NEXT STEPS IN COMMON
2019 Churchwide Assembly actions that connect with our life together

In this third of four reports, we focus on the adoption by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of a social statement on women, sexism, and justice, exploring how this action intersects with LSTC's own previous statements and ongoing commitments.

**Faith, Sexism and Justice social statement**
The **Faith, Sexism and Justice** statement honestly names the pervasive oppression of women and girls as the logic and outcome of patriarchy. It admits the harm caused by patriarchy and sexism to women and girls, men and boys, and non-binary adults and children. It confesses that the Christian tradition has been used to resist dismantling patriarchy and sexism, and is complicit in perpetuating these by upholding patterns of inequity and harm. Although there has been progress on these issues, the statement calls the ELCA to continue establishing gender equity by identifying and dismantling patriarchy and sexism.

The social statement ends with an array of implementing resolutions that address our life together at the many different levels of our church. Some focus on congregations, institutions, synods, and the denomination, while others more broadly apply to the whole church and call for individual and communal discernment in order to generate new directions for action. The resolutions most closely relate to our life together as a seminary are these:

- A call to deepen an understanding and awareness of patriarchy and sexism in our lives, the church, and society so we can become more effective agents of transformation, with obvious implications for an educational institution.
- A call to nurture and support women and girls in leadership roles throughout their personal and professional development, encouraging them to pursue such roles in congregations and consider rostered ministry. This includes ensuring our church reflects women’s leadership at every level, providing equal pay for equal work.
- A call to develop and use worship resources in our church’s liturgies, with gender-inclusive and expansive images for God, and developing an inclusive language lectionary similar to the Psalter in Evangelical Lutheran Worship.
- A call for seminaries to renew the development of syllabi and practices that affirm and promote the gifts of women from varied identities and backgrounds, understanding that gender is shaped and complicated by other intersecting identities.
- A call for all expressions of the church to incorporate anti-sexism training and protocols in their ongoing work, such as adaptations to boundaries training for rostered ministers; and creating resources to support rostered ministers who experience sexual misconduct or gender-based harassment, and pastoral care for all affected by sexism.

As a seminary of the ELCA, LSTC knows that while we have made progress on issues of gender equity, we still continue to be complicit in systems of patriarchy and sexism. In our efforts to address this reality we have taken the following steps:

- Many of our church’s notable “firsts” have strong connections with LSTC, including Lydia Kalb, the first woman of color ordained in the ELCA, and Antje Jackelén, Archbishop of Sweden who served on our faculty.
- The proportion of incoming students identifying as women or non-binary people has equaled or exceeded those who identify as men. In partnership with the ELCA Global Mission unit, we have sponsored many female scholars from two-thirds world nations.
More than half of all employees, faculty and staff, identify as women. The Leadership Council (director level or higher) is nearly half female, with two of five VPs/Deans as women. Gender-equity is built into all position descriptions, and three of the last five faculty hired through regular searches have been women.

In 2015, we hired a Title IX Coordinator to oversee the prevention of and restorative practices for gender-based discrimination and harassment. Faculty, staff, and students participate in annual trainings to prevent, identify, and disrupt incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination.

Gender is a central topic in course offerings, foregrounding the experiences of women with an awareness of the intersecting identities that inform gender identities. These include: Womanist Theology; Women Preaching/Preaching Women; Theological Reflection on Intersectionality; Women of Genesis; and Identity and Difference: The Intersection of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Class, and Sexuality.

Contextual Education prioritizes gender-diversity in recruiting site supervisors for MiC and internship placements, working with students to honor their requests for supervisors of a preferred gender.

Anti-bias and intercultural competence training are provided for all new contextual education supervisors. Boundary training is built into student workshops, as well as support and resources for students who face gender-based harassment or harm.

The chapel staff receives ongoing training and supervision about the use of language in both spoken and sung elements of the liturgy to support a standard of gender-inclusive and expansive images for God.

While it is apparent that our school has long been a leader in matters of gender equity, we also confess our failures along the way and even today. What are the remaining issues calling for our diligent persistence that will yield truly constructive results? How can we use our substantial experience as a teaching resource to lead within our wider church?

We hope this report helped to highlight this significant action of the Churchwide Assembly, some ten years in the making. Please follow the link to statement itself, ponder the questions we posed, and consider our how our school might be even more committed. Many thanks to Aaron Copely-Spivey, Eric Kyle, and Marji Shanno for help with the content.

The last installment of these reports will appear on September 27 and focuses on three actions: the Church/State memorial, the Poor People's Campaign, and the Deacon amendments.