



news from the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries

For Release: IMMEDIATELY

September 24, 2009

Contact: John R. Spangler jspangler@ltsg.edu Tel. 717-338-3010

LTSG 09-52-JS

EASTERN CLUSTER OF LUTHERAN SEMINARIES TAKES STOCK, LOOKS TO STREAMLINE STRUCTURE

September 22, 2009 (Gettysburg, PA) The Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries (Cluster) laid plans to streamline its board and governance structures as it began to envision new ways for the three schools to work together in theological education.

The shape of restructuring emerged as the cluster board, consisting of representatives of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary received proposals from a committee assigned the task at its September 21-22, 2009 meeting in Gettysburg.

The proposals, with constitutional changes to follow, will be sent to the governing boards of the three partner seminaries with anticipation for final formal agreement to take place at the Cluster's March 18, 2010 meeting. The restructuring will require adoption of specific changes in the Cluster's bylaws.

The proposed structural changes reduce the number of board members to 12, including four from each school. The current board consists of 18 members, plus three deans in advisory roles. The restructured board will consist of seminary presidents, deans, board chairs, and one faculty member from each school -- all with voice and vote. The proposal includes one standing committee, in service to the one Library shared by the three schools and designated working groups that support shared programs and oversee grant related projects. The proposal is designed to reduce the number of standing committees, reduce travel, and maintain effectiveness.

Board member Nelvin Vos said "it is important to note that our structure has served us well up to this point, but we are now at a different point, with a new level of trust." Vos added that this is a time for "building a new kind of future for these three institutions."

The cluster Board members discussed the future role of the cluster in light of pressing questions about the current state of theological education and the need for schools to become at the same time more sustainable and increasingly accountable to the Cluster partners.

"In moving toward a new organizational model, the Eastern Cluster is beginning a new phase in its life, one that will be marked by creative thinking and cooperative ventures that will enhance and enrich theological education in the East," said the Rev. Glenn Ludwig, who chaired the meeting. "With all schools facing issues of long-term sustainability, the willingness to engage in new ways of providing for theological education will serve all three seminaries well."

The cluster introduced Ms. Christine Lohr, who began September 1st as Director of the Intersections Institute, a partnership of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries, social ministry organizations, and schools of

business that will provide graduate and continuing education opportunities that integrate the study of theology and management to form leaders who can successfully navigate the changing environment in which the church serves.

In other business, the Cluster board welcomed Dr. Ginger Barfield, recently elected dean of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary to her first meeting, received the operational reports of the peer schools, and made changes to the Cluster budget to support common programs for Project Connect and programs with youth, including the allocation of \$20,000 in funds to the Lutheran Theological Center in Atlanta.

More information is available at the Cluster's web site www.easterncluster.org