

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
1100 East 55th Street Chicago, Illinois 60615

News Release

January 4, 2012

For immediate release

LSTC restructuring to remain strong in mission

Today Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago Interim President Philip Hougen and Board Chairperson Sarah Stegemoeller announced that the seminary is restructuring several departments and making budget cuts that will help LSTC remain financially sustainable in a rapidly changing economic environment. Personnel changes include elimination of eight full- and part-time staff positions and shifts in job responsibilities for several other positions to deliver student services more efficiently.

First step toward sustainability

“LSTC will continue to be strong in its mission of forming visionary leaders,” Hougen said. “We are six months into proactive planning, the Envisioning Process initiated by LSTC’s Board of Directors in 2011, to find new ways to keep delivering excellent theological education. The first goal of that process is to make sure that LSTC remains financially sustainable. These difficult, but necessary budget cuts and personnel changes bring us a step closer to that goal.”

Hougen added that the personnel transitions will be handled as fairly and compassionately as possible. Laid off workers will receive a severance package and funds to assist with job searches. In a letter to the LSTC community, Hougen said, “We recognize, celebrate and honor the ways in which all of these people have contributed to LSTC’s ministry and mission and lament the decisions that the current economic reality forces on the seminary.”

Starting immediately, LSTC will outsource Finance Office services to Quattro FPO Solutions. Administration of the master of divinity and master of arts programs and responsibilities for Community Life will change July 1. Two tenured faculty members have volunteered to take a one semester leave of absence in the 2012-13 academic year. All Centers at LSTC will be required to be self-sustaining beginning July 1, 2012.

Curriculum, property, collaborations part of sustainability planning

As the Envisioning Process continues, the faculty is in conversation about LSTC’s curriculum and how it could better serve the needs of congregations while also addressing the financial challenges faced by students. A task force is reviewing management and maintenance policies and practices for LSTC’s housing. Through that process, they will also develop an economically feasible long-term plan for classroom and administrative space. LSTC continues to explore opportunities for collaboration with Valparaiso University, the Covenant Cluster and other ELCA seminaries.

“The kind of theological education that LSTC offers and the type of leaders it provides the church are so important that we must ensure that the seminary is sustainable into the future. LSTC’s mission is God’s work that we do in this place. We trust that God is present in the people and in our planning,” Hougen said.

About LSTC

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago forms visionary leaders to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. Its approximately 290 students come from all parts of the United States and from around the world to study in one of six advanced degree programs. Graduates become pastors, other church leaders, and university and seminary professors. LSTC is a seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a member of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools, allowing students to cross-register among the 11 member seminaries and drawing on a wealth of ecumenical resources. LSTC enjoys a number of cooperative arrangements with the University of Chicago. To learn more about the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, visit www.lstc.edu

###

Contacts: Philip Hougen
Interim President
773-256-0728
phougen@lstc.edu

Jan Boden
Director of Communications
773-256-0744
jboden@lstc.edu