

## THE LAY TEACHING COMMITTEE

### *The Composition of the Lay Teaching Committee*

The lay teaching committee comprises six to eight persons committed to the congregation or agency and the mutual learning process of an internship. The members should reflect the composition of the congregation or agency.

In church or agency staff internships, the mentor pastor (or on-site supervisor, if the mentor pastor is not at the placement site) usually selects the persons to serve on the lay teaching committee, with assistance from the student if he or she is already on staff. Student pastors who are appointed as sole pastor of a student charge select the members of the committee from their congregation(s). If the internship is a dual placement in which the intern will serve two entities, approximately half of the committee members should be drawn from each. Together they represent a single committee.

Those choosing the committee members should remember that the lay teaching committee does not serve the same function as the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or Personnel Committee and should not be identical to that body.

Persons who will work most effectively on this committee are persons who

- Know and are committed to the church and its mission in the local congregation, the community, the denomination, and the world
- Have a sense of their own baptismal call to ministry in the church and the world and of their own distinctive gifts for fulfilling that ministry
- Recognize the importance of accountability in the church—their own and that of others
- Are able and willing to invest the necessary time and energy in helping the intern to learn and grow
- Can be open to the uniqueness of the intern—her/his gifts for ministry, vision of the church, ways of doing things
- Appreciate the importance of mutual trust in personal relations and conversations

## ***Responsibilities of the Lay Teaching Committee***

There are four primary areas of responsibility for the lay teaching committee.

### A. Support

- By praying regularly for the intern
- By working to be sensitive to the intern's several "worlds": pastoral responsibilities, academic requirements, professional relationships, and family life
- By demonstrating concern for the intern's family and/or important relationships
- By interpreting for the congregation and staff the purpose of the internship and the student's role and responsibilities within it
- By making the intern feel welcome to share her/his faith story with the committee

### B. Involvement

- By finding time and situations to observe the intern engaged in ministry
- By participating in some aspects of the intern's ministry
- By reading carefully all written reports provided by the intern
- By supporting the intern's ministry in the congregation
- By assisting the intern in the formulation of Revisions 1 and 2 of the Learning Covenant

### C. Feedback

- By attending the regularly scheduled meetings of the lay teaching committee
- By preparing for these meetings by reflecting on their experiences with and observation of the intern and reviewing any written material prior to the meetings

- By sharing with the intern their honest, constructive opinions on the intern's work in fulfillment of the required competencies
- By assuring the intern that feedback conversations are privileged communication and will not be shared with anyone outside the internship team

#### D. Evaluation

- By attending all evaluation sessions, normally the Ninth Week Evaluation, the Midpoint Evaluation Conference and the Final Evaluation Conference
- By sharing with the intern and the faculty supervisor their frank assessment of the intern's strengths and areas of need
- By responding in writing to evaluation material provided by the faculty supervisor

### ***The Chairperson of the Lay Teaching Committee***

#### A. Selecting the chairperson

The chairperson of the lay teaching committee is selected from the committee members. If the mentor pastor has named those members, he or she may also request a particular individual to serve as chair. When this is not possible, the chairperson is chosen by the committee after the Perkins intern faculty supervisor has conducted the lay teaching committee orientation early in the internship. A chairperson must be named by no later than the second meeting and must be among the members who attended the orientation.

In some cases, a congregation may have recently been a teaching partner in the Perkins intern program and will have some members on the committee who are familiar with the process. Even if the chairperson is chosen from this more experienced group, he or she is still required to attend the orientation led by the Perkins intern faculty.

In full-time student pastor internships in which the members of the committee are drawn from both the student's charge and the mentor pastor's charge, the chair of the committee is normally a member of the student's charge. The chair of the committee does not have to be a member of a major

administrative entity in the church, e.g., PPRC or Personnel Committee, as these serve a different function than the lay teaching committee.

#### B. Qualities of an effective chairperson

An effective chairperson is one who exemplifies the qualities desirable in all the committee members as described earlier. In addition, the chairperson should be one who

- Respects differing opinions
- Understands small group dynamics
- Possesses good organizational and communication skills
- Supports the learning structures of the Perkins Intern Program and the seminary and is willing to invest the time and energy to learn the intern program process
- Appreciates the importance of mutual trust in personal relations and conversations and keeps that value before the committee
- Understands the importance of the committee's honest and constructive feedback to the intern's learning

#### C. Responsibilities of the chairperson

In addition to sharing in the four primary areas of responsibilities of the committee (support, involvement, feedback, and evaluation) already described, the chairperson's specific responsibilities include:

- Scheduling and attending all committee meetings
- Learning about the internship process and becoming familiar with the Course Competencies
- Assisting the intern in the formulation of the intern's learning covenant's revision 1 and 2
- Reading the intern's learning covenant and offering feedback

- Being available to meet with the intern between meetings, if necessary
- Working with the intern to create the lay committee's agenda for each meeting
- Guiding the discussion at the committee meetings around the required competencies and/or ministry experiences
- Observing the intern in different ministries and encouraging others to do the same
- Participating in all evaluation sessions
- Sharing in any community ritual of receiving and/or sending forth of the intern