

SSTE REPORT TO THE 2021 NT-NL SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Report from 2019 to Present.

At the beginning of our 12th and final module of the two-year cycle of the Secondary School of Theological Education, we are pleased to observe the theological, emotional, spiritual, and missional growth of lay student leaders as evidenced by their participation in the AUIMs (Academic Units of Integrated Ministry / Classes) and their self-assessment on the competencies of our methodological proposal.

The total number of students is twelve (12) representing in the program each of the Hispanic-Latino congregations, 3 students from First Sagrada Familia (Garland); 2 students from Walnut Hill (Farmers Branch); 2 Students from Emanuel (Dallas); 2 students from Santa Maria in Exile (Irving), 2 students from Adviento (Arlington) and 1 student from San Gabriel (Alvarado).

This program has exposed Competencies as the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which allow lay leaders to strengthen their self-improvement and growth and serve more efficiently in their respective congregations.

We restate that the assessment of competencies was not carried out through numerical valuation or notes, but conceptually. Students carried out their self-assessment, reviewing themselves and expressing their feelings and opinions on the scope of the competencies from the twelve modules studied. By reviewing self-assessments, we can see that each student declares that they have learned the minimum, sufficient and necessary to be a competent leader.

Here are the results:

Theologically:

- Students demonstrate and manifest greater understanding of the Holy Scriptures and a basic theological knowledge of our Christian, catholic and apostolic faith.
- Students have developed greater ability to communicate and express their ideas and opinions with confidence, keeping a Lutheran theological perspective.
- Students understand the importance of an ecumenical, inclusive, and reforming theological viewpoint. In addition, they manifest moral criteria in line with Lutheran Christian deliberation.
- The theological competence of the program has encouraged students to strengthen their sense of belonging to and loving Jesus Christ, the Lutheran doctrinal and spiritual tradition, and to continue to grow in their Christian commitment and witness to life.

Spiritually:

- Students express spiritual feelings with greater personal reflection, sharing their own experiences in a critical-constructive way, and observing the importance of a healthy spirituality in the church.
- Students understand the importance of practicing an empathetic, assertive, resilient, and conscious attitude of their actions and prayer intentions, to meet current needs.
- Students have a better sense of the importance of analyzing the transcendent meaning of human existence. In addition, they relate biblical texts that inspire faith in the One and Triune God.
- The spiritual competence of the program has guided students in how to continue to grow spiritually and to increasingly strengthen their faith from meditating Holy Scriptures.

Emotionally:

- Students demonstrate growth in active listening, acceptance of other opinions, and horizontal dialogue. They also claim to feel respected and valued in their knowledge and appreciate mutual support within the church.
- Students demonstrate greater self-regulation when expressing their feelings and opinions. In addition, they are more confident and optimistic about their leadership.
- Students understand the importance of motivating more joyful and participatory liturgical celebrations in their congregations. They are also aware of fostering fraternity and acceptance in the different congregational ministries.
- The cases analyzed in each of the AUIMs have motivated students to express their emotions in a sincere and accountable manner.
- The emotional competence of the program has promoted the development of emotional intelligence in students and motivated them to reflect on the importance of knowing themselves to optimize their personal growth.

Missionally:

- Students demonstrate ability to analyze the needs of their environment. In addition, they express their intention to be servants and proclaimers of the gospel in their community and anywhere else.
- Students have formulated contextual mission strategies at the end of each AUIM (class). Generally, most of them claim to be implementing these strategies in some way as part of their personal mission work in their congregations.
- Students confirm that they are implementing their learning, and claim to feel more confidence in themselves, and be better prepared meet others.

- The missionary competence of the program has aroused students' interest in being more committed to the church's work in function of their possibilities. In addition, it has led them to reflect on the meaning of the great commission that Jesus Christ has left us to go all over the world preaching the gospel.

These results are conclusive from the comments of the facilitators during the AUIMs and by the constant dialogue with the group. They are also the product of student testimonies through personalized Zoom interviews.

We thank the NT-NL Synod and the ELCA for their support and recognition of the work done by SSTE, and especially our Bishop Erik Gronberg for their unconditional support.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Edy Santos.

Rev. Gus Vinajeras.