

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS CONFERENCE

LASALLIAN REGION OF NORTH AMERICA
RÉGION LASALLIENNE DE L'AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

March 12, 2021

Dear Lasallians,

We hope this message finds you, your families and ministry communities safe and healthy. One year ago, our lives changed as the pandemic began to have a profound impact on all facets of our lives. Since March 2020, we have sheltered in place, adapted the way we serve young people, gone through periods of not physically seeing family and friends, worried about the health of our loved ones and recognized the many ways our frontline workers have kept us safe. We recognize the many challenges we have encountered during the pandemic and share in the grief that more than 2.5 million people have died from COVID-19. Please know that we continue to pray for all of our Lasallians who have been, and continue to be, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Office for Lasallian Education at Christian Brothers Conference has been closely monitoring guidance and advisories from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health authorities while in ongoing communication and reflection with our partners and stakeholders regarding the feasibility of hosting in-person gatherings for the 2021 summer formation programs. While there are signs of optimism, we realize challenges remain. Conscious of summer plans, we wanted to provide this information to you in a timely manner.

We have kept the health and well-being of all involved in the programs at the forefront of our decision-making process. After discussing several considerations, in consultation with the Districts and the Lasallian Education Council and responding to the needs that have been expressed, we are offering the following for each of our summer Regional formation programs:

- Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies: Out of an abundance of care and caution, we will not hold an in-person or virtual gathering of the 2021 Buttmer Institute of Lasallian Studies. We are mindful of the rich international and communal aspects of the program and want to be sure all of our presenters, participants and Lasallian colleagues are able to experience the community of this formation program. Sarah will be in touch with current Buttmer participants in April to share virtual opportunities to come together for speakers, prayer and community building. These virtual formation opportunities will NOT replace a year of Buttmer. Returning participants will resume their curriculum when we return to in-person programming in 2022 and will be joined by the incoming class of 2024.
- Brother John Johnston Institute of Contemporary Practice: Out of an abundance of care and caution, the Regional session will be reimagined to a virtual gathering that will occur from July 12–16. We are mindful of the needs of our presenters and participants and will work to provide a meaningful formation experience. Current participants will receive information regarding this session in May.
- Lasallian Social Justice Institute (LSJI): Out of an abundance of care and caution, the Oki-Ni-Soo-Ka-Wa “Come and See” at De La Salle Blackfeet will be reimagined to a virtual “Come and See” experience that will occur from July 18–23. We are working with the team at De La Salle Blackfeet to provide synchronous and asynchronous sessions for a meaningful formation experience to create awareness of the present reality of the Blackfeet American Indian Tribe, how this reality has been impacted by historical events, and how this first step of creating awareness leads us to addressing Indigenous concerns in Browning, Montana. Registration for this session will open in late March.

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We remain grateful for your ongoing support of our Regional formation programs, and know we remain committed to providing outstanding formation experiences. In the days and months ahead, please be assured of our prayers for you, your families and ministry communities.

Peace,



Sarah Laitinen
Director of Lasallian Programs
Office for Lasallian Education



Mark John Freund
Executive Director
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