



North American Lutheran Seminary: A Proposal

Overview

The Task Force for Theological Education proposes to establish a Seminary of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) and call a director to draft a plan for establishing a Seminary Center and Houses of Studies. The Seminary Center and Houses of Studies will together comprise the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS). The NALS will have one faculty body, comprised of NALC faculty at the Seminary Center and Houses of Studies.

The Concept

The Seminary Center and Houses of Studies

The North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) will train candidates for ordained ministry within the NALC and will exist initially as a limited operation with a Seminary Center located at Trinity School for Ministry (TSM) in Ambridge, PA, with other Houses of Studies established elsewhere in North America as resources permit and opportunities arise within the Mission Districts of the NALC. Trinity was chosen by the visiting team of the Task Force after eliminating a number of possible sites and visiting three campuses. Trinity was selected because of its evangelical spirit, strong traditional values, and accommodating ethos. The first House of Studies is currently being developed at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) in Charlotte, NC.

The NALS, together with Trinity School for Ministry, will offer a full course of study leading to the Master of Divinity degree, which will be granted by TSM. This will prepare candidates for NALC ordination certification. While all courses leading to the M.Div. degree will be offered on-campus at the Seminary Center and some Houses of Studies, students may also take courses through distance learning, and students at Houses of Studies may take courses offered online at the Seminary Center. Similarly, opportunities for global distance learning will be an important component of the NALC theological education network.

Candidates for NALC ministry will be encouraged to attend the NALS, either at the Seminary Center in Ambridge or Houses of Studies. The Seminary Center in Ambridge and NALS Houses of Studies will each develop a local support committee which will have a variety of tasks including, but not limited to, developing a system of mentoring pastors, contextual ministry opportunities and financial support of students. The NALS will also provide for regular all-student/faculty gatherings (residencies at TSM or at Houses of Studies) which will bring all NALC students together for pastoral formation, the further training of candidates for NALC ministry and to help establish a spirit of collegiality and fellowship among the students. The Seminary Center will coordinate all course offerings, faculty assignments and administrative responsibilities throughout the network.

Governance

The North American Lutheran Seminary in all its parts will be owned by the NALC. A governing board will be established comprised of nine to fifteen ordained pastors and laity of the NALC accountable to the NALC

Executive Council and NALC Convocation, to serve staggered six-year terms and meet semi-annually. Members will be nominated by the Bishop and Executive Council and elected by the Convocation. Members may serve two consecutive terms. The board will elect its own officers. The Bishop shall be a permanent member of the board with voice and vote but shall not hold office on the board. NALC staff may attend board meetings as necessary with voice, but not vote. The NALS Director will have voice but not vote or hold office on the board.

Development and Public Relations

Fund-raising efforts will be made by appealing to the Convocation, Mission Districts, congregations and individuals. The NALC website should include information on the NALS as should the NALC monthly newsletter, Lutheran CORE newsletter, and *Connections* magazine. Each Mission District will be encouraged to provide information on the NALS at each Mission District Convocation.

Initial Staff

A Seminary Director should be called by the Executive Council by summer/fall, 2013 to prepare the Seminary Center for operation and to develop and coordinate the relationship between the Seminary Center and Houses of Studies. The NALS Director and a part-time/full-time registrar (negotiated with Trinity School for Ministry) will work in conjunction with the NALC Candidacy Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Recommendations to Executive Council and Convocation

Be it resolved: that the Executive Council recommends that the 2013 Convocation of the North American Lutheran Church approve the establishment of the North American Lutheran Seminary as outlined in the NALS Proposal, comprised of a Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, PA, and Houses of Studies.

Be it resolved: That the 2013 Convocation authorize the raising of \$1,000,000 for the establishment of the North American Lutheran Seminary, to be expended pursuant to budgets approved by the Executive Council as funds are available.