HISTORY OF CONCORDIA COLLEGE

The history of Concordia College mirrors that of the Norwegian Lutheran immigrants to the Red River Valley who founded the college. Concordia was dedicated on Oct. 31, 1891 — only about 10 years after the first settlers had made their home in the Red River Valley.

The Norwegian settlers valued education and their religious heritage. Because schools were few in the area, especially at the secondary level, the establishment of quality schools was high on the settlers' list of priorities.

The Northwestern Lutheran College Association, composed of Red River Valley Lutherans, purchased the property of the Bishop Whipple School in Moorhead, which had been started by the Episcopalians a few years earlier and had closed for lack of students. Bishop Whipple Hall, the oldest building on the campus today, recalls those early years in the life of the college. As the country and the Norwegian settlement matured, so did the college. The necessity for adding regular liberal arts courses on the college level to those offered on the academy level was soon apparent, and in 1913 a complete college department was organized. The first baccalaureate degrees were granted in 1917, and in 1927 the academy section of the institution was discontinued. Park Region College of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, became a part of Concordia College in 1917; one of Concordia's residence halls commemorates this addition.

Presidents

Ingebrikt F. Grose — 1891-1893
Hans H. Aaker — 1893-1902
Rasmus R. Bogstad — 1902-1909
Henry O. Shurson — 1909-1911
Johan A. Aasgaard — 1911-1925
John N. Brown — 1925-1951
Joseph L. Knutson — 1951-1975
Paul J. Dovre — 1975-1999
Thomas W. Thomsen — 1999-2003
Paul J. Dovre (interim) — 2003-2004
Pamela M. Jolicoeur — 2004-2010
Paul J. Dovre (interim) — 2010-2011
William J. Craft — 2011-2023
Colin C. Irvine — 2023-present