

## **Pre-Placement Considerations for Field Education Sites**

### **A) Receptive Structure:**

1. A receptive organizational structure is friendly and welcoming. Supervisors are asked to develop a special ritual of welcoming/commissioning for the seminarian (see, for example, commissioning ritual in the UCC Book of Worship). Supervisors not only show a warm welcome, but also support students in this formative experience. This is a public recognition of their role in that organization.
2. The organization should prepare for the seminarian and understand that the seminarian is there to practice and learn. The organization should provide room for growth and mistakes and give support throughout the year, allowing the student to be a student and not placing him/her in the position of doing the supervisor's work or functioning without any support.
3. Issues such as physical accommodations are important because "it will be a long year if the student has to work from a table in the room where staff eats lunch and the bulletins are assembled."
4. If there is a Lay Committee, members should be selected and confirmed before the student arrives.
5. The student should expect and deserves a Supervisor who is straightforward and direct in letting the student know her/his gifts and weaknesses in ministry.

### **B) Regularly Planned Supervisory Sessions and Lay Committee Meetings:**

1. Supervisory Sessions: The Supervisor should meet with the student for in depth conversations about twice a month. The typical one-on-one supervisory session with the seminarian should last one hour. The session offers the Field Education Supervisor the opportunity to discuss with the student the formative impact of the experience on his or her life and ministry. The session also serves as a means of clarifying issues that arise.
2. Lay Committee Meetings: If there is a Lay Committee, it should meet with the student every time she/he preaches, or at least once a semester for review and guidance. The supervisor should not sit in on the Lay Committee meetings.
3. Time and space are important considerations when setting up these. Meetings should happen in a space that is free from distractions. There should be clear agendas for meetings. It helps to set these meetings up at the very beginning of the placement.
4. The student should discuss meeting aims with the Supervisor (and Lay Committee) at the beginning of the year. The agenda belongs to the student (to discuss visits, learning goals, and areas for growth), but in the beginning the Supervisor can guide this dialogue, coaching the student to articulate her/his wants/needs in the meetings. We encourage the Supervisor in the beginning to take the lead; eventually, the student will be able to be proactive and use that time for theological reflection, not just planning.

### **C) Functions and Implications of the Learning Covenant (from *The Art of Braiding Hair/Trenzar*):**

1. The student should share a draft of her/his Learning Goals with the Supervisor. The Supervisor should assist the student by offering practical ideas specific to that church to help craft mutually beneficial goals. There should be agreement on implementing these goals before the student composes the final version of the Learning Covenant. Both the Supervisor (and the Chairperson of the Lay Committee) should give their signature for submission to LTS.
2. The creation of the Learning Goals is a key task, yet seminarians may shortchange themselves or produce hard-to-measure goals. This will result in a required revision by the student when the goals are reviewed by the Coordinator of Field Education.

**D) Special needs of the student / Instructions for the student:**

1. Before starting a placement, students should write down what they expect from a field education site and share those thoughts with the supervisor (and lay committee) to make sure all are on the same page. Expectations from the supervisor, lay committee, and congregation should be communicated in writing.
2. If the student believes she/he needs some particular support, she/he should ask for it. One important aspect is scheduling. If the student only has one day per week available, discuss that at the beginning. If she/he is only available on the pastor's day off, how successful will that placement be? If the student wants to shadow the pastor before doing particular things, she/he should express that and make it a part of the covenant. Students should not do things without having first observed, regardless of whether she/he thinks she/he knows how to do it. Every church or field ed site is different. Be sure prior knowledge transfers. Do not let the supervisor assume prior knowledge is sufficient. Students should ask for what she/he needs. Remember: this is the student's education and all should prioritize accordingly.

**E) Other info for Supervisors:**

1. Motivate the student to keep a record of everything done using a log book, journal, etc. They can share it with you or just keep it for their personal growth.
2. Please understand how important it is to get evaluations in on time. It greatly disrespects the student not to meet the deadline. Also, these reviews are supposed to be done in consultation with the student: please make sure to consult with the student when filling out the forms.