



## A NEW APPROACH TO TUITION AND AID \$15,000 Drop in Concordia's Price Tag Starting Fall 2021

JESSICA MILLER  
jmille39@cord.edu

A surprise announcement from Concordia College President William Craft left students with questions about what the news meant for them.

On September 24, Craft unveiled a new approach to tuition and financial aid for the 2021-2022 academic year. The dramatic change sees the new cost of tuition set at \$27,500, a substantial decrease from the current year's \$42,750.

Craft, who is in his tenth year as Concordia's president, further elaborated on his message.

"First and foremost, the change in the college's tuition and financial aid model brings greater clarity and transparency regarding direct educational costs at Concordia," said Craft. "This benefits both continuing and new students."

For over two decades, Concordia has had both high tuition prices and high financial aid. This new approach allows Concordia to lower the two amounts so students can see more clearly the actual price of admittance, as well as aid students and their families plan ahead financially.

President Craft reassured that all students would have their financial aid adjusted accordingly, and they may even be paying less than they were expecting to.

"Total financial packages (both scholarships and grants) for current students will be proportionately adjusted to reflect the new tuition level for the 21-22 academic year so that the total net costs students are currently paying will be sustained," said Craft. "It is possible that individual scholarships may be adjusted in varying proportions to preserve the total net college

costs students are currently paying. Once a student's total tuition and aid packages have been revised to maintain current net costs for each student, a limited inflationary increase of \$800 will be instituted for the 21-22 academic year."

This \$800 cap on tuition increase for next year cuts the expected \$1,700 increase by nearly half.

David Creech, an associate professor of religion at Concordia, is excited that the college has changed its approach to tuition for next year.

"The way that the higher education works is that there's a little bit of a game that's played where the more expensive the college, the more prestigious it's assumed to be," said Creech. "We are about education. We have doors open to all sorts of different people, and in inviting them in we're not going to play the prestige game."

With Concordia being straightforward about their cost of tuition, more students may envision themselves attending and not turn away at first glance of the price tag.

"The price change is first and foremost a move for clarity, so that a wide range of prospective students and families will see that a Concordia education is possible for them—a smart choice regardless of their family's income level," said Craft. "More students choosing Concordia means more resources for academic programs, for student development and support and for continued innovation across the college."

Even though Concordia is dropping their price of tuition, President Craft is sure of the college's financial standings.

"This change in our tuition and financial aid model sup-



The Concordia skywalk over Eighth Street.

CONCORDIA COLLEGE

ports both improved enrollment of new students and retention of current Concordia students," said Craft. "Stabilizing and improving enrollment and retention rates benefits students individually and the college as a whole."

Kayla Zopfi, a senior at Concordia, was skeptical when she first heard the news. She became aware of Concordia's inflated price tag a few years prior when a friend sat in on a budgeting and tuition meeting. Since then, she has stressed the need for students to know the more accurate cost of admission.

"Honest is something Concordia should have been from the beginning, even though the high tuition/high aid model is something other institutions have been doing," said Zopfi.

After seeing a local billboard advertising the college's lowering of tuition, she felt unconvinced that the message is being publicized properly.

"I don't think it's a bad move, but I think it's being advertised to the general public as something that it's not," said Zopfi. "I don't think it tells the whole story."

Zopfi said one thing she believes the decision is good for is that the impact of financial aid is felt more by the student. When tuition is monumental, a few thousand dollars in aid seems like a drop in the bucket.

"It makes the effects of FAFSA and state grants weigh more," she said. She gave the example of when tuition is \$12,000 at a state school and a student receives \$5,000 in federal aid, it is clear that almost half of the cost is covered.

Concordia College is not the first private college to try this new approach to tuition and financial aid. In the fall of 2013, Concordia University (CSP) in St. Paul university announced a similar tuition reset that dropped their tuition cost by \$10,000.

According to a recent affordability fact sheet found on their website, undergraduate enrollment totals have been on the rise since 2013, accompanied by a 15% increase in six-year graduation rates. CSP prides itself on a model that provides an affordable but quality education for students, which is exactly the goal of Concordia College with the recent tuition change announcement.

If the outcomes of Concordia's promise for an honest sticker price are anything like the outcomes of CSP's tuition reset, the college should see increases in enrollment and retention rates in the coming years. If nothing else, a drop in up-front tuition costs will make Concordia appear to be a more affordable choice for a greater range of prospective students.

Dominic Erickson and Ingrid Harbo contributed to this report.

## RED RIVER MARKET RESILIENT DESPITE COVID-19

KAY FRANZESE  
kayfranzes@cord.edu

Fall is in full swing and Fargo's local market is still up and running. The Red River Market has been in Fargo since 2015 and has become immensely popular. Every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., there are crowds of people at every tent looking to buy fresh produce from local farms or delicious food from local restaurants.

This season, however, the Red River Market has had to make some changes in order to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. When you enter the market area, you will see that almost everyone is wearing a mask and

that there are sanitizer stations placed throughout the market. The vendors have had to limit the amount of people who can stand under their tents and increase their sanitation procedures.

While the pandemic has created some complications for market-goers and vendors, the Red River Market has been resilient and the community has put much of its support behind the market. Even during this time of uncertainty, the community still craves the fun and friendly atmosphere of the Red River Market.

Before COVID-19 hit, people were able to walk into the market area without wearing a

mask, social distancing or sanitizing their hands after touching something. Concordia student Anna Bushy had been to the market before COVID-19 and she offered her insight to how the market has changed from before the pandemic and after the pandemic.

"I feel like now there is kind of an air of uncertainty when you go. Just having to sanitize when you walk in and everybody has their masks on. It's really different because you used to be able to go around freely and not worry about everything you touch," she said.

In North Dakota, masks are not mandated, but people still come to the market wear-

ing their masks and sanitizing their hands. The requirements and recommendations from the North Dakota state government have been actively addressed at the market in order to keep the market open during these times.

Jen Skoog from Family Roots Farm is selling at the Red River Market for the second year. Like many other small businesses, her business has seen a decline of customers due to COVID-19, but has still been able to maintain a steady stream of support from the community.

"The customers we do have do a phenomenal job of really upping their orders for our sales, so it's definitely helped make up for a lot of that," she said.

For many of the vendors, the Red River Market is not only a place where they can sell their produce, but it is also a place where they can become a part of the community here in Fargo.

The pandemic has been difficult for many, but it has especially impacted those who own small businesses. Fortunately, the Red River Market has done a lot to ensure that their vendors' businesses are able to sell at the Market.

Skoog shared her appreciation for the market coordinators.

"The coordinators have done a great job at making sure that we're still able to have the vendors. The space between vendors has actually been a plus, so

that's been great. And they've been really good at making sure the market still has its authenticity even though things have changed," she said.

Another highlight of the market is the live music played by local musicians. It adds another fun aspect of community to the market and keeps the people at the market humming along while they are shopping.

Musicians have also been impacted by the pandemic in the sense that gig opportunities have slowed, but that hasn't stopped musicians like singer-songwriter Jake Ingamar from performing at the market. Many gigs that take place for musicians often occur indoors, such as bars, and that has been a struggle for these musicians as they are trying to make a living while being precautionous of the virus.

The Market also offers a special opportunity for these musicians since they perform outdoors.

"The people who run the market have been unbelievably nice here and I really appreciate it. Every time I leave here, I feel good," said Ingamar.

While COVID-19 has affected many aspects of life, the Red River Market continues to be resilient and share some of that resilience with its community by providing a safe and social environment for people to enjoy.



The Red River Market truck is a popular place to take photos while at the market.

KAY FRANZESE

### MISSION

The purpose of the Concordian is to affirm the mission of Concordia College by cultivating thoughtful and informed students, faculty and staff through the awareness and discussion of college, local, national and world affairs.



### CONTACT US

E-mail: [concord@cord.edu](mailto:concord@cord.edu)  
Campus Mailbox: FPO 214  
Online: [theconcordian.org](http://theconcordian.org)

Next week: Flu  
shot clinic