



Lancaster Theological Seminary Receives Grant to Learn to Teach Beyond Trauma

LANCASTER, PA, 29 January 2021 – Lancaster Theological Seminary faculty will study the effects of trauma on learning and develop ways to better teach students who have experienced trauma in their lives. The graduate school of theology has received a one-year \$5,000 grant from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion for this project.

The Rev. Darryl W. Stephens, PhD, director of United Methodist Studies and the Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry at Lancaster Theological Seminary, will direct the grant entitled, “Trauma-Informed Classroom Teaching at Lancaster Theological Seminary.”

Psychological trauma is a widespread phenomenon in U.S. society and across the world, according to Stephens. Increasingly recognized as a public health issue, trauma affects mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Traumatic experiences range from adverse childhood experiences to sexual assault, warfare, chronic poverty, systemic racism, among other events.

“The impact of trauma on classroom learning has become even more acute and identifiable as we have dealt with COVID-19 and greater recognition of the ongoing pandemic of racism in U.S. society,” Stephens says.

The grant will give Lancaster Seminary faculty the opportunity to develop and implement specific trauma-informed classroom interventions and teaching strategies for both online and in-person learning.

“By adopting trauma-informed pedagogical practices, we hope to expand participation, accessibility, and learning by our students, many of whom carry significant burdens of trauma history,” Stephens says.

Lancaster Theological Seminary faculty members will participate in the one-year project that will begin in May 2021.

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Lancaster Theological Seminary, an ecumenical graduate school of theology affiliated with the United Church of Christ, is known for academic excellence, celebration of differences across Christian traditions, and creative engagement on issues important to our world.