

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SOUTHERN SEMINARY: THE INTERN PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The intern program of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary provides the student a supervised learning experience in the work of ordained ministry within the context of a congregation or an appropriate agency or institution. Internship is a prerequisite for ordination by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Professor of Contextual Education (hereafter referred to as Professor) represents the seminary in leading the Internship Year Program. The Contextual Education Committee of the Seminary exercises general oversight of this in-service training component of the curriculum.

After the first two years of the curriculum, the seminarian normally enters the internship program. Grading is on a pass/fail basis. The intern year, which **usually** begins in August, continues for twelve months and includes two weeks of vacation. Under exceptional circumstances, minor alterations may be approved by the seminary.

Alternatives to the third year internship or parish context are granted by the faculty upon the recommendation of the Contextual Education Committee. In every case, students desiring to meet the internship requirement in an alternative way shall submit a petition to the chairperson of the Contextual Education Committee during the first academic year.

SUPERVISED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The intern is most accurately described as a minister-in-training. He or she functions as an assistant to the pastor/supervisor. Two basic goals of internship are:

1. To acquire skills, experiences, and perspectives appropriate to pastoral competence, and
2. To attain increased integration of personal identity with an emerging pastoral identity.

Under the supervision of a pastor/supervisor, the seminarian achieves these goals as he/she ministers to individuals, to the congregation, and to the community at large. During the course of the internship, as well as at its end, the supervisor will provide evaluations (3-Month; Mid-Year and Final).

The intern has primary responsibility for the quality of the field experience, whereas the pastor/supervisor provides the learning situation and close supervision. 3-Month; Mid-Year and Final evaluations are submitted by the intern.

An internship committee made up of five to seven members of the congregation gives feedback to the intern regularly through the year. The intern, pastor/supervisor, and congregational internship committee formulate and monitor a learning covenant that identifies the intern's learning goals and the resources available for meeting them. The Professor consults with the pastor/supervisor, the intern, and the committee about the progress and difficulties encountered in the internship. 3-Month; Mid-Year and Final evaluations are submitted by the Committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERN

During the internship year, the intern is expected to fulfill these responsibilities:

1. Serve full time in the congregation or internship center unless other arrangements are agreed upon at the beginning of the internship.
2. Develop an effective working relationship with the pastor/supervisor, carrying out the assignments given, and functioning as an adjunct to and primary support of the pastor/supervisor.
3. Reflect theologically and pastorally upon the internship activities and functions with the pastor/supervisor.
4. Deepen one's own devotional life and develop the insights and wisdom integral to effective ministry.
5. Conduct himself/herself at all times in a manner befitting one preparing for the office of ministry.
6. Provide health insurance for self and family. The congregation is **required** to pay the premium for the student and **encouraged** to pay the premium for the student's spouse/dependent children.
7. File promptly such reports of work and progress as may be required by the seminary, the congregation or agency, and the synod, including the learning covenant, the evaluation-feedback forms, and summaries of the evaluation-feedback material.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTOR/SUPERVISOR AND CONGREGATION

Throughout the internship, the seminarian engages in the full range of ministerial work using the program and resources of the congregation as the experiential context.

The pastor/supervisor and the congregation or agency gives the intern opportunities to participate in and observe as many aspects of pastoral responsibility as are feasible. These functions include the following:

1. Worship
 - A. Leadership in worship and preaching. The intern will normally have the opportunity to preach at least twelve times or more during the year. These opportunities may be provided in other than Sunday services.
 - B. Experiencing the evaluation of at least one sermon each quarter by a group of representative worshipers.
 - C. Observing and/or assisting the pastor/supervisor in pastoral acts such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, and private communions.
2. Pastoral Care
 - A. Visiting members, prospective members, the sick, the aged, the imprisoned, etc.

- B. Ministering to the bereaved.

- C. Counseling with youth, the sick, the aged in normal situations, many of which will grow out of relationships established in the intern's assigned responsibilities.

- 3. Education
 - A. Teaching a least one class in one of the congregation's educational agencies.
 - B. Becoming familiar with the administration of the entire educational program of the congregation.

- 4. Evangelism
 - A. Participating in the evangelism program of the congregation and its general administrative activities.

- 5. Social Ministry
 - A. Observing and participating in the social ministry program of the congregation.
 - B. Observing and participating in social action in the community or society in which the congregation is located.

- 6. Stewardship
 - Participating in the stewardship program of the congregation and its general administrative activities. (For the purposes of financial giving, the intern is considered a member of the congregation.)

- 7. Parish Administration
 - A. Attending the meetings of congregational organizations and/or committees and assuming responsibility for one of these under the pastor/supervisor's guidance.
 - B. Observing the general pastoral administration of the parish and the church office.

- 8. Involvement within the larger Christian Community
 - A. Attending some pastoral conferences and/or synodical meetings.
 - B. Attending group meetings and training sessions for interns sponsored by this seminary or, in case of great distance, by another Lutheran seminary. The congregation is normally expected to provide travel and living expenses away from home.

SUPPORT OF THE INTERNSHIP PROCESS

Provisions of support facilitate and enhance internship as a learning process and include:

1. Assist and advise the intern in implementing assigned responsibilities. The pastor/supervisor should arrange a suitable time at least once a week, of 60 to 90 minutes to confer with the intern. Focus on personal reactions to pastoral work, problems encountered, progress made in the work assigned, and evaluation of styles of working. Spend time with the intern in the planning of congregational programs.
2. Give opportunity for the intern to observe the pastor/supervisor carrying out particular functions before the intern is asked to carry out these same functions.
3. Include the intern in all regular church council meetings with voice but without vote. The intern may report directly to the council, or the report may be incorporated within that of the pastor.
4. Provide an internship committee consisting of five to seven members of the congregation who observe the intern's work, engage in regular discussions with the intern, provide evaluation-feedback, and serve as resources.
5. Assist the intern in formulating a specific learning covenant and three times a year provide the intern and the seminary with regular written evaluation feedback about the way in which this particular intern's ministry is experienced in this particular setting.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER PROVISIONS

To meet living expenses of the intern (and family) the congregation provides housing, cash stipend, automobile expenses, and other costs. At present these provisions are:

1. Monthly to the intern
 - . \$1100 monthly stipend plus premium for student medical insurance (\$3,108-Enhanced Option)
 - . housing and utilities
 - . FICA (Annually designated percentage (7.65%) of stipend and housing allowance -congregation's share)
 - . car allowance (IRS allowable reimbursement -.550 for 2009)
2. Annually to seminary
 - . \$300 internship conference fee
 - . \$100 cluster fee
 - . \$500 for intern travel pool for one round trip for intern (and family between seminary and internship locations.
 - . \$1000 tuition and administrative fee for internship year

3. Other benefits

- . equivalent of one day free time each week
- . two weeks (at least) vacation for a twelve month internship

4. Elective options

- . allowance towards IRS withholding tax
- . allowance towards intern's share of FICA

A Word About Taxes

According to the U. S. tax legislation of 1986, cash stipend and housing allowance are considered taxable income for I.R.S. purposes, and they also constitute the basis for FICA taxes. Appropriate forms must be filed, and the intern's tax must be withheld monthly.

The above financial arrangements are the usual ones. The cost of internship may vary from parish to parish in relation to the cost of intern housing. The congregation should be aware that the seminary may request parish assistance in providing for other specific needs of an individual intern (for example: person with handicapping condition; time off for military chaplaincy educational requirement, etc.)

The congregation makes possible the pastor/supervisor's attendance at the annual training and team building conference at the seminary. The pastor/supervisor and intern attend two meetings of an intern cluster sponsored by the seminary (or one of its counterparts). All interns from the specific geographic area participate in these meetings accompanied by their supervisors. Leadership is provided by the Professor of Contextual Education and by other faculty members, or by qualified persons designated by the seminary. These costs and provisions are similar among ELCA seminaries.