The Parallels of Healthcare & Education
2017 Adventist Business Teachers Conference

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This summer, the Andrews University School of Business Administration (SBA) will host the 10th Biennial Adventist Business Teachers Conference from July 11–13. Since its inception in 1999, this event has brought Adventist business professors from all over the world to Andrews for networking and education.
Assisted by a $15,000 gift from Karsten Randolph, Andrews graduate and CFO of Shawnee Mission Medical Center in Kansas, the conference will be the first held since 2014.

Though the numbers change yearly, the last event welcomed professors from all over the world, including The Adventist University of Haiti, Middle East University, Peruvian Union University, Babcock University in Nigeria, Columbia Adventist University and Helderberg College in South Africa, all contributing to the group of 47 attendees. Similar numbers and diversity are expected at July’s conference.

The 2017 conference theme is “Lessons from the Healthcare Industry: Addressing the Triple Bottom Line of Cost, Access, and Quality in Business Education.” Presenters will explore what they have learned from the business side of healthcare and how these principles can be applied to business education in the classroom and job field.

“There is a lot of change and innovation going on in healthcare, which seems very familiar to what we are facing now in higher education,” states Liz Muhlenbeck, event presenter, Adventist Health System endowed chair and associate professor of management. “We decided to see if we could merge the two somehow, be creative in that, and see what lessons could emerge from the different speakers.”

Fortunately, that shouldn’t be a problem, since the three-day event is going to be packed with speakers from various Adventist educational and medical backgrounds.

On Tuesday, plenary sessions will be held by Muhlenbeck and Sy Saliba, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at Florida Hospital. Wednesday will feature Judith Storfjell, professor emeritus of the University of Illinois at Chicago and former senior vice president chief nursing officer at Loma Linda University Health. Also speaking on Wednesday will be Duane McBride, professor of sociology at Andrews. Thursday’s plenaries will be presented by Loren Hamel, president and CEO of Lakeland Health, and Peter Landless, executive director of the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.

“We tried to find people who would have insight to different aspects of both healthcare and higher education,” says Muhlenbeck. “What could they share with us, as people who are responsible for molding the next generation of leaders? What insight could they give us, so that they could send professors back to their universities to start crafting the next curriculum that would make useful education?”

Though the education sector might not seem immediately analogous to the healthcare realm, Ralph Trecartin, dean of the SBA, asserts that the two are not only similar but follow a path that is connected.

“Something we need to talk about is the specialization of healthcare,” he says. “Healthcare has been traditionally very broad and general, so universities tend to be very broad and general. But then you have certain institutions that become very specialized, such as those for heart or cancer centers, and to some extent, as universities we are going to have to face the question of how we can be the very best in specifics. It’s really important for us to get to
know all our counterparts. We can be more successful in planning educational opportunities for the worldwide church if we know each other."

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