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**CENTRAL DISTRICT CONFERENCE OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA REPORT**  
March 2018

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**Spring '18 enrollment** - Total student enrollment for the spring 2018 semester is at 427, which is the highest for the spring term since 2013. U.S. students represent 29 states while 55 international students represent 18 countries and 13 percent of the student population. International student enrollment is at a 20-year high for a spring semester. Retention of students overall has been strong at Hesston for several years, and moving from the fall semester to the spring semester this year, students retained at a 94 percent rate, the highest retention rate since 2004.

**Homecoming and Presidential Inauguration** - Hesston College celebrated homecoming and the inauguration of its ninth president, Dr. Joseph A. Manickam, Sept. 22 to 24 with the theme "Grounded in community, globally engaged." The weekend featured events reflecting and celebrating the college's values, experiences and global connections. Weekend highlights included a Global Voices music showcase that featured Hesston College ensembles performing works from international students' home countries. During that program, Dave Osborne was honored for directing the international students program since 1986. Alumni, students and guests made up an Interfaith Relationships panel to share reflections on how interfaith relationships on-campus and off-campus have challenged and enriched their lives. The event brought the college's five living presidents together to interact with the campus community and alumni.

**Community Read** - For the sixth year, the community of Hesston, led by Hesston College and Hesston Public Library, invited individuals and groups to take part in a community read during the fall semester. This year's book selection was *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis* by Cynthia Barnett. The book examines a variety of perspectives and makes an argument for a "water ethic" with a call to action that reconnects individuals to their water. Barnett presented at Hesston College on Nov. 2 about her work.

**AVDS conference "Before the Unthinkable Happens"** - Hesston College's 2018 Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series (AVDS) conference offered a hands-on process where issues of oppression that can lead to trauma-related incidents were addressed and dismantled. With the theme "**Before the Unthinkable Happens: Confronting our role in injustice,**" the conference took place on the Hesston College campus Feb. 23 to 25. More than 450 persons engaged with different parts of the weekend, including the Ted & Co. TheaterWorks show *Discovery: A Comic Lament*. The weekend was also resourced by the Kansas Leadership Center to help develop skills to clarify purpose, begin outcome plans and impact the future. KLC faculty member and pastor of Berea Community Church in Kansas City, Kan., Adrion Roberson served as one of two keynote

speakers. Dr. Drew G.I. Hart from Messiah College helped to strengthen the biblical theology of justice to work at being faithful disciples and ethical believers. For more post-event conference content, go to [hesston.edu/avds](http://hesston.edu/avds).

**Honoring Dr. King's Legacy** - The Hesston College community participated in a Martin Luther King, Jr., Day "Tools for the Journey" workshop on Jan. 15, led by President Joe Manickam and John Murray, director of International Admissions. The workshop addressed injustices that are pervasive in society today and what individuals can do to recognize injustices and their own reactions to them. No classes were held on MLK Day in order to give the entire campus community – students, faculty and staff – a chance to participate in the activities. A chapel was also held in the afternoon and featured a student, faculty and staff gospel choir and speakers Ben Woodward-Breckbill, associate pastor of Shalom Mennonite Church (Newton, Kan.), and Jessica Klanderud, history professor at Tabor College (Hillsboro, Kan.).

**Congregational student aid** – Hesston College offers a match grant for scholarships provided by student churches. During the 2016-17 year, 65 churches contributed \$176,880 in student scholarships to 108 recipients. Hesston College matched a total of \$112,885. The average church aid per student was \$1,637 while the average church-and-college aid per student was \$2,683. **If your congregation is interested in providing a scholarship program to support Mennonite higher education, contact the Church Relations Office at 866-437-7866.**

Read these full stories and more at [www.hesston.edu](http://www.hesston.edu). For questions or more information, contact Dallas Stutzman, director of Alumni and Church Relations toll free at 866-437-7866.

**2017-18 campus theme verse** - 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV)

**Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA  
Statistics and Connections**

**2017-18 Academic Year Students – 1**

**Congregational Student Aid** – 1 congregation provided \$1,000 in tuition assistance for 1 student as of March 1, 2018.

**Unified and Designated Giving** – We are grateful for the financial support of conference churches to Mennonite colleges and Mennonite Education Agency through Unified and Designated Giving and for personal contributions given from individuals.

Dr. Joseph A. Manickam, President

Dallas Stutzman, Director of Alumni and Church Relations

Tony Brown and Lindsey Mason, Development Officers

Mary Bender and Carley Wyse, Admissions Representatives