

2026-2027 All Students Handbook



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PART I

Welcome & How This Handbook Works

1.1 A Letter to Our Students

Dear Students,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 academic year at LSTC! Whether this handbook is the first LSTC document you've ever opened or you're a returning student flipping straight to the sections that changed, I'm glad you're here.

As we enter this academic year, I want to be upfront about something: this is a year of transition at the seminary. Between new leadership, new students, new processes, and new procedures, we are navigating a new academic year together as “One LSTC”. While I’m personally still learning how this institution has traditionally operated, we are also working toward the next chapter of LSTC. This means that this year, more than most, we're building some of this plane while we're flying it.

I say that not to lower the bar, but to name it honestly. There will be moments this year when a procedure isn't as fully worked out as we'd like, or when an answer takes a little longer to reach you than it should. When that happens, I'm asking for grace — the word that's been on my mind all year. Grace from you toward a staff and faculty enmeshed in a world of change, and grace from us toward students navigating a system that's still being built. Grace doesn't mean an absence of standards; it means we extend patience and good faith to one another while we hold to them.

That's really what this handbook is: the shared expectations we're asking you to hold, and our commitment to hold up our end too. The procedures in the pages that follow describe what we're asking of you this year, and we're asking you to read them and adhere to them as best as possible — just like we plan to, too. They exist to keep things fair and predictable for everyone, especially in a year when a few things are still catching up to where we want them to be. And please tell us when something isn't working — we would much rather hear from you and fix it than have you quietly work around a broken process.

I'm so glad to be entering this new year alongside you. I hope it's one where we all can learn and grow together.

In grace and gratitude,



Derek Brinkley

Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Experience

1.2 Welcoming Statement

LSTC recognizes that our school stands on the lands of the Potawatomi, Miami, and Peoria peoples. For thousands of years before their forced removal, this was their traditional homeland, and it continues to hold their ancestral stories and wisdom. We honor and thank the elders of these and other nations, past and present. These lands are still home to many indigenous people, and we are grateful to learn in this place.

LSTC strives to offer a community and academic experience grounded in the good news of the gospel and shaped by our urban, multicultural, ecumenical, global, interfaith, and university-related context and commitments. As a

Reconciling in Christ seminary, LSTC seeks to offer hospitality and welcome to all who enter its academic programs — including but not limited to one another's race, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical ability, social status, and theological diversity. LSTC is always becoming a reconciling community; reconciliation is an ongoing activity and effort that we do together.

1.3 Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission: The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), a seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), forms visionary leaders to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ.

Vision: LSTC seeks to build up the Body of Christ and work for a world of peace and justice that cares for the whole creation.

Values: LSTC is —

- Christ-centered — strives by God's grace to follow Christ's call to loving service.
- Responsive to context — embraces its diverse urban setting; relationships with synods and congregations provide academic and practical experience that meets the needs of the church.
- Attentive to diversity — emphasizes knowing and honoring the perspectives of all nationalities, ethnicities, cultures, Christian traditions, and religions to form leaders whose witness will build communities of hospitality and reconciliation.
- Committed to excellence — sends leaders into church and world who are prepared academically, practically, and spiritually; faculty are internationally recognized scholars and teachers, and administration and staff strive to provide exemplary service.

1.4 Non-Discrimination Statement

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, a seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, values diversity in its faculty, staff, and students. The hiring and admissions practices of LSTC offer equal opportunity to persons regardless of race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital or veteran's status, physical ability, and social class

LSTC does not tolerate harassment of any kind. Sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are forms of sex discrimination and are strictly prohibited. Questions or comments about harassment or discrimination can be directed to the Human Resources Office at aaron.copley@lstc.edu. For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, you can also contact the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, Chicago Office, at (800) 877-8339.

1.5 How This Handbook Fits Together

LSTC publishes several documents that overlap in places — this Handbook, the Academic Catalog, and the Program Manuals for individual degrees. To keep from repeating (and, over time, contradicting) the same policy in more than one place, each document has a specific job:

- The Catalog is the authoritative source on curriculum, degree requirements, and course offerings. It is updated once a year and applies to its specific academic year (i.e. 2026-2027).
- This Handbook covers what it's like to be a student here day to day — how to register, how to request a leave, how to file a complaint — plus the community and compliance policies that apply to everyone. This is updated on a rolling basis as needed.

- Program Manuals cover requirements specific to a single degree (MDiv, MA/MAM, ThM/PhD, DMin, TEEM), including program-specific governance documents.

This handbook was created, in part, by using AI for formatting and organizational purposes.

1.6 Key Contacts

The full staff, faculty, and center directory changes throughout the year as roles shift — for the most current listing, use the LSTC website directory at <https://lstc.edu/about/directory/>. The offices students contact most often are below.

Office	Contact	Ext.
Office of the President	Shauna Hannan, President	728
Dean for Academic Affairs	Robert Smith, VP and Dean of Academic Affairs	721
Registrar (records, registration, F-1/J-1)	Bradley Erz, Registrar and PDSO	717
MDiv / MA Programs	Brooke Petersen, Director	691
Advanced Studies (ThM, PhD, DMin)	Mark Swanson, Director	672
TEEM Program	Marji Shannon, Director	746
Contextual Education (CPE, MIC, internships)	Marji Shannon, Director	746
Candidacy	Brooke Petersen, Director	691
Enrollment Management & Student Experience	Derek Brinkley, Vice President	727
Financial Aid	Rachel Sefcik, Fractional Director	—
Student Housing & Employment	Bianca Leoni, Manager	681
Human Resources / Title IX Coordinator	Aaron Copley-Spivey, Director	771
Chapel & Worship	Christian Scharen, Director	—
IT Services	Tim Olson, Director	778
Security & Operations	James Foster, Director	700

1.7 Centers & Special Programs

Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice (CCME)

Directed by Taurean Webb (Associate Director: Sara Trumm). Since 2006, CCME has provided cultural and educational opportunities for Christians, Muslims, and people of all faiths, and endows the Harold S. Vogelaar Professorship of Christian-Muslim Studies and Interfaith Relations, held by Mark Swanson.

Rev. Dr. Albert “Pete” Pero, Jr. and Rev. Dr. Cheryl Stewart Pero Center for Intersectionality Studies

Directed by Taurean Webb. Addresses intersectional oppressions faced by BIPOC people through a constructive theological lens, with a focus on dismantling white supremacy and colonial power dynamics. Students interested in ethnic-specific ministries may contact: African American Studies — Dr. Taurean Webb; Hispanic/Latinx Studies

— Dr. Elyssa Salinas-Lazarski; Asian Studies — Dr. Peter Vethanayagamony; Arab/Middle Eastern Studies — Dr. Mark Swanson.

PART II

Registering & Managing Your Studies

2.1 Student Categories

- Full-time (Master's): registered each semester for at least 3 courses, or a full-year internship. MDiv students typically take 9 courses/year to finish in 4 years; MA/MAM students typically take 8/year. An overload requires petitioning the Dean of Academic Affairs.
- Full-time (Advanced Studies): enrolled in 2 courses, or Continuing Relations.
- Part-time: fewer than 3 credit courses (Master's) or fewer than 2 (Advanced Studies).
- Special Student: not enrolled in a degree program; may take courses for credit or as an auditor. May not take more than one course without being assigned an advisor. Up to 4 courses may later transfer into a first Master's degree, or 3 into an advanced degree. Special-student status normally lasts one year, after which the student must apply for admission to a degree program or renew the special-student status.
- Leave of Absence (LOA): granted in exceptional cases for students who intend to resume their degree at a definite time; normally capped at one year. See 2.7 for how to request one.
- Former Student: studied at LSTC for at least one semester and discontinued without LOA status; must apply to the Admissions Committee for readmission.
- MDiv Provisional: admitted but lacking a credential, or awaiting an ELCA Candidacy Committee decision; held for a maximum of one semester.

2.2 How to Register

1. Meet with your advisor before registration — this is required, one week before advance registration opens; students who don't meet with their advisor will not be allowed to register. Registration workshops are held at the end of each semester for questions.
2. Complete advance registration online during the scheduled window. J-Term and Spring registration typically happens during the fall semester; Summer and Fall registration during the spring semester. Financial accounts must be paid before a student may register, and a student on academic probation who fails to meet the semester's academic qualifications may have advance registration cancelled by the Registrar after grades are reviewed.

Registering for courses outside LSTC

- ACTS consortium courses: must be degree-seeking, have completed one full-time semester at LSTC, and be in good academic standing. Complete the ACTS cross-registration form on MyLSTC and email it to registrar@lstc.edu. You're registered in LSTC's system and billed LSTC tuition (except summer registration at CTU). PhD students may only cross-register at ACTS schools with PhD programs (e.g. CTS, Garrett); registering elsewhere means covering tuition and fees yourself.
- Other ELCA seminaries: complete the ELCA cross-registration form on MyLSTC and submit to registrar@lstc.edu; you may also need to apply directly to that seminary.
- University of Chicago courses: complete the Bi-Registration form on MyLSTC and submit to registrar@lstc.edu. Normally limited to students with a 3.0 GPA or better; you're responsible for the tuition difference between LSTC and UChicago, and may also need to apply to the Divinity School directly. UChicago remains on the quarter system — check their site for bi-registration dates.

2.3 Course Profiles

Faculty publish course profiles — rationale, objectives, strategies, assessments, and required texts — on the LSTC website under Students/Courses. For ACTS courses outside LSTC, check individual school listings at acts-chicago.org.

2.4 Add/Drop, Withdrawal, and Refunds

Semester courses may be added or dropped through the first week of the semester with no charge. Courses may still be dropped through the second week by petition through the Registrar's Office. After the second week but before the tenth week, a dropped course is recorded as a “W” (withdrawal), which doesn't count against GPA. For J-Term, the last day to add is the first day of term; a course must be dropped by the last day of the first week for a 100% refund, after which no refund is made and a “W” is entered.

Tuition refunds are provided to students who withdraw from all courses based on the chart below.

Term	Withdrawal Timing	Refund
Fall / Spring	Weeks 1–2	100%
Fall / Spring	Week 3	70%
Fall / Spring	Week 4	50%
Fall / Spring	After week 4	None — a “W” is recorded; withdrawal requires petition
J-Term / Summer	By last day of week 1	100%
J-Term / Summer	After week 1	None — a “W” is recorded

A student who has withdrawn from the seminary must reapply for admission to resume studies.

2.5 Auditing Courses

Audits don't fulfill degree requirements and require instructor approval; audited courses appear on the transcript with an “AU” grade and are billed at half the program's tuition rate, except PhD students auditing while on continuing relations (no charge) and special students (special audit rate). Switching between Credit and Audit status is only possible within the first two weeks of the term.

2.6 10-Year Limit on Coursework

LSTC generally does not accept courses older than ten years toward degree requirements. Exceptions may be considered for courses taken at LSTC that earned a B or above and meet other requirements.

2.7 Requesting a Leave of Absence

1. Get the Leave of Absence / Withdrawal form from the Registrar's Office via MyLSTC.
2. Start a conversation with the Registrar or your Program Director — they'll help gather the signatures the form needs.

3. If you intend to return at a definite time, request Student on Leave status; if not, complete the official withdrawal process. Without this step, LSTC cannot issue a “Letter of Honorable Dismissal,” which other institutions or employers often request.

To resume studies after withdrawing, you'll need to reapply for admission; the Admissions and Financial Aid offices will let you know what documentation is needed to supplement your original application.

Advanced Studies (ThM/PhD) students: this process is different for you. Per the Advanced Studies Program Manual, you petition the Director of Advanced Studies for “Inactive Student” status, available for up to three years — you remain on the ThM/PhD program roster and are not required to reapply for admission when you resume active status, though you're not eligible to use seminary resources (library, housing, etc.) for the duration. Contact the Advanced Studies Office rather than the Registrar's Office to start this process.

2.8 Grading Scale and Course Credit

Grade	GPA	Meaning
A+ / A	4.00	Outstanding
A-	3.75	Very Good
B+	3.25	Good
B	3.00	Competent
B-	2.75	Adequate
C+	2.25	Adequate
C	2.00	Low
C-	1.75	Low
D	1.00	Inadequate / Failing
F	0.00	Failing
NC	—	No Credit — counted as F in GPA
P	—	Passing (C- or higher) — not counted in GPA
EX	—	Extended Incomplete
AU	—	Audit

MDiv, MAM, and MA students must pass a course with C- or better for credit; below that, it's recorded as NC (counted as F). ThM, PhD, and DMin students need B- or better; below that is also NC.

Pass/Fail option

Unless on academic probation, MA/MAM/MDiv students may request Pass/Fail grading in any course by completing a form through the Registrar's Office no later than the end of the second week of classes. A “P” doesn't affect GPA; an “F” does. Advanced Studies students are not eligible for Pass/Fail. All ThM/PhD examinations, colloquia, language exams, the Pedagogy Seminar, and the Public Presentation of Dissertation Project are graded Pass/Fail, as are Continuing Relations.

All course grades submitted to the Registrar are final and cannot be changed unless there was an error in calculation. A student registered for Continuing Relations whose advisor reports No Credit (NC) — counted the same as an F in GPA — is placed on academic probation as a result; a leave of absence for a semester or academic year is an alternative if circumstances warrant.

2.9 Course Evaluations

Students must submit an online evaluation for each course at the end of every term — completion is mandatory, both so faculty can improve their courses and because LSTC must demonstrate evaluative procedures for accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission and ATS. Instructors can't see evaluations until after grades are submitted, and responses are anonymous.

2.10 Immunization Requirement

Illinois law (Public Act 85-1315) requires students entering Illinois colleges and universities to show proof of immunity to measles, mumps, rubella, and tetanus/diphtheria, or document a medical exemption.

1. Get the “Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago Immunization Requirements” form from Enrollment Management and Student Experience
2. Have your doctor or health clinic complete it (or submit copies of existing immunization records).
3. Submit it to Enrollment Management and Student Experience before your first day of classes.

2.11 Attendance Reporting

Students are expected to attend every class in which they're enrolled. Faculty report students who miss the first class period, and must also report a second unexcused absence to the Registrar, who forwards it to the VP of Enrollment Management and Student Experience.

2.12 Commencement and Graduation

- All coursework and all bills (tuition, fees, housing, library fines) must be complete and paid in full.
- Minimum cumulative GPA: 2.0 for Master's programs, 3.0 for Advanced Studies.
- Commencement is held once a year in May. File your degree application by November of the prior year. Attendance is expected unless the President has granted written permission to receive the degree in absentia.

2.13 Student Records and FERPA

LSTC maintains student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and won't release information from a student's record without written permission, with the exception of designated “directory information” (name, address, phone, date/place of birth, email, major, dates of attendance, classification, enrollment status, degrees/awards, most recent prior institution, and photo). Students may review and inspect their records, request an amendment, or file a complaint — full detail is in the FERPA Annual Notification on MyLSTC — and may opt out of directory-information disclosure by completing a form through the Registrar's Office.

2.14 Advanced Standing and Transfer of Credit

If you believe prior coursework or experience has already prepared you for an LSTC course requirement, you may request advanced standing rather than repeating the material — demonstrated either through a portfolio of work or an oral/written exam, evaluated by a faculty member identified by your Degree Program Director. No more than 25% of your degree program may be granted through advanced standing. Separately, students transferring in from another accredited institution may be credited for up to two-thirds of their program's credits, generally for coursework completed within the last 10 years. Start either process with a conversation with your Degree Program Director; full detail, including the request form, is in the Master's Programs Manual.

2.15 Contextual Education and Internship

Most MDiv and MAM students complete a supervised ministry placement through Contextual Education — Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), Ministry in Context (MIC), or an ELCA internship, depending on your program and rostering track. Requirements, stipend and insurance information, and the assignment calendar are covered in the Master's Programs Manual; start by contacting the Director of Contextual Education (see Key Contacts, 1.6) early in your program, since placements are typically arranged one to two semesters in advance.

2.16 Independent Study and Summative Evaluation

An independent study may be arranged between a student and a faculty member using a proposal form available on MyLSTC, approved by the relevant Program Director. A student needs at least a 3.0 GPA to register for an independent study, may not take more than one per semester (except by special permission), and may not begin another if a prior term's independent study is still incomplete. Separately, MA and MAM students complete a Summative Evaluation — a thesis or ministry project — on a multi-semester timeline starting in the second year; students register for it using a form provided by their first reader. See the Master's Programs Manual for the full process and timeline.

PART III

Academic & Institutional Policies

For the 2026-2027 academic year, these policies will appear in both the handbook and the course catalog for ease.

3.1 Academic Standing

LSTC recognizes three categories of academic standing: Good Standing, Academic Probation, and Academic Suspension.

- Good Standing — Master's students: minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA. Advanced Studies students: minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA. Status changes take effect the semester after a student first fails to meet the minimum.
- Master's students below 2.0 with incomplete grades are placed on Academic Probation. Non-degree students taking Master's courses who miss the minimum for the first time are also placed on Probation.
- Advanced Studies students below 3.0 with incomplete grades are placed on Academic Probation. The same first-time rule applies to non-degree Advanced Studies students.
- On Academic Probation, students must take all classes for a letter grade (no extended incompletes) and must meet with their academic advisor, the Dean of Student Services, and their program director. Academic Probation Extended is available if a student maintains the minimum semester GPA each term and is otherwise making satisfactory progress — it avoids suspension as long as that continues.
- Failing to achieve the minimum semester GPA while on Probation results in Suspension the following semester. A suspended student may petition the Committee on Readmissions and Special Admissions for readmission, returning on Probation; failing to meet Probation requirements after readmission results in Dismissal, with no further readmission eligibility.

Good academic standing is required to graduate. Some programs set standards that exceed this general policy.

3.2 Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

LSTC monitors SAP both to be a responsible steward of financial aid and to protect academic integrity. Maintaining SAP is required both to continue in a degree program and to remain eligible for financial aid. It's evaluated quantitatively (pace toward degree completion, measured at the end of each term) and runs alongside — but separately from — the qualitative Academic Standing policy above. Students facing personal, family, or financial circumstances that affect performance are encouraged to reach out to their program director, advisor, or the Dean of Student Services.

Probation and suspension under SAP

A student who completes less than 67% of attempted courses in a term is placed on SAP Probation. Failing to reach 67% completion again the following term, or failing to meet other probation requirements, results in SAP Suspension. As with Academic Standing, a suspended student may petition the Committee on Readmissions and Special Admissions; readmitted students return on Probation, and failing probation again results in Dismissal with no further readmission eligibility. Students on SAP Probation may continue registering (letter grades only) and should meet with their advisor, program director, and the Dean of Student Services to plan a path back to good standing.

Appealing for financial aid during probation

Financial aid eligibility during a probationary semester isn't automatic. To be considered, submit a financial aid appeal explaining (1) why SAP wasn't met and (2) what has changed to allow SAP to be met by the next evaluation. A successful appeal retains aid eligibility for that semester.

Maximum time limits (quantitative measure)

Program	Maximum Time
MA	2 years
MAM	3 years
MDiv	4 years
ThM	3 years
PhD	7 years (includes ThM)
DMin (Preaching)	3 years (1 year for KF-P program students)
DMin (ecumenical)	7 years

Students can petition their program director for an extension under special circumstances. Progress is reviewed after each payment period; the Financial Aid Office sends written notice when SAP evaluation affects aid eligibility. Suspended students may appeal on the basis of mitigating circumstances (e.g., death in the family, accident, illness, or other factors outside the student's control) by submitting an appeal to the Academic Office.

Advanced Studies (ThM/PhD) students continuing in the program without coursework must register each semester for Continuing Relations with their advisor, who reports a P or NC grade at term's end. Failing to register has real consequences: unregistered students cannot sit for exams, develop proposals with their advisor, or pursue other academic activities, and lose access to seminary services including the library and housing. International students on F-1 visas must be registered for Continuing Relations to maintain visa status.

Extension policy

An extension to complete coursework after a course ends is a privilege, not a right — instructors may instead grade based on work submitted by the deadline. To request one, complete a Petition for Extension signed by your instructor, advisor, and program director. Incomplete work is due by the final day of the following semester (Fall/J-Term → end of Spring; Spring/Summer → end of Fall); unresolved extensions are recorded as NC by the Registrar. Students on academic probation are not eligible for extensions, and multiple simultaneous extensions require a written completion plan submitted with the petition.

Repeating a course

Notify the Director of Financial Aid and the Registrar if you need to repeat a course — financial aid does not cover repeated coursework. Repeating a course already passed with A through C- (or P; A/B for Advanced Studies) requires a petition approved by the instructor, program director, and dean.

Other SAP considerations

- Institutional aid and outside scholarships: retained by meeting the original award criteria plus SAP, except Fund for Leaders (FFL) scholarships, which are revoked immediately (no probation or appeal) if a student falls below 2.0 GPA or falls behind on maximum-timeline pace.
- Candidacy: for MDiv/MAM/MA students on ELCA rostered-ministry tracks, SAP includes progress through ELCA candidacy stages — consult your program director with questions.

Advisors for Advanced Studies students

Each ThM/PhD student is assigned an advisor from the appropriate Division as part of admissions, matched on faculty and student interest where possible. To request a change, submit a Petition for Change of Advisors; contact the Advanced Studies Office for the process.

3.3 Academic Honor System

Students are expected to present original work and to acknowledge sources — hard copy or digital — through footnotes, endnotes, or other appropriate citation.

Plagiarism

Presenting another's work as one's own, from any source, is plagiarism and a serious offense. Students needing help with citation methods are encouraged to consult Kate Turabian's Manual for Writers. When an instructor determines plagiarism has occurred, they discuss it with the student and report it to the program director and the Academic Dean, who together with the instructor determine the penalty for a first offense; anti-plagiarism training is then required to continue in the program. A subsequent offense is grounds for dismissal.

Copyright infringement

Unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material (including peer-to-peer sharing) may carry civil or criminal liability.

Encouraged collaboration

Discussing class materials, brainstorming, sharing works in progress, and giving constructive feedback to peers are encouraged and not honor code violations.

Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI can be a useful tool to support teaching, learning, research, and resource development; this tool should not, however, replace human judgment, critical thinking, intellectual authorship, ethical responsibility, or the relational and formational dimensions central to theological education. All members of our learning community are responsible for the accuracy, appropriateness, integrity, and potential consequences of any AI-assisted content. Faculty, staff, and students should disclose meaningful uses of AI (either in citations or in a description of methodology). As AI develops, we are committed to developing critical, ethical, and responsible AI literacy.

3.4 Academic Appeals

Faculty have latitude to assign grades they deem fair; disagreements about a grade should first go to whoever made the evaluation, so the student understands the reasoning or can request an adjustment. (ELCA candidacy committee decisions follow ELCA's own appeal policies.)

1. Discuss the evaluation directly with the professor, pastor, or administrator involved — another student or professor may take part in this conversation if helpful.
2. If unresolved, appeal in writing to your Program Director, who may bring the matter to the Academic Cabinet in consultation with the Academic Dean. The Cabinet hears both parties and renders a decision, communicated by the Academic Dean; members with a conflict of interest recuse themselves (if two or more must recuse, the President appoints a mediation panel). A written record is kept in the Academic Dean's office.

3. If a student believes LSTC itself is acting contrary to ATS standards, that concern goes in writing to the Academic Dean, who brings it to the Academic Cabinet and reports findings to both student and President, keeping a permanent file per ATS policy.

3.5 Community Standards and Classroom Expectations

LSTC affirms the ELCA's moral and ethical guidelines for ministry leaders, including "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline." The community is expected to assist one another in building mutual trust; when a concern arises about a community member, the first step should be a direct conversation with that person. Where relationships are strained or broken, the grievance and harassment policies below (3.9–3.11) apply, with mediation and reconciliation as the goal wherever possible.

- Mutual accountability — clear standards for both instructors and students support the trust teaching and learning depend on.
- Hospitality — all members and guests should expect respect and fairness in teaching and learning (see 1.4, Non-Discrimination).
- Forgiveness — practices of confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation are part of life together, with room for mistakes as part of learning.
- Inclusiveness — students and professors are expected to use inclusive language in speaking and writing.
- Conduct befitting ministerial leadership — students perceived as acting counter to these values will be invited into a restorative justice process; refusal to engage, or a process that doesn't reach a satisfactory resolution, may be grounds for dismissal or withholding a degree.

In cases requiring formal action, the Academic Dean, the Executive for Administration, and the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience keep a written record of any formal complaint. Suspension or dismissal for cause is the faculty's responsibility, normally on the Academic Dean's recommendation. LSTC provides counseling referrals through Enrollment Management and Student Experience during any such process.

3.6 Guidelines for Civility

Developed by LSTC's former Diversity Committee for talking and living together across difference:

- Respect the personhood of others while engaging their ideas.
- Carefully represent the views of those with whom we disagree.
- Be careful in defining terms; avoid needless inflammatory language.
- Use generalizations carefully; offer specific evidence where possible.
- Seek to understand the experience behind another's view; hear others' stories as we share our own.
- Don't let personal offense at a differing opinion be used to shut down dialogue.
- Be a patient listener before formulating a response.
- Stay open to changing your own position, and be patient with others' process of change.
- Use facilitators or mediators where they can help.
- Remember that people are ultimately defined by their relationship with God — not by the flaws we find, or think we find, in their views and actions.

3.7 Health Insurance Requirement

Health insurance is a condition of enrollment for all full-time students. Incoming full-time students sign a waiver confirming ACA-compliant coverage; students unable to show coverage should meet with the Admissions Office. International students may enroll in a specialized plan through International Student Protection (ISP). Students on internship must independently maintain insurance — internship congregations cannot pay for or reimburse it.

3.8 Disability Accommodations

Accommodations modify classroom, exam, or administrative practices to minimize the discriminatory effect of a disability. Responsibilities are shared:

1. Contact the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience to identify yourself and begin the accommodation process (the VP also reaches out to incoming students on this).
2. Provide the VP with documentation well in advance of need — ideally at least two weeks before the semester begins.
3. The VP works with Academic Affairs to draft a letter to your instructors noting the accommodations required, sends it to you for review, then releases signed copies to you and your instructors, and files a copy.
4. Provide the letter to each instructor no later than the end of week two of a semester course, or day two of a J-Term course (this deadline can flex for accommodations discovered after the term starts).

For building/physical accommodations, the Director of Safety, Security and Visitor Services partners with the VP; LSTC respects privacy and confidentiality throughout, coordinating with ELCA candidacy committees only under existing information-release agreements. Students unsure whether a cognitive or learning difference is affecting their work can contact the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience about arranging educational testing.

3.9 Harassment Policy

All members of the LSTC community are expected to maintain a positive, professional environment free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. LSTC does not tolerate prohibited harassment or retaliation against anyone who reports it in good faith, and provides ongoing training to students, staff, and faculty. Academic freedom and freedom of expression remain central to seminary education; nothing in this policy penalizes responsible teaching and learning. This policy applies to LSTC programs and activities on and off campus, and covers board members, faculty, staff, contractors, agents, students, visitors, and their family members.

What counts as prohibited harassment

Verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward someone because of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, physical or mental ability, religious expression, socio-economic status, marital status, parental status, veteran status, or citizenship status. This includes epithets, slurs, degrading jokes, threatening or intimidating acts, negative stereotyping, and offensive material posted or circulated on LSTC premises.

Sexual harassment is one form of prohibited harassment and can affect any gender. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually explicit media in a public setting, and conduct where submission affects an employment or academic outcome — for example, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, insults, threats, jokes about gender or traits, intentional misgendering, sexual propositions, suggestive noises, leering, whistling, obscene gestures, or unwanted touching. LSTC complies with Title IX, the Clery Act, and Campus SaVE; see 3.10 for Title IX specifics, and contact the Title IX Coordinator, Aaron Copley-Spivey (773-256-0771), with questions.

How to report

- Students → the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience, your program director, your faculty advisor, or the Director of Contextual Education.
- Staff → your supervisor or the Director of Human Resources.
- Faculty → your division chair or the Dean of Academic Affairs.
- Board members, families, and visitors → the Director of Human Resources.
- Anonymous → the Campus Conduct Hotline, 866.943.5787 (a service of LSTC's insurance provider; a summary report reaches LSTC).

Report promptly if possible, though LSTC responds regardless of timing. Contacted staff/faculty should respond within two business days; if a response is slow, students and faculty may escalate to the President, and staff to the Director of Human Resources. Conversations are kept confidential to the extent possible, and confidential outside counseling is available via MyLSTC (Groups/Student Services/Mental Health Resources).

Resolution process

An initial meeting (a support person may attend) lets the complainant share what happened, learn about resolution options, and complete an Incident Report Form if they choose to pursue resolution — if not, HR investigates independently to maintain a harassment-free environment. Once a report is filed, one or more of the following resolution options apply, in any order the complainant finds helpful, ideally begun within 48 hours:

- The staff/faculty contact approaches the alleged offender on the complainant's behalf and reports back.
- The complainant and staff/faculty contact approach the alleged offender together.
- The complainant approaches the alleged offender directly and reports back.
- Mediation with a neutral third party, arranged by the staff/faculty contact.
- A panel of six trained members (2 students, 2 staff, 2 faculty, plus alternates) hears the case. The panel is convened by the Dean of Academic Affairs (student or faculty complainant) or the Director of Human Resources (staff or other community member complainant) — unless that person is party to the complaint, in which case the other role convenes it, or, if the President is involved, the Board Chair.

The convener investigates and gathers written/oral evidence; both parties submit written reports and see each other's. The full panel reviews evidence and interviews the complainant, then the alleged offender, and any supporting witnesses, taking intercultural context into account. Both parties may bring an advocate. Deliberations typically take up to five business days; a majority decision determines disciplinary action or dismissal of the case (the President casts a tie-breaking vote if needed and reviews the process for fairness). The President communicates the outcome within five business days of the panel's report. Most cases resolve within 60 days, with written notice to both parties if LSTC extends the timeline for good cause.

Discipline, appeals, and external reporting

Substantiated complaints lead to prompt remedial and disciplinary action, up to expulsion (students) or dismissal (faculty/staff); the President communicates the outcome and appeal information within five business days, and threats identified during investigation trigger timely, confidentiality-respecting community notice. Unsubstantiated complaints are dismissed, with a record kept by the Director of Human Resources.

Either party may appeal to the President (or the Board Chair, if the complaint is against the President) within 15 days of the panel's determination, on grounds of new evidence, bias or unfair treatment, or a failure to follow LSTC's stated procedures. The President reviews the full record and issues a final decision within 45 days.

Complainants may also pursue criminal action or private civil suit at any time, before, during, or after LSTC's own process — LSTC will assist and cooperate with law enforcement at the complainant's request, though LSTC's findings and any criminal outcome are independent of each other. Employment-discrimination complaints may go to the EEOC or a state agency; student-discrimination complaints may go to the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

3.10 Title IX

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” — Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination — including sexual harassment, assault, and other sexual misconduct — across all LSTC programs and activities: academics, admissions, financial aid, and student services. The Clery Act (as amended by the Campus SaVE Act) additionally requires annual crime statistics reporting, timely warnings, emergency notifications, and prevention education. Definitions, reporting, and resolution procedures for sexual harassment and misconduct are covered under the Harassment Policy (3.9).

Title IX Coordinator: Aaron Copley-Spivey, Director of Human Resources — 773.256.0771. The Coordinator oversees reports of sexual misconduct and relationship violence, can issue no-contact orders and arrange accommodations, and can answer questions about policy, resources, and legal options. Reports may also go to the University of Chicago Police, 773-702-8181 (24/7). Confidentiality is protected to the extent possible and allowed by law, though it cannot be guaranteed; the Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline (1-888-293-2080) offers confidential support outside the LSTC community.

3.11 Grievance Policy

A “grievance” is an alleged violation or misuse of Seminary policy or procedure by a Seminary official or body that has adversely affected a community member's (student, staff, faculty, or family member's) rights. This process is a last resort after informal discussion; it intentionally covers policy disputes rather than interpersonal conflicts, which fall under 3.5 and 3.9.

1. Attempt informal resolution first, directly with the person or body involved.
2. If unresolved within 30 working days, notify the Dean of Academic Affairs in writing within two additional weeks (or the President, if the grievance concerns the Dean; or the Board Chair, who assigns a bishop representative, if it concerns the President). Specify the policy in question, how it was violated or misapplied, and the specific harm. The Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience investigates and reports to the President, responding in writing with a proposed resolution within 30 days.
3. If still unresolved, appeal in writing to the Grievance Panel, including the original grievance, the response, and your reasons for appealing. The Panel determines whether further investigation is warranted, interviews relevant parties, and reports findings to the President within 30 days.
4. The President reviews the Panel's report and issues a final decision in writing within 14 days, to the grievant, the Panel Chair, and the Dean of Academic Affairs. Case summaries are kept on file in the President's Office.

The Grievance Panel is appointed by the President (in consultation with the Dean of Academic Affairs) and ordinarily includes the President, the Dean of Academic Affairs, a faculty member, a student, and a staff member, with the Director of Human Resources as an advisory member; anyone directly involved recuses. Failure to comply with this process may lead to disciplinary action.

3.12 Substance and Alcohol Policy

LSTC's approach to drug and alcohol concerns is pastoral and rooted in Christian concern; alcohol and drug abuse are treated as potential health, safety, and security issues, and the community is expected to help maintain an environment free of their negative effects.

General policy

Unlawful manufacture, possession, use, distribution, sale, or purchase of alcohol or illicit drugs on campus or at LSTC activities is prohibited. Moderate alcohol consumption is permitted only at approved school functions by those legally able to consume it, in compliance with school guidelines. Anyone whose prescribed medication may cause impairment should discuss it with their advisor or the appropriate administrator. Federal, Illinois, and Chicago law apply in full — including the 21-and-over drinking age — and violations may lead to school disciplinary action independent of any criminal proceeding.

Guidelines for events serving alcohol

- A designated person must be responsible for serving and monitoring alcohol at any LSTC function.
- Alcohol may not be served where anyone under 21 is present without prior written approval from Student Services; events must be registered at least a week in advance with a designated responsible person.
- Non-alcoholic beverages and food must be available at any event serving alcohol.
- Event publicity may not reference the availability of alcohol.

Health risks

Illicit drug use and alcohol abuse carry documented, sometimes permanent, health consequences — effects on the central nervous, reproductive, cardiovascular, pulmonary, and endocrine systems, along with cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects that can contribute to self-destructive or risk-taking behavior. Chronic use can cause severe, lasting impairment.

Sanctions

Under the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act, LSTC certifies a drug prevention program and has adopted the following: unlawful possession, use, or distribution on LSTC property or at LSTC activities is grounds for possible dismissal; anyone impaired while on LSTC premises is subject to discipline up to dismissal; disciplinary sanctions (including expulsion or termination) and referral for prosecution may apply, and LSTC distributes an annual notice of legal sanctions and health risks. Reinstatement after a violation is at LSTC's full discretion and may require a completed rehabilitation program. Student employees convicted of a criminal drug violation (including on-campus misdemeanors) must notify the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience within 5 days; LSTC must notify any federal granting agency within 10 days if the conviction involves federally funded work.

Prevention, counseling, and referral

LSTC offers community education and networks with other institutions on prevention. Preventive services follow two paths:

1. A student concerned about their own use is encouraged to contact the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience; all inquiries are confidential. The VP, with a professional consultant, evaluates the situation and provides recommendations and referrals, working to minimize disruption to studies during treatment. Only the Pastor to the Community and, if necessary, the President know the reason for any related leave.

2. Someone concerned about another community member is encouraged to approach that person directly with care first. If that doesn't help, the next step is the Pastor to the Community, and after that, the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience, who investigates and arranges recommendations and referrals with a professional consultant. Students in candidacy are encouraged to also involve the LSTC Director of Candidacy or their candidacy committee — openness is encouraged, and candidacy committees do work with students in treatment.

3.13 Technology and Communications Policies

Responsible use of email

LSTC reserves the right to monitor its email system, including mailboxes and logs, in the ordinary course of business; passwords and delete functions don't limit that right, and LSTC may occasionally be compelled to access or disclose messages. Electronic communication should meet the same standards of propriety as any other communication — offensive, demeaning, harassing, defamatory, or disruptive messages are prohibited. Report any such message to the Director of Information Services.

Responsible use of the Internet

LSTC's internet connection is for teaching, learning, research, administrative, and mission-related purposes. Prohibited uses include posting or transmitting offensive, defamatory, or sexually explicit material, hacking, or attempting to compromise system security. LSTC may monitor usage at its discretion; direct concerns to the Director of Information Services.

Inclusive language

Language conveys facts, attitudes, and values, and exclusive or prejudicial language causes real harm. LSTC calls on faculty, staff, and students to use inclusive language, in writing and speech, that affirms the full humanity of all people. The Pastor to the Community can point to resources; students with questions about inclusive language in academic writing should consult their advisor.

3.14 Filing an Institutional Complaint

Enrolled and prospective students may file a complaint related to accrediting standards, ecclesiastical commitments, or applicable state/federal law with the Dean of Academic Affairs (Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 5416 S. Cornell Avenue, Chicago, IL 60615, 773.256.0721). LSTC also operates under the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which accepts institutional complaints directly.

Once filed, the Dean follows the Grievance Policy (3.11) and shares the complaint with the Director of Human Resources for submission to the relevant agency (ATS, HLC, ELCA, the state, or the federal government). The Dean of Student Services and Director of Human Resources each maintain a record of formal complaints and outcomes.

PART IV

Paying for Seminary

4.1 Tuition and Fees

All estimated costs can be found on our website at <https://lstc.edu/admissions/financial-aid/>.

4.2 Transcripts

Electronic transcript: \$5. Paper transcript by mail: \$5 (records before 2007) or \$6.80 (records after 2007). The Registrar's Office cannot release a transcript while a balance is past due or a hold is on the account.

4.3 Housing Charges

LSTC offers private apartments (studio–3 bedroom) for individuals and families, and shared apartments (up to 4 people, gendered or ungendered units available). Leases run up to one year via the Housing Office, ending June 30 for returning students and May 31 for graduates.

Full housing policy detail is in the Housing Handbook.

4.4 Federal Student Loans

LSTC is certified by the Department of Education for the Federal Stafford Loan Program and encourages exhausting other funding first — private loans should only be considered after Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans. Loans for those who apply via the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). There's no fixed deadline — a loan can be processed any time between September and April — and students are encouraged to borrow the minimum needed, since the amount can be increased later. If loan funds are needed for living costs beyond what's billed to your account, request a check through the Financial Aid Office.

If you withdraw, are dismissed, or take a leave of absence before completing a payment period, federal law requires the Financial Aid Office to recalculate your aid eligibility (the “Return of Title IV Funds” process) based on how much of the term you completed. Notify the Registrar's Office in writing (email, mail, or in person) if you're withdrawing — that notification date determines both any tuition refund and the aid recalculation. If you stop attending without formally withdrawing, federal rules treat this as an “unofficial withdrawal” and the recalculation uses the midpoint of the term, which can create a balance you owe the institution. The Financial Aid Office will notify you in writing of any post-withdrawal disbursement you're eligible for, and of any balance due; unresolved balances result in a hold on your account and loss of Title IV eligibility until resolved.

4.5 Payment Policies

LSTC doesn't mail paper invoices — check your MyLSTC portal regularly. Beginning in fall 2026, students can't register with a past-due balance, and financial aid for the coming term can't be applied against past-due amounts (loan proceeds can cover up to \$200 of prior-year charges).

- Fall charges: billed early September, due the first Friday of October. Spring charges: billed early February, due the first Friday of March. Talk to Financial Aid about aid and loans before classes begin.
- J-Term, Summer, Special Student, and audited courses: 100% due before classes begin. All other fees: due in full before classes begin.

- Third-party payments (church, agency, sponsor): the student remains responsible for ensuring payment arrives on time; a sponsor's failure to pay doesn't waive late fees. Pay on time yourself and seek reimbursement once outside support posts.
- Payment methods: check, credit card, or money order in U.S. funds, via check, card, or the LSTC portal — include your student ID on every payment. A returned or denied payment (NSF, stop-pay, etc.) incurs a \$25 fee plus any bank/processor charges.

Federal loan proceeds are applied first against any amount due LSTC (tuition, rent, fees) before any credit balance is released to the student. When a student requests a disbursement from a credit balance, LSTC must retain enough to cover unpaid and anticipated charges for the relevant period (Sept–Jan, Feb–Jun, or Jul–Aug) — anticipated move-out credits, security deposits, and not-yet-received loans/aid/gifts can't be counted toward funds available for release. All disbursement requests go through the Office of Financial Aid at financialaid@lstc.edu.

4.6 Holds on Accounts

Holds may be placed on a student account in MyLSTC when a student falls out of compliance with LSTC's financial and academic policies.

- For students who aren't meeting satisfactory academic progress, an academic hold is placed.
- For students who have an outstanding financial balance greater than \$1,000, a financial hold is placed.

These holds will prevent affected students from registering for classes; obtaining diplomas and other official documentation from the seminary; participating in graduation, internships, and other degree-related requirements; renewing their annual apartment lease; and receiving other seminary services.

In order to clear a hold, students must either bring their balance under the \$1,000 threshold or meet with a member of the Enrollment Management and Student Experience team to discuss an academic and/or financial plan. This academic and/or financial plan must be realistic in nature and approved by the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Experience in consultation with other LSTC community members, particularly the VP of Academic Affairs.

PART V

Campus and Community Life

5.1 Housing

LSTC offers affordable one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments for private or shared rental in Hyde Park, near Nichols Park, the University of Chicago, and the lakefront. Dogs and cats are welcome in family apartments (subject to the pet fee — 4.4). Individual students may share a suite-style apartment with their own bedroom, or, depending on availability, rent a studio/one-bedroom alone; families are prioritized for larger units. Commuting students can book the Commuter Apartment in LSTC Guest Housing (1118 E 54th Place #1) for one or two nights a week — \$450/semester for one night, \$550 for two, or \$45/night during J-Term/Maymester (2024-25 rates); students needing more should apply for shared housing through the Housing Office.

5.2 Library Services

University of Chicago Libraries

LSTC students have full in-person borrowing and pick-up privileges (e-resources are accessible only on-site at the Regenstein Library). To get your Campus Card: get your Chicago ID number from LSTC, claim your CNetID before visiting, and visit the ID & Privileges Office at Regenstein in person.

JKM Library/TRELIS

The JKM Library, a partnership of LSTC and McCormick Theological Seminary (MTS) is expanding digital research access for both seminaries through a new relationship with the Graduate Theological Union's Theological Schools Recentering & Enhancing Library Integral Services (TRELIS).

Additional information about accessing TRELIS resources will be shared with students, faculty, and staff as implementation moves forward. For assistance with utilizing TRELIS, please email library@gtu.edu.

5.3 Writing Center

Beginning fall 2026, LSTC has joined the Academic and Student Experience Collaborative through Union Theological Seminary in NYC, giving students access to Union's Writing Center, directed by Dr. Amy Meverden. Services include individual Zoom appointments, workshops and events, and a GrammarlyPro subscription. Students may enroll in GrammarlyPro at <https://invite.grammarly.com/jj2lKT15>.

5.4 Worship and Chapel

Worship is central to LSTC's life together — catholic, contextual, inclusive, and confessionally Lutheran, planned by the community itself and incorporating varied liturgical, musical, and cultural traditions. The Director of the Chapel oversees worship with the Cantor and a team of student worship assistants.

- Wednesday Holy Communion, 11:30am, on campus and online — typically led by senior students, faculty, or guest preachers.
- Friday “Wild Chapel” — a spiritual practice for the following week, shared via the Chapel Director's community email and the Monday “Message from the Dean.”
- Dinner Church, bi-weekly Wednesday evenings at the Life Together Space.

- Pray & Break Bread, roughly monthly — an off-campus visit to a Chicago neighborhood and ministry site for learning, prayer, and lunch.

All students, staff, faculty, and family are invited to serve as assisting ministers, lectors, communion assistants, intercessors, song leaders, greeters, or bakers — reach out to the chapel staff to get involved.

5.5 Spiritual Life

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to cultivate personal spiritual practice, and can connect with a trained spiritual director — clergy or laypeople from various Christian traditions, usually outside the LSTC community — for a confidential mentoring relationship. Find profiles via MyLSTC → Student Services → Spiritual Directors, or contact the Enrollment Management and Student Experience with questions.

5.6 Counseling Support

Beginning Fall 2026, students have 24/7 access to virtual mental health and wellness support through TimelyCare. This includes 6 free sessions and unlimited “just-in-time” sessions, along with other wellness resources. LSTC also maintains a list of spiritual directors who are available to assist students. LSTC will subsidize up to \$200 per student per semester to meet with one of the available spiritual directors. Several faculty also offer a pastoral ear informally. The Director of the Chapel is a confidential resource for reports of harassment or abuse, breaking confidence only if keeping it would jeopardize someone's health or safety.

5.7 A Community That Cares

The LSTC Care Team supports students through unexpected hardship — special prayer services or vigils as needed (announced by email), personal outreach and support in the case of bereavement, and pastoral counseling and referrals through the Pastor to the Community (schedule via email). Reach the Care Team through the Director of Chapel or your program's pastoral care contacts.

5.8 Calendars and Communications

- Community Events Calendar — maintained by the Assistant to the Dean of Academic Affairs; contact that office to add a community-wide event.
- The Door — the weekly (fall/spring) or J-Term student publication, edited by a student hired through the Dean's Office; distributed by email.
- The Dean's Report — the weekly (Monday) roundup of activities, announcements, accomplishments, and prayer requests, posted on MyLSTC.

5.9 Katie's Closet and the Duty Free Shop

Katie's Closet is LSTC's on-campus food pantry, open to all students; watch for updates from the student coordinator on availability and access. The Duty Free Shop offers free used household items and clothing to students and staff (priority to new international students, as supplies allow), donated by the community. Reach out to Enrollment Management and Student Experience for hours and location.

5.10 Parking

The CTU garage offers first-come, first-served parking at \$10/day (subject to change; there is no free garage parking). Beginning in September 2026, authorized ID cards are required as the standard method for entering the garage but students may still press the call box button, tell security you're with LSTC, and scan the exit QR code to

pay. Free street parking is available nearby (e.g., 55th Street); LSTC recommends a steering wheel lock and anti-theft protection, and isn't responsible for vehicle loss, damage, or theft.

5.11 Recreational Activities

Students often find companions for walking, jogging, or swimming near Lake Michigan; reasonably priced Zumba, martial arts, and yoga classes are sometimes offered through UChicago or in Hyde Park (publicized via email and The Door).

5.12 Spouses, Partners, and Children at LSTC

LSTC has a long history of mutually supportive relationships among spouses, partners, parents, and children, though formal programming for them is limited.

5.13 Student Employment

A full course load is assumed to require full-time study, though part-time work is common; the Enrollment Management and Student Experience posts job openings (see MyLSTC). For the sake of academic progress, students shouldn't work more than 10 hours/week while carrying a full load — those who do should expect their degree to take longer than the standard timeline.

5.14 Security and Emergencies

LSTC Safety and Security develops and implements campus-wide safety policy, including fire safety, electronic access, and security systems. Emergency call boxes around housing and CTU connect directly to 911 dispatch; in any emergency, call 911 first, then the LSTC front desk (773-256-0700). Night security patrols the LSTC/CTU campus in partnership with UChicago and Chicago police, and various campus locations are under 24/7 electronic surveillance. Students receive annual crime-prevention presentations; anonymous tips can go through the front desk, and general comments to James Foster, Director of Operations and Security. The LSTC Annual Security Report is linked at the bottom of the security page on the LSTC website.

In a medical or safety emergency

1. Call 911.
2. Then call the LSTC front desk, 773-256-0700, so staff can respond and support on-site.
3. Keep student information private — share only with emergency responders and designated LSTC officials, not coworkers, friends, or family.

LSTC collects emergency contact information from every student and keeps it available to appropriate staff — keep yours current, and make sure your emergency contact knows any relevant medical needs or restrictions. This coverage applies while the building is open.

5.15 LSTC as a Green Zone

Founded in 1988 by Dr. David Rhoads, the Green Zone is LSTC's creation-care team, working with the Environmental Ministry Study Emphasis to raise environmental awareness and support sustainable, theologically grounded practice — conserving energy and water, reducing waste, and choosing local, organic, and green products. LSTC offers coursework, fieldwork, and ministry projects in environmental ministry through the Study Emphasis. Follow Green Zone at LSTC on Facebook or email for current programming.

5.16 Public Church Fellows

This program engages students in service with community non-profit partners alongside small-group reflection and faith formation, integrating academic work with service experience. Administered jointly by the Admissions and Student Services offices, with a staff or faculty advisor coordinating.

PART VI

Student Governance and Involvement

6.1 Student Government

- MSA (Masters Student Association) — represents MAM, MA, and MDiv students; advocates on their behalf and administers member activity fees. Class conveners run regular class meetings and sit on MSA; MSA elects/appoints members to LSTC committees and advisory Board seats. (Constitution and Bylaws are in the Master's Programs Manual.)
- GSA (Graduate Student Association) — represents ThM and PhD students; elects a President, Secretary, and Treasurer, with six appointed coordinators (Graduate Studies Committee, International Students, Internet, Newsletter, Publicity). GSA provides two committee representatives (one international, one North American) and elects advisory Board members; officers are chosen each spring. (Constitution and Bylaws are in the ThM/PhD Programs Manual.)
- ISA (International Student Association) — represents all international students, supports international causes and advocacy, and works with the International Student Association Office. (Constitution and Bylaws are in the International Student Supplement.)
- Board of Directors representation — three students (one first-level Master's, one Advanced Studies, one international) serve two-year advisory terms (Oct 1–Sept 30) with a designated backup, attending all regular and special Board meetings.

6.2 Student Organizations

- Green Zone — the community's creation-care/sustainability group (see 5.14).
- Faith and Justice Collective — organizes for social justice in Chicago alongside The People's Lobby, Reclaim Chicago, People's Action, and SOUL; open to all students, spouses, partners, children, faculty, staff, and community partners.
- Thesis 96 — a student group supporting full participation (including ordination) for LGBTQIA+ people in the church, particularly the ELCA, through community education and public advocacy.

6.3 Student Representation on Committees

- Faculty Search Committees — MSA and GSA each nominate candidates; the Dean of Academic Affairs interviews and selects one from each to serve as full voting members of the search committee.
- Program Review Committees — students are consulted as part of LSTC's four-year degree-program review cycle.
- Contextual Education Committee — recommends CE policy and assignments; includes two recently-retained interns (elected), the Director of Contextual Education, the Director of Candidacy, the Director of MDiv/MA Programs, and, as needed, an additional faculty member.

6.4 Teaching and Research Assistantships

TA/RA positions let students build pedagogical and scholarly skills under faculty mentorship. Positions are advertised by email to all students; faculty choice determines the final hire, but positions are meant to be shared across students over time rather than repeatedly awarded to the same person.

1. Faculty submit a position description to the Dean's Office; the Academic Dean approves the semester's list based on class size, faculty workload, institutional need, and fairness across the faculty.
2. The Dean's Office advertises approved positions by email; interested students send a letter of application directly to the supervising faculty member, who makes the final selection and notifies the Dean's Office and other applicants.
3. The Assistant to the Dean contacts the Student Employment Manager to complete income/tax paperwork and place the student on payroll (paid the 15th and last day of each month; hours are logged in Paylocity and approved by the Assistant to the Dean).

Positions are typically full-time (~8 hrs/week) or part-time (~4 hrs/week), with clear expectations set at the outset via the position description; changes require mutual consent. Courses over 25 students may warrant an additional assistant, subject to Academic Dean approval. TA positions remain subject to cancellation through the end of the Add period for low enrollment. Evaluation forms for TAs are distributed near the end of the semester.