

Luther College

Public Statements* Office of the President

June 2021

Luther College will on occasion issue statements in response to national, regional, or local matters of public interest, or in response to requests from its stakeholders or inquiries from the media.

In general, Luther College will not issue statements merely to acknowledge its awareness of or to raise awareness among its stakeholders of a matter of public interest. Rather, Luther College will issue statements primarily when it has identified tangible measures that it will take, either directly or indirectly, to support its mission, stakeholders, and/or strategic priorities in response to a matter of public interest.

When Luther College issues statements, the means, including the level of engagement and visibility, will be guided by the standpoints described below. Separate standpoints are described for statements issued in response to occasions of social unrest.

The tone and content of statements will be guided by Luther College's mission, commitments, strategic priorities, and/or student creed, which may be found in the appendix of this document. In all instances, Luther College will aim to engage in a non-partisan manner, and it will take into account the potential impact upon the campus community, alumni, and the larger community within which Luther College resides.

General Standpoints

A. Lead (High Engagement and Visibility)

The matter of interest directly impacts Luther College's mission and/or strategic priorities. Luther College provides high visibility and public leadership, often in conjunction with national, regional, and/or state consortia.

Matter of interest might include:

- Government policy on higher education
- Issues that impact access to and readiness for higher education, including government policy that does not directly pertain to higher education
- Issues that impact the safety and wellbeing of students
- Commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly as they are articulated in Luther College's mission statement and current strategic plan.

Statements may be issued by:

- President
- President and Chair of the Board of Regents

Means (selected from):

- Message to campus community (students, faculty, and staff)
- Statement to local and regional media
- Luther College website
- Luther College social media accounts (main accounts only)
- Message to alumni (email and/or newsletter)

B. Engage (Medium Engagement and Visibility)

The matter of interest is a clear institutional priority, but it does not unduly impede Luther College's ability to fulfill its educational mission or strategic priorities, or to protect the safety and wellbeing of its students. Luther College will take leadership, sometimes in conjunction with national, regional, state, and/or local partners.

Matter of interest might include:

- NCAA Division III athletics
- Initiatives within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), or the Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (IAICU)
- Government policies that impact Luther College's operations and/or finances, even though they do not directly pertain to higher education or affect access to or readiness for higher education (e.g., health mandates; policies that impact freedom of expression, charitable deductions, or tax exemptions; and utility board decisions)
- Scientific debates, especially those connected to environmental sustainability

Statements may be issued by:

- President
- President and appropriate member(s) of President's Cabinet
- Vice President for Mission and Communication (as spokesperson to the media)

Means (selected from):

- Message to campus community (students, faculty, and staff)
- Statement to local and regional media
- Luther College website

C. Position (Low Engagement and Visibility)

The matter of interest is not a clear institutional priority. Luther College holds a position and shares it selectively, and sometimes privately, with relevant stakeholders and/or partners.

Matter of interest might include:

- Issues concerning the City of Decorah, Decorah Chamber of Commerce, Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors, Winneshiek County Economic Development & Tourism, and/or Winneshiek County Public Health

Statements may be issued by:

- President
- Member of President's Cabinet

Means (selected from):

- Message to relevant stakeholders and/or partners
- Message to campus community (students, faculty, and staff)

D. No Position (No Engagement and Visibility)

Luther College does not have a position. Luther College defers to others more suited to speak.

Matter of interest might include:

- Election results, including those within the ELCA
- Political campaigns
- Ballot initiatives
- Drug policies

- Gun rights

Standpoints Involving Social Unrest

Upon occasions of social unrest precipitated by discriminatory attacks (physical or otherwise) or protests in response to violations of human and/or civil rights, Luther College may issue special statements. On most occasions when a statement is issued, the statement will describe measures that Luther College will take to provide support to and demonstrate solidarity with its affected stakeholders. On some occasions, Luther College will advocate for changes to local, regional, and/or national policy.

The decision regarding whether and how to take action will be made collaboratively by the President, the Vice President for Mission and Communication, and the Executive Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications, in consultation with the Provost, the Dean for Student Engagement, and/or the Director of College Ministries. In addition to the mission, commitments, strategic priorities, and student creed described in the appendix of this document, the following considerations will also inform the decision-making process:

- Extent of impact of the unrest upon the campus community
- Extent of impact of the unrest upon the City of Decorah or Winneshiek County
- Extent of impact of the unrest upon geographic areas with high densities of Luther College alumni
- Extent of knowledge of the contributing factors to the precipitating event(s) and/or protests
- Probability that the unrest will obtain broad and sustained local, regional, and/or national attention
- Responses issued by well-respected educational institutions and consortia
- Timeliness and relevance of a potential response from Luther College
- Perceived credibility of Luther College on the precipitating event(s) and/or protests, including the possession of a well-articulated view, internal champions, and/or subject matter experts

A. Provide Support and Demonstrate Solidarity

The occasion of unrest significantly impacts the campus and/or alumni community. Luther College has the resources and champions to provide meaningful and timely support. Luther College will demonstrate solidarity with its affected stakeholders, raise awareness of immediate and ongoing resources available to the campus community, and/or provide educational and training opportunities based upon the availability of subject matter experts and champions.

Statements may be issued by:

- President
- Provost
- Dean for Student Engagement
- Director of College Ministries

Means (selected from):

- Message to affected stakeholders
- Message to campus community (students, faculty, and staff)
- Message to alumni (email and/or newsletter)
- Statement to local and regional media
- Vigil, town hall, forum, and/or seminar on campus

B. Influence Policy

The occasion of unrest significantly impacts the campus and/or alumni community, and it substantially impedes the ability of Luther College to fulfill its educational mission and/or strategic priorities. Luther College has subject matter experts that will be perceived as credible and authoritative advocates on the contributing factors connected to the precipitating event(s) and/or protests. Luther College will advocate for changes to local, regional, and/or national policy, often in conjunction with consortia or partners.

Statements may be issued by:

- President
- President and Chair of the Board of Regents
- Subject matter experts on campus

Means (selected from):

- Message to affected stakeholders
- Message to campus community (students, faculty, and staff)
- Message to alumni (email and/or newsletter)
- Statement to local and regional media
- Luther College website
- Luther College social media accounts (main accounts only)
- Op-ed for local, regional, or national media

*Luther College thanks Augustana College, Augsburg University, and the Mayo Clinic for the frameworks, as well as some of the specific content, that informed the development of this document.

APPENDIX

Mission

In the reforming spirit of Martin Luther, Luther College affirms the liberating power of faith and learning. As people of all backgrounds, we embrace diversity and challenge one another to learn in community, to discern our callings, and to serve with distinction for the common good.

As a college of the church, Luther is rooted in an understanding of grace and freedom that emboldens us in worship, study, and service to seek truth, examine our faith, and care for all God's people.

As a liberal arts college, Luther is committed to a way of learning that moves us beyond immediate interests and present knowledge into a larger world—an education that disciplines minds and develops whole persons equipped to understand and confront a changing society.

As a residential college, Luther is a place of intersection. Founded where river, woodland, and prairie meet, we practice joyful stewardship of the resources that surround us, and we strive to be a community where students, faculty, and staff are enlivened and transformed by encounters with one another, by the exchange of ideas, and by the life of faith and learning.

Commitments

Grounded in the Lutheran theological and educational tradition, Luther College affirmed the following commitments in its 2018-2023 Strategic Plan:

- Excellence
- Community
- Human Dignity
- Justice
- Freedom
- Service

Strategic Priorities

Luther College identified the following strategic priorities in its 2018-2023 Strategic Plan:

We must ensure that our educational experiences continue to develop whole persons who are equipped with the skills for lifelong learning and leadership. We must inspire and empower students to solve the most difficult challenges facing our world.

We must support students, faculty, and staff, equipping them to thrive, succeed, and serve. We must engage with one another across campus to develop programs and partnerships that enable us to flourish, ensure academic excellence, and invest in students.

We must become an inclusive community of welcome, equity, and justice that goes beyond hospitality and fairness. We must find inspiration in a diverse community and ensure that we are able to work across differences.

We must establish a fiscally sustainable business model. We must innovate and optimize our operations, investing in strategies that deliver on the distinctive character and value of a Luther education.

Norse Creed

The following creed was adopted by the Luther College Student Senate in 2018 and is shared with all students during New Student Orientation:

I am a **Luther Norse**.

I am a citizen of the world.
I am inclusive and compassionate to all.
We value and recognize all faiths.
We are a diverse **Community**.

I engage in learning beyond my interests
I display integrity through my actions.
We hold ourselves and each other accountable.
We project **Leadership**.

I am determined to make the world sustainable.
I possess an open mind.
We show reverence for individuals.
We demonstrate **Respect**.

We are learning to be well rounded people.
We are becoming more.
We Are **Luther**.