



GORDON COLLEGE

Office of the President

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

Dear Gordon parents,

As we prepare with faithful expectation for another semester ahead—with the hope that the global concerns and limitations brought on by COVID-19 will begin to lessen as the months progress—we can acknowledge that climate is on our minds. Not just the pandemic, or even the weather, though it is nearly February in New England and the forecast typically demands our attention this time of year. It is our tumultuous national climate—particularly as manifested in recent months around race and politics, reflecting a basic inability to overcome antagonism, to curb anger before it leads to violent aggression and to engage with each other in a civil manner. With such a pervasive spirit of mistrust around us, even Christian campuses are not immune.

Yet that quality—a distinctly Christian campus—represents our saving grace, and not just spiritually. As such I am calling on all within the larger Gordon family to recommit and refocus this spring semester, to appreciate the unique opportunity we have here at Gordon. We can recognize and should respect our unique qualities as individuals and know that our experiences and life stories might be very different. Yet we have the capability, and in fact a scriptural imperative, to take our eyes off each other and our differences and fix them firmly above to what unites us—to fix our gaze on Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith as it says in the Book of Hebrews. As surely as our mission mandates a focus on education and vocational preparation, we also pledge to shape and build up Christian character, not only for each individual student but as an interconnected body of Christ.

It is important to remember at Gordon that our intentional Christian community should *not* be one guided by a human ideology, theory or philosophy—our foundation has and will remain one that is decidedly biblical. In a pre-semester planning letter to his

colleagues in the Office of Student Life, Associate Vice President for Student and Global Engagement Dr. Nicholas Rowe drew from Paul's letter to the Ephesians to describe the attitude and ethos each of us should convey through our words and actions with students and colleagues:

"You *belong* here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home." Ephesians 2:19–22 (The Message)

As students return to campus later this week, our campus is committed to demonstrating and equipping our students to engage differently—to remind them of what unites us in Christ and, in Dr. Rowe's words, "to engage that well in a way that does not denigrate God's image in the other." As stakeholders in our sons' and daughters' experiences at Gordon, you and I must do the same.

We are also following up on specific assurances we provided to students last fall. (I emailed a more detailed update to students last week.) Two initiatives are particularly notable for parents.

First, we committed to engaging an external advisor to assist the College in developing a strategic plan for the aspirations outlined in our [Shalom Statement](#). We are thrilled that [Phil Bowling-Dyer](#) from InterVarsity Christian Fellowship has come alongside the College in this important work. Rev. Bowling-Dyer led the entire faculty and staff through a multi-day set of diversity trainings in December. As he continues the work this semester, he is surveying students and has been hosting listening sessions with small groups of faculty and staff to better understand the challenges and opportunities on our campus around issues of *shalom*. He will begin hosting similar sessions for groups of students when they return. We are grateful that he will be with us for several months in this crucial role.

Second, we committed to adding additional (and appropriate) cameras or other strategic surveillance measures on campus. The College's leadership approved a significant capital investment to upgrade the quality of our security infrastructure and to add more than 80 cameras around campus. The project is already underway, and we expect it to be completed before the end of the spring semester. As some parents have raised questions, I want to be clear we worked closely with our Center for Technology Services, Gordon Police and Student Life in order to balance safety needs for our campus and potential privacy

concerns of our residents. Upon careful review of what would be in the best interest of our students, we decided to only add new cameras to building entrances and exits. This will allow us to better monitor who is inside a building at any given time while still respecting the privacy of students in public areas like hallways or floor lounges. We believe our approach is a solution that will allow students privacy while keeping them safe in our community.

Someone once said that spring is a lovely reminder of how beautiful change can truly be. As we begin this spring semester, I hope you will join with me in praying for God's provision and positive change on many levels—to achieve global health and safety, to move away from the polarization we have experienced in our nation and for us reflect the unity found through Christ every day here at Gordon. At its center, *shalom* is the right ordering of relationship and actions that affirm human dignity regardless of race, color, nationality or personal belief. It reflects our essential interdependence and our elemental interconnectedness. It provides the hope for a great Gordon education and campus experience, and the foundation for a life well lived long after graduation.

With blessings for a safe semester and hopeful spring,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Michael Lindsay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

D. Michael Lindsay
President

Gordon College is one of the nation's premier Christian colleges and located just north of Boston. We offer students extraordinary access to leading-edge opportunities for intellectual, professional, and leadership development to address the increasingly complex challenges of a global society. Gordon stands apart from other outstanding institutions in New England by combining an exceptional education with an informed Christian faith.

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