



Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

**Loyola University Chicago Opportunities in
Catholic Education
LU CHOICE**

Program Handbook

Program Description

Loyola University Chicago Opportunities in Catholic Education (LU-CHOICE) is a two-year service, scholarship, training program for college graduates. The mission of LU-CHOICE is to serve under resourced Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

LU-CHOICE, described by some former participants as “a spiritual boot-camp”, provides a unique opportunity to live out the Jesuit ideals. As men and women for others, LU-CHOICE teachers find great joy in knowing they are serving others. They are able to put their faith into action in both the classrooms in which they teach and the faith-based communities in which they live.

The essence of LU-CHOICE can be found in its three pillars: professional teaching, community, and spirituality. The pillars are a part of the formation program that is LU CHOICE. Participants of LU-CHOICE serve others as dedicated, full-time elementary teachers. They attend education classes through a graduate program at Loyola University Chicago. Upon successful completion of the course work, participants earn an M.Ed from Loyola and receive a K – 9 certification.

All LU-CHOICE teachers live in community. Community life may provide opportunities for professional support, personal growth, and spiritual development. Communities live in housing located by LU-CHOICE participants and are responsible for rent, utilities, and related costs.

An active spirituality is at the core of all aspects of LU-CHOICE. Teachers have the opportunity to share their own faith journeys with their students. Communities also have the opportunity to pray together and encourage the spiritual development of each member.

LU CHOICE is a member of the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE). This consortium seeks to establish and support a growing cadre of colleges and universities as they design and implement graduate teaching service programs.

Being Catholic, or a person of faith, is not a requirement of the LU CHOICE Program. However, participants must be willing to live and work in an environment of persons that have active expressions of faith in their lives.

About the Handbook

The LU CHOICE Handbook serves as a guide to a successful experience in LU CHOICE. It exists to clarify assumptions regarding a member's participation in the LU CHOICE program.

Members of LU CHOICE agree to promote the values of the program and Loyola University Chicago and may encourage one another to grow in faith. LU CHOICE members are representatives of Loyola University Chicago and the Archdiocese of Chicago and as such they are expected to portray themselves in the most professional manner at all times.

Much of what is expected of a LU CHOICE member is a matter of common sense and sound judgment. Disregard of the policies and guidelines can result in the loss of program benefits, including tuition remission and could possibly lead to dismissal from the program.

The guidelines are designed to foster a strong program and a positive community experience. They are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the LU CHOICE director.

Mission

The mission of LU-CHOICE is to serve under resourced Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago. This is accomplished by educating, placing, and supporting talented college graduates in elementary classrooms. LU-CHOICE teachers live out their faith and embody the Jesuit ideal of being men and women for others through service to their schools and dedication to their community.

**Under-resourced is defined as schools needing assistance finding faith-filled, well-trained teachers.*

Statement of Understanding

The LU CHOICE Program and the Archdiocese of Chicago are committed to providing well-trained teachers to serve in urban Catholic schools in the Chicago area. LU CHOICE recruits gifted and talented individuals and offers them an opportunity to accept the challenges and rewards of a life of service. LU CHOICE teachers are committed to making a difference in the lives of the children they teach.

Foundation

LU CHOICE is a service program supported by the pillars of professional teaching, community and spirituality. Each of these pillars contributes to the quality of the teachers' experience and each is essential to the success of the program. LU CHOICE teachers who wholeheartedly embrace every aspect of the program embark upon an unparalleled journey of personal growth and enrichment. Each aspect contributes to the quality of the experience and each is integral to the success of the program. The more you are able to dedicate yourself to each aspect of the program, the more likely you are to have a rewarding experience that will shape you for the rest of your life.

LU CHOICE may be a spiritual, emotional, and professional challenge that will sometimes require you to set aside personal wants and needs for the good of the community. Community life challenges its members to grow to new levels of understanding and experience along with others who share similar convictions and ideals.

It will require you to stretch and grow to new levels of understanding and experience. It is a time to work with men and women who share convictions and ideals similar to your own. It is a time to be good stewards, and to give back by serving young people and their families.

School of Education's Conceptual Framework

The School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, a Jesuit and Catholic urban university, supports the Jesuit ideal of knowledge in the service of humanity. We endeavor to advance professional education in the service of social justice, engaged with Chicago, the nation, and the world. To achieve this vision the School of Education participates in the discovery, development, demonstration, and dissemination of professional knowledge and practice within a context of ethics, service to others, and social justice. We fulfill this mission by preparing professionals to serve as teachers, administrators, psychologists, and researchers; by conducting research on issues of professional practice and social justice; and by partnering with schools and community agencies to enhance life-long learning in the Chicago area.

LU CHOICE is Catholic and Jesuit

To be a member of LU CHOICE it is not necessary that you share the Catholic tradition; however, you will be asked to understand its tradition and practices, its beliefs and values and are expected to interact respectfully and critically with it.

And those of you from other denominations and traditions can expect from the program the same openness towards you. We want to learn from your tradition and practices and find the many connections and similarities, as well as shared values and beliefs.

The Jesuit tradition involves searching inward as well as outward, knowing yourself and scrutinizing your own experience as well as exploring what others' claim as their experience; it brings a special commitment to social justice, to spiritual practice, to compassion and service towards others. Ultimately, it means seeking God in all things and living a life worthy of the glory of God.

Jesuit education asks us to take risks, to search beyond our fears, to take courage and go where we have not yet gone.

Ignatius and Jesuits Today

Ignatius and Jesuit spirituality originally, and again recently, focuses on the poor. The worldwide General congregation of Jesuits in 1994 wrote this: "We have recovered, for our contemporary mission, the centrality of working in solidarity with the poor in accord with our Ignatian charism. As though with new eyes, we read, as a prophetic text for our time, what Polanco, the Jesuit assistant to Ignatius, under Ignatius's guidance wrote to the Jesuit community at Padua in 1547: "So great are the poor in the sight of God that it was especially for them that Jesus Christ was sent into the world...Our Lord so preferred the poor to the rich that he chose the entire college of his apostles from among the poor, to live and associate with them, to make them princes of his Church and set them up as judges of the twelve tribes of Israel – that is, of all faithful – and the poor will be his

counselors. Friendship with the poor makes us friends of the eternal King.” August 7, 1547 #33 Servants of Christ’s Mission.

So this is how Jesuits now describe their ministry:

“Jesuits’ ministry is particularly directed towards

Those who have not heard the Gospel,

Those who are at the margins of the Church or of society,

Those who have been denied their dignity,

Those who are voiceless and powerless,

Those weak in faith or alienated from it,

Those whose needs are greater than they can bear”

General Congregation 34, #169 Decree on Ministerial Priesthood and Jesuit Identity

Saying Yes to an Invitation to Join LU CHOICE

When an invitation is extended to someone to join LU CHOICE the following information is not known: where you will be teaching, what grade/subject you will be teaching, where you will be living and with whom you shall be living. This is intentional on the part of the program. We use as our inspiration Mary’s response in Luke 1:38, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word”. Stepping into the unknown, and saying yes without knowing the details, is an important part of the program.

Preparing People to Lead Extraordinary Lives

A part of Loyola's mission is "Preparing People to Lead Extraordinary Lives". This is at the forefront in the development of the LU CHOICE Program model. Ignatius calls for the development of the whole person, head and heart, intellect and feelings. The purpose, however, is not centered on the development of the self alone. Rather, the purpose is to develop leaders who are committed to ideals and values to such an extent that they will work to change society. (Taken from, Themes of Jesuit Higher Education by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. edited by John J. Callahan, S.J.)The components of LU CHOICE were designed to assist in the accomplishment of this goal.

Living in a community presents an excellent opportunity for personal development and a better understanding of the issues associated with the working poor.

LU CHOICE teachers do sign a lease for a house/apartment. Loyola University Chicago does not get involved in issues related to housing. Teachers have the opportunity to experience the day to day challenges that are a part of lease signing. Teachers also have the opportunity to develop as responsible adults in service to others while getting a better understanding of the life of the working poor.

Teachers are encouraged to live near the schools where they are teaching or among those similar to the students they teach. In this way teachers have the opportunity to experience first hand some of the issues that the working poor experience on a daily basis. By living among the working poor members can identify with the economic realities of the children they serve.

This also provides an opportunity to get a glimpse into the day to day lives of the poor and less fortunate. The issues you are facing are the same issues that the working poor in that area face on a daily basis. The experience is meant to help you have a conversion of heart and develop compassion, empathy and then hopefully action for those you serve. One of the goals of LU CHOICE is that after this experience you will be forever changed and will be a positive change agent in the world.

Past participants have described their experience of spirituality in this way:

"Being in LU CHOICE may create a situation where reliance on God is of utmost importance. That is one of the reasons that I have appreciated the spiritual component in the program. For me spirituality could be "leaned" on during the many challenges that I faced while in this program."

Finally, signing a contract with Loyola University Chicago and with a school gives you an opportunity to navigate through the issues involved in the day to day life of the world of work. While in the program you report to two administrators; the LU CHOICE director and the principal of the school in which you are assigned. In dealing with your administrators, maturity and professionalism are the expectations.

Professional Teaching

By learning you will teach, by teaching you will learn.”

-Latin Proverb

Catholic educators, then, express excellence and fulfill the demands of their vocation as they minister to the authentic needs of youth. Their work is not only a job, a profession requiring specialized expertise; it is also a divine calling, that is, a ministry requiring courage and confidence.

The Vocation of the Catholic Educator (NCEA, 1996)

Through LU CHOICE, Loyola University Chicago is committed to providing to participating schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago professional educators who are engaged in the pursuit of excellence.

LU CHOICE teachers choose to serve children and to make their classrooms safe, emotionally supportive and educationally challenging environments. Part of teaching as a ministry is the focus on student development—academically and spiritually. Your daily interactions with your students, colleagues, and other LU CHOICE teachers will have a profound effect on your own life and on the lives of those you serve.

LU CHOICE strives to provide you with the best possible experience. You, in turn, must strive to respond to the call to serve rather than the desire for personal achievement or recognition.

Moreover, you will become aware of your own gifts and talents. You may discover the ease with which you are able to bring a smile to the face of a shy student, your ability to spark self-confidence in those who have none or the gift of quiet patience with students who need extra time and attention.

A true sense of service must be rooted in the Gospel rather than in the self-serving notion of personally saving the world. Through the example of Jesus and the sometimes heroic sacrifices of parents and family, the resilience of students, and the commitment of other educators, LU CHOICE teachers may learn that genuine service is founded on faith, humility, and solidarity.

Program Components:

- LU CHOICE teachers are placed in a Catholic School and will teach at that school for the two years in which they participate in the program. Serving in the same school for two years, we believe, provides the teacher with the best possible learning experience. In some cases it may not be possible that the teacher have the same assignment or be in the same school for the second year of the program. The needs of the school may change and the principal may find it necessary to give the teacher a different assignment for their second year of the program. If a school should close, the program will find a new placement/assignment for the teacher's

second year. Participation in the program is contingent upon available placements within the Archdiocese of Chicago.

- Placements are made by the program director. Attempts are made to place teachers at the grade level and in the environment in which they are most interested. However, personal preferences can not always be met.
- Student files are sent to principals for final approval. **Applicants not accepted by a principal for a teaching position cannot be accepted into LU-CHOICE.**
- After candidates are accepted into the program they are sent a graduate application for the School of Education.
- Teachers are often placed in schools that are under resourced and may minister to populations that are also under served. For the new teacher this can create challenges. The program will not isolate you or shield you from these challenges. The program is here to be a support to our teachers in this challenging environment by helping you get *through* the challenges. **Under-resourced is defined as schools needing assistance finding faith-filled, well-trained teachers.*
- As it states in our mission, “The mission of LU-CHOICE is to serve under resourced Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Therefore, you may be placed in **any** Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Chicago. While our focus is on schools that minister to under served populations, we may also be in schools that do not fit that profile.
- All first year LU CHOICE teachers will be assigned a second year LU CHOICE teacher to serve as their mentor.
- All teachers must provide to the Office of Catholic Schools the result of a TB tests taken within one year prior to teaching. The teacher should visit the LUC website to see if any other vaccinations and/or paperwork are required by the university. If so this must be completed by the end of July during the first summer in the program.
- LU CHOICE teachers take graduate level classes during their two years in the program according to the following schedule:

Summer – Year One

CIEP 421: Reading/Literacy Instruction in Elementary School

CIEP 437: Strategies for Teaching Social Studies/Fine Arts

CIEP 438: Math Methods in Elementary/Middle School

Fall – Year One

CIEP 423: Advanced Literacy Instruction in Content Areas
CIEP 564: Student Teaching Seminar

Spring – Year One

CIEP 401: The Exceptional Child
CIEP 564: Student Teaching Seminar

Summer – Year Two

CIEP 446: Middle School Theory and Practice
CIEP 425: Classroom Assessment
CIEP 439: Teaching Science in Elementary/Middle School

Fall – Year Two

CIEP 401: The Exceptional Child
CIEP 450: Educational Psychology
CIEP 564: Student Teaching Seminar

Spring – Year Two

ELPS 420: Philosophy of Education
CIEP 564: Student Teaching Seminar

- LU CHOICE teachers are given the option of taking their last class at the Rome Center in July of their final year in the program. It is the teacher's responsibility to apply for the Rome Program. Reservations for this program are not held for LU CHOICE teachers. As classes fill up early it is recommended to apply for the program in October of their final year of the program.
- Teachers are required to pay for testing fees for the Illinois Test of Basic Skills, Content Exam and APT and books which are required for course work. The Basic Skills' test must be taken and passed prior to November of the teacher's first year in the program.
- Summer Seminars: During the summer teachers will attend seminars designed to help them prepare for their first year of teaching. These seminars are practical and may be led by current LU CHOICE teachers, Staff, Alumni and principals.
- All LU CHOICE teachers will be assigned a Supervisor of Student Teaching. This supervisor will visit each LU CHOICE teacher up to ten times the first year and second year. The purpose of these visits is to provide supervision, support and feedback to the LU CHOICE teacher. The supervisor also assigns the grade for student teaching each semester.
 - Your two years in LU CHOICE are considered student teaching. Therefore, it is important that any major issues that arise at school with administration, parents, students, etc. be discussed with your supervisor

before taking any action. Your supervisor can give you advice on next steps.

- The LU CHOICE Director will also visit each teacher twice per semester. The purpose of these visits is to meet with the principal of the school to get feedback and suggestions on the program. Additionally, these visits help confirm the feedback that the director receives about the teacher from the supervisor and the principal. Visiting the schools also gives the director an opportunity to experience the school atmosphere and administration. Visiting LU CHOICE teachers in their classrooms gives the director an opportunity to experience what it is like for the teacher on a daily basis.
- All participating teachers must present to the director a copy of their class schedule, and official college transcript, by October 1.
- At the end of each semester (summer, fall, Winter/Spring), each LU CHOICE teacher will be evaluated. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine if the teacher will continue in the program. If a teacher has areas of concern, those areas will be outlined for the teacher and the teacher will have the next semester to show improvement in those areas. If improvement is not evident, the teacher will be asked to leave the program.
- Termination by a LU CHOICE School of a LU CHOICE Teacher's Teaching Contract due to the Teacher's material breach of the Teaching Contract, or the non-renewal of a teacher's contact, may result in the Teacher's removal from the LU CHOICE program. In such a circumstance, the decision whether to remove a LU CHOICE Teacher from the LU CHOICE program, or to seek employment for the teacher at another school, shall be at the recommendation of the LU CHOICE Director.
- Due to state certification guidelines, all LU-CHOICE teachers must have the following general education credits. Many teachers will have completed these requirements in their undergraduate course work. However, some LU-CHOICE teachers may be required to take additional classes to complete the general education requirements. Note: Some requirements may be met by waivers or testing rather than completion of a course. **Scheduling and payment of tuition for these classes is the responsibility of the LU CHOICE teacher.**

Communication Skills

Public Speaking (3)

Composition I & II (6)

Mathematics and Science

Math Elective (3)

Biological Science (3)

Physical Science (3)

One science must include a lab.

Humanities

Evidence of 9 credit hours in at least two of the following categories:

Arts, Literature, Philosophy, Foreign Language

Social Science

American Government

Or U.S. History (3)

Evidence of 6 hours in at least two of the following categories:

History, Geography, Economics, Political Science, Anthropology, Religious Studies (not Theology), Psychology, Sociology

Area of Concentration

18 hours of coursework in an approved area. Courses should be beyond the introductory level and at a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the 18 hours.

- ***LU CHOICE applicants are not required to take the GRE or praxis exams.***

AmeriCorps

LU CHOICE has been a member of the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service (CNVS) since 2003. CNVS assists member programs in many ways. Through CNVS, LU CHOICE teachers may be eligible to participate in the AmeriCorps Education Awards Program (AEAP). If available, teachers may participate in AmeriCorps for a total of two years.

All LU CHOICE teachers are encouraged to participate in AEAP. With the LU CHOICE staff, each teacher will determine at which level (full-time, part-time, and reduced part-time) to enroll.

All LU CHOICE teachers that are also AmeriCorps members are bound by the AEAP contract and handbook.

Required Paperwork

All members participating in AmeriCorps will have to provide the following to the program:

- AmeriCorps Enrollment Form
- Member Contract
- An original copy of a birth certificate or passport and a government issue ID
- Placement Site information
- Orientation certification
- Bi weekly Tracking tools, signed by the school principal (to be turned in on the 10th of each month)

- Certification of hours worked form, signed by school principal
- Exit Form, filled out at the end of the term
- Progress Report, filled out at the end of the term
- Mid year and final supervisor evaluation
- Civic Engagement Survey
- Program Evaluation

Failure to turn in any of these documents can result in being disqualified to receive an AmeriCorps award.

Liability Insurance

All LU CHOICE placement sites sign the AmeriCorps Site Supervisor Contract which acknowledges that the site has adequate liability insurance coverage for the organization, employees and members, including coverage of members engaged in on- and off-site project activities. Loyola University Chicago also maintains adequate liability insurance for the organization, employees and members.

Background Checks

By signing the LU CHOICE letter of intent you give the program, and the Office of Catholic Schools, authorization to conduct a state criminal registry check. You also give authorization to share the results of that check within the program, as deemed appropriate. You give further authorization for the program and the Office of Catholic Schools to share these results with your placement site.

You understand that selection into the program is contingent upon the program's review of your criminal history, if any.

After the check is completed you have an opportunity to review and challenge the factual accuracy of a result before action is taken to exclude you from the program.

Members are required to verify their identity by having the program director examine a government-issued photo ID (e.g., driver's license, state-issued ID, passport). A copy of the ID will be kept in the member's file.

Community

If we are going to use the word [“community”] meaningfully we must restrict it to a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to “rejoice together, mourn together, and to delight in each other, make other’s conditions our own.”

M. Scott Peck, M.D., The Different Drum (1988)

While the communities in LU CHOICE are faith-based, it is not a requirement to express or share the same values as the participants in which you live.

Community living is much more than just sharing living space. At its best, you will become part of something that is a reflection of the first community of disciples of Jesus. Being aware of the needs of others and letting others know of your needs will provide many benefits. Embracing a communal way of life will enable you to identify more closely with the realities of those whom you serve and make you a better servant.

Building a community does not “just happen” without effort. You must plan to devote time and work to build community, just like you would with developing yourself academically. It is for these reasons that some of the practical aspects of community living are outlined below.

One component of community living is to live simply. Living simply is not the same as living in poverty. It is an invitation to reflect on the impact the material world has in your own life. Since resources are limited, each LU CHOICE teacher will be required to make difficult fiscal and social choices while trying to make ends meet within your budget. Sometimes you will have to make personal and communal sacrifices in negotiating appropriate ways to pool resources and funds.

The concept of community living embraces more than living simply. More importantly, it is about building relationships, relying on one another, supporting each other and sharing the responsibility for the quality of life of the community. Community living may challenge LU CHOICE teachers to focus on the important questions of faith in Jesus Christ, living harmoniously with others, and how selflessly they extend themselves for their students, co-workers, other LU CHOICE teachers, God and the global community.

Community requires commitment to the other members of the group. Sometimes it requires sacrificing one’s own agenda to be with, to get know, and to come to care for the other members of the group.

Individualism and competition are highly esteemed social values in our contemporary culture. Many times a Christian community challenges the values of individualism and competition that are prevalent in modern society by demonstrating that much can be accomplished by living and working together in a spirit of sacrifice, respect, dedication, and openness. A Christian community appreciates and celebrates the differences, individuality, and gifts of each of its members. It promotes collaboration rather than

competition and cultivates a climate in which the members are given the opportunity to actively explore and nurture their faith. LU CHOICE seeks to build a cooperative and supportive environment wherein LU CHOICE teachers may freely express their successes, joys, doubts, struggles and questions. The creation of such an environment requires each member to open him/herself to different or even opposing viewpoints, values, experiences, ideals, and expectations. The faith journey may facilitate the opportunity for LU CHOICE teachers to explore, recognize, and appreciate that they live and work with people who have traveled different paths. Because it is founded on faith, the Loyola community supports those who believe that God invites us to a life of service. LU CHOICE teachers become more sensitive to diversity in community by opening their hearts and minds to honest, respectful dialogue.

The living reality of a faith-based community will sustain and challenge you on a daily basis. Unlike the experience of roommates, neighboring tenants or even co-workers who occupy a common space, a faith-based community demands that LU CHOICE teachers risk vulnerability by openly sharing themselves.

LU CHOICE teachers are encouraged to honestly communicate feelings, hopes, dreams and fears with one another and actively search for the connections that make them a community.

Community living demands flexibility and compromise. You must be willing to share the routine and often mundane tasks of day-to-day living. You must also willingly participate in decision-making and agree to abide by the community's decisions even when it does not suit you.

Through participation in activities which may include: prayer, group reflection, retreats, meetings, the day-to-day tasks of housework, shopping, cooking, and so forth, LU CHOICE teachers work together to create a cooperative and supportive environment. The service to which our faith invites us does not conclude at the end of the school day or at the end of the week. Rather, by serving one another in community, LU CHOICE teachers continue the process of mutual understanding, support and empowerment.

Community living is one of the most important aspects of the LU CHOICE experience. A supportive community will make a tremendous difference in your personal development and in your performance as a teacher. Becoming a community requires commitment and self-sacrifice. Your community will challenge you to grow and because of that, at times, you may have to sacrifice your personal interests for the sake of the community. Unlike most beginning teachers, you have the advantage of a community that provides a professional and spiritual support network.

Community can be the best part of the LU CHOICE experience but it can also be the most difficult. Living in community is not the equivalent of living in a dorm or apartment setting. In an ideal community, the members are committed to each other, they make time for one another, they share concerns and ideas, they care for each other, and they sacrifice for each other. Members strive to become more aware of how their daily

actions or indifference may affect the lives of those around them. The reward of a successful community experience is one of the advantages that sets LU CHOICE apart from other programs.

Service in LU CHOICE is not easy. Every day offers new challenges and obstacles to overcome, but you are never alone. Community living offers the support necessary to face the challenges of each day. Community also offers a structure for reflection and spiritual practice.

Community living is a component of the LU CHOICE program. However, housing is not a part of the program. Housing and all related issues are the responsibility of the program participants.

LU CHOICE teachers should keep a communal calendar, being aware of and honoring the following expectations/guidelines and particulars of community living:

- ***Eating dinner together.*** The community should decide on a schedule for sharing dinner together. You are encouraged to do this as often as is possible. However, three times a week is the program expectation. This would mean that extra-curricular activities should be planned to take place before or after the dinner hour on agreed upon nights. On some community evenings, members may invite co-workers, and other guests who can share insight into professional development, community living, spiritual growth, etc. *Eating together as many nights as possible is encouraged with the understanding that extra-curricular activities and other commitments will mean that not every member of the community will be able to be there every night.*
- ***Doing household chores such as cooking, shopping, cleaning, etc. together, when feasible.*** The community should develop a schedule to ensure that regular duties are carried out on a regular and fair basis. LU CHOICE is a community-oriented program that requires its participants to be considerate of the other members of the household. Each member is expected to maintain the highest standards of safety, cleanliness, and healthy living in the community residence.
- ***Meeting weekly for reflection or spiritual sharing.*** You will have the opportunity for weekly reflection or spiritual sharing together. Take turns planning and leading the community in reflection or spiritual sharing. Take time to prepare the activity in order to make it a helpful experience to the other members of the community. Be creative, take risks and try new things.
- ***Planning and participating in monthly community events.*** As a community, you should plan at least one community event per month; i.e. going to the movies, a game night at the house, putt-putt golf, etc. All community members must attend the event, as its purpose is to strengthen group unity, cohesiveness, and camaraderie. When planning the event, LU CHOICE teachers should be sensitive

to and respectful of others' interests. The community may sometimes invite other people to participate in a community activity.

- ***Meeting regularly to discuss community issues.*** It will be important to take time to discuss and plan certain aspects of your life together. The regular meeting will be a time to talk about the days and weeks ahead so that your schedules can be altered to make room for community events, to discuss how faithful you have been as a community to your agreements, etc. To function smoothly, the community must establish a method of decision-making and distribution of responsibility. Regularly scheduled meetings (twice a month Aug –Jan, then you may have monthly meetings from Feb – July), attended by all community members, are the expectation of the program. It is best to establish a set time and day for these meetings (for example, the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30) so LU CHOICE teachers can plan their schedules accordingly. These meetings should be scheduled in addition to the weekly reflection or faith sharing meetings.
- ***Community Covenant*** – Each community will draft a community covenant to which each member agrees to abide.
- ***Whole Group Reflection or Spiritual Sharing***– The entire group of LU CHOICE teachers will have the opportunity to gather four times a year for reflection or spiritual sharing. The group will not meet during the months in which retreats are held.
- ***Honoring the communal living rules.***
 - Except for vacations and occasional trips, LU CHOICE teachers are expected to be ***full time residents*** of the LU CHOICE community house in which they are assigned. (This includes weekends.) It is important to discuss with fellow community members, in advance, those situations that will take them away from the group during regularly scheduled community activities and/or ***overnight***. LU CHOICE teachers will consider the group when making vacation plans.
 - LU CHOICE teachers must decide on a policy for overnight visitors provided it is in accordance with LU CHOICE policies. A guest staying more than two nights should first be approved by the community.
 - Communities are to discuss and decide as community reasonable parameters for parties, including number of guests, when guests must leave, responsibilities for set-up and clean-up, weekend vs. school nights etc.
 - Use and/or possession of illegal drugs or substances by LU CHOICE teachers or at a LU CHOICE community home are strictly prohibited. See LU CHOICE Member Handbook “Drug Policy” for additional information.

- In the spirit of community and promoting community, members are asked to not have TVs in their rooms, but to have one TV in a common area of the house.
- Due to the nature of community, LU CHOICE will not place persons directly involved in intimate personal relationships in the same community.
- ***Pooling Community Resources—financial resources and time spent working together.*** LU CHOICE teachers will be required to pool their resources and work together to maintain a budget for weekly groceries and other community expenses. Unlike purely individual financial responsibilities, this requires members to openly communicate about accounting matters and to come to consensus regarding the grocery lists, community events etc.
 - RENT, UTILITIES AND BILLS—The cost of rent and utilities for LU CHOICE housing, including phone service, is the responsibility of the LU CHOICE teachers who are living there. Conservation methods will help to decrease cost of utilities or hold them in check. It is suggested that one person in the community be responsible for paying monthly bills such as gas, electric, and phone. The community should decide who will be responsible for paying the bill each month and collecting the correct amount from each community member. LU CHOICE teachers starting in June must be prepared to pay rent, and security deposit, on August 1.
 - If for any reason a member leaves the community, the community will have to work out details with the teacher as relates to bill payment. The member leaving is obligated to pay all community related expenses through July. The community may decide to get another roommate. In any case, the program does not get involved in these housing related issues.
 - All teachers live on the Lake Shore Campus during the summer. Housing and meals are covered by the program.
 - Teachers are still responsible for paying rent and utilities on their community residences over the summer.
 - FOOD—Teachers will agree on a dollar amount per week to be used for groceries. This amount will include food that you buy for school activities (food that you might be asked to bring for teacher pot-luck lunches, social events, etc.), and occasional dinner guests (including LU CHOICE staff, guest speakers, etc.).
 - HOUSEHOLD MAINTENANCE—Proper care for the residence will make your community living experience much more pleasant. Report problems to your landlord promptly. Make a schedule for regular cleaning and stick to it. An amount should be agreed upon for monthly purchases of cleaning supplies, light bulbs, vacuum cleaner bags, paper products, etc.
 - KEYS—Each LU CHOICE teacher receives a key to the residence from the landlord.
 - LEASE – All LU CHOICE teachers are encouraged to sign a lease for their home. The program strongly discourages moving in to a residence

without a lease. Leases are to run from August 1 – July 31. If participants choose not to have a lease it is their responsibility to live in their residence from August 1 – July 31. LU CHOICE bears no responsibility for these properties. Any challenges related to housing must be worked out by the residents of the property and their landlord. This can include but is not limited to: bugs, rodents, things that need to be fixed, etc.

- HOUSING – housing is the responsibility of the individual participants and community members. As responsible, adult, graduate students, participants are expected to locate their own housing. Participants must live with other program participants. All issues related to housing; deposits, credit checks, and moving are the responsibility of the participants.
 - The program is happy to provide assistance as relates to locating housing. Second year teachers are also great resources for this activity.
- FURNITURE – furnishing houses is the responsibility of the participants. Over the years the program has accumulated furniture and can usually provide each participant with a bed and dresser. The program is happy to provide communities with any other furniture we have acquired. Caring for this furniture is the responsibility of the community. If teachers choose to break their lease, and/or move out prior to July 31, they will be responsible for moving and storage of furniture in a central location etc. until July 31. The program does not store furniture.
- DEPOSITS – Teachers are responsible for paying deposits for housing. If it is the decision of the program to move the following will be the guidelines if a deposit is to be paid by the program;
 - the community must have a lease for that housing that runs from August 1 – July 31. If the full deposit is not returned to LU CHOICE the difference will be billed to the community members. All necessary paperwork must be received by the program office by July 1 in order for a check to be processed in time. If the necessary information is not received by July 1 teachers may forfeit this benefit.
- MOVING – Teachers are responsible for all aspects of moving if they decide to move. This includes moving furniture and all items to their new residence. If it is the decision of the program to move teachers, the following will be the guidelines followed:
 - the program will only move teachers out of a residence at the end of July and in to another residence at the beginning of August. Teachers are responsible for moving their personal items and packing up the items that belong to LU CHOICE. Moves will be set up by July 15. Therefore, all new addresses must be received by the program office by that date in order that a move can be set up in time. If the necessary information is not received by this date, teachers will be responsible for their move.

Community Assignments

All LU-CHOICE teachers live in community with other participants. Ideally communities are a mix of first and second year teachers. There is not a set number for how many members may be in a community, however, communities usually range from a membership of 3 – 6.

Community assignments are determined by the program participants with the approval of the Director. All teachers must have the opportunity to be a part of the decision making process as relates to community make up. LU CHOICE teachers must live in the agreed upon community. New assignments can be made each year so it is possible that LU CHOICE teachers will not live in the same community during their two year participation in the program.

Community Support

LU CHOICE values the efforts you make toward true community. In that light, the program will support you in a variety of ways:

- Dinner with the director. The director will visit each community 2-4 times a year. At that time dinner will be shared and any business that needs to be addressed will be discussed at that time. The director will also conduct a faith sharing session.
- Support Person(s): When possible each community will be assigned at least one support person. This person has usually participated in a similar service program. This person is there to listen and support the community and its individual members as they need. Communities are encouraged to utilize their support persons for assistance/support during their participation in the program
- Chaplain: When possible a chaplain will be assigned to each community. As with the support person, the community should have the chaplain over for dinner on a regular basis. This person is there to be a spiritual resource and support to the community. When possible the chaplain(s) will meet with the group on a regular basis for faith sharing and/or spiritual direction.

Communities are encouraged to utilize their resources on a regular basis.

Being present to community

In LU CHOICE, community provides participants with the support necessary to engage in the difficult work for justice. Living in community requires commitments to both formal and informal time together, as well as sharing resources and open communication. Despite the challenges of living with unknown people, it is important that participants establish the relational foundation they will need throughout the year. For this reason, **LU CHOICE asks participants neither receive out-of-town visitors nor leave for individual trips within the first two months of their LU CHOICE year. LU**

CHOICE participants should consider the following when making decisions about their place in community:

- Am I focused on the here-and-now or am I focused on my past relationships and my future plans?
- How much time am I spending away from my community (on the phone, e-mail, making frequent trips to visit friends and family, having guests and visitors, etc.)?
- Am I giving and receiving support from my community or am I relying on outside resources (i.e., family, friends, a significant other) to give me the apostolic support I need as a LU CHOICE participant?
- If I am relying on people outside of my community, why?

Note on LU CHOICE Community Life

Community in LU CHOICE is a means to an end. A LU CHOICE community, building on the spirituality of Saint Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus, and the prior experience of participants, is **outward focused**. Community is meant as a means to help serve an end--namely, the ministry of each member of the community. Community should provide a supportive role for a person in their ministry--a place to rest, a place to talk to others who have similar issues, a place to recharge for ministry. The focus is on the ministry--in your case, your service and your academic work. LU CHOICE participants are asked to figure out the form of community that best accomplishes the goals of LU CHOICE. This may be done in many ways, such as faith sharing meetings, hosting gatherings, and praying and socializing together. While it is ideal to meet together as a community often, the LU CHOICE program, with all of the responsibilities involved, does not always allow for this. Therefore, LU CHOICE participants should discuss ways in which they can schedule time together. **Community life does not end at 5:00 pm on Friday and then resume on Monday morning.** Weekends, when LU CHOICE participants are not working or attending class, offer ample opportunities for getting together as a community. For this to happen, however, all community members need to make community life and spending time together a priority.

The development of the community is the responsibility of the individual members. The program can offer support in this area. However, the program will not step in to “solve” community related matters. It is the expectation of the program that members will use their combined experience, and the skills being developed through their studies, to development community and handle any issues that may arise.

Simple Living

The group of believers was one in mind and heart. No one said that any of his belongings was his own, but they all shared with one another everything they had . . . There was no one in the house who was in need.

Acts of the Apostles 4: 32-34

LU CHOICE members are invited to embrace a simple life and to reject the notion that a successful life is determined by material wealth. LU CHOICE members live with a modest salary, health insurance, and partial tuition remission.

Simple living is not a matter of pretending to be poor but rather it is an occasion to reflect upon the impact the material world has on our daily lives. LU CHOICE members are challenged to make responsible fiscal choices while trying to make ends meet on a modest salary. By living modestly members can identify with the economic realities of the children they serve.

Simple Living Expectations

All LU CHOICE members come to the program knowing that there is an expectation that they will live a simple life. It is expected that the yearly modest salary will be the money each member lives on while he/she is in the LU CHOICE program.

The practice of using a parent's credit card or allowing parents to pay for personal expenses is not in keeping with the spirit of simple living.

Depending on a personal expense account or a bank account for an extra cash flow runs contrary to the idea of living simply. Having to go without the extras or the perks we believe we cannot live without in modern society can be a growth filled and challenging experience.

Therefore, LU CHOICE teachers are not permitted to have jobs outside of their teaching placement. See Part-Time Jobs/School Service Opportunities in the LU CHOICE Policies section for more information.

Living within the personal stipend

LU CHOICE expects participants will not spend beyond their personal stipend during their time in the program. This expectation is not meant to impose austerity, but to help participants experience a greater sense of solidarity with those whose limited income is not a choice. Monetary limitations also help participants examine their priorities and reflect on the impact of how they allocate their resources. Some questions to consider deepening this reflection are:

- In making purchases am I buying on impulse or have I thought about the full implications of my choice?
- Who is affected by this purchase?
- What do I know about the business/institution that is profiting from this purchase?
- Am I spending this money merely because I can?
- How does this purchase express solidarity with people who are poor?

LU CHOICE participants receive a larger stipend than those in other related programs. Realities of graduate student life in the city of Chicago make this necessary. LU CHOICE participants are expected to use their stipend in responsible ways.

LU CHOICE does pay all school related tuition and fees. Participants are responsible for books and other school expenses. The monthly living stipend is enough to cover all basic expenses. The annual health insurance premium is through the participants' school/archdiocese. Participants are responsible for all other medical related costs.

If any type of unexpected expense should arise; medical, car related, family emergency, etc. the participant will need to be prepared to explore options to handle these expenses. Since the monthly stipend does not provide much opportunity for savings, participants are faced with risk of debt when something unexpected should arise. It is the responsibility of the participant to be prepared for these situations prior to accepting an invitation to join the LU CHOICE program.

Spirituality

*“Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
to give and not to count the cost...”*
- *from St. Ignatius’ Prayer for Generosity*

...their ministry requires Catholic educators to stand before their students as living witnesses, symbols of God’s and the Church’s personal interest in their lives.

The Vocation of the Catholic Educator (NCEA, 1996)

We value the experiences of a diverse group of participants from all backgrounds. While it is not a requirement to express or share the same faith values as other participants, all members must be open to living and working with persons that express faith experiences which may be different from their own.

Prayer and faith-sharing are the inextricable links which draw together service and community living and form the foundation for building and maintaining a healthy community. As an ecumenical group, LU CHOICE teachers are encouraged to enter respectfully into dialogue and open themselves to deeper questions of the heart. By celebrating, questioning, sharing faith and oneself, the LU CHOICE fellowship experience may require you to transcend an often hidden but real assumption that one’s spirituality is a purely private matter which should not be expressed in public. For many spirituality comes alive when LU CHOICE teachers recognize that their service as teachers, their lives in community, and their professional growth are all intimately connected to their faith in a generous and compassionate God who invites us to serve one another.

In sharing your personal stories and your faith, you will explore the sometimes intangible and reflective questions of the heart. The following questions may be the basis of the weekly faith-sharing with the community:

- What is my service as a teacher revealing to me about myself, others, God?
- What is my membership in a faith-based community revealing to me about myself, others, God?
- What values of my society/culture am I questioning as a result of my experience of service and community life?
- What in my experience currently is challenging me to grow in my faith?

Through a common exploration of how each member finds God in his/her life LU CHOICE teachers may take the time to notice and appreciate more of life and open themselves to a new dimension of the spiritual journey.

While recognizing that time for private personal reflection is needed to nurture a vibrant faith-life LU CHOICE teachers may have the opportunity to share their joys and struggles in the context of evenings of fellowship/faith sharing. Realizing that each person brings a unique perspective to bear on questions relating to faith, LU CHOICE

teachers must be sensitive to various stages of spiritual development and the individual level of comfort each member brings to the faith-sharing gathering.

Evenings of prayer/faith-sharing/reflection may provide LU CHOICE teachers with an opportunity to listen to one's own experience and to the life experience of a few others. As LU CHOICE teachers connect their daily lives with their faith in God the rewards of a life of service, and community living become more apparent. The evenings of fellowship/faith-sharing will sustain you through the trials, tribulations and triumphs of your LU CHOICE experience.

Community Chaplains

When possible each community will be assigned a community Chaplain(s). Communities are encouraged to utilize their Chaplain(s) for assistance in faith development during the participation in the program. When possible the chaplain(s) will meet with the group on a regular basis for faith sharing and/or spiritual direction. This generally would occur between January and May on a monthly basis.

Weekly Reflection or Spiritual Sharing

Taking advantage of both individual and communal prayer opportunities will enhance your experience of LU CHOICE and make it the powerful experience that it can be. Spirituality is a cornerstone for LU CHOICE. It is fundamental to the spirit of the program and is essential to the process of becoming community. Therefore, the community has the opportunity to establish a regular day and time for weekly reflection or spiritual sharing and nothing must be allowed to interfere with these meetings. If a school event is scheduled on the same evening as the fellowship meeting, the community must arrange to meet on another evening during that week.

- Note: Remember and respect the fact that people (and the Church!) have diverse styles of prayer and are at different points in their own personal prayer journey. What may be a comfortable prayer style for you may be new to a member of your community. It may take time for others to become comfortable with your preferred style of prayer. This does not mean that new forms of prayer should not be attempted; in fact, a variety of prayer is encouraged. Simply be mindful that others may be asking you to stretch and that you may be asking your community to stretch as well.

Whole Group Reflection or Spiritual Sharing

Four times a year the entire LU CHOICE community will have the opportunity to gather for reflection or spiritual sharing. (Usually, September, November, January, and March) The group will not meet during the months in which retreats are held. (October and May)

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction is the contemplative practice of helping another person or group to awaken to the mystery called God in all of life, and to respond to that discovery in a growing relationship of freedom and commitment. (James Keegan, SJ, Roman Catholic, USA, on behalf of the Coordinating Council of Spiritual Directors International)

Spiritual direction is the process of accompanying people on a spiritual journey. Spiritual direction exists in a context that emphasizes growing closer to God (or the holy or a higher power). Spiritual direction explores a deeper relationship with the spiritual aspect of being human.

A key component of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius is spiritual direction. In order to help LU CHOICE teachers better discern where God is calling them, not only while in the program, but after they leave the program, all LU CHOICE teachers have the opportunity to be assigned a spiritual director with whom they will meet on a monthly basis. (More, if desired by the teacher and can be arranged with the director.)

Retreats

Members have the opportunity to participate in weekend retreats that will be scheduled during the year by LU CHOICE.

Retreat Schedule

Year One

- Opening Retreat/orientation – both classes
- Fall Retreat – both classes
- Spring Retreat – both classes
- End of First Year day of Reflection – class that just completed year one

Year Two

- Fall Retreat – both classes
- Spring Retreat – both classes

Why do we attend a Silent Retreat?

We make the retreat a part of the program for your sake. After weeks of transitioning into teaching, we ask you to take a weekend of Ignatian spirituality. This means that you get some rest on the weekend, reflect on your experience of the first few months with a spiritual companion during the retreat, take your experience to God in prayer as you understand God, and receive the gift that God wants you to enjoy. The retreat is placed to help you seek and find God in all the events of your life, to allow you to claim your identity as a "person for others," and to lead you to listen to your deepest desires. Various activities are presented during the weekend retreat and we encourage you to take part in them and give yourself to the process of the retreat.

LU CHOICE Policies

It is assumed that teachers in LU CHOICE are mature adults. It is not the intention of these guidelines to tell you how to behave in every situation, nor are they to be viewed as a list of "dos" and "don'ts". Rather, the policies described herein are meant to clarify any assumptions you may have regarding your participation in LU CHOICE.

A noteworthy reality is that as a member of LU CHOICE you represent Loyola University Chicago and the Archdiocese of Chicago. In that regard, you are a public person and must conduct yourself in a professional, ethical and moral manner at all times.

Teaching Expectations

LU CHOICE teachers are expected, at all times, to present themselves to their students and their communities in the most professional manner. Appropriate boundaries must always be maintained in the student-teacher relationship. Teachers must abide by Archdiocesan and school policies as highlighted in the school's handbook. Failure to abide by said guidelines may result in a teacher's dismissal from LU CHOICE.

Absenteeism/Tardiness

LU CHOICE teachers who are absent or late for work must follow the protocol of the school of employment regarding absenteeism and tardiness. Except in the case of illness, you are expected to be at your job on a daily basis. ***Any anticipated absence needs to be approved by the LU CHOICE director and the principal prior to making any plans.*** As teachers you should not cause hardship on the principal or the school by your absence from your teaching responsibilities.

Appearance

As a LU CHOICE teacher, you are expected to dress professionally in accordance with your school's policies. In the LU CHOICE residence a sense of modesty must prevail. Please be sensitive to the co-ed living situation and employ your common sense.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Alcohol and substance abuse and the use of illegal substances will not be tolerated. The habitual use of alcohol is discouraged. The inability to perform school related activities such as teaching and extracurricular activities, failure to participate in community life, or inappropriate behavior resulting from substance abuse are grounds for immediate dismissal from LU CHOICE. At parties or gatherings it is your responsibility to make sure that those consuming alcohol are of legal age.

- Drug-related Offenses at Work: Pursuant to the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, employees (i.e. LU CHOICE teachers) are prohibited from unlawfully manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing or using a controlled

substance in the workplace. As further required under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, a teacher, as a condition of participation in LU CHOICE, must notify LU CHOICE if she or he is convicted of any criminal drug statute violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after the conviction.

- Drug and Alcohol Use: Unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance, and excessive use of alcohol, that may adversely affect an employee's job performance, or that may reflect unfavorably upon public or governmental confidence in the manner in which LU CHOICE carries out its activities, is prohibited.
- Disciplinary Action: Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination.
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention (taken from the Loyola University Chicago Student Handbook)
Loyola University Chicago is committed to the adoption and implementation of a program to prevent the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students. In support of this commitment and in compliance with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, the following information is provided. All members of the Loyola community are expected to comply with the policy.
- Standards of Conduct
The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance and/or illegal use of alcohol by students, faculty or staff on Loyola University Chicago property or at university-sponsored functions is prohibited. See the Judicial Affairs section of the Student Handbook for more information.
- Disciplinary Sanctions
Students who violate this prohibition against drug and illegal use of alcohol on campus and during off-campus university activities will be subject to disciplinary action with sanctions ranging from educational measures to expulsion from the institution, according to provisions of the Student Handbook. Students may also be referred for criminal prosecution.
- Legal Sanctions
Local, state and federal laws make illegal use of drugs and alcohol serious crimes. Conviction can lead to imprisonment, fines and assigned community service. In addition, property used in connection with illegal drugs may be confiscated, federal student loans, grants and contracts may be denied, and illegal use of drugs or alcohol may result in revocation of driving privileges.

Illinois law prohibits the unlawful manufacture, possession, use or distribution of marijuana and controlled substances, including narcotics, barbiturates and cocaine.

Violation of state law may result in arrest and conviction on charges of a misdemeanor or felony offense. An individual so convicted may be fined and/or imprisoned. The sale or distribution of alcohol to or possession by persons under the age of 21 is also prohibited by state law. Any person who violates this law may be charged with a misdemeanor offense and punished accordingly.

Bereavement Leave

LU CHOICE teachers must consult Archdiocesan policy and the school principal in regard to leave associated with the death of an immediate or extended family member.

Confidentiality

On occasion, LU CHOICE teachers may share issues of a personal nature with other LU CHOICE teachers or the LU CHOICE staff. It is expected that whatever is shared in the group or with individual LU CHOICE teachers will be kept in strict confidence except as described below.

While striving to respect confidentiality, LU CHOICE teachers have a responsibility to bring to the attention of the Director anything that may adversely affect a member, his/her service to the school, or the well-being of the community. This obligation is meant to protect and preserve the welfare of LU CHOICE teachers, the community, and the students we serve. Any such information will be dealt with sensitively and with respect for those involved.

Renewal of Contract and Termination

All LU CHOICE teachers are expected to abide by the guidelines set by their school for renewal of teaching contracts. Deadlines for contract renewal should be respected by the LU CHOICE teacher.

LU CHOICE teachers make a commitment to serve in LU CHOICE for two years. A LU CHOICE teacher's participation in the program may be terminated at any time for just cause. The school principals also reserve the right not to renew the contract of a teacher at the end of the first year of service.

A LU CHOICE teacher may choose or be asked to leave the program. If a LU CHOICE teacher voluntarily or involuntarily leaves the program, graduate school tuition obligations become the individual's responsibility.

DISMISSAL FROM The LU-CHOICE PROGRAM

The Director of the LU-CHOICE program may terminate a teacher's participation in the program at any time.

A LU-CHOICE teacher *may* be dismissed from the program for one or more of the following reasons:

- Conducting oneself in a manner deemed as morally or ethically offensive
- Disregarding the philosophy of the school or the program
- Disregard or the violation of Loyola University Chicago policies.
- Demonstrating a pattern of failure in the classroom
- The inability to live harmoniously with other LU-CHOICE teachers
- Disregarding the policies/procedures of the program
- Having any serious physical or emotional problems.
- Earning two or more "C's throughout the coursework
- Decision by the administration of the school where the teacher is employed to discontinue the teaching contract anytime during the school year OR to not offer a new contract to the teacher for the ensuing year.
- Decision by the LU-CHOICE director that the teacher is not upholding/observing the policies of LU-CHOICE as outlined in this handbook.
- Any teacher who is dismissed from their school may also be dismissed from the LU-CHOICE program and his/her Master's degree program.
- This list is not exhaustive. There may be other reasons for program dismissal.

In the event that a teacher is dismissed from the program, the teacher understands that the program has incurred a large number of expenses on their behalf, and is thereby responsible for reimbursing the LU-CHOICE program at Loyola University Chicago for the following costs:

- Tuition and university fees
- Summer housing and meals costs

The school may choose to discontinue the teachers' employment if they are no longer in the program. In the event that a teacher is dismissed from the school in which he/she is employed, the teacher understands that the school has incurred a large number of expenses on their behalf, and is thereby responsible for any contractual agreements with the school and these will have to be met by the teacher.

The teacher will also be responsible for expenses that impact his/her shared community through July:

- Teachers are responsible for payment due to the teachers of the community they are living with (i.e. phone, internet, rent, utilities, etc.) through July.

In addition, this does not mean that the teacher is released from the lease that was signed for housing. The apartment lease for the shared community holds all tenants responsible. The teacher must honor the terms of the lease. The teacher must meet with members of their shared community to decide on the best way to handle the household's possible vacancy and payment for shared expenses.

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL FROM The LU-CHOICE PROGRAM

If LU-CHOICE teachers determine that they wish to withdraw from the program, they are to consult immediately with the LU-CHOICE Director.

When facing the issue of withdraw from the program, LU-CHOICE teachers understand that they will be responsible for any related LU-CHOICE program fees and costs that the university incurred during the teachers' participation in the program.

LU-CHOICE teachers who are facing the issue of voluntary withdrawal from the LU-CHOICE program should follow these steps:

- Immediately schedule an appointment with the LU-CHOICE Director.
- Discuss your situation with the LU-CHOICE Director, and provide reasons behind your decision.
- Following the appointment with the LU-CHOICE Director, the teacher must prepare and submit a transition plan to the school principal and LU CHOICE director. The plan must include at least three weeks of teaching to give the school time to make arrangements for a replacement teacher.
- If program continuation is not a possibility, the teacher must submit a letter of resignation to the LU-CHOICE Director.
- The teacher must submit a letter of resignation to the school administrator where employed.

LU-CHOICE teachers who decide to leave the program should understand that they have signed contracts with Loyola University Chicago, the placement school, and shared housing. The burden is placed on the teacher to resolve contract matters with each party involved.

When teachers voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time during their two years of service, they will be held responsible for reimbursing Loyola University Chicago for the following costs:

- Tuition and university fees
- Summer housing and meal costs

All contractual agreements between the teacher and placement school must be met by the teacher. The school, however, may choose to discontinue the teacher's employment if the student is no longer in the LU-CHOICE program. The student must meet with the LU-CHOICE Director and the school administrator to determine the course of action

(i.e., to determine effective withdrawal date and to review the requirements of the Archdiocesan teaching contract.)

The teacher will also be responsible for expenses that impact his/her shared community through July:

- Teachers are responsible for payment due to the teachers of the community they are living with (i.e. phone, internet, rent, utilities, etc.) through July.

In addition, this does not mean that the teacher is released from the lease that was signed for housing. The apartment lease for the shared community holds all tenants responsible. The teacher must honor the terms of the lease. The teacher must meet with members of their shared community to decide on the best way to handle the household's possible vacancy and payment for shared expenses.

Grievance Procedure

At times, a LU CHOICE member may have problems, concerns, or grievances connected with their work, with community life, or with the program in general. The following procedure has been developed for consideration of a LU CHOICE member's grievance. A LU CHOICE member should proceed in the following manner:

- Present the problem to the Director, either orally or in writing. The Director will give it prompt attention and make a decision within a reasonable amount of time. All decisions made by the director are final
- If the problem is with the LU CHOICE Director the LU CHOICE member should contact the Dean of the School of Education.
- The Dean may wish to schedule a meeting with the LU CHOICE member to discuss the issue(s).
- The Dean will consider the problem and make a decision within a reasonable amount of time.
- The Dean's decision is final.

Legal Responsibility for Finances and Possessions

LU CHOICE is not responsible for the loss of money or other personal belongings of a LU CHOICE teacher. LU CHOICE teachers may bring their own vehicles to the residence and are encouraged to offer rides to other members who may not have their own vehicles. Neither LU CHOICE nor the Archdiocese is responsible for any damage to vehicles.

Loan Deferments, Forbearance and Cancellations

As graduate students, LU-CHOICE teachers will be able to defer most, if not all, of their student loans. LU-CHOICE teachers are considered full-time students during the summer sessions and half-time students during the school year. Loyola University Chicago participates in the National Student Clearinghouse. Therefore, if the LU-CHOICE teacher's undergraduate institution or loan company uses this clearinghouse, he/she will have minimal paperwork to complete for loan deferment. If the institution does not participate in the National Student Clearinghouse, then it is the responsibility of the LU-CHOICE teacher to obtain the necessary paperwork for loan deferment. Please submit the completed paperwork to the Registrar's Office on the fifth floor of Lewis Towers for the registrar's verification and signature.

- Perkins Loans may be deferred and possibly cancelled for teachers in certain schools or teaching in certain disciplines. LU CHOICE teachers should contact their lending agency or the financial aid office of the college or university they attended as an undergraduate for more information.
- Stafford Loans issued after July 1, 1993, have a provision for deferment for economic hardship. The benefits of each loan are listed on your copy of the promissory note. There is a possibility that you will be able to delay the payment of your loan. You must contact your lender to verify the benefits and obtain the appropriate forms. The lender is the party who bills you or issues your coupon book.
- For more information visit <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/teachercancel.jsp?tab=repaying> or see the Director.
- **Loans**
LU-CHOICE teachers receive modest stipends from their schools to cover the basic costs of living. As participants in this service program, LU-CHOICE teachers can expect a simple lifestyle. However, costs of participating in LU-CHOICE are kept to a minimum so that LU-CHOICE teachers need not incur debt.

In the case that an LU-CHOICE teacher does require a loan, he/she may obtain an alternative student loan. Alternative loan programs are offered to students by private lenders. Eligibility for these programs is based on the creditworthiness of the borrower or co-signer, if applicable. Please contact the lender directly with any questions related to a loan program's specific terms and conditions, and how they apply. *Remember, each loan has different terms and conditions. The Office of Student Financial Assistance endorses no loan over another.* LU-CHOICE teachers may visit <http://www.luc.edu/finaid/altloans.shtml> for information on these loans.

In reference to your status as a student keep this in mind:

1st Summer 9 hours

1st Fall 4 hours

1st Spring 4 hours

2nd Summer 9 hours

2nd Fall 4 hours

2nd Spring 6 hours

If going to Rome you will have 3 hours in the final spring and three in the final summer.

It is important to know what your loan agency considers full and part time student status. The above may affect when you have to start paying back loans.

Part-Time Jobs/School Service Opportunities

Jobs (part-time or other), outside of LU CHOICE assignments, are not permitted. (School assignments are determined by the school principal.)

LU CHOICE teachers may decide to participate in other activities as part of their service commitment. If the teacher is interested in additional responsibilities, such as coaching, student council, etc., there should be communication or discussion between the school principal, LU CHOICE staff and LU CHOICE teacher. These additional interests may be permitted if it is feasible and does not unduly hinder teaching and/or community responsibilities. *The teacher should consult with the director before volunteering for any position.* The scope of involvement, the size of the program and the stage of professional development will all be considered before approval is given.

Members completing their second year may have outside employment beginning in June prior to the ending of their contract in July. The member must consult with the LU CHOICE director before accepting a paid position outside of LU CHOICE.

Compensation for After-School Related Activities or for Summer Service

- LU CHOICE members who participate in after school activities or service projects may not receive monetary compensation for their service.
- In order to maintain fair and equitable compensation among the LU CHOICE members, site supervisors are asked not to compensate a LU CHOICE member for service outside of their teaching service.
- Site supervisors who wish to compensate LU CHOICE members for additional services may do so by purchasing classroom teaching aids for their use during their service. The teaching aids are to be left at the school when the LU CHOICE member completes his/her term of service.

Vacations

LU CHOICE teachers should consult the school calendar for vacation information. Members may spend their vacation time away unless a community event is planned for that time. In the event that a retreat or other community event is planned, LU CHOICE teachers must participate in the planned event. The community is encouraged to maintain a community calendar on which members will record the dates when they will be away as well as scheduled community events.

Members are encouraged to take vacation during their Christmas break in December, and their Spring break.

Members finishing their first year can take a vacation after the LU CHOICE orientation in mid June. Participants *may* have a few days off after completing summer school and before teaching in August.

Program Calendar

All participants receive a program calendar. All events on the calendar are mandatory. If a participant may need to miss a scheduled event, the procedure that follows is to be followed.

At times it may be necessary to change the date of a scheduled event. In respect to all teachers, when a change is made, teachers are given as much notice as possible. Even though this may be inconvenient, teachers may have to change plans in order to attend an LU CHOICE event.

There may be events added to the calendar through out the year. It will be at the discretion of the director whether these events are mandatory.

Program Deadlines/Events

LU CHOICE is “Preparing People to Lead Extraordinary Lives” therefore; the program holds its members to very high standards of performance. From time to time data will need to be collected from participating teachers. It is imperative that all deadlines are met. If a deadline will not be met, for any reason, it is the responsibility of the teacher to contact the director **well in advance** to:

- state the reason why the deadline will not be met,
- ask permission for an extension,
- outline the plan for getting required information turned in.

The same is true for scheduled events. If there is a conflict with a scheduled event, for any reason, it is the responsibility of the teacher to contact the director **well in advance** to

- state the reason why attendance at the event is a challenge,
- ask permission to be excused from the event,

- outline the plan for making up the event if necessary.

Failure to meet a deadline, or attend a required event, can result in loss of program benefits until said deadline or event is met.

Any activities to be made up must be completed within one month of the originally scheduled date of the event.

Community and Marriage

LU-CHOICE is a program designed for college graduates who wish to give two years of service through teaching to under-resourced Catholic schools. During their service, LU-CHOICE teachers live in small faith-based communities. In the context of Christian community, they are called to grow together, to support one another, and to challenge each other as they develop personally, professionally, and spiritually. The community pillar of LU-CHOICE is certainly broader in reference and expectation than each LU-CHOICE house; however, a principal experience of community is rooted in the life of each LU-CHOICE house.

The vision of small faith-based community that each LU-CHOICE house is called to explore entails a substantial giving of the self for the good of the community. This vision of community is such that admission to LU-CHOICE is reserved to single lay people committed to living in the LU-CHOICE house with the other community members.

Because LU-CHOICE is a two-year program, the possibility arises that members could wish to marry before they complete their two years of service. In such cases, we encourage the engaged couple to reflect with care on their decision. The emotional, social, and spiritual energies required by the LU-CHOICE model of intentional, faith-based community are likely to conflict with the demands connected with the intimacy of marriage, particularly at the outset of the marriage. Because of our profound respect for the sacrament of marriage, we strongly recommend that LU-CHOICE participants enter into marriage at a time when they are able to enter fully into that sacramental relationship without having substantial responsibilities to an LU-CHOICE community, in fairness to the marriage and to the other community members.

In the event a couple considers the possibility of marrying before one has completed his or her term of service in LU-CHOICE, they would be asked to enter into a discernment process with the LU-CHOICE director to determine whether they will be able to continue to participate in the LU-CHOICE program in the event they decide to wed before completing their term of service. Consensus will be the goal of such a discernment process; however, the director of LU-CHOICE reserves the right to make the final decision about continuance in the program after marriage. The basic criteria employed to reach a decision about continuance in LU-CHOICE will focus on the degree to which the member will be able to participate fully in the teaching, community life, and spirituality components of the program.

One of the options to be considered when making this decision is if the spouse is not a member of the LU CHOICE program, they will not be able to live in the LU CHOICE community while the teacher completes the program.

Family Relationships

A problem arises for teachers and staff from time to time concerning the differing ways in which LU CHOICE staff and parents relate to you as a teacher. The dilemma seems to be that the LU CHOICE staff relate to you as an adult, and your parents often relate to you (understandably!) as one of their children. So, we would like to clarify our position, and then offer some suggestions to you. **First and foremost, we relate to you as adults who make adult decisions. Therefore, we do not have any official relationship with your families throughout the screening process or during your volunteer years,** much to the chagrin of some parents who feel that they should be consulted.

We value the fact that many of you are doing your experience in LU CHOICE as a direct result of values passed on to you by your parents. The problem is that sometimes parents get upset with us for not telling them about some incidents or experiences in your neighborhoods or jobs which you may have during your time in the LU CHOICE program. We do not feel that we can or should share any information with them, as again, we treat you as adults, and to inform your parents of your activities would be to violate our trust with you. We do encourage you to share as openly as you can with your families during your year so that your entire family can better understand your experiences. **It is your responsibility to communicate with them.**

We do have some suggestions for you:

We recommend that you provide your parents with the following information

- your home phone
- the names of the people in your community
- your work phone
- the LU CHOICE office phone
- the name of the LU CHOICE director

Transportation

All transportation expenses are the responsibility of the participating teacher. (Public transportation and/or expenses related to owning a car.) Some teachers can expect lengthy commutes to/from work.

Evaluations

As part of the evaluation process each teacher will complete an end of year self evaluation in addition to a yearly program evaluation.. The end of year self evaluation and the program evaluation are due on May 31.

Other Important Information

Emergencies

It is especially important that LU CHOICE teachers contact the LU CHOICE Director immediately if there is any emergency or accident involving a LU CHOICE teacher or the LU CHOICE residence. This includes medical, household, automobile or programmatic emergencies.

Immediately report all accidents and instances of theft to the Director and, if appropriate, to the police. In case of an accident, mishap, or a substantial community conflict, LU CHOICE teachers may be asked to write an incident report that will be kept on file and used for clarification, if necessary.

In order to fully support LU CHOICE teachers, it is important that the Director be made aware of any difficulties a member may be having at school or in the community. LU CHOICE teachers should seek assistance from the principal, mentor teacher, or the LU CHOICE Director if discipline issues arise at school, or if difficulties with students' parents or other school staff members occur.

Health Benefits

While you are a LU CHOICE teacher, your health insurance is provided by the Archdiocese of Chicago. The portion that you pay will be deducted from your monthly check.

Program Correspondence

While in the LU CHOICE program all program correspondence will be mailed to the community residence in which you live. Also, when contacting you by email or cell phone, the preferred cell phone number/email that is on file with the office will be used.

If at any time you wish to be contacted via a different mailing address, email address or cell phone number, that information must be received by the program office in writing.

Available Resources

LU CHOICE provides you with the following resources. You are encouraged to utilize these resources as often as possible.

- The LU CHOICE Director
- Your school principal
- Your LU CHOICE supervisor
- Your professors
- Your school mentor, if one has been appointed

Your LU CHOICE mentor
Your community members
The other LU CHOICE teachers
The LU CHOICE Alumni
Your community support people, if one or more have been assigned to your community
The e-mentoring program, if this is offered by LUC.
Your community chaplain , if one or more have been assigned to your community

Yearly Stipend

LU CHOICE teachers receive a yearly stipend of \$16,000. Taxes and medical insurance are deducted from your monthly check. Pay day and payment arrangements will be governed by the participating school.

Transcripts

An official transcript must be on file in the LU CHOICE office by Oct. 1. Failure to have the official transcript can result in teachers being blocked from class registration which could result in program termination.

Basic Skills Test

The Illinois Basic Skills' Test must be taken, and passed, prior to November during the teacher's first year in the program.

Program Expenses

During the 1st summer you will need money for the following:

- \$50.00 graduate school application fee.
- Books for summer classes.
- Possible security deposit for your house/apartment.
- You will need to be ready to pay your first month's rent on August 1.
- Up to \$100 for credit checks and apartment application fees.
- Money for your personal spending over the summer.
- Registration for the Basic Skills' Test is \$85.00.

During the summer your housing and meals are covered. There should be no other expenses during the summer.

Participants do pay a fee prior to graduation. Fee is currently \$75.00. In addition you must submit an application for graduation. To ensure your degree is posted on time check into this in October prior to your graduation date. Participants are also responsible for paying for any classes needed to meet the state of Illinois certification requirements that were not taken prior to joining LU CHOICE.

LU-CHOICE participants are responsible for paying rent and utilities after they move into their community home. They also pay for groceries, transportation, and books for class.

LU CHOICE teachers pay for their last six hours of graduate credits and associated fees. Teachers taking six hours in their last spring semester are billed for this full amount. Teachers taking three hours in the spring and three hours in the summer are billed for three hours in the spring and three hours in the summer. ***It is the responsibility of the participant to pay these charges on time and resolve any issues that may be related to payment of fees.*** Any late fees incurred for late payment is the responsibility of the participant. **It is suggested that participants check their account in Locus starting in December to ensure on time payment.**

Many LU CHOICE teachers elect to use part of their AmeriCorps Award (\$4,725) to cover related expenses. **If you are going to do that be sure to send in your voucher to LUC AFTER you spring tuition/fees have been posted.** Failure to follow this procedure may result in the misallocation of your voucher.

In order for a teacher's scholarship award to be applied to their student account, their file in the LU CHOICE office must be up to date at all times. When a file is not up to date, the scholarship award will not be applied. This could result in the inability to register for classes, being assessed a late registration fee or not being able to get into a desired class.

Term of Service

- LU CHOICE teachers commit themselves to two years of teaching service and service to LU CHOICE. The two-year commitment begins on the first day the LU CHOICE member reports to the program and ends on July 31st of the second year in the program.
- During the term of service LU CHOICE members are expected to participate fully in all aspects of LU CHOICE life. This includes but is not limited to the orientation/retreat for new teachers in June.
- LU CHOICE members are expected to reside in their residence through the end of July in the second year and to continue meeting their LU CHOICE responsibilities including attendance at community meetings. *(If teachers choose to break their lease, and/or move out prior to July 31, they will be responsible for moving and storage of furniture etc. until July 31. In addition, not honoring the terms of the contractual agreement also jeopardizes the teacher's completion of the program.)*

Non-Discrimination

Loyola University Chicago, LU CHOICE and the Archdiocese of Chicago do not discriminate in program admission based on religion, race, color, sex, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

Reasonable Accommodation

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other relevant local, state and federal legislation Loyola University Chicago's LU CHOICE program is accessible to persons with disabilities and will provide reasonable accommodation to the known mental or physical disabilities of LU CHOICE members and staff.

Office Information

The LU CHOICE office is located at Loyola University Chicago, Water Tower Campus, Lewis Towers, 820 N Michigan, 6th Floor. The office mailing address is: LU CHOICE, Loyola University Chicago, School of Education, 820 N Michigan Ave., 11th floor, Chicago, IL 60611. The office phone is 312-915-7049 and the fax number is 312-915-6660. The cell phone of the director will be provided to program participants and should only be used to contact the director in the event of an emergency.

For non emergency issues contact the director via email, lhubbel@luc.edu, or the office phone.

Program Participation

LU CHOICE members are expected to actively participate in all aspects of LU CHOICE, including fellowship, training, in-service, and responsibilities related to teaching and all community activities.

Your LU CHOICE Experience

The above guidelines and policies, especially those regarding professionalism, community and spirituality, are designed to give you a framework upon which you can build your LU CHOICE experience. Following, or not following these guidelines, is not a guarantee that you will have the experience that you are expecting. It is your responsibility to utilize these guidelines to help create your experience. Your experience of professional teaching, community and spirituality, with the support of the program, is up to you.