

Floor Committee #1: President's Report

**Subject: Commitment to recruitment of called workers**

Reference: President's Report for WELS Synod Convention 2023

Resolution No. 04

WHEREAS 1) the synod president posed the question as to whether now is the time to "commit ourselves to a concerted and wide-ranging synodwide effort to encourage more people to serve in the public ministry and to provide as much assistance as possible to make that choice more affordable" (President's Report, p. 4, right column); and

WHEREAS 2) Martin Luther College states in its Philosophy of Financial Assistance and Student Debt,

"About 75 percent of MLC students graduate with debt. The debt for that 75 percent averages \$27,000. If two of our graduates marry, the debt can double. Many of our graduates, therefore, enter their public ministries with a challenging burden—a burden exacerbated by the lower lifetime earning potential of called workers compared to college graduates in other fields.

"This financial burden has a negative effect on recruitment. In a competitive college marketplace, we are at a disadvantage in rankings that use a return-on-investment framework. According to a 2019 Sallie Mae report, most high school students and their parents list college cost, often including consideration of return on investment, as the most important factor in their college choice.

"While we remain convinced that the value of ministerial training—and the blessings of a life dedicated to gospel ministry—far outweigh financial considerations, we still must admit that the debt load carried by many MLC graduates likely has a significant negative impact on student recruitment."; therefore be it

Resolved, a) that the synod president appoint a Recruitment Task Force to study and address the challenges to recruitment for our ministerial education schools; and be it finally

Resolved, b) that the Recruitment Task Force consider the implementation of a called worker tuition reimbursement program at all levels of the ministerial education system.

Pastor Jason Hacker, chairman  
Pastor James Douglas, secretary

**ADOPTED**