

Developing a Learning Covenant

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A learning covenant constitutes a commitment on the part of the supervisor and the student to assuring the continued vocational formation of the student. The CDSP learning covenant includes specific goals and activities in five categories: (1) liturgical leadership and preaching; (2) administration and management; (3) Religious education and pastoral care; (4) Mission, outreach, and public leadership; and (5) Additional goals.

Each goal should be articulated to invite appropriate risk-taking and should challenge and stretch the student. The more specific a goal statement is, the more likely the student, the supervisor, and the lay committee can assure that it is met. The learning covenant also includes the rationale for each goal, which should be grounded in individual strengths, challenges and experiences relative to vocational skills and demands. Finally, for each goal, the covenant includes specific activities or behaviors that will contribute to achieving the goal as well as any additional experience or support that the student would like in order to assure the goal can be achieved.

Developing Learning Goals

Learning goals should be developed through conversation(s) between the supervisor and the student. Ideally these conversations are the start of a strong mentoring and formational relationship. Here is one possible approach to developing learning goals, using the categories listed in the learning covenant document. Addressing one category at a time:

1. The student shares their experience in the category, the impact it has had on their understanding of vocational call, and their desires for further development.
2. The supervisor engages the student by asking questions, sharing personal insights, and helping broaden or deepen the student's understanding of the category and its demands

on clergy.

3. The student and the supervisor together articulate 1-2 specific learning goals and discuss the activities or behaviors that will be used to achieve each goal.

Categories of Learning Goals

The categories for learning goals are one way of thinking about formational opportunities in field education. If a student has specific goals that cut across these categories or are otherwise not included in this structure, please use the “additional goals” category. Here are some areas for discussion that may inform development of specific goals in each category.

Liturgical Leadership and Preaching

- a. Knowledge of liturgical resources (e.g. BCP, authorized texts, lectionary, music)
- b. Experience and skills in planning and leading liturgy (e.g. weekly eucharist, daily office, occasional liturgies)
- c. Comfort and skill in homiletics (e.g. writing and preaching sermons, leading shared homilies)
- d. Awareness of self and presentation in liturgy (e.g. stance, physical actions, tone)

Administration and Management

- a. Knowledge of Episcopal polity and the role of clergy and lay bodies
- b. Familiarity with personnel management theory, legal requirements, and practice
- c. Experience and comfort with recruiting, motivating, and acknowledging volunteers
- d. Knowledge, skills, and experience in group decision-making, collaboration, and personal initiative
- e. Familiarity and skill in financial management (e.g. budgeting, reading financial reports, engaging congregations in financial giving)
- f. Awareness of self and presentation as a leader (physical presence, tone, relative power and privilege)

Religious Education and Pastoral Care

- a. Knowledge of and experience with curricular resources for children, youth and adults
- b. Experience and skills in planning and leading educational programs for different age groups and across age groups
- c. Experience and skill in planning and organizing community gatherings (e.g. annual meeting, retreats)
- d. Experience and comfort with visiting individuals in need of pastoral support (e.g. eucharistic visits, prayer, listening, other resources)
- e. Awareness of self as a pastoral presence - ability to assess and respond appropriately to pastoral and spiritual needs across diverse populations.

Mission, Outreach, and Public Leadership

- a. Experience with adopting practices for living in accordance with God's mission.
- b. Experience and skills in planning and leading community outreach and service efforts
- c. Experience in community organizing, developing and maintaining relationships with community groups, spending time assessing and responding to needs in the local context.
- d. Awareness of self and ability to speak faithfully as a representative of the church in public settings

Other Goals

- a. Specific areas of leadership development for intentional focus (e.g. self-differentiation, change management, other)
- b. Inter-faith or ecumenical development goals appropriate to the placement site and the student
- c. Goals related to developing an ability to meet needs of diverse populations (e.g. preaching or programming to those who speak a language other than English, engaging with a different age group or an unfamiliar demographic)
- d. Personal development goals related to confidence, self-awareness, relationships and boundaries, or other.