Ketting-Weller Accepts La Sierra Position

Add one more administrative post to the search list for Walla Walla University (WWU). Ginger Ketting-Weller, WWU vice president for academic administration, announced this week that she will become dean of the School of Education at La Sierra University in Riverside, Calif., beginning July 1. Ketting-Weller has served as a vice president at WWU since 2002. During her 10 years of service, Ketting-Weller has led the academic program and hired 40 percent of the current faculty. Prior to her service at WWU, Ketting-Weller was a professor of education at Pacific Union College, where she was named Educator of the Year in 2000. She has also worked in the K–12 Adventist educational system in Redlands, Calif., and Lincoln City, Ore. Read more from the WWU website HERE.

WWU Presidential Search Begins Interviews

The Walla Walla University (WWU) Presidential Search Committee is interviewing three candidates on the “active list” to replace current president, John McVay, who will transition to study leave and a new role as professor this summer. Those currently being interviewed are Dwight Nelson, Pioneer Memorial Church senior pastor and Andrews University Theological Seminary adjunct professor, David Thomas, Walla Walla University School of Theology dean and professor, and Linda Wysong-Becker, Union College vice-president for student services. Even as the committee interviews these individuals, they continue to maintain a larger “active” list of candidates. The committee will take further recommendations to the WWU Board of Trustees for consideration on May 14.

International Religious Liberty Association Holds World Congress

Nearly 900 delegates and guests from 65 countries have met this week in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, for the Seventh World Congress of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA). Denton Lotz, IRLA president and Baptist minister, spoke to an audience representing Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other faith communities. He observed: “Seventy percent of the world lives in places of religious oppression.” Noted Adventist leaders integral to this congress include John Graz, IRLA secretary general and Adventist world church public affairs and religious liberty director, Nicholas Miller, Andrews University International Religious Liberty Institute director, and Gregory Hamilton, Northwest Religious Liberty Association president. Read more
**Worldwide Shift in Tithe Will Affect North America**

During the annual Spring Meeting last week in Silver Spring, Md., Seventh-day Adventist world church leaders recommended a change in how world divisions contribute to the General Conference budget. If approved, these recommendations will allow the North American Division (NAD) to reduce its current 8 percent contribution to just 6 percent of gross tithe receipts. The NAD could retain the difference to carry out additional projects within its own territory. Other world divisions would likely see their tithe contributions rise. The earliest this recommendation can officially be voted on or approved, will be at the Annual Council meetings to be held this October at the world church headquarters. Read more from Mark Kellner and the Adventist News Network [HERE](#).

**Canadian University Touring Orchestra Hit by Portland Thieves**

The Silverwind Band orchestra, on tour from the Adventist-run Canadian University College (CUC) in Lacomb, Alberta, lost $20,000 worth of prized instruments and personal items this week in Portland, Ore. While the group ate at the Old Spaghetti Factory near downtown Portland on Monday, thieves broke into the touring bus and took instruments, passports, money and personal electronics. The orchestra is carrying on with borrowed instruments as it continues its tour to California. Members hope photocopies of passports will be enough to get them back across the border. Watch a news report on this story from KGW television in Portland [HERE](#). If you would like to help these college students replace their instruments, go to the CUC website [HERE](#).
Vice President to Lead School of Education at La Sierra University

Ketting-Weller Has Led Academic Administration Since 2002

By: Rosa Jimenez

Ginger Ketting-Weller, vice president for academic administration at Walla Walla University, has accepted an invitation to become dean of the School of Education at La Sierra University. She will begin her new role July 1 of this year.

Ketting Weller has served as vice president at WWU since 2002. During her 10 years of service, Ketting-Weller has led the academic program, hiring 40 percent of the current faculty. She has worked with presidents Jon Dybdahl and John McVay, and twice served short terms as acting president.

"Walla Walla University has been greatly blessed by the excellent and dedicated leadership that Dr. Ketting-Weller has given to the institution’s educational mission. We are indebted to her," says John McVay, WWU president.

"I feel privileged to have worked with her," says Lucy Krull, dean of the School of Nursing. "I knew that when I had a problem, I could count on her to listen, strategize with me and give her honest opinion of the right next steps."

"Dr. Ketting-Weller has provided significant leadership during substantial transitions in administration, enrollment, accreditation, and academic policies," says Scott Ligman, associate vice president for academic administration. "Her passion for students, colleagues, and excellence in Adventist higher education will be missed on our campus.

As vice president for academic administration, Ketting-Weller has overseen the development of a sabbatical policy and revision of the rank and tenure policy, both providing increased support for and focus on faculty research and scholarship. She participated in the development of the plans for the new administration building, oversaw the expansion of the School of Nursing, and assisted in planning for the relocation of the School of Social Work and Sociology to Winter Educational Complex.

With her support and advocacy, the minimum entrance GPA was raised, student retention increased with the implementation of the freshman mentoring program, and financial support for faculty development increased.

Ketting-Weller credits many of these accomplishments to a team of strong and capable leaders on campus. "I have been privileged to work with some people across the institution who are creative and willing to take risks and pursue change for the sake of the university’s future," she says. "Our leadership team includes some wonderful colleagues who have been courageous enough to make the tough decisions that have put the university in a stronger financial and strategic position than we have enjoyed for a long time. These leaders are people of integrity, grace, grit and a great sense of humor. I shall miss them."

Prior to her service at WWU, Ketting-Weller was a professor of education at Pacific Union College, where she was named Educator of the Year in 2000. She also worked in the K-12 Seventh-day Adventist educational system in Redlands, Calif., and
Lincoln City, Ore.

Ketting-Weller is a 1985 Walla Walla University graduate. During her undergraduate years, she was in the honor studies program and also served as a student missionary.

She is married to Jim Weller, principal at Rogers Adventist School. They have three children and five grandchildren, all residing in southern California.

<- Back to: News
World religious freedom congress opens with call to avoid secular society’s lead

Apr. 24, 2012 Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Mark Kellner/Adventist Review

Addressing nearly 900 delegates and guests at the Seventh World Congress of the International Religious Liberty Association, Denton Lotz, a noted Baptist minister and IRLA president, summarized the purpose of this three-day event: "We’re here today because we believe that freedom of religion is basic to all human rights."

That view, sadly, is not shared in many parts of the world, something Lotz said made holding the sessions even more important.

"It's incumbent upon us to work together that we live together in harmony and concord," Lotz said to an audience of leaders from Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other communities. "We don't need religious wars."

That violence against believers remains a problem was evident from a session-opening video presentation noting the death sentences pronounced – but not yet carried out – on Christians in Pakistan and Iran on charges of "blasphemy," and the assassinations of Pakistani officials Salman Tasser, governor of Punjab province and minorities minister, Shahbaz Bhatti. Also cited was the extreme religious repression found in North Korea.

While the main congress theme, "Secularism and Religious Freedom – Conflict or Partnership" may seem far removed from lands where persecution is active, Lotz took a different view.

"Most people worldwide suffer from a lack of religious freedom. Seventy percent of the world lives in places of religious repression," he said.

Speaking to an audience that included Seventh-day Adventists, Mennonites, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Mormons and Scientologists, among others, IRLA secretary-general John Graz noted the world congress is a multifaceted event.
"This congress is about religious freedom, but it is not a religious event," Graz said. "We are all here together. We represent different faiths, different religions and different churches. We are different, but we are respectful of each other."

With the theme of "Secularism and Religious Freedom -- Conflict or Partnership," speakers and delegates will attempt to negotiate the challenges of a world which is increasingly hostile to a variety of religious expression in the public square. While standing for separation of church and state, IRLA leader Lotz issued a call for religion to avoid following a secular society's lead.

"When religion becomes secular, I believe it is the greatest challenge to religious freedom, allowing secularism to define what a religion believes," Lotz told delegates. "When we allow the secularization of our faith to transcend the transcendent, it loses its meaning," he added.

According to Lotz, "Religion will die when it no longer focuses on God, but only on autonomous man. Religion will thrive when it focuses on God."

In a statement read to delegates, the country's president, Leonel Fernandez Reyna, offered "a most cordial welcome to the Dominican Republic, a land of freedom. The Dominican Republic is a place of freedom for Christians, Muslims, Jews and people of other faiths."
Adventist leaders to begin shift in tithe-source formula

Apr. 19, 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

Mark Kellner/Adventist Review

The formula for contributions by world divisions to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will change in 2013, if suggestions recommended by global church leaders on the concluding day of the movement’s Spring Meeting are adopted later this year.

By 2020, the North American Division would annually contribute 6 percent of its gross tithe receipts to the General Conference budget, down from 8 percent today. Other world divisions – of which there are 12 – may see their annual contribution increase to 3 percent of gross tithe, although that is less certain. A commission is being formed to study the matter and report back to the 2014 Annual Council, said Robert E. Lemon, treasurer of the Adventist world church.

“This request will allow the North American Division to carry out its missional goals and the funds will be used to advance the work throughout the division,” said Tom Evans, treasurer of the North American Division, in a statement. “The North American Division has been blessed in being instrumental in the growth of the world church since its inception,” Evans added.

Because an adjustment in the contribution percentage is a matter of policy, leaders explained, it can be voted only at an Annual Council, next slated to take place in October 2012 at the world headquarters. For now, church leaders have authorized the General Conference’s Treasury department “to prepare the budget based on these assumptions,” that the change would be made, said Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference.

In explaining the move, Lemon said the North American Division, or NAD, the region where Adventism was born, “needs to remain strong. … In addition to that, every part of the world considers NAD to be their territory and they come and raise funds in NAD. We have to understand the level of commitment NAD had given over the history of the church has given to mission.”

After the measure was approved, on a voice vote, Wilson said, “Let me underscore the appreciation on the part of the world field and the General Conference for the generosity on the
part of the North American Division for decades. We do value it and appreciate it.”

In other actions at Spring Meeting, the Executive Committee voted to approve a “Client Identification and Cost-Sharing Action Plan” for the General Conference Auditing Service, or GCAS, which would shift some audit work to local, outside firms, and require church units to financially participate in the costs of audits conducted by the GC organization.

The 35-year-old GCAS operation is currently tasked with financial compliance audits of many church operations around the world, from divisions to remote clinics staffed by one or two people, said Lemon. While the North American Division pays for its audits, the General Conference pays for most of the rest, leaving an $8 million annual shortfall. In view of this, reorganization would ease the dollar drain, he said.

“This is a very comprehensive and needed action, but it's complicated,” Wilson noted during discussion of the measure. Passed on a voice vote, further plans are to be discussed at Annual Council.

In other financial news, Lemon reported the General Conference operated in 2011 at $10 million below budget caps, and received an additional $18.8 million in unexpected income due to foreign exchange rates and other considerations. The Spring Meeting leaders voted to allocate $15 million to a variety of outreach and development projects aimed at reaching non-Adventists and strengthening church members in their faith walk.