

February 9, 2026

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Dear Dr. Ankerberg,

Greetings to you and the Lutheran community of faith at Concordia University, Wisconsin and Ann Arbor.

The 2025 Formal Visitation of your university by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is complete, and the report of findings by the visitation team has been submitted. Having received your institution's review of the report, the Concordia University System is pleased to report to you that we affirm without concerns Concordia University, Wisconsin and Ann Arbor, and each of its implemented church work programs.

This letter includes a copy of the report. The letter of determination and a copy of the report will be posted publicly on the Concordia University System website at www.cus.edu. We are honored to support and affirm the vital work being done at Concordia University, Wisconsin and Ann Arbor. We will continue to pray for you, help you, and work with you to further the tradition of excellence in Christian education built on the strong Lutheran Confession of Jesus Christ.

The Concordia University System is blessed to boast in the Lord and His gifts of outstanding universities. May His grace strengthen you as we form and educate pious people across many godly vocations in the Church and the world. We thank God for His many blessings, and we thank you for your faithful confession. God bless you all.

In the strong name of Jesus Christ,



The Reverend Dr. Jamison J. Hardy
President



Visitation Report
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Formal Visit to Concordia University, Wisconsin / Ann Arbor
November 17-19, 2025

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The Concordia University System (CUS), in fulfillment of Bylaw 3.6.6.1.a.2, conducted an in-depth ecclesiastical formal visitation at Concordia University Wisconsin/Ann Arbor (CUWAA). The visitation team comprised six members: Mr. Jeff Schwarz, Rev. Dr. Mark Koschmann, Rev. Dr. Peter Jurchen, Rev. Richard Snow, Rev. Rob Kieselowsky, and Mr. David Broderdorf. CUS President Jamison Hardy and Vice President Douglas Spittel assisted the team. The final visitation debrief was observed and supervised by CUS Board of Directors Chairman Rev. Mark Braden, representing the Board in accordance with Bylaw 3.6.6.4.2. The team spent three days on the campus of CUW, interacting with the campus community and conducting group and individual interviews. As the report states, these visitation days were productive and positive times of interaction with the university.

This was the first formal visitation conducted at CUWAA under the bylaw revisions created by the 2023 Synod Convention Resolution 7-04b, utilizing the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcome Standards (LIMOS) and the associated LIMOS Evaluation Tool.

The formal visitation process is intended to support both formative and summative functions. Based on the LIMOS, it shall engender local development and provide for outside monitoring of formative processes, engaging all institutions fully in intentional and measurable programs intended to advance their expression of Lutheran identity and accomplishment of Christ-centered mission outcomes. It shall also enable the drawing of summative conclusions, concretely identifying strengths and weaknesses in institutions and programs, and ultimately providing a clear rationale for decisions about the continuation or termination of affirmation.

Concordia University Wisconsin/Ann Arbor (CUWAA) demonstrates a clear, sincere, and institution-wide commitment to its identity as a Christ-centered Lutheran university. Across campus conversations – from cabinet members and deans to student life leaders and faculty–there is genuine dedication to forming students through the lens of Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and a living understanding of vocation.

The recently adopted Concordia Cornerstones (Christ-centered, Truth & Integrity, Excellence, and Service) are a major achievement. They reflect CUWAA's Lutheran heritage

in a contemporary and compelling way and offer a unifying framework for graduate outcomes, academic programs, student life, and mission leadership. At the same time, CUWAA is navigating institutional challenges, including faculty concerns around communication, strategic clarity, CUAA integration, and the long-term sustainability of certain programs.

Overall, CUWAA possesses remarkable strengths: faithful leadership, mission-driven staff, engaged students, and a deep desire to proclaim Christ. The opportunities before the university lie primarily in clarifying strategy, building trust, and strengthening communication—all toward a future where the Concordia mission thrives.

Identity Standard I – Ecclesiastical Mission and Goals

Solid Christ-centered mission focus, biblical values, vision for the larger service to the larger Church. Christ is the center, and faculty strive to incorporate prayer, scripture, and faith reflections throughout classes and courses. Chapel space and schedule encourage opportunity for faith development. Faculty regularly engage faith development in the classroom, personal conversations, and the organized work of “Faith Associates,” as well as organic student gatherings, to build a strong discipleship culture. Clear efforts are being made to help students grow in God’s Word and in holy living. The visitation team consistently witnessed administration, faculty, staff, and students sharing the importance of God’s Word, the gifts of His grace, and His call to various vocations. The institution works diligently recruiting and training workers for full-time service to the congregations of Synod. Articulation of these statements and values strives to seek unity of doctrine and practice.

Interview Specifics:

- The Concordia Cornerstones are exceptionally strong and well-integrated into campus culture. They embody CUWAA’s mission in language that resonates with faculty, staff, and students.
- CUWAA is developing a Lutheran identity mentorship program for staff members similar to the one for faculty members.
- CUWAA clearly conveys its vision and mission statements in branding across the university (including posters, digital assets, and even screen savers on employee laptops).

Identity Standard II – Spiritual and Academic Life

Across academics, there is an explicit commitment to authentically living out the Christian faith across academic programs. The Nursing program, for instance, articulates its mission through the lens of Jesus' healing ministry and a holistic understanding of care for the whole person. Academic deans consistently demonstrate strong passion and intentionality in integrating faith in substantive ways, especially within graduate-level health programs. The Board has explicitly affirmed the quality of students in pre-seminary and pre-deaconess pathways, describing them as "bright, articulate, and faithful." In addition, collaborative engagement with external theological advisors from LCMS seminaries to strengthen the theological depth and integrity of the university's worship life.

Interview Specifics:

- CUWAA constituents are supportive of the alignment of ecclesiastical mission and goals in the design and delivery of campus worship.
- LCMS campus pastors plan and lead campus worship.
- Documented examples and direct observation show the regular pattern of leadership by ordained clergy and regular use of LSB liturgies and hymnody. Vestments are regularly used.
- Chapel attendance is strong, visibly including student-athletes as teams are especially encouraged as a group are required to attend chapel on Wednesdays.
- Wednesday worship uses LBS Responsive Prayer combined with contemporary hymnody and instrumentation. Several interviews reflected a desire to expand that into one more day of the week.
- Catechesis is consistently provided for the campus community. When interest is shown for deeper study and church membership, students are referred to local parishes to receive proper instruction and induction into a congregation.
- Faculty regularly engage the spiritual life of undergraduate and graduate students using prayer, scripture, and faith reflections in the pattern of classwork and homework. Faculty regularly engage the spiritual life of students using prayer, scripture, and faith reflections in the pattern of classwork and homework.
- Student "Faith Associates" are engaged, trained, and resourced with materials certified by the campus pastor. The CUAA campus pastor is beginning to explore opportunities for expanding campus ministry at the CUAA campus.
- The VP of Mission and the theology faculty are regularly engaged for input and feedback to help bring faith, ethics, and philosophy to integrate with coursework.

- Theology faculty, and department deans of business, education, science, pharmacy, nursing, and health professions, are interfacing with theology faculty to integrate faith and scripture into coursework.
- Many faculty and academic deans expressed sincere, articulate Christian commitments.
- The Concordia Cornerstones and student learning outcomes grounded in Lutheran doctrine and practice are clearly shaping academic programs, with strong support from deans.
- Many faculty incorporate Christian case studies, prayer, vocational language, and theological reflection into coursework.
- The School of Pharmacy strengthened its student learning outcomes from general ethics to explicitly Christian philosophy and identity.
- Campus ministry leadership receives exceptionally strong support from faculty, deans, university administration, president, and the Board of Regents.
- The visitation team encourages CUWAA to continue to develop a plan to cultivate a residential life experience for those enrolled in church work programs that encourages and enhances a Christian lifestyle.
- The visitation team recognizes that CUWAA will need to navigate the heightened pressure of the accreditation process which may undermine Lutheran identity and mission, especially in education, social work, and health sciences.

Identity Standard III – Student Recruitment and Student Life

Student Life is a major strength at CUWAA. Leadership is compassionate, professional, and thoroughly Christ-centered. CUWAA provides robust support for students facing significant physical, psychological, or spiritual needs. Staff hiring practices intentionally prioritize Christian identity and capacity for Gospel-centered care.

Interview Specifics:

- Marketing assets (logo, website, print and digital media) clearly articulate the faith-based culture of CUWAA and its Lutheran identity.
- The counseling center is described as “in the best shape it has ever been,” partly due to LIMOS' focus.
- Many of the counselors are CUWAA graduates and can speak directly from experience of the institution’s Lutheran identity and life. The VP of Mission holds staff training for new and existing staff.
- CUWAA’s VP of Mission continuously works with the university enrollment team to hone the university’s Lutheran identity.

- Active presence in various youth gatherings and Lutheran High Schools. Faculty and staff represent and guest teach on topics like Lutheran vocation at high schools and middle schools.
- Admission counselors are equipped to engaging faith conversations with prospective students.
- Student Health Center provides training on identity, mission, values, and biblical worldview and staff commit to provide services in keeping with Lutheran doctrine and practice.
- Student Counseling Center provides training on identity, mission, values, and biblical worldview and staff commit to provide services in keeping with Lutheran doctrine and practice. When appropriate, counselors incorporate prayer and scripture into the counseling session.
- Student Housing provides training on identity, mission, values, and biblical worldview and dorm directors and R.A. staff commit to provide services in keeping with Lutheran doctrine and practice.
- “Faith Associates” are engaged in all dorms and on all floors. These Faith Associates regularly interface with the campus pastor.
- Student Life hires Christians for student-facing roles and integrates faith conversations into staff training and formation.
- CUWAA is working intentionally to lift its LCMS identity and clarify expectations for Ann Arbor.
- Widespread use of Christian language in visuals across campus (“hope in Christ,” “Jesus is at the center,” Christian artwork, crosses, etc.).
- Students praised the spiritual opportunities at CUWAA.
- One challenge is engaging students in chapel service at CUAA since most are non-residents and online students.
- Student Success staff speak confidently about integrating faith and care for students during difficult times.
- CUWAA sponsors an annual international week showcasing different cultures in a way that aligns with the LCMS identity of the university.
- Representatives from Admissions and Financial Aid described intentional recruitment Lutheran and Christian students. They describe CUWAA’s Christian mission and Lutheran identity in campus tours, have strong scholarship structures for Lutheran and church-work students, and thoughtful recruitment planning and student support initiatives. The university is addressing challenges felt across higher education: high sticker price creates barriers and ongoing efforts to manage the cost of tuition.

- Campus Pastor Jonathan Bakker discussed a strong and improving worship life, high chapel engagement across the week, the excellent “Faith Associates” program providing peer care, integration with congregations, and growing pastoral care consistency and student engagement. The university is rebuilding its campus ministry teams and exploring ways to integrate Lutheran worship formation in the curriculum.
- Church Work Students praised professors for strong and consistent integration of faith in academic programs, extensive opportunities for ministry practice and leadership, formation deeply grounded in Lutheran theology and worship, positive integration with non-church work students, and strong presence of faith within athletics. Ongoing work is being made to integrate church-work and non-church-work students and to enhance the promotion of Christian values in campus programming.
- The visitation team recommends that CUWAA place increased priority on recruiting and hiring LCMS personnel, particularly in senior leadership roles, in its ongoing commitment to Lutheran Identity.

Identity Standard IV – Planning and Resourcing

Although the Board states that its strategic plan is in year 2 of a 5-year process, more communication about this strategic plan needs to be shared across campus. In addition, the visitation team recognizes CUWAA’s ongoing efforts to articulate and communicate a clear theological, academic, and financial framework for its Ann Arbor campus.

Interview Specifics:

- Like many institutions in higher education today, CUWAA’s financial challenges pivot around enrollment, operating expenses, capital improvement, and allocation of donations for endowment vs. non-endowment.
- CUWAA endowment fund is expected to reach 300 million in a few years.
- Conversations about the core curriculum continue to take place as the faculty and administration work to deliver the most relevant content in the core curriculum. The core curriculum has three required Theology courses.
- The relationship between CUW and CUAA continues to involve important financial, communication, and identity considerations, and the visitation team encourages the ongoing efforts of CUWAA leadership to engage these matters collaboratively.
- Representatives from Advancement confirmed a strong donor base with high LCMS representation, clear donor segmentation across CUW and CUAA, a faith-forward

fundraising culture, solid annual fundraising with room to grow, and increasing engagement with endowed positions.

- The visitation team recommends that CUW and CUAA further discuss how to refine and enhance communication procedures both inside and outside the two campuses.

Identity Standard V – Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Leadership consistently names “mind, body, and spirit” as an integrated vision. Students are seen as image bearers of God, with faculty and staff eager to serve them. President Ankerberg’s leadership is mission-focused, theologically grounded, and student-centered. CUWAA leadership expresses a genuine desire to strengthen LCMS relationships, especially in Wisconsin and Michigan. Board of Regents affirms commitment to raising up church workers and supporting theology faculty. Deans and administrators appreciate the value of LCMS partnerships even in professional programs. The institution demonstrates sincerity in wanting to work closely with the church. Leadership emphasizes Christ, excellence, truth, integrity, and service, reinforced through the Cornerstones. Administrative leaders, including in academics, student success, and operations, are dedicated, empathetic, and mission minded.

Interview Specifics:

- President Ankerberg chairs the Institutional Advisory Committee consisting of the CUS presidents and CUS leadership.
- CUWAA Board of Regents participated in the training provided by Synod. The executive team regularly interacts and meets with CU counterparts.
- The Board of Regents and administration have designated a Board Professional on the executive team to ensure compliance with LCMS bylaws and congruence of CUWAA bylaws.
- Senior leadership – including President Ankerberg and Chief Mission Officer Dr. Aaron Moldenhauer – exudes commitment to the university’s Lutheran identity.
- Dr. Moldenhauer is widely respected and described as a “gift to this institution.” The visitation team is very supportive of his tremendous work integrating the Lutheran identity across the university.
- The cornerstone “Vocation as Service” is deeply embedded across student life, academics, and community engagement.
- Many leaders articulate Lutheran vocation beautifully and pastorally, grounding it in justification and sanctification.

- Strong commitment to supporting students in their struggles while pointing them toward hope in Christ.
- Service-oriented programs, including Social Work and Nursing, express a clear sense of calling.
- There is a strong desire for clearer, healthier relationships between CUW, CUAA, and regional LCMS partners.
- Faculty and Board of Regents emphasized the need to communicate CUWAA's Lutheran identity more clearly and broadly. Plans for the *Missio Dei* Center show strategic vision for unifying CUWAA's centers and faith initiatives.
- Leaders speak frequently about hope in Christ and the importance of Christian presence across campus departments.
- Given the hiring needs of a large institution, CUWAA's Human Resources continues to prioritize finding LCMS faculty and staff members.
- Theology Faculty noted that only one-third of CUWAA faculty are LCMS
- The visitation team recommends that CUWAA expand the integration of Lutheran identity and faith formation into graduate programs and continue to provide faculty development in Lutheran theology.
- The VP of Academics emphasized institutional mission focus, robust and multi-year faculty formation processes, mission-driven hiring practices. The VP of Academics affirmed that faculty are motivated by shared Christian purpose.
- The Chief of Staff and VP Innovation highlighted a strong campus-wide mission alignment, commitment to preparing Christians for diverse vocations, and the need for strong presidential partnership, leadership stability, and strengthening mission infrastructure after the restructuring of the Ann Arbor campus. A key area of focus is ongoing enrollment concerns and balancing growth and alignment.
- The Dean of Education highlighted CUWAA's large and influential education program across modalities, consistent Lutheran identity across in-person and online formats, strong LCMS faculty representation and professional engagement, high placement numbers and wide impact, and worldview training that confronts secular philosophies. The college of education continues to address intensifying accreditation requirements with Christian faithfulness.
- Ann Arbor faculty representatives emphasized a strong, explicit integration of Lutheran theology and vocational identity in teaching, a deep culture of prayer, mentorship, and personal spiritual support, faculty minister meaningfully during times of program turmoil and uncertainty, Christian faith is actively lived, not merely historical or symbolic, and the new Health & Humanities Lab enriches faith-and-learning integration.

- Church Work Program Directors reinforced a strong commitment to church work as central to CUWAA’s mission. The Church Work Program Directors spoke positively about student-led ministry and the university’s robust faith-in-athletics outreach. Programs cultivate relational and emotional skills needed for ministry. Recruitment of students remains ongoing challenge for church-work programs.
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Identity Standard VI - Assessment of Effectiveness

The visitation team noted the CUWAA self-study report was an accurate portrayal of the university’s intentional efforts to assess the effectiveness of the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes and ecclesiastical goals of the university. Faculty are assessed annually regarding how the curriculum is linked to Lutheran theology. Academic leadership continues development of tracking policy, student engagement, assessing the effectiveness of faculty training, and measuring curriculum mission and goal assessment. Regular student surveys and faculty assessments help the university achieve its goal for improving Lutheran faith in course study.

Interview Specifics:

- The strategic plan highlights the Lutheran identity, mission, vision, and values of CUWAA. Formed with broad-based input, it includes four pillars and 34 clear objectives. In its early stages, it has yet to find full incorporation across campus.
- CUWAA continues to prioritize integrating Christian faith and Lutheran identity in the classroom and across the university. CUWAA representatives indicate that this is a distinguishing feature of CUWAA.

Identity Standard VII – Handling and Resolving Concerns of Constituents

The university administration and cabinet strive to solve problems at the “lowest possible level.” At the same time, the visitation team recommends that CUWAA develop a more unified communication strategy that emphasizes transparency, trust, mission, and LCMS identity.

Interview Specifics:

- Concerns over the design and delivery of institution-sponsored academic and spiritual events have been raised; however, all processes have been properly followed to express those concerns according to policy and procedure.
- The university appears to be addressing student concerns in a clear and timely manner. At the same time, faculty, staff, and external partners seek clarity and trust with CUWAA administration.

- University support services and campus ministry are very active in supporting students in their academic and personal lives. The comment was made by staff member in Student Life that “when students are at their worst...we are there for them.”
 - A strong theme across all interviews is a desire for the university’s leadership to address concerns about internal and external communication.
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Conclusion

The visitation team gives thanks to God and commends President Ankerberg and Concordia University Wisconsin/Ann Arbor for its strong commitment to its mission as a Lutheran university, committed to the Christian faith and life as taught in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the Lutheran Confessions.

Overall, the visitation team affirmed without concerns CUWAA’s success in fulfilling its mission and offered constructive suggestions for continued growth. CUWAA is a Christ-centered Lutheran institution with tremendous strengths: committed leadership, mission-aligned faculty and staff, compassionate student life personnel, and engaged students longing for hope and purpose. The Concordia Cornerstones are a major unifying success, offering a theological and missional framework that will shape CUWAA for years to come. To thrive in the coming years, CUWAA will benefit from publicly articulating, simplifying, and regularly communicating strategic priorities. These steps will allow CUWAA to deepen its Lutheran identity, strengthen mission vitality, and serve the Church and world with clarity, grace, courage, and faithfulness.