**III. LOCATIONS/Learning Communities**

1. The Location/Learning Community

The “Location” is the physical site, normally a church, where students meet for in person classes.

Some areas operate with Learning communities using a variety of locations for their classes, others may meet virtually with online classes.

Each location/learning community is designed to have a minimum of 4-5 students and a maximum of 15. If a Location’s enrollment will exceed 15, the Location/Community Manager should contact the Area Steering Committee which then decides whether to close the class enrollment at 15 and/or attempt to open another class. This smaller class size aids in the development of fellowship, sharing of class materials, and the ability to ask questions.

Locations/ Physical spaces must provide:

1. Classroom/Meeting Room space that will comfortably seat 20 people at tables to allow for instructors or guests etc.

2. Consistent availability of the room on the scheduled days or nights at class times.

3. Basic classroom equipment

4. Permission to serve light refreshments in a designated area.

5. Permission from the Location’s Pastor and/or Church Council to use the room.

6. The Pastor or member of the pastoral staff of the church may be asked to serve as the Location’s/Community’s Pastoral Advisor.

1. The Location/Community Manager: The Location or community Manager is an essential part of making the GIF/diakonia Program function smoothly and effectively. Location Managers are selected for their commitment to the program and its mission to equip lay persons for discipleship and ministry. The Location/Community Manager needs to possess organizational, communication and people skills since this person coordinates all activities of the GIF/diakonia Program at the local level. As with all diakonia leaders, location managers are volunteers.

**Location/Community Manager:**

* Secures meeting location, communicates as needed with the facility staff.
* Maintains student files: contact information, classes completed, collection of fees and other financial responsibilities (this varies from synod to synod)
* Recruits instructors, coordinates class schedules, supports instructors with information on program requirements, course guidelines and resources as needed
* Introduce weekly devotions, schedule students’ participations in devotions and assistance as needed
* Serves as liaison with Pastoral Advisor for the location
* Makes emergency decisions (i.e., weather cancellations); discusses special problems with Pastoral Advisor
* Provides location/community reports to the Steering Committee

**Resources useful for Location managers may include:**

Certificates

Devotions

Forms

**Pastoral Advisor**

* Usually, the pastor at the location site
* Assists in providing an environment where students can receive counsel and advice on issues of faith, vocation and personal development.

**Expectations of Students/Instructors**

Students:

Students entering the Growing in Faith/diakonia Program are typically active members of the church and are expected to understand that GIF/diakonia theological perspective is that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Ideally, students should have the support and prayers of their local congregation and pastor. Students should be willing to devote the time and energy necessary to participate in the GIF/diakonia program. Students will register and be provided with all information needed prior to the start of each course via the website. This includes instructor and student contact info, syllabus, book requirements, assignments, evaluations, etc.

For classes meeting *virtually*, a device with internet connectivity and the ability *to navigate and use the electronic format* used is required. Access to a printer may be helpful. Virtual Students will be provided with email or links for meetings, class lists, syllabus and book requirements, assignments, etc.

All students are expected to participate fully in the program through:

-Regular attendance at all class sessions. (In person or virtually for ZOOM classes)

-Participation in class/group activities

Willingness to share in group discussion, conversation and prayer with other class members

-Willingness to offer solidarity and friendship to class colleagues

Timely completion of all assignments

-payment of all fees and tuition, or apply for financial assistance as needed

Grades

GIF/diakonia uses a “Complete/Incomplete” system of measuring accomplishment.

Completion= Attend and participate in at least 3 of the 5 course classes and complete all assignments. If incomplete, students may work with the instructor to complete missing assignments in a timely manner.

Graduation/Completion

Upon completion of *the Foundation Year, a letter of accomplishment shall be issued by the Student’s area leadership. Requirements are:*

* 1. Class participation and completion of all 6 foundation year courses
  2. payment in full of all tuition and registration fees

*Upon completion of Foundation and Practical Year courses a certificate of completion and a cross necklace shall be presented. Requirements are:*

1. Completion of 12 courses, including class participation, assignments, etc.

2. Payment in full of all tuition and registration fees

Financial Obligations

Tuition payments (2022-23 $65/course) may be made for the entire year or class by class. The Location/Community Manager and area treasurer keep a record of the payments and follow up on delinquency.

Students may not be permitted to continue participating in the program if their tuition and fees are not up to dateor they have applied for, but not been granted, financial aid.