



THE LILLY NETWORK

OF CHURCH-RELATED
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Lilly Network Update 18.4

November 2023

Welcome to the Lilly Network Update, an e-publication from the Lilly Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities to keep Lilly Network representatives and others informed about the activities of 1) Lilly Network institutions, 2) present and former Lilly Fellows and, 3) the Lilly Network office at Valparaiso University.

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The 2023 Thirty-third Annual Lilly Network National Conference

On October 20-22, 2023, the Lilly Network of Church-Related College and Universities held its 33rd annual [National Conference](#), *Contemplating Integral Ecology for the Common Good*, at [Aquinas College](#) in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The conference addressed questions such as: what is integral ecology; how can it be oriented to the common good; and how can faith-based liberal arts institutions of higher education train their students to be attentive to both natural and human ecology so as to contemplate and develop effective solutions to questions of ecology and sustainability? Hosted by Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a liberal arts college in the Catholic, Dominican tradition, this conference explored these questions from multiple perspectives, engaging the natural sciences, philosophy/theology, and the humanities/arts.

Kerry Andrew Emanuel, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Meteorology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Marie I. George, Professor of Philosophy at [St. John's University](#) in New York, and Debra Rienstra, Professor of English at [Calvin University](#) were the plenary speakers.

The Lilly Network will hold its thirty-fourth annual National Conference on September 27-29, 2024 at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. The conference will address the theme, "The Spiritual Lives of Our Students." Look for more information in Spring 2024. [Click here](#) to download a flyer.

The 2023 Twenty-third Annual Lilly Network Workshop for Senior Administrators

On October 19-20, the Lilly Network held its [Twenty-Third Annual Workshop for Senior Administrators](#) on the topic: *Fostering Hope in a Polarized Age*.

The 2023 Workshop for Senior Administrators offered the opportunity for senior administrators at church-related colleges and universities to consider the impact of cultural, political, and social polarization on their campuses and what is needed in campus leadership in this time. The current polarization of our culture, especially as it has linked with religion, has touched higher education over such issues as academic freedom, hiring practices, free speech, DEI initiatives, curricular design, and religious freedom. This polarization has been uniquely felt by stakeholders at church-related institutions because of the way polarization connects to religion. This workshop helped administrators think together about how hope and their own missional resources can help them move forward constructively toward a shared future beyond this time of polarization.

The Twenty-fourth Annual Workshop for Senior Administrators will be held at Westmont College on September 26-27, 2024 in Santa Barbara, California. Check the website in Spring 2024 for more information on next year's workshop.

Name Change, Updated Logo and Website Rollout

The Lilly Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities (formerly The Lilly Fellows Program) in consultation with the National Network Board is transitioning to using a new name. This better aligns our organization with the way most people interact with it. We launched our updated logo at the 2023 National Conference, and a new website for the Lilly Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities is coming soon.

The names of our fellowship programs will not change. Our new email address lilly.network@valpo.edu is already in use, but if you email us at our old email address, we will still get the message.

The Tenth Biennial Lilly Network Book Award for 2023

On October 20, 2023, at its Thirty-third Annual National Conference at Aquinas College, the Lilly Network presented the 2023 biennial Book Award to Willie James Jennings, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Africana Studies at Yale University Divinity School for his book [After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging](#) (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2020).

After Whiteness addresses many of the most important contemporary themes in higher education—inclusion, access, racial justice, and diversity in the academy. Moreover, it does so in a truly novel way—a way that gives those of us in the academy, and especially those of us in theological education or who want to understand higher education within a Christian context, eyes to see and ears to hear. This is because Jennings roots his reflections on racial justice within a larger narrative of the academy, and in doing so sheds light on the way the contemporary academy's goals and ideals of liberal education are marred in hidden ways by the wounds of colonialism, racism, and economic exploitation. While higher education in Jennings's telling both liberates and forms us, these darker legacies also enslave and deform.

To enable us to see and hear, Jennings employs stories, poetry, and imagery in such a way that his work opens our hearts to the ways in which activities such as grading, faculty searches, and plagiarism involve practices that are complicit in this deformation but also hopeful sites of redemption. These vignettes, these stories, stick with the reader—they become opportunities for meditation, for reflection on why we think and do the things we do

in higher education, and how we could rethink these activities in light of the gospel, the good news that Jesus meets those following him—the motley crowds—with love, and offers them a home in which they belong. This book is meant to be read over and over again. It offers hope. It offers a path to learning—a path not just to integrating learning with faith but also towards learning that is animated by hope and love.

The biennial Lilly Network Book Award honors an original and imaginative work from any academic discipline that best exemplifies the central ideas and principles animating the Lilly Network. These include faith and learning in the Christian intellectual tradition, the vocation of teaching and scholarship, and the history, theory, or practice of the university as the site of religious inquiry and culture.

The Lilly Network also honored as finalists the following books: James L. Heft, *[The Future of Catholic Higher Education](#)* (Oxford University Press, 2021); Kevin Hood Gary, *[Why Boredom Matters: Education, Leisure, and the Quest for a Meaningful Life](#)* (Cambridge University Press, 2022); and Todd C. Ream, Jerry Pattengale, and Christopher J. Devers, Editors, *[Cultivating Mentors: Sharing Wisdom in Christian Higher Education](#)* (IVP Academic, 2022).

Deadlines for Grants and Fellowships

Grants:

The next series of programs that will receive funding are: [Mentoring Programs](#), [Small Grants](#), [Network Exchanges](#), and [Collaborations and Conferences](#). Proposals for the programs are due **September 15, 2024**.

Fellowship Programs:

The deadline for applications for the 2024-2024 [Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowships in Humanities and the Arts](#) is Wednesday, January 17, 2024.