is sponsoring a study week in June 2002 tailored for physicians . Physicians from across North America and further afield are expected to attend. This could be the first in a series of study weeks that may become part of the life of Augustine College.
- There has been much interest and encouragement to **open the Augustine College core programme to older students**. We have made a commitment to encourage applications from recent graduates of other programmes who feel that a year at Augustine College would benefit them before moving on to post-graduate studies or careers. Our limited experience has been that such students can integrate well with the undergraduates and have a salutary effect on college life by their presence.
- **Grade 13 is being phased out of the Ontario school system** and this will result in a 'double cohort' of high school graduates entering universities and colleges in September 2003. Aside from the possibility of having increased numbers of applicants from this large group it may be that with students being a year younger at graduation Augustine College will be a very attractive alternative as a first year of post secondary education prior to immersion in the average mega-versity.'
- Trinity Western University is developing a satellite programme in Ottawa which will start in September 2002. It is for third and fourth year students interested in political science and public administration and does not overlap our curriculum. They have purchased and are renovating the former Laurentian Club for this purpose. We already have a full credit transfer agreement in place with TWU and two students who have gone on to study there. As the situation unfolds there may be an opportunity for cooperation locally that would benefit both institutions.

This is a brief overview of the first five years of Augustine College. Those of us who have been part of this exciting time can't help but be aware of the providential way in which so much has come from so little in so short a time.

Considerable challenges lie ahead and around us so we remain ever dependent on that same Providence to complete the journey from infancy to maturity successfully.

We acknowledge an enormous debt of gratitude to our faculty, donors, supporters, volunteers and alumni. Your interest, encouragement, prayers and gifts are essential in realizing the vision of Augustine College each year. Your

influence will extend beyond the college as an organization into the lives of the students themselves for years to come.

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President

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