



**Partnership with Week of Compassion and
HELM Leadership Fellows Program
Grant Request for 2024 &
Multi-Year Vision**

Global Awareness Trip Rationale

The HELM Leadership Fellows Program (LFP) exists to cultivate and strengthen the existent and developing leadership gifts and skills of its college and university students. During the four-year program, cohorts focus on Christian community, societal transformation, *global awareness*, and leadership engagement.

After a cohort grows together in authentic Christian community and then recognizes how faith compels us toward justice and social transformation, in their third year they learn about effectively walking in solidarity with others in a globally interconnected world. Each year that fellows engage the themes intellectually and experientially, they build upon the last until they emerge more fully formed as leaders, ready to engage and faithfully share all they have acquired as fellows.

During late Spring, our third year cohort has the opportunity to participate in a *Global Awareness Trip*. The Global Awareness Trip makes every attempt to allow fellows to be fully immersed into a new place in as many ways possible through a variety of educational, observational, and participatory experiences. Participants will be challenged to hold their own faith understanding and life experience alongside and within that of the new communities they encounter, and will have opportunity to listen, see, sense, worship, pray, confess, and be transformed by a new culture and place. Time for journaling, personal meditation, and guided discussion will play a regular part in the Global Awareness itinerary.

The effectiveness of an immersion experience is best measured over the long course of time as participants think, speak, and act differently in relation to the world, its varied cultures, and many challenges. However, in the short term, as we travel and hope to see the growth of broader, deeper perspectives, leaders will look for and expect the (sometimes painful) breaking down of individual intellectual and emotional structures. During the trip, regular opportunities to dialogue with and process the experience among peers and leaders will be significant.

Leaders will watch for open hearts and minds, willingness to engage in conversation, good questions, patience, and even longings for change. These things call for vulnerability and surprising stamina, so leaders will be prepared to extend a generous and kind spirit as we travel alongside students in their growth and the newness they encounter.

Proposal 1: Single-Year Grant Request for 2024:

Week of Compassion supported our third-year Fellows in the past and we remain grateful. Several of our students have experienced life-changing decisions because of the opportunity the Global Awareness immersion. Thank you again. To this end, we present to you this rationale and proposal for your ongoing support for our Leadership Fellows in May 2024. We are requesting \$6,000.00 (2024) to help make it possible for students to continue to learn from global partners in this unique and meaningful way. We will be aligning our program in consultation with our partners involved in global ministry including Week of Compassion and the Division of Overseas Ministry/Global Ministries. Our goal in this alignment is to draw on educational resources as well as extend the priorities of our partners in our communication circles. The alignment will also offer our Fellows connections and opportunities to consider additional engagement with global initiatives, on their own, after they graduate from college.

Proposal 2: Multi-Year Partnership and Expansion of the Ministry:

Along with aligning our third-year Global Awareness with the strategic priorities of our partners, we propose a multi-year commitment for both the Leadership Fellows and the development of an Emerging Clergy International Relations Cohort.

The initial partnership proposed is twofold:

1. **The Leadership Fellows Program (Third-Year College/University Student):**

We currently accept approximately 10 students per cohort (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior) with up to 40 students in the program annually. Third-year students, as noted above, will travel abroad as a part of their learning objectives. Currently, we are shifting our program in order to follow global priorities as stated by the WOC and/or Global Ministries/DOM.

Our goal in this proposal is to work “hand-in-hand” with WOC and Global Ministries/DOM in designing and selecting locations appropriate for students, publishing vetted reflections on our social media and news sources, lifting the mission of each ministry and engaging students to learn more about the larger Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)/UCC presence throughout the world.

To this end, we propose a five-year relationship with Week of Compassion in this program with shared planning and investment in our students. We humbly request that

you consider committing \$8,000.00 per year for 5 years to this program for a total commitment of \$40,000.00 over this period.

2. Emerging Clergy International Relations Delegation:

HELM offers an opportunity for emerging clergy to meet with General Unit Church ministry leaders once per year – utilizing budget resources for a conference typically held in Indianapolis, IN. In considering desired outcomes and stewarding resources, we offer an alternative proposal for Week of Compassion to consider alongside HELM. This proposal is an invitation to develop a new offering in partnership between HELM, WOC and Global Ministries/DOM.

We envision an approach where we re-allocate resources to bring our emerging clergy to the General Assembly. We believe this move will offer emerging clergy an opportunity to experience the richness of the full Assembly as well as significant connections to all of our Disciples ministries. During the years between assemblies, HELM will develop a Virtual Conference giving voice to our general units and the Office of the General Minister and President to present their ministry and to make connections with our emerging clergy.

Expanding on the strategic priority of connection and relationship development, we note a potential gap for many of our emerging clergy is the capacity and opportunity to experience alternative cultures, develop meaningful international relationships and to allow those relationships to inform their vocational calling and life-long ministry. We also affirm the role global immersion plays in informing ethical and responsible awareness as our ministers engage their ministry settings. Therefore, we are proposing the development of a shared Emerging Clergy International Relations Cohort.

A proposed initial design, in conversation with WOC and Global Ministries/DOM:

- 7 Theological Schools, Divinity Houses, or Seminaries
- 7 Emerging Clergy (one annually from each Disciple program)
 - Each School offering \$1000 scholarship for their representative for travel
 - HELM offering \$1000 scholarship for each representative for travel
 - WOC offering \$1000 scholarship for each representative for travel
 - GM/DOM offering \$1000 scholarship for each representative for travel
- Total available per student per year \$4,000.00

(Note: If less is needed depending on location of travel, we can expand number of attendees)

- 4 Non-Traditional Track Emerging Clergy (one annually from NAPAD, Convencion, Convocation, and General Church)

- HELM offering \$1250 scholarship for each representative for travel
 - WOC offering \$1250 scholarship for each representative for travel
 - GM/DOM offering \$1250 scholarship for each representative for travel
 - Congregation/Region and/or General Ministry \$250 for scholarship for travel
- Total available per student per year \$4,000.00

(Note: If less is needed depending on location of travel, we can expand number of attendees)

3. Summary: In this proposal each partner agrees to a multi-year budget allocation (up to five years) towards this program of \$7,000 annually for traditional track emerging clergy and \$5,000 annually for non-traditional track emerging clergy.

- \$7,000 a year for 5 years – Total Commitment \$35,000
 - \$5,000 a year for 5 years – Total Commitment \$25,000
- \$60,000

With regard to both levels, college age students and graduate or emerging clergy, the partnership with Week of Compassion requested in total:

- Leadership Fellows: \$40,000 - 5-year total (\$8,000/Year)
- Emerging Clergy: \$60,000 - 5-year total (\$12,000/Year)
- Total Commitment: \$100,000 – 5-year total (\$20,000/Year)

Finally, **we then are asking for WOC to consider an annual line-item in the budget of \$20,000** for both global emersion experiences. HELM will do the same as well as expand messaging on WOC priorities to our media circles, Disciples Colleges & Universities, Graduate Schools of Theology/Seminaries and Divinity Houses, and Non-tradition track communications with General Ministries, Regions and congregations.

Respectfully,
 Tamara Rodenberg
 President
 Higher Education & Leadership Ministries