**II. AREA/Synod Steering Committees**

**Growing In Faith/diakonia** areas are the geographical area programs or synods of the ELCA. Upon application to the national Board of Directors, these program units are authorized by it to identify as GIF/diakonia programs, based on their commitment to the stated curriculum and to the provisions of the diakonia constitution.

Each Area has a Steering Committee which oversees the operation, management, and coordination of the diakonia Program in their locality. As with all other leaders of the GIF/diakonia program, these persons serve without salary. The Area Steering Committee is directly accountable to the National Board. In choosing members of Steering Committees and nominees to the national Board, diversity and inclusiveness are to be pursued. Each Steering Committee shall be entitled and expected to nominate at least one lay graduate to serve on the national Board of Directors; other persons, either lay or clergy, may be nominated in addition. These nominees may or may not be serving currently on the Steering Committee of that program but must have participated in GIF/diakonia.

Area Steering Committee Responsibilities:

1. Oversees the operation of the Area Locations (optional paid position to oversee area website pages/info)

2. Recruits and trains Location/Community Managers

3. Provides for an Area publicity strategy and public relations

4. Selects and trains Instructors and/or Pastoral Advisors as needed

5. Interacts with congregations & local synods

6. Plans and Implements Graduation; orders GIF/diakonia crosses from National Board

7. Plans & Implements Annual Retreat (as able)

8. Grants Financial Aid (if available)

9. Provides support for the National Board through an annual stipend (2022-23 - $750)

10. Maintains a central treasury for the Area

11. ***May*** provide a central treasury for operating the Locations

12. Maintains a central record of students, instructors, and graduates of the area

13. Provides the National Board secretary with a certified list of graduates each year

14. Develops other policies and procedures for the effective functioning and

efficient management pertaining to the Area which is not the responsibility of the National Board.

Finances: Each Area Steering Committee is responsible for setting up its own system for receiving and managing all the financial transactions of the Area and its Locations.

Area Steering Committees can choose to set up their finances in the following ways:

1. The Area Treasurer receives and disburses all funds through a central Area treasury

or

2. The Location Managers receive deposit and disburse all Location funds, providing

complete reports of all transactions to the Area Treasurer.

**Steering Committee Officers**

**(Encouraged to be limited to two 3-year terms)**

Executive Director:

* Shall be a rostered ELCA Lutheran pastor serving in the Area
* Is responsible for representing the program to the larger church
* Consults with Location/Community Managers and other workers within the program
* Provides theological and practical leadership in the ongoing mission of the program
* Is encouraged to serve on the National GIF/diakonia Board
* Shall ensure that a Synod liaison is appointed by the Synod to the Steering Committee to foster communication among the Synod’s rostered leaders and the Synodical Bishop

Chairperson:

* Shall be a non-ordained graduate of the Growing in Faith/diakonia program
* Sees that the Steering Committee meets regularly, that meetings are conducted smoothly, and that all the important tasks of operating the program are distributed among Steering Committee members or others and are carried out.
* Provides a semi-annualreport to the National Board

Vice Chair:

* Assumes the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson when the chairperson is unavailable to perform them.

Secretary:

* Records and sends out all Minutes of the Steering Committee meetings
* Notifies members of meeting dates and locations
* Sends and receives all correspondence for the Steering Committee
* Responsible for ensuring that mailing lists and student roster information (provided annually by the Location Managers) is maintained and kept up to date.

Treasurer:

* Receives and disburses all funds for the Area Steering Committee
* Maintains the bank accounts and provides financial reports at each Steering Committee meeting
* Ensures that all tax reporting responsibilities are taken care of in a timely fashion.

(Depending on how the Area Steering Committee has set up its financial procedures, the Area Treasurer will):

* Directly administer the income and expenses of the Area Locations through a central

treasury

**OR**

* Receive reports of the financial transactions from the Location Managers who are

directly administering the income & expenses for their individual Locations.

***Steering Committee Members***

Growing In Faith/Diakonia graduates, Pastoral Advisors, current students, and instructors are the most likely candidates for Steering Committee membership. However, the Steering Committee may also select members not from those groups who can advance the purposes of diakonia or serve specific needs.

Location Managers should be ex officio (voting) members of an Area Steering Committee. A Synod Liaison is also recommended.

The National Board requests an annual stipend from each of the GIF/diakonia Program Areas. This amount is set annually by the National Board and is used for such activities as to maintain the diakonia Program’s National Office, any part-time or temporary staff, mailings, travel expenses, and the like. If areas are unable to provide the full amount, a lesser amount will be accepted.

Student Financial Aid: It is the policy of GIF/diakonia to encourage as many people as possible to participate. Recognizing that some people may experience serious financial limitations, financial aid may be made available upon request and review by the Steering Committee if local funds are available.

Student requests for financial aid may be made at any time during the year to the Location Manager, Area Chairperson or Pastoral Advisor of the Location where the student is enrolled. Completed Financial Aid Request Forms (in forms section) should be sent to the Area Steering Committee as indicated on the form. These requests are normally presented at the next scheduled meeting of the Area Steering Committee.

Student Financial Aid should be granted solely on need and availability and the amount of such grants and general policies regarding financial aid is determined by the Area Steering Committee. Financial Aid requests must be submitted each year.

The names of those receiving scholarships or other financial aid, as well as the amount received, will be considered confidential information, shared only with those needed to make decisions on the granting of such aid. Financial or other background information may be requested as part of the request process, and this information will also remain confidential.

Students who receive Financial Aid are encouraged to return the funds at some future time, if they can, so that other students may be assisted.

**Resources for Steering Committee include:**

Annual dues to national

Graduation

Publicity

Retreats

Sample forms, application and financial aid

Synod assembly sample resolutions