

Dear Board of the Louisville Institute,

We write to you as a group of theological educators who have participated in the Louisville Institute Doctoral and/or Postdoctoral Fellowship and the corresponding Vocation of the Theological Educator (VTE) Gatherings during the past year (or two years). We write with the sole purpose of affirming the excellent and gifted staff of LI who have so enriched our personal and professional lives: Aimee Moiso [*and redacted staff members*].

Those of us who are completing our second fellowship year have now experienced four Executive Directors during our time with the Louisville Institute. We thank and affirm Edwin Aponte, Gerardo Marti, Edwin Hernandez, and Raymond Bonwell for their work and wish in no way to diminish their leadership or performance as Executive and Interim Executive Directors. Still, cycling through constant leadership change is inevitably disorienting, presenting challenges for maintaining a steady institutional voice and growth toward fulfilling the organizational mission. We wish you to know that, nevertheless, we have experienced the constant, dedicated leadership of Aimee [*and redacted staff members*] throughout our time as fellows. In different ways, each of them embodies and deepens the mission of the Louisville Institute to forge bridges between the church, the academy, and the larger communities in which we live.

They do so by organizing stellar gatherings of fellows many times each year; steering the application process for LI's many fellowship and grant programs; orienting new fellows and interfacing with their institutions; accompanying them through the logistics of institutional placement; and in countless other ways. The staff have also served as advocates for us when conflicts and challenges have arisen with our institutional placements. In each and every interaction with Aimee [*and redacted staff members*], they have demonstrated their dedication to the Institute, its mission, and to each of us both professionally and personally.

Thus we write to thank the LI staff—and also to ask that the Board in turn show to them its appreciation for their having steered the ship of this Institute for the past two-plus years. We suggest that the Board might consider a variety of ways to express its appreciation including financial compensation and organizational promotion. We recognize that it is important for the Institute to have an Executive Director and that, traditionally, the role of an Executive Director is to be the forward-facing institutional presence including fundraising, outreach, networking, and the like. That said, the work of the Institute—the missional work—has been done, and done exceptionally well, by the staff. We hope that as the Board looks to the future of the Institute it will take care of the people who have shepherded the Institute through tumultuous times with incredible dexterity, care, and commitment. Too often in our churches, organizations, and broader society, the work that women do is not equally valued, esteemed, and compensated. And so we have written today simply to affirm our appreciation and admiration for Aimee [*and redacted staff members*], and to ask that you join us in celebrating them.

Warmly,

Louisville Institute Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows

Andrew Stone Porter
[*other names redacted*]