

Is it the End of Evangelical Christian Colleges in NYC?

The King's College, the last standing evangelical Christian college in New York City, has declared that it will not hold classes in the upcoming fall semester due to severe financial challenges.

In a recent email addressed to "members of the King's community" and signed by the Board of Trustees, the school conveyed its decision along with the regrettable news of faculty and staff position reductions or eliminations. Although the school's future remains uncertain, the board assured recipients of the email that they would provide further updates in the coming days and weeks. The number of retained faculty members remained undisclosed, although some faculty members confirmed that they were still employed as of Monday afternoon.

The King's College has faced public financial difficulties, prompting the Middle States Commission on Higher Education to withdraw its accreditation in May. Since January, the college has been seeking \$2.6 million to sustain its operations, but a fundraising campaign yielded only \$200,000. To maintain its accreditation appeal, King's must demonstrate financial viability with active student enrollment.

During the spring semester, faculty and staff actively assisted students in transferring to other institutions, including St. John's University in Queens and Providence Christian College in California. Despite this, some students have expressed a desire to stay at King's if it reopens in the fall.

Over its 85-year history, The King's College has never surpassed 1,000 students. Nevertheless, it earned recognition

as a top conservative liberal arts school, often compared to Hillsdale College. The college's political affiliations have sparked debates among students and faculty while operating on a tight budget and relying heavily on donations from benefactors such as Richard and Helen Devos. However, the partnership with Canadian education investment company Primacorp Ventures failed to improve enrollment, leading to layoffs.

Amidst the uncertainty, a glimmer of hope arose when the board disclosed "advanced discussions" with an undisclosed Christian university for an "educational and operational partnership" to ensure the college's continuation beyond the 2023-2024 academic year. However, details remained scarce, leaving the college community anxiously awaiting further announcements and updates from the board.

For Dru Johnson, a professor at King's, the rollercoaster ride of emotions began in March. He managed to secure a teaching position at Hope College in Michigan, but for others, the uncertainty persisted, impacting families invested in the college's future.

The impending closure of The King's College and the recent announcement of Alliance University's shutdown exemplify the challenges facing Protestant institutions with New York City roots. With Concordia, affiliated with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, closing in 2021, and Alliance University, formerly Nyack College, set to close in August, it appears to be a challenging time for such institutions in the region. {eoa}

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