

YVONNE C. ZIMMERMAN, Ph.D.

President, Clarke University | Dubuque, IA

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Yvonne C. Zimmerman serves as President of Clarke University. She previously served as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty and Dean of Academic Affairs at Clarke. Before joining Clarke, she spent fifteen years on the faculty and in academic leadership at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Drawing on her experience as a professor, scholar, and academic leader, she brings together scholarly expertise and executive leadership in service of mission-centered higher education.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

President, Clarke University

May 2026 – Present; previously Acting President, November 2025 – April 2026

Chief executive officer of a private Catholic university, providing strategic, financial, and operational leadership in partnership with the Board of Trustees to advance the University's mission and long-term sustainability.

- Partners with the Board of Trustees on governance, strategic planning, financial stewardship, and institutional priorities.
- Leads institutional transformation through organizational restructuring, academic portfolio review, and operational realignment to strengthen long-term financial sustainability.
- Develops and advances strategic partnerships with community, healthcare, business, higher education, religious, and civic organizations.
- Provides leadership to the University community while representing Clarke to alumni, donors, community partners, elected officials, and other external stakeholders.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, Clarke University

September 2024 – October 2025

Chief academic officer responsible for academic strategy, faculty affairs, and institutional accreditation; member of the President's Cabinet.

- Led academic strategy and oversight of all academic programs, guiding faculty workforce planning, curricular development, and academic quality.
- Directed comprehensive General Education revision and broader curriculum revitalization, working with faculty governance bodies to modernize degree requirements, strengthen interdisciplinary learning, and align programs with institutional priorities.
- Oversaw revision and standardization of faculty academic policies, strengthening institutional governance, clarifying expectations for faculty roles and responsibilities, and improving transparency in academic decision-making.
- Led the academic component of institutional financial realignment, conducting program review and aligning faculty resources and academic offerings with the long-term financial sustainability.

Dean of Academic Affairs, Clarke University

August 2023 – September 2024

Senior academic administrator responsible for academic operations, student academic policy, and implementation of institutional academic initiatives; member of the academic leadership team.

- Led comprehensive review and revision of student-facing academic policies, standardizing institutional practices related to grading, academic standing, and student progress to improve clarity, equity, and administrative consistency.
- Oversaw academic operations and program administration across the university, supporting faculty governance processes and implementation of institutional academic initiatives.
- Collaborated with enrollment and student affairs leadership to support student retention and academic success initiatives.

Associate Academic Dean; Acting Dean, Methodist Theological School in Ohio
2017 – 2023

Senior academic administrator responsible for curriculum oversight, faculty support, and institutional accreditation processes.

- Member of the President’s Administrative Council (senior leadership team), contributing to institutional strategy, policy development, and operational decision-making.
- Chaired institution-wide curriculum revision initiative, guiding faculty governance processes and implementation of new degree structures.
- Directed the Master of Arts in Social Justice and Master of Theological Studies degree programs.
- Led the institution’s accreditation self-study process, coordinating faculty and administrative contributions.
- Served as Deputy Title IX Coordinator.

BOARD SERVICE

Board of Directors, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, Dubuque, IA
2025 – Present

Board of Directors, MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center, Dubuque, IA
2026 – Present

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Religious and Theological Studies (Religion and Social Change)
University of Denver and Iliff School of Theology, 2008

M.T.S. (Christianity and Culture)
Candler School of Theology, Emory University, 2001

B.A. (Bible, Religion, and Philosophy; Psychology – double major)
Goshen College, 1998

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Clarke University, Dubuque, IA
Professor of Religious Studies, August 2023 – April 2026*
** Tenure held in abeyance upon appointment as President.*

Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, OH
Professor of Christian Ethics, 2023
Associate Professor of Christian Ethics (tenured), July 2013 – June 2023
Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics, July 2008 - June 2013

University of Denver, Denver, CO

Adjunct faculty, Gender and Women's Studies, 2007 - 2008.

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs, CO

Adjunct faculty, Humanities Department, Fall 2007.

Red Rocks Community College, Lakewood, CO

Adjunct faculty, Philosophy Department, 2004 - 2005.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

Other Dreams of Freedom: Religion, Sex and Human Trafficking. AAR Academy Series. NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

SELECTED PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

"Prostitution and American Christianity." *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* vol 25. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2026.

"Modern Slavery, the Bible, and Slow-Down Ethics" in Christy Cobb and Katherine A. Shaner, eds. *Ancient Slavery and its New Testament Contexts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Press, 2025.

"Learning from Black Lives Matter: Resisting Purity Culture in US Antitrafficking." *Religions* 14(4) 2023: 430.

"To Shape the Changes for Which we Long" Afterword in Lauren McGrow, ed. *Religious Responses to Sex Work and Human Trafficking: Intersections of Justice*. NY: Routledge, 2022.

"A Catholic and an Agnostic Walk into a Homeless Camp?: Collaborating Across Religious Differences" in Lauren McGrow, ed. *Religious Responses to Sex Work and Human Trafficking: Intersections of Justice*. NY: Routledge, 2022.

"Human Trafficking and Religious Movements" in Paul A. Djupe, ed. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2019.

"Disrupting Religious Privilege: Code of Conduct for Religious Institutions, Faith Communities and Faith-Based Organizations for the Work with Survivors of Forced Labor, Human Trafficking, and Modern Slavery" in Ryszard Piotrowicz, Conny Rijken, and Baerbel Heide Uhl, Eds. *Routledge Handbook of Human Trafficking*. NY: Routledge, 2017.

"Teaching Ethics While Queer and Mennonite." *Conrad Grebel Review* 35(1), Winter 2017: 83-94.

"Forced Labor and the Movement to End Human Trafficking," co-authored with Letitia M. Campbell, in Sebastian Kim and Katie Day, Eds. *The Companion to Public Theology*. Boston: Brill Academic, 2017.

"Christian Ethics and Human Trafficking Activism: Progressive Christianity and Social Critique," co-authored with Letitia M. Campbell. *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 34(1), Spring/Summer 2014: 145-172.

Reprinted in *Sex and Gender: Christian Ethical Reflections*, Mary Jo Iozzio and Patricia Beattie Jung, eds. Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 2017.

"Christianity and Human Trafficking." *Religion Compass* 5(10), October 2011: 567-578.

"From Bush to Obama: Rethinking Sex and Religion in the U.S.'s Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 25(2), Spring 2010: 79-99.

SELECTED SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS

“Anti-Human Trafficking and Black Lives Matter,” International Trafficking Conference, University of Toledo, Toledo, 2021.

“To Hear the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor: Human Trafficking and the Environmental Crisis,” International Society of the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture Annual Meeting, 2021.

“Anti-Human Trafficking and Black Lives Matter,” Ohio Attorney General’s Human Trafficking Summit, 2021.

“Reducing Harm, Practicing Faith and Building Relationships: Lessons on Collaborating Across Religious Differences,” Keynote lecture for the Rights, Dignity and Religion: Responding to Modern Slavery Conference, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK, 2020.

“Violence, Humanity, and Citizenship,” Society of Christian Ethics Annual Meeting, 2019.

“Beyond the Politics of Rescue: Organizing, Empowerment and Harm Reduction in the Movement to End Human Trafficking,” Theological Commons Faculty Lecture, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2018.

“Social Justice and the Environmental Crisis: Capitalism, Human Trafficking and Our Common Home,” College of Wooster Lecture Series, 2015.

“Losing Voice: Progressive Christianity and the Movement to End Human Trafficking,” Keynote, Perspectives on Human Trafficking Conference, University of Denver, 2015.

SELECTED PUBLIC LECTURES & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“The State of Higher Education in Iowa,” Leadership Dubuque panel, 2025.

“Professional Sexual Ethics,” Community Development for All People staff training, 2022.

“Human Trafficking: Framing Pastoral Responses to Forced and Exploited Labor,” Lexington Theological Seminary webinar, 2022.

“Justice in Acts,” Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio Big Reads Colloquium, 2019.

“Community-based Responses to Human Trafficking,” Franklinton Civic Action Group, 2016.

“Queer Sexual Ethics,” Love Across the Spectrum: LGBT Christians Speak Out conference, Ohio Wesleyan University, 2015.

“Leading With Values: Progressive Christianity and Social Ethics in Ending Human Trafficking,” Keynote, Western Pennsylvania Commission on the Status and Role of Women, 2014.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Editorial Board
Religion Compass

Grant Application Assessor
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Leadership in Scholarly Societies

- Women's Caucus, American Academy of Religion
- Queer Studies in Religion Group, American Academy of Religion
- Lesbian Feminist Issues in Religion Group, American Academy of Religion
- Ethics and Sexualities Working Group, Society of Christian Ethics

Peer Review

Manuscript reviewer for Cambridge University Press, Routledge, and Manchester University Press; article reviewer for *Gender and Society*, *European Journal of Political Sociology*, and *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*