



LTSS Rector and Dean's Report to the Region 9 Synods - 2021

Greetings from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary! We continue teaching and learning within constraints imposed by the pandemic. For the most part, our seminary community has been extremely fortunate. We have not lost students, faculty, or staff members to the virus. Students have adapted well to learning and to sustaining community life at a distance from one another.

Faculty have innovated in ways we would not have done without the imperative to do so. We are largely providing course content online and "flipping" the classroom, so that time with the professor is mostly time in discussion (on Zoom, for now). This innovation in pedagogy will inform our practice beyond the time of social distancing.

Enrollment

In the 2020-21 school year, 73% of our students are ELCA candidates for ministry. Our community is enriched also by those among us from other expressions of Christianity. "Diversity" for us means differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, race, class, and location in ministry. We learn much from each other.

LTSS Enrollment stands at 71 for spring 2021, a net loss of three from fall 2020. To put that in recent historical perspective, in the spring of 2015, LTSS enrollment was 97. That year, the last pre-merger entering class graduated. Since then, enrollment has trended down until the last few years, when it has started, slowly, to recover. One of the ways we all support the future of the church is by noticing those whom God may be calling and connecting them with theological education. We are grateful for your work with us to identify Christian leaders and support their discernment.

Faculty

Last fall, we welcomed the Rev. Dr. Justin Nickel as the Frances and Baxter Weant Assistant Professor of Lutheran Studies. This spring, we opened a search for a new faculty member in the fields of African American Studies and Practical Theology. We expect that a new colleague will be in place for the start of the fall 2021 term. Finally, thanks to a generous estate gift, we have begun building an endowment whose draw will fund a faculty chair in worship.

Financial Aid

This academic year, LTSS has offered *more than \$900,000 in scholarship aid* to our students. This number includes dozens of full-tuition scholarships. We can do this only because donors, past and present, have directed millions of dollars in gifts designated for student aid. We are grateful to be able to offer this aid to students. Thank you!

ATS Accreditation

We received official word from the Association of Theological Schools/Commission on Accrediting that LTSS academic programs are accredited for another ten years. This is great news! The accreditors cited as a particular strength the seminary's "relationship with the university that significantly strengthens the seminary's resources, including the Center for Teaching and Learning and expertise in educational assessment."

Staying in Touch

Thank you for all the ways you support the mission of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary to "teach, form, and nurture women and men for public ministry in a context that is Christ-centered, faithfully Lutheran, and ecumenically committed." Please stay in touch with us by signing up to receive our e-news for alumni and friends at www.lru.edu/ltss.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Hinkle Shore".

Mary Hinkle Shore
Rector and Dean