

By Jan Boden

Members of the Class of 1970 are proving that good things can come of a casual conversation.

In 2019, Allan Rohlfs and Brian Eklund (both MDiv, 1970), and Matt Keadle (2011, MDiv) got together with Anna Moorhead, then a new gift officer for LSTC, for a get-to-know you conversation.

During their visit, Eklund mentioned that the fraternity at his other alma mater, Muhlenberg College, was funding a scholarship there. That sparked the idea that Rohlfs and Eklund could organize their class to do the same thing for LSTC.

“I had gotten a letter from my alma mater, Augustana College, asking me to send them the RMD (required minimum distribution) from my IRA,” Rohlfs said. “And I thought, ‘That’s a great idea! We could ask members of the Class of 1970 to do that to fund a scholarship at LSTC.’”

Rohlfs had been especially concerned about LSTC’s ability to compete with the full-tuition scholarships that he had heard several other ELCA seminaries are providing to every incoming masters student. He wanted to challenge his class to fully fund one student and then see if other classes could do the same.

He did some calculating and inquiring: there were 55 MDiv graduates in the Class of 1970. Some have died and some have lost touch with LSTC due to life transitions. In October, 14 classmates attended their 50-year virtual reunion where Rohlfs and Eklund shared their idea.

‘Take a free ride’

“Together we came up with the idea that if each class member gave sacrificially, we could provide a total ride for one person. We want to challenge each class after ours to do the same. That way LSTC could give a free ride to many more, if we could, to each of the incoming students,” Rohlfs said.



Brian Eklund, Matt Keadle and Allan Rohlfs outside of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Los Angeles, Calif., where a conversation turned to inspiration to fund a scholarship.

Funding the future

Class of 1970 challenges itself, other classes

This wasn’t the only plan class members considered to fund scholarships. They discussed creating an endowment, but many of them favor the impact of giving the scholarship immediately. This would mean pledging to repeat the gift for five years.

“If each successive class did the same, then we will have created a succession for the scholarship fund,” Rohlfs reasoned.

Another reason to give the gift now is their awareness of the changing nature of seminary education. With changes in the church, the candidacy process, recruitment and questions about what this kind of education will look like a few years from now, flexibility is an advantage.

The energetic but unofficial steering committee for the

scholarship has met several times with Bill Myatt, director of philanthropic engagement, and Jessica Houston, alumni services and events manager to move ahead with their efforts. Volunteers so far include Pete Manfred, Fred Sickert, Brian Eklund, John Heins, Keith Nelson, Albert “Bert” Bodaski, Dennis Ellison, Paul Swanson, Kurt Hendel and Allan Rohlfs.

“The Class of 1970 has a great plan to help future leaders afford LSTC. I encourage other classes to consider the challenge they have made. Imagine the impact that would have for LSTC students,” Myatt said. 🌱

Boden is public relations manager.

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