

## Report Summary to the United Lutheran Seminary Board of Trustees

May 15, 2019

Theme: “Becoming a Catalyst for Social Justice”

Facilitator: Judith Roberts, ELCA, Program Director for Racial Justice

### **Purpose**

Based on the racial equity resource, *Philanthropy Closer to Racial Equity and Social Justice Effective Communities, LLC* By Betty Emarita. This tool provides a framework to structure conversations about race which contribute to progress toward racial equity and social justice. The tool is designed for nonprofit leaders, staff and board members interested in confronting and reducing racial inequity.

### **Description**

The tool consists of questions that are grouped into three action areas:

Action Area 1. Clarify values on social justice and align practices with values.

Action Area 2. Become a learning organization to better understand social justice issues.

Action Area 3. Develop strategies to expand the impact of social justice activities.

### **Using the Tool**

Racism and its negative impact on racial equity is a complex reality. Work to reduce racial inequity and make progress toward social justice is supported by productive conversations that explore and define issues of race and inequity. When conversations are productive, they inform potential strategy. Embedding capacity in organizations for reflective, constructive dialogue about race is essential.

### **Vision**

United Lutheran Seminary becomes a social justice learning organization. Begin Where You Are. Start with your “lived experience,” both individual and organizational, and build the capacity to move from there.

### **Action Area 1. Clarify values on social justice and align practices with values.**

What values does the institution support?

- Values were named in the new strategic plan and some board members expanded their definition of values beyond the plan.
- Challenge of living into the values around implementation and accountability of the new strategic plan.
- Encourage ULS community to have a shared definition and understanding of institutional values.
- Create strategies for dismantling inequities named in the strategic plan.
- Create accountability and implementations and measurables for values statements.

### How does the institution deal with structural inequities or root causes?

The experience of inequities surfaced in a major way on the campus—major part of the current campus identity. Now there is a heightened awareness of inequities; and yet there are more layers to unpack. ULS is still discovering what they do not know as it relates to social injustices.

### **Action Area 2. Become a learning organization to better understand social justice issues.**

What strategies will you use to get a clear, “big picture” view of structural and systemic root causes?

- Appreciate multiple perspectives about issues & continue to be inclusive of all voices.
- Commit more time to understand social justice issues.
- Define Social Justice issues as they relate to the experiences of marginalized voices and the wider community.
- Curriculum expand to be inclusive of broader perspectives.

What strategies will you use to enable board, staff and diversity task force to learn from and with each other?

- Finds ways to incorporate the Diversity Task Force and the Board to work and learn together.
- Look to Diversity Task Force, ULS staff team to lead social justice presentations/trainings with board and students.
- Diversity Committee of the Board take the lead on incorporating educational learnings.
- Women of the ELCA, SEPA Synod antiracism Team (Judith suggested local group to provide trainings. Also, trainers might have an alumni connection).

### **Action Area 3. Develop strategies to expand the impact of social justice activities.**

What strategies will you use to leverage the impact of initiatives related to social justice?

- New hire, Professor of Diversity Studies and Life will join the seminary to guide the campus culture and expand curriculum.
- Connect with ELCA advocacy and policy priorities. (Judith suggestions that we did not discuss as a group).
- Prepare leaders to engage social justice issues within congregational settings where there is resistance.

## Institutionalizing Racial Equity

Implicit Bias	Explicit Equity
Unaware of choice points	Builds in decision-making guides that evoke consideration of equity
Exclusive of stakeholders	Fosters active engagement and empowerment of stakeholders
Not attentive to race, gender, income and other inequities	Gives distinct, specific and sufficient attention to key disparities/inequities
Ignores barriers to access	Supports and implements strategies to remove barriers
Does not consider racial impacts	Systematically analyzes potential impacts on disadvantaged groups

