

2008 Bulletin of Reports Delaware-Maryland Synod

AIOS

Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries

Since its founding in 1995, the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries (ECLS) has fostered strong collaboration between the three eastern schools, enhancing our common task of theological education for a broad spectrum of students. Major Cluster-sponsored programs include diaconal ministry formation (based at Gettysburg), a Doctor of Ministry degree (Philadelphia-based), and partnership in the Atlanta program centered in the predominantly African-American Interdenominational Theological Center (with Southern being the primary Cluster connection point). A separately incorporated entity, the Cluster is governed by a Board of Directors made up of board representatives and key academic and administrative leaders from each of the three schools. One of the three seminary presidents serves in rotation as Cluster executive director, assisted by a contracted part-time cluster coordinator. With only modest core funding from the seminaries, the Cluster has been blessed to receive nearly \$5 million in grants from foundations.

Current Collaborative Programs:

- The Cluster's *One Library Under Three Roofs* links the collections at Gettysburg, Philadelphia and Columbia, providing students, faculty and other borrowers with access to a vast array of books, periodicals and e-resources.
- Vocational discernment emphases focused on young adults is carried out by means of *Project Connect*, which works in close concert with the Admissions offices of each school.
- Faculty collaboration occurs especially through the diaconal formation event and shared D.Min. A joint faculty retreat in March 2009 provided opportunity for the three faculties to envision additional areas where sharing might occur.
- *Theological Education with Youth* (TEY), a program jointly sponsored by the two Pennsylvania schools, is in its 10th year of providing in-depth study, fellowship and service opportunities for junior- and senior-high young persons.
- A pioneering effort is being launched in 2009 to provide both theological and managerial/leadership education for social ministry organization staff persons. *Intersections Institute* has received grants from the ELCA, Diakon and Thrivent.

Future Cluster Directions: In the current context of economic challenges, a call has been issued to review the Cluster governance structure with an eye toward achieving greater efficiencies. Concurrently, as each school engages in "belt-tightening," Cluster conversations will explore options for additional areas of shared administrative and pedagogical endeavors.

With Appreciation: The Cluster is grateful for support to theological education and our seminaries from the synods and churchwide organization. As he concludes his service as dean at Southern, appreciation is expressed to Dr. Michael Root.

The Rev. Glenn Ludwig, chair

The Rev. Marcus Miller, executive director