



Projects Funded by a Grant from the Lilly Endowment, 2014-2016
Project Summary

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Andover Newton's initiatives for reducing seminary debt include two projects: a Cooperative Master of Divinity and a three-part financial literacy initiative (personal finance, fundraising, church finance).

PROJECT ONE:

The Cooperative MDiv combines part-time paid ministry work and ministry studies over a four-year period as an alternative model for funding seminary education. For over fifty years, Andover Newton has made creative educational use of the fact that students have funded their seminary educations in part through paid work for churches. The Cooperative MDiv would blend experiential and classroom learning at a newly-advanced level.

Key Objectives:

- Provide income for MDiv. students, thus reducing their need to take on debt.
- Provide students with valuable ministerial experience in a "teaching church" setting.
- Provide partner churches with affordable leadership resources and continuity of ministerial staff over a four-year period.

Activities to date:

- Hancock Church in Lexington, MA has agreed to be the pilot church.
- A search is underway for a student for the pilot phase of Hancock and Andover Newton's partnership.
- Faculty leader and Senior pastor have begun to design curriculum.
- Dean, who will double as researcher, has begun to map out a research project on scalability of an expanded Cooperative MDiv.

Resources:

- Literature review for research project including resources on theological field education, professional education across fields, and ministerial formation.
- Partnership centered currently on 40+ year teaching parish but expanding rapidly to other local congregations (two have expressed interest in participating in the expanded program, unsolicited).
- Other higher learning institutions in area, such as Northeastern University, have comprehensive cooperative programs and will be included in research project.

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PROJECT TWO:

Financial Literacy: Development of non-credit courses in personal finance, fundraising and church finances.

Key Objectives:

- Assist students in budgeting and managing their personal finances to better understand the implications of student debt for their long-term financial health.
- Teach students the basic fundraising skills they will need as leaders of churches or other non-profit organizations.
- Educate students about best practices for managing church finances to prepare them to deal effectively with church councils and other lay leadership.
- Provide continuing education for local ministers and alumni around financial literacy
- Pilot courses and research the feasibility of introducing a required course on money in the MDiv curriculum

Activities to date:

- Engaged Margaret Marcuson to lead a workshop on Church Finances, October, 2014.
- Arranging conversation on best practices at 2014 ATS SPAN Conference in Orlando, Florida
- Hosting focus group with members of the Council of Theological Education of New England April 24 at Andover Newton
- In the process of hiring student assistant

Resources:

- UCC and MACUCC stewardship resources
- Cornerstone Fund
- UCC Pension Boards
- MMBB (ministers and Missionaries Benefits Board)
- Literature search on personal finance
- AFP (Association of Fundraising Professionals)

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