



Amber Kalina shows off her connection to Augsburg University while at the churchwide offices. Kalina, an LSTC student and Augsburg graduate, is excited about the new partnership between the schools.

LSTC, Augsburg University form partnership for five-year BA/MDiv degrees

LSTC and Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minn., are launching a five-year BA/MDiv degree called the Public Church Scholars. Students in this program will complete two degrees in five years: a bachelor of arts in Theology and Public Leadership from Augsburg and a master of divinity from LSTC.

Esther Menn, dean of academic affairs, calls the program “an innovative and promising way to re-envision theological education and formation of pastors.”

The goal of this program is to prepare intentional leaders of a multiracial, multiethnic public church. Students will explore theological education, leadership formation, and experiential learning in an internship in preparation to be public leaders in the church.

Elements of the new Public Church Scholars program include paid four-year part-time contextual learning and internship, supportive cohort of peers, training in equity and inclusion, cultural competency and vocational discernment; generous

financial aid; spiritual direction, life coaching and professional mentors; clinical pastoral education; and accompaniment through the candidacy process for ordination in the ELCA.

Amber Kalina, an LSTC student now on internship, attended Augsburg and sees advantages of this program. In fact, she wishes it had been an option for her. She chose Augsburg because of its Youth and Family Ministry degree, and her experience with Augsburg’s Youth Theology Institute.

“One of the reasons I picked LSTC was because I perceived a similar atmosphere of challenge and nurture that I had experienced at Augsburg,” she said. “I wanted a seminary education that would continue to push me deeper into my faith, not just allow me to remain comfortable in what I came to learn at Augsburg.”

Both Augsburg and LSTC form leaders who make a difference inside and outside the walls of the church by being deeply rooted in their communities, she said.

“From attending Augsburg

as an undergrad and LSTC as a graduate student, I feel that I have been equipped for ministry that is deeply relational, grounded in the gospel, and geared toward making a difference in the lives of people and the world God made.” ❁

Correction

In the Commencement section of the Summer issue of the *Epistle* (pages 6–7), Vickie Johnson’s name and photo were inadvertently left out. We apologize for the error and offer Vickie our sincere regret and congratulations on her MDiv degree. A corrected version of this issue of the *Epistle* can be found at lstd.edu under News and Summer *Epistle*. ❁



Vickie Johnson