December 17, 2008

Dear Colleagues:

I am happy to present my portfolio detailing my work at Concordia University. In the nine and a half years I have been here, I have had the pleasure of teaching hundreds of students; of working with wonderful colleagues in the university and the community; of learning more about my teaching and the field of physics; and of developing new activities, courses and programs for Concordia University. As I complete this portfolio and looked back at what I have done here and forward to what I hope to accomplish, I am struck by a profound sense of belonging – of being a part of larger mission which I feel is truly worthwhile. I am happy and proud to be a part of Concordia University and its mission in the church and world.

In this portfolio I try to present some documentation of what I do here at Concordia and in the Seward community, of why I do things the way I do and where I want to see my ministry go from here. The online portfolio is divided into a section on teaching (the longest section, because the main emphasis of my time and energy at Concordia is teaching) including my teaching philosophy and sections on the courses I teach, with examples of what I do and of student work and evaluations; a section on my research; a section on the activities I do at Concordia and elsewhere that are not part of my specific teaching load; and finally a collection of letters, thank-you notes and newspaper articles I've received. I hope that these materials provide some insight into how I view my personal ministry within the larger context of Concordia’s mission to prepare servant leaders for the church and world.

One final note about the format of this portfolio. I put my portfolio online for several reasons. The first is that of course everything is online today, and this work should be no different. Secondly, I've recently spent a fair amount of time working to put my work at the Osten Observatory online, and since that website would be an important part of my portfolio, it made sense to put as much of the rest of the portfolio online too. Finally, as I reflected on my work and thought about how to present it, a series of web pages with multiple links within them was how I was organizing things in my mind, so it was natural to go ahead and put the whole thing online. A word of caution is in order, however. I am not an experienced web programmer, and by nature I tend to be overly prepared. That means that this portfolio is probably longer and more in-depth than it would be if it was presented in a traditional notebook of printed pages. I encourage you to explore the links within my portfolio, but especially in the "Courses" section, I would warn you that there is probably more there than you care to look at. So if my over-enthusiastic entry into online portfolios takes up too much time, please be forgiving, and chalk it up to the mindset of a teacher who would rather go into a class over-prepared than left with twenty minutes of time to fill.

In Christ,

Robert Hermann, Ph.D.

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