



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

September 4, 2018

Colleagues and Friends:

Grace to you and peace from our One and Triune God forever and ever. Amen.

As I review my notes of our meeting Wednesday, August 29, 2018 at the Lutheran Center, I am very grateful for your commitment to be part of an intense conversation that will benefit the ELCA adventures in theological education. The following is a summary of our conversation:

- Our meeting began at 1:00 p.m. in the Lent room of the Lutheran Center and finished well past 5:00 p.m.
- Greg Villalón, Director Leadership for Mission and Candidacy of the ELCA, was the moderator of the group that included Dean Craig Nesson and President Louise Johnson of Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dr. Robin Steinke, President of Luther Theological Seminary, Dr. David Ratke, Dean of the Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary at Lenoir-Rhine University, Dr. José David Rodríguez, Lutheran Seminary of Theology at Chicago faculty and Hispanx scholar, Greg Henson, President of Sioux Falls Seminary, Dr. Sarah Stenson and Dr. Chris Croghan, Co-directors of the Luther House of Studies at Sioux Falls Seminary, Rev. Steven Wigdahl, Senior Pastor of Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Naples, Howard Isaacson, CEO of Emmanuel Academies, Inc., Dr. Richard Bliesse, Independent Consultant in Theological Education, Mrs. Janet Andersen, member of Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Naples, and myself.
- After thoughtful and intentional conversations, the group affirmed the following agreements:
  - The Emmanuel Academies 5-Year Pastoral Leadership Degree Program, hosted at Emanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Naples, Florida, will participate in a 5-year affiliation experiment with an ELCA Seminary.
  - Students at the Emmanuel Academies 5-Year Pastoral Leadership Degree Program will affiliate with the Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary at Lenoir-Rhine University.
  - The details of the affiliation related to course load, course descriptions, format, costs, and other topics will be determined by further conversations between the Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary at Lenoir-Rhine University and Emmanuel Academies.
  - Students at Emmanuel Academies can begin studies immediately while the agreements related to affiliation are determined.

- The Emmanuel Academies 5-Year Pastoral Leadership Degree Program is invited to be part of the Hispanx Theological Education Network that will be developed by the ELCA Hispanx community and the ELCA Seminaries, hosted by the Wartburg Theological Seminary.
- This affiliation agreement only includes students at Emmanuel Academies 5-Year Pastoral Leadership Degree Program.
- The Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary at Lenoir-Rhyne University and Emmanuel Academies will develop a formal document of agreement for the affiliation experiment that will include:
  - Details of the agreement
  - A detailed time-table and formal assessment plan for the 5-year experiment and,
  - Clear exit options for all parties
- Dr. Sarah Stenson and Dr. Chris Croghan, Co-directors of the Luther House of Studies at Sioux Falls Seminary, Greg Henson, President of Sioux Falls Seminary, Dr. Robin Steinke, President of Luther Theological Seminary, and Rev. Louise Johnson, President of Wartburg Theological Seminary, will pursue conversations related to the affiliation process of ELCA students registered in the Kairos Program at Sioux Falls Seminary.
- These agreements are not ELCA policy-binding since they are experiments of the ELCA Seminaries.

It is my understanding that my office has formally concluded its task as convener and that further conversations will be convened and hosted by the interested parties: (1) Emmanuel Academies and the Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary at Lenoir-Rhyne as related to Emmanuel Academies ELCA student affiliation, and (2) ELCA Seminaries, represented by Presidents Robin Steinke and Louise Johnson, and the Luther House of Studies and Sioux Falls Seminary, as related to the affiliation of Sioux Falls Seminary ELCA students registered in the Kairos Program. Wartburg Theological Seminary will invite Emmanuel Academies to be part of further conversations related to the ELCA Hispanx Theological Education Network.

In Christ!



Rev. Dr. Francisco Javier Goitía Padilla  
 Director for Faith Formation, ELCA Seminaries and Lay Schools  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America