

October 5, 2015

To the ELCA Church Council:

Grace and peace in the name of Christ.

We are at a kairos moment for theological education in the ELCA. We are grateful to have been invited to respond to the TEAC Report.

We are appreciative of the strong openness to imaginative and deep change that the TEAC task force report has generated. We acknowledge the courage of the leadership of our eight seminaries engaging in these conversations. We remain sensitive to the disruptive and necessary change these proposals will bring.

We affirm moving forward in this urgent task. We have overwhelming consensus in our support for TEAC proposal 3A<sup>i</sup> and Baker Tilly model options A and B (Central System and Limited Central System). Model option A has the greatest energy among us; many were open to both options. The Conference of Bishops voted to reject the status quo (model option E).

The Conference of Bishops strongly advocates the necessary reform that best serves the current and future mission of Christ's church for the sake of the world.

In moving toward a more centralized model for the sake of better stewardship we call for innovation, responsiveness, accessibility and flexibility. We pledge ourselves to this work with our partners at our seminaries.

In Christ,

The Conference of Bishops

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#### Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Recommendation #3

Ensure the mission vibrancy and financial stability of the seminaries of the ELCA as they serve their crucial roles in our theological education network

#### Proposed actions:

A. To call upon the seminaries of the ELCA in the next three years to form a common theological education enterprise that has the necessary planning structures and appropriate decision-making authority to (a) enable regular strategic sharing of the faculty resources of the seminaries along with other qualified teachers; (b) organize common recruitment and a common application process; (c) generate a common research agenda that serves the flourishing of the church (d) and enable operational efficiencies that free up the resources needed for expanded work and new experiments in theological education.