

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, values, commitments, strategic priorities, and/or student creed. 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.

Matters 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 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 Communication, and the Executive Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications, in consultation with the Provost, the Dean of 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 of 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.