Educational Models and Practices Peer Group Final Reports

THE **ATS**
EDUCATIONAL MODELS AND PRACTICES
PROJECT

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The Association of Theological Schools
The Commission on Accrediting

Educational Models and Practices Peer Group Final Reports

Contents

Preface

Institutions across The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) are involved in a wide array of activities exploring new ways to fulfill their missions and to achieve and sustain economic equilibrium. Much of this activity has been done without access to important background information and by individual schools without a clear picture of what other schools were doing and learning. The Educational Models and Practices (EMP) project has begun to provide information both about *what* the schools are doing, beyond the data normally reported through the Association's Annual Report Forms, and to provide opportunities for collaborative work enabling the schools to learn together and share learning across the membership.

A significant part of the Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education project (EMP) was the formation and work of 18 peer groups of more than 300 representatives from 110 schools to study particular educational models and practices, analyze their effectiveness, and report back to the membership.

The project was based on a foundational assumption that a great deal of the expertise needed to address the challenges and embrace the opportunities currently present for theological schools resides **in the schools themselves**. Those serving in the schools are in closest contact with their constituencies and they do the daily work of preparing leaders for a broad range of service. ATS staff provided support for the peer groups and facilitated resources, but attaining the goals of the groups depended mostly on the work of the people from the schools.

Another assumption was that **collaboration** among the schools that are working on similar models and practices could produce even greater wisdom. Some collaboration between schools was already happening, but collaboration is notoriously difficult and relatively rare. The resources of this project enabled the kind of expansive collaboration that can contribute to better understanding of these models and practices, providing thoughtful probing and testing, and cultivation of creative ideas.

The **goals** of the peer groups were to:

- **Identify and address crucial issues and questions.** Although these varied somewhat by group, they generally included the following questions. What do we *not* know about this model or practice that we need to know? What is distinctive about this way of educating? How does the model or practice effectively advance the mission of the school and the purposes of theological education? Is it the best use of resources? Is the model or practice sustainable?
- **Identify indicators of quality and effectiveness.** Is the model or practice *educationally* effective? How do we best measure and demonstrate that effectiveness? Can we demonstrate a level effectiveness sufficient to warrant encompassing the model or practice in the Standards of Accreditation?
- **Nurture innovative thinking.** Can the collaborative exploration of the existing model or practice inspire creativity that can lead to new ideas?
- **Inform the wider membership.** Each peer group completed its work by producing a report to share findings with the broader membership and create a record of the study.

There are two broad outcomes from the work of the peer groups.

First, each group produced a report with an analysis of the particular model or practice, identification of best practices, insights about theological education that might be applicable to a range of contexts, and greater clarity about the educational and financial promise of the model or practice. Because of this work, the Association has gained a much more comprehensive understanding of a wide range of models and practices that can serve the schools and the constituencies they serve with effective and sustainable education in the present and the future.

Second, the process itself explored the possibilities of collaboration, leading to creative thinking through the interaction of more than 300 highly gifted, knowledgeable, and dedicated theological educators. Through this exercise, schools and their personnel have developed greater capacity to think creatively and to act adaptively to address present and future challenges and to take advantage of present and future opportunities.

Forming the Groups

On the basis of the reports from academic deans, and in consultation with the EMP project Advisory Committee, the ATS Board, and the Board of Commissioners, ATS staff formed 18 peer groups including more than 110 different schools to explore and assess particular educational models or practices.

The staff invited schools to participate in the peer groups, believing that the school was doing good work with the particular model or practice and that it would be a strong contributor to the peer group's work. The selection also sought to mirror the diversity across the ATS membership, including ecclesial families, schools of different sizes and types, those embedded or affiliated as well as "stand alone" schools, schools from the United States and Canada, schools that primarily represent particular constituencies, and schools representing the range of both traditional and innovative educational models and practices.

Invitations asked academic deans (and, in a few cases, presidents), to recommend as many as three persons from their schools with knowledge of different facets of the program to join with their peers from other schools to explore and assess a particular educational model or practice. We asked the deans to send people who had the most significant knowledge of the model or practice, who could represent their schools' work, and who could most significantly contribute to the group's study. This analysis was to benefit the schools in the peer group and, more importantly, to serve the broader membership. Each group included between four and ten schools representing a variety of approaches and perspectives.

Each peer group was facilitated by a member of the ATS director staff who provided intellectual leadership and helped coordinate the work of the group with the larger project, the broader Association, and a possible redevelopment of the ATS *Standards of Accreditation.* Each group was assigned to engage its model or practice to:

- discuss the reasons each school decided to develop and implement it,
- explore key issues related to the model or practice,
- think creatively together about the possibilities and challenges of the model or practice (including thinking innovatively about new possibilities),
- assess the educational effectiveness and financial sustainability of the model or practice,
- identify educational principles that emerge from the conversation, and
- report the group's findings for the benefit of schools across the Association, and to inform a possible process of redevelopment of the accreditation standard and procedures.

Peer Group Forums

In February 2016, more than 220 theological educators gathered at an initial peer group forum to launch their work on an array of educational models and practices. Two groups were formed subsequent to the meeting—the group studying residential theological education and the group representing university divinity schools.

Participant feedback reflected the energy and enthusiasm of the meeting. The forum informed participants about the community of ATS schools, named both challenges and opportunities, described the educational models and practices project and its goals and possibilities, and identified the particular goals of the peer groups. Stephen Graham, ATS senior director of programs and services and project director for the EMP, framed the work of the peer groups within the larger context of the project. Participants also heard from Charla Long, principal and senior consultant of Go Long Consulting, about "Assessment of Learning and Educational Models and Practices," including the novelty of an accrediting agency urging its schools to think creatively and to be innovative, and from Daniel Aleshire, former ATS executive director, who reflected on "The Challenges We Face, the Opportunities before Us."

Participants also highly valued the opportunity to make connections with peers from other schools both within the groups and between them. Many participants also affirmed the support and encouragement they sensed from ATS, especially the openness to innovation.

The groups continued their work through conference calls in the spring, in-person meetings in the fall, and additional conference calls as needed. Each group's project writer prepared a 2,000-word preliminary report circulated to all of the participants in all of the groups to inform everyone in the project about each group's work, their preliminary findings and remaining questions, and to form a common understanding for the final gathering of peer groups in April 2017.

The goals of the April 2017 forum were for participants to:

1. refresh their understanding of the EMP project and the purposes and goals of the peer groups within the project,
2. continue work in the individual groups and plan next steps in the work,
3. interact with other groups to explore areas of possible collaboration and engage areas of difference,
4. hear from three experienced theological educators about what must not be lost in the midst of great changes, and
5. find effective ways to utilize the resources we have at hand to meet whatever challenges the schools face and to embrace present opportunities.

Each group had significant time for additional work as well as structured time for conversations with other groups. The forum was a remarkable time of conversation and collaboration with nearly 200 participants, including presidents, deans, program directors, faculty, and other administrators.

Each peer group was allotted time to continue their work as a group and move toward completion of their group's work. The forum also facilitated conversations among the groups in three ways. First, groups assigned members to represent their group and host participants from other groups for conversations while the remaining members of each group spread out for conversations with other groups. Second, whole groups were assigned to have conversations with one or two other groups with *similar* emphases or projects. Finally, groups were assigned to converse with groups studying an educational model or practice particularly *unlike* their own. For example, the group studying "formation in online contexts" was assigned to have discussion with the "residential theological education" group, and the "educational values of online education" group met with the "university divinity school" group. Those two discussions, in particular, were lively but fruitful! Participants in all four groups reported that they came away with deeper understanding and fewer suspicions about the validity of the educational models and practices used by their colleagues from other groups.

The groups discovered that there was much to be learned from one another, even if at first that did not seem likely. Through the conversations a few "myths" were dispelled and some tensions emerged. One participant noted that "evangelists" for online education were almost excessive in their enthusiasm for that educational model, and another noted that there was some disparagement of the traditional "liberal arts" approach to theological education in favor of more pragmatic approaches. There was general agreement that, "it's fine to affirm and celebrate your way of doing theological education, but don't denigrate mine." These comments highlight both the diverse array of educational models and practices already existing within the Association and also the possible disagreements and tensions between schools and educators.

In the midst of the dramatic changes taking place within theological schools it is crucial to discern both change *and* continuity. Three seasoned theological educators—Donald Senior, president emeritus of Catholic Theological Union, Emilie Townes, dean of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, and Mark Young, president of Denver Seminary—shared their perceptions of what must not be lost as theological schools adapt to new realities. Senior named the preparation of religious leaders who will both know how to give and to receive mercy. Townes noted the necessity of preparing people of care and love, and Young encouraged theological educators to be people of hope and to nurture people of hope in the midst of a world too often bound by fear. The presentations are posted on the ATS website:
https://vimeo.com/218643887
https://vimeo.com/218645496
https://vimeo.com/218651886

Periodically through the forum, participants related "student stories" of those served effectively by the schools' educational models and practices, including a student lacking a bachelor's degree yet flourishing in graduate theological education, students with access to theological education through online programs, including a church leader in Ghana, and witness by a group of incarcerated students about the impact of theological studies on their lives.

Participants spoke of the "deep sense of trust and collaborative spirit" experienced at the forum. Many noted the fruitful conversations from this extraordinary opportunity to meet with such a wide range of colleagues exploring a broad variety of educational models and practices. Participants also noted both the remarkable differences between schools and models, but also the striking similarities of their educational goals and desired outcomes for students, as well as the potential for greater collaboration, sometimes in unexpected places.

It was gratifying to read the variety of reflections on how participants "plan to share within your own school what you are learning from this project." Numerous participants reported their plans to share insights from the forum and the project with faculty colleagues at formal faculty meetings and other contexts. Others expressed their intentions to report to their presidents and/or academic deans about their work. Many said that the work of the peer group was particularly timely, as their schools were in the midst of curriculum review, a strategic planning process, or a self-study.

Conversations among peer groups at the April 2017 Peer Group Forum highlighted a number of possibilities for utilizing resources across the different educational models and practices under study.

Below are a few examples:

- Online resources might be utilized in programs for the incarcerated as some correctional facilities allow greater online access for prisoners.
- Residential programs could learn from the intensely student-oriented programs in historically black theological schools.
- Assessment of prior learning, normally associated with programs of competency-based education, could help identify appropriate equivalencies for programs serving students without bachelor's degrees and DMin programs serving those without the MDiv degree.
- Global partnerships, competency-based programs, programs for permanent deacons, and a number of others can utilize online resources more effectively than they currently do.
- University divinity schools, in particular, highlight the importance of strong intellectual formation that utilizes the breadth of the arts and sciences. These schools also provide leadership in theological scholarship.
- Discoveries in online programs about ways to form community, such as an online prayer forum, can be utilized in residential programs as well.
- Programs that link bachelor's and master's degrees and reduce the overall time needed for ministry preparation may actually prepare students *better* for graduate theological study because they focus on that goal in undergraduate studies and can utilize the full duration of study for formation toward religious leadership.
- The group studying preparation of laity in Roman Catholic institutions and the group analyzing programs for those without bachelor's degrees have many common concerns, including appropriate criteria for admission, ongoing institutional support for Latino/a students, and finding ways to help alleviate the financial burdens often carried by these students.
- Changes in understandings of campus residency impact online and global programs.
- A number of programs serve the missions of schools, but with a few exceptions they place additional strain on institutional resources (e.g., programs in prisons, global partnerships, reduced credit programs, online programs, and competency-based education).

- There is significant diversity *within* the groups represented by the Asian schools peer group and the group studying programs to serve Latino/a students.
- At the same time, there is significant overlap among the work and concerns of the Asian, Latino/a, and global partnerships groups.

In summary, from the work of the peer groups, a few central themes emerged:

- A focus on **learning outcomes** and the wide-ranging implications of that focus.
- The key outcome of **student formation**, recognizing the different understandings and emphases among the schools.
- Emerging forms of **context-based** education that utilize places of ministry and service as full educational partners.
- **Access** to theological education that takes a variety of forms.
- An emphasis on **cultural competence** across institutions.
- Understanding the role of theological schools as one part of the **full life span** of Christian/theological education.

The groups continued their work through summer 2017, and submitted the final reports that are included here. The reports are also posted on the ATS website: https://www.ats.edu/resources/current-initiatives/educational-models-and-practices-theological-education

Conclusion

ATS director staff provided important leadership to the groups. Senior Director of Programs and Services Stephen Graham; Senior Director of Accrediting and Institutional Assessment Lester Ruiz; Directors, Accrediting and Institutional Evaluation Barbara Mutch , Tom Tanner, and Debbie Creamer; and former Executive Director Daniel Aleshire each facilitated the work of particular groups. The directors guided the work of the groups by helping them to clarify challenges and opportunities, identify crucial questions, and think together about educational principles that support the particular model or practice. In addition, some of the peer groups included research projects within their work. Director, Research and Faculty Development Deborah H. C. Gin facilitated the research whose findings are summarized in the reports, with some attached as appendices.

Participants in the peer groups did remarkable work. They were enthusiastic about the task and recognized its importance. Their immersion in the work was especially noteworthy given how busy they are with ongoing duties in their schools. The work of the EMP peer groups of member institutions of The Association of Theological Schools demonstrates the impact of the work as an *association* of schools¸ committed to a common goal and working together to explore, assess, and affirm quality theological education in a remarkably diverse set of forms, contexts, and approaches.

The groups present these reports as resources for peer schools in the shared work of preparing theologically educated leaders "to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public."

Educational Models & Practices in Theological Education
Peer Groups

1 Formation in Online Contexts
- Catholic Theological Union
- Gateway Seminary
- Lexington Theological Seminary
- Moody Theological Seminary
- Shaw University Divinity School
- Wesley Seminary
  at Indiana Wesleyan University

2 Educational Values of Online Education
- Anderson University School of Theology
- Carey Theological College
- Chicago Theological Seminary
- Erskine Theological Seminary
- Fuller Theological Seminary
- Northwest Nazarene University
  Graduate School of Theology
- Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

3 Duration (Reduced Credit MDiv)
- Azusa Pacific Seminary
- Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School
- Franciscan School of Theology
- North Park Theological Seminary
- Perkins School of Theology
  Southern Methodist University
- United Theological Seminary
  of the Twin Cities

4 Accelerated Bachelor's/MDiv
- Columbia Biblical Seminary
  of Columbia International University
- Denver Seminary
- Saint Paul School of Theology
- St. Andrew's College
- University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

5 DMin Admission
- Aquinas Institute of Theology
- Drew University Theological School
- Fuller Theological Seminary
- New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
- St. Mary's Seminary and University
- Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry
- Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
  of Trinity International University

6 DMin Identity
- Knox College
- Lincoln Christian Seminary
- Tyndale University College & Seminary
- United Theological Seminary

7 Permanent Diaconate Program
- Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology
- Immaculate Conception Seminary
  of Seton Hall University
- Pontifical College Josephinum
- Saint Meinrad School of Theology
- St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry
- St. Mark's College
- University of St. Thomas School of Theology

8 RC Schools Formation of Laity
- Augustine Institute
- Kenrick-Glennon Seminary
- Seattle University
  School of Theology and Ministry
- St. Augustine's Seminary of Toronto
- St. John's Seminary (CA)
- University of St. Mary of the Lake
  Mundelein Seminary

9 Programs for Latino/a Students
- Barry University
  Department of Theology and Philosophy
- Calvin Theological Seminary
- Denver Seminary
- Oblate School of Theology
- Wesley Seminary
  at Indiana Wesleyan University
- Western Seminary (OR)
- Western Theological Seminary

10 Global Partnerships
- Ambrose Seminary of Ambrose University
- Asbury Theological Seminary
- B.H. Carroll Theological Institute
- Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond
- International Theological Seminary

11 Global Partnerships

- Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
- Carey Theological College
- Columbia Theological Seminary
- Nazarene Theological Seminary
- Oblate School of Theology
- Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University
- Trinity Evangelical Divinity School of Trinity International University

12 Asian Schools

- China Evangelical Seminary North America
- Georgia Christian University School of Divinity
- Grace Mission University Graduate School
- International Theological Seminary
- Logos Evangelical Seminary
- Presbyterian Theological Seminary in America
- Shepherd University School of Theology
- World Mission University School of Theology

13 Historically Black Schools

- Hood Theological Seminary
- Howard University School of Divinity
- Interdenominational Theological Center
- Payne Theological Seminary
- Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University
- Shaw University Divinity School

14 Competency-Based Education

- Grace Theological Seminary
- Hazelip School of Theology of Lipscomb University
- Northwest Baptist Seminary
- Regent University School of Divinity
- Sioux Falls Seminary
- Talbot School of Theology of Biola University
- United Lutheran Seminary
- Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University
- Western Seminary

15 Programs in Prison

- Calvin Theological Seminary
- Candler School of Theology of Emory University
- Chapman Seminary of Oakland City University
- Drew University Theological School
- Duke University Divinity School
- New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
- New York Theological Seminary

16 Students w/o Bachelor's

- Briercrest College and Seminary
- Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology
- St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary
- Taylor College and Seminary

17 Residential Theological Education

- Concordia Seminary (MO)
- Concordia Theological Seminary (IN)
- Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- Princeton Theological Seminary
- Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Virginia Theological Seminary

18 University Divinity Schools

- Boston College School of Theology and Ministry
- Boston University School of Theology
- Candler School of Theology of Emory University
- Catholic University of America School of Theology and Religious Studies
- Duke University Divinity School
- George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University
- University of Chicago Divinity School
- Vanderbilt University Divinity School
- Wake Forest University Divinity School
- Yale University Divinity School

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Formation in Online Contexts Final Peer Group Report

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Why the Schools Engaged this Educational Model

The peer group studying formation in online contexts began its work with a face-to-face meeting in November 2015. The group continued its work at the Educational Models Forum in February 2016, through conference calls and email correspondence, and another face-to-face meeting on September 14-15, 2016. The group completed its work at the Peer Group Forum in April 2017 and a final conference call in July.

These schools adopted the online educational format for a variety of reasons, including their missions to provide theological education to those without access to the schools' campuses, to remain competitive with similar schools offering online study, and as an adaptation that was part of a complete reinvention of how the schools delivered their educational programming (Lexington).

All agree that formation is central to theological education, but there are significant differences in how the schools understand "formation." Participants in the group agreed that simply offering online classes without particular attention to formation is not sufficient to achieve human and spiritual formation. Many of the other peer groups have also identified the necessarily "formational" character of theological education. More than other forms of education, *theological* education must attend to the multifaceted development of the person. In addition to intellectual and academic formation and development of skills of ministry, theological students must be formed as persons of integrity and spiritually formed to lead communities of faith and serve in other contexts. The ATS Standards of Accreditation degree program standard for the Master of Divinity degree names four areas of required program content. "The learning outcomes for the MDiv shall encompass the instructional areas of religious heritage, cultural context, personal and spiritual formation, and capacity for ministerial and public leadership."[1] A few of the groups have also referenced *The Program of Priestly Formation* of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops with its four "pillars" of formation: intellectual, pastoral, human, and spiritual. While not all schools use these categories, nearly all would see formation in those areas or similar areas as fundamental to theological education. The groups have noted the need in some contexts to emphasize the four areas more equally. The peer group studying formation in online contexts recognizes the broad formation that takes place within the online medium as well as through structures and processes for formation within the students' home contexts.

Crucial Issues and Questions

Because the schools represent a fairly broad spectrum on the theological map, including the three ecclesial families in ATS (Roman Catholic/Orthodox, Mainline Protestant, Evangelical Protestant), and variations within the families, definitions of "formation" are quite diverse. The current standards are quite broad and use diverse language to speak of formation and, while in most instances the standards reference "personal and spiritual formation," in several instances they use other modifiers to describe the type of formation expected (A.3.1.1; B.2.5.5; E.2.1.2). This diversity does not stem from the nature of specific degrees, but perhaps from some ambiguity in the standards about the meaning of "formation." The group explored developing a definition that is appropriate across the diversity, but recognized that this might not be possible. Members do agree, however, that theological education is inherently formational and that schools must have a working definition within their own contexts and be able to demonstrate that appropriate formation is taking place through their programs, including formation that gives attention to cultural differences among students.

Online programs must attend to the "extracurricular and cocurricular" dimensions of theological education and formation that once were assumed to take place through the residential model. Assumptions have been made in the past about the formation of students prior to their graduate theological studies by networks of institutions and persons and about the formation of students during graduate theological studies on the school's campus. Further, many students are coming to graduate theological study without formation by those networks (extensive congregational life, Sunday schools, youth and young adult programs, denominational colleges, etc.) and schools are sometimes faced with the need for remedial work. This suggests that the assumptions about formation in residential programs need to be reassessed because so many students are commuters. All seminaries need to give attention to whether and how these students form community. Ironically, some online programs have often given more focused attention to formation than residential programs. Some of the schools reported that moving

[1] ATS Standards of Accreditation, Standard A, Master of Divinity, A.2.1.

into online learning has compelled them to become more intentional creatively to address some aspects of formation that were assumed to happen on campus.

For example, because online students won't meet in the schools' chapels for worship, some schools video stream their chapel services. Similarly, the schools utilize asynchronous discussion boards as ways for students to interact about matters of spiritual import such as prayer for one another. They have found that "the medium promotes a deep sharing among students." Exercise of this intentional creativity may also include photographs or audio and video recordings of liturgical performances, prayer practices, and students telling their stories.

Faculty teaching in online programs that utilize the students' contexts as part of the formational process are challenged to contextualize their teaching in ways that connects effectively with a range of ministries. This can be hard work but it can also be fruitful work, and work that helps faculty members connect their disciplines more seamlessly with practices of ministry.

Because assumptions about formation may no longer be accurate, programs delivered by all modes (online and residential) need to give explicit attention to formation.

If the campus is not the site for theological study, schools may draw upon resources for education and formation in the students' home contexts such as congregations, local mentors and spiritual directors, families, and other resources. Online technology actually aids access to and interaction with these local contexts. Formation for these "rooted learners" must make the best possible use of home contexts and recognize that the capabilities of contexts vary depending on the health of congregations, availability of qualified persons and resources, and complexities that develop when the primary ministry context for formation may be, at the same time, the place where the student provides religious leadership. Institutions with online programs need to give attention to how the role of the institution changes in this educational model. The school is no longer the primary provider of student experiences, but rather an orchestrator of the resources in which the students are embedded.

Online programs will need to insure that students' perspectives are appropriately broadened, that programming is adequately flexible to allow the students' ministry contexts to be incorporated into their academic work, and that students develop into self-directed learners. Online programs should take advantage of faculty-student interaction—between students and among student, church, and faculty for education and formation.

Schools in the project have identified a number of crucial parts in the "matrix of learning" that can contribute to the education and formation of students, including:

- familial relationships,
- context of ministry,
- student cohorts that build relationships between students through the program and often beyond,
- mentors who work with students face-to-face,
- professors who are prepared through academic training, ministry experience, and instruction for online teaching, and who are themselves personally and spiritually formed,
- curriculum specifically designed for the online format that take advantage of the local context, and
- community networking globally so that the student is, as one school put it, "encouraged to see herself/himself as a citizen of the world village united in Christ."

Opportunities and benefits

Many of the opportunities and benefits of the online model of education are identified in the report of the peer group studying more broadly the educational values of online education. This report will repeat some of those opportunities and benefits, but will focus on aspects directly related to formation.

Utilizing the students' own contexts as essential to the educational and formational processes allows formation to be integrated into the students' ministries as well as using the day-to-day experiences of the students in the learning and formation processes. Many schools have found that online classes increase the diversity of the student population, and interactions among these embedded students has the advantage of providing them with cross-cultural experiences. Sharing about their local ministries broadens awareness, as these create a wider ministry landscape that promotes mutuality, empathy, and knowledge. The result of working with these contexts for ministry can include strengthening ties between schools and congregations, between schools and other sites of service, and among schools, alumni, and others recruited and trained to serve in the formational work of theological education. Students' contextual connections to the church allow some simultaneous evaluation by the church and the academy.

Pastoral ministry is regularly noted as one of the loneliest professions. Online learning can provide needed community and support from fellow students, professors, and mentors for those already in ministry. Some schools have observed that the depth of relationship and community created in online programs rivals that created in residential programs. The community created online may also have the ability to continue after graduation in ways that residential community cannot.

Challenges and Obstacles

Early on, the group identified a list of "myths" about online education.

1. Everybody understands what formation is. Even "spiritual" formation.
2. Nothing about formation in online contexts is measurable.
3. Formation can't be done online.
4. Formation in these programs relies solely on what is done online.
5. Formation only happens if schools do something intentional to make it happen. [In fact, people are formed by going through the experience of online engagement whether schools pay attention or not.]
6. There is no community online.
7. Students want to take online solely to avoid traveling to campus. [In fact, there are many reasons why students want to take online.]
8. Formation can be abstracted from context.
9. Formation in traditional residential contexts has been uniformly effective and consistent.
10. Online education is less expensive for schools and students.
11. All "solutions" must come from the schools. [In fact, students are creating solutions before we even know there is a problem.]
12. Students can easily add online study to what they are already doing.
13. Online education will be easier for students.

Schools using online education are challenged to keep their technology up to date. It is essential to have adequate support for the technology infrastructure and for the technological needs of students and faculty. Because of the reliance on technologies, maintenance is crucial and troubleshooting must be rapid and effective. Students must be oriented effectively to the school's course management system and have access to IT support services. In addition, schools must be vigilant in looking toward newer technologies and realize that there will always be cost-benefit tradeoffs to their choices of technologies.

Faculty must be trained and supported for online learning and, in some cases, schools must navigate and overcome faculty resistance because as one participant put it, "faculty can make or break online programs." Many faculty members will need to develop new pedagogical approaches and think in dramatically different ways about their teaching. It is important to have personnel dedicated to instructional design. Some means of quality monitoring (perhaps feedback from colleagues) is also important. It is crucial for schools to calculate faculty workload issues fairly and the group agreed that online teaching is at least as labor intensive as on-campus teaching, and usually requires *more* time and effort. This group also noted the importance of expecting and helping faculty to be formed themselves in order to mentor the formation of students.

Use of adjunct faculty and other educational personnel such as mentors and other volunteers requires administrative oversight and support. Schools must orient these additional staff to the school and its educational practices and ethos, and they must hold personnel accountable to agreements about their roles in the processes of education and formation. Formation in all contexts must include significant interaction between faculty and students.

Library resources and the skills of library personnel must be adapted to serve the online population. Other student services such as student advising, registration, counseling services, academic support services, chapel, must also be adapted to the online context.

Assessing Educational Effectiveness

The group has reviewed how each school addresses formation and also shared insights about instruments that are available to assess student formation such as the Spiritual Transformation Inventory (spiritualtransformation.org). The group agreed that assessment of all programs whether residential or online must be equal regardless of the mode or educational model.

Practices with embedded assessments used by the schools include:

- covenant groups of students that meet regularly online with a faculty member and an experienced pastor to measure and report individual growth,
- including in all courses a learning goal in the area of spiritual formation,
- evaluations that are part of curricula in spiritual formation, in some cases courses are required each term,
- development of rubrics that help measure spiritual and personal growth, some of them with extensive and broad sets of competencies that are measured,
- extensive and regular reporting by "ministry" and "spiritual formation" mentors who meet regularly in-person with students, and
- reports from "ministry reflection groups" that are part of the students' ministry context,

Demonstration of Financial Viability

The group agreed that the cost of online *formation* adds little to the existing cost of online programming. On the other hand, they also admitted that it would be very difficult to quantify, separate, and measure the costs of formation activities and processes.

Class size and faculty workload remain difficult issues. Standard practice for online courses among the peer group institutions is to limit enrollment to around 15-20 students, which may limit overall enrollment and revenue or require expenditures for more faculty. Because "regular and substantive" interaction between faculty and students is expected, classes larger than 15 students can become very labor intensive.

Educational Principles

The group has identified these six general educational principles related to formation in online contexts.

- Each institution must define formation in ways that fit their missions, constituents, and particular degree programs. Models must be shaped with intentional outcomes that are measurable.
- Formation includes preparation for the communities to be served.
- Formation is intensely relational.
- Faculty need to be prepared to contribute to student formation.
- Institutions should recognize online students as "regular students" and value residential and online students equally.
- Outcomes for residential and online students must be the same.

Implications for Standards:

1. The standards should eliminate distinctions of the means of educational delivery (online, residential, CBE, etc.) and focus on achieving the outcomes.

2. The standards need to have more consistent language about formation. The standards should require each institution to define "formation" for each degree and incorporate that definition into its statement of learning objectives for each degree.

Recommended Practices:

If a school delivers programs both online and in residence, the outcomes must be the same

- Define formation for your school's programs and/or tradition. Such might include spiritual, human, intellectual, social, pastoral categories depending on the ministerial needs of your students.

- Develop strategies for integrating formation into academic programs. Such might be integrated within the courses or extracurricular or cocurricular programs. Strategies may leverage students' communities and contexts or other cultural contexts. Strategies should focus on clearly defined competencies.

- Develop an assessment plan for formation aligned with the formation competencies. Competencies for distance students should be identical to those for residential students.

- Provide adequate training and support for faculty, including adjunct faculty, and other supporting professionals. Training and orientation should include skills, such as effectively using online tools, and knowledge, such as understanding program history and mission.

- Provide adequate training and support for students as well.

- Limit class size to approximately 15-20 students per “section.” Section here refers to the number of students that might be expected to interact and for what counts as a course for faculty teaching load.

Appendix
Observations from Conversations with Other Peer Groups

Prison
Conversations with those offering theological education in prison affirmed that there might be ways to cross-fertilize our two models. An increasing number of prisons are making (limited) Internet access available to their inmates, and thus it would be possible for educators to utilize an LMS tailored to the prison context with limited Internet access. Currently, the hurdle to overcome is providing inmates full access to a theological library. Synchronous video conferencing technology already makes it possible for inmates to join faculty members (and non-incarcerated students) in live classes.

Implication for standards: this group raises issues of how "contact" is defined between faculty and student; and issues of defining the minimal level access to a library.

The prison model and the residential model share certain features. Students in each model are gathered together for learning in a shared context. In an online prison model, however, students would be gathered in a context that they would not share with faculty and staff. Faculty and staff would become the "dispersed" members of the community, thus reversing the relationship of learning to location characteristic of traditional online education. In this respect, an online prison model would share similarities with an online global model. Highlighting the different offline realities of learners and teachers points to the importance of *all* schools claiming the resources of the students' setting. Taking student context seriously may also influence advising and admissions practices.

Historically African American schools
These schools already do significant formation and have clear understandings of how it is done, including embracing the community in which the student is embedded. The Historically African American educational model highlights the students' offline reality. This is also characteristic of the Global model and other schools with constituencies that are predominantly people of color.

Latino/a schools
Challenges for these populations vary by the students' generation in North America, with each generation bringing different formation needs. The Latino/a schools model also highlights the students' offline reality.

Asian schools
The Asian Schools have mostly first generation students, and these schools tend to lose second generation students to "non-Asian" seminaries. Because of cultural heritage, they often have a top-down leadership model that makes formation more difficult. Like the African American and Latino/a schools, formation for the Asian schools would be mostly in community highlighting the students' offline realities.

Accelerated Programs from Bachelor's to Master's Degrees
Some institutions allow graduate credit hours to count for undergraduate credit, but not vice versa.

Students without a Bachelor's Degree
Some programs require psychological tests or other such instruments to evaluate such students for admission. Most did not want to employ Prior Learning Assessment because of how much work it is.

Competency Based Education

Competency Based Education remains in an experimental phase. CBE programs identify competencies as the ways to understand and pursue the formation of students. Members thought that only some parts of CBE could be done online. Mentors are deeply involved in some schools, but perhaps without enough concern for their credentials and preparation. CBE is probably not fitting for all students because it requires a highly self-motivated learner. This group highlights the need for all models to identify competencies.

Global partners

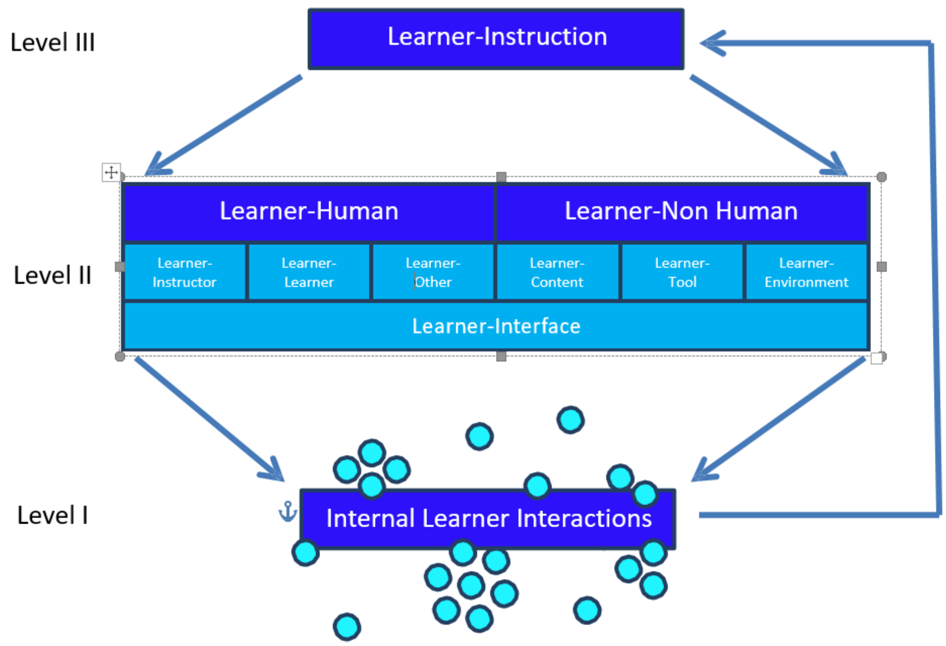
The schools in this group focused on making resources available to less fortunate partners around the world. They work to develop mentors who can move into the foreign communities in order to know the host culture and to be shaped by the institution

Residential Programs

This conversation led to mutual affirmation. Those teaching in online programs continue to value the existence of residential programs. No one should presume any inherent competition or antagonism between schools that have embraced distance education and those that remain committed to residential education, as each type of school excels at something different. Both share commitment to how place and context shape student learning—residential schools by gathering students together in the same shared space for learning and online schools by attending to the learning that takes place in dispersed locations unique to each student. The conversation, therefore, highlighted the possibility that residential programs might take even more advantage of their local contexts and exploit them for more explicit attention to contextual formation. For example, schools located in cities might use their urban contexts to develop leaders in urban ministry.

Appendix A

Atsusi Hirumi's framework for understanding course interaction



Hirumi's table translating theoretical approaches into practical kinds of assignments

Table 2.

Relating instructional strategies, tools and techniques to basic instructional approaches and theoretical orientations.

Instructional Approach	Teacher Directed		Student-Centered	
Theoretical Orientation	Behavioral	Cognitive	Neurobiological	Constructivist
Instructional Strategies	• Elements of Lesson Design (Hunter, 1990) • Direct Instruction (Joyce, Weil, & Showers, 1992)	• Nine Events of Instruction (Gagne, 1977, 1974) • 5 Component Lesson Model (Dick, Carey, & Carey, 2009)	• Interplay Strategy (Stapleton & Hirumi, 2011)	• Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984) • Learning by Doing (Schank, Berman & Macpherson, 1999) • Problem-Based Learning (Barrows, 1985) • 5E Instructional Model (BSCS, 2005; Bybee, 2002) • WebQuest (Dodge, 1998)
Instructional Tools and Techniques	• Task Analysis • Behavioral Objectives • Practice and Feedback • Programmed Instruction • Contingency Contracts	• Message Design • Rehearsal • Chunking • Mnemonics • Advanced Organizers • Cognitive Task Analysis • Cognitive Load • Self-Regulated Learning	• Emotions • Positive Climate • Sleep, Nutrition and Movement • Active Discussions • Simulation, Role-Playing and Immersion • Problem-Based Learning • Graphics and Multi-Sensory Learning	• Facilitating Learning • Discovery and Inquiry-Based Learning • Authentic/Experiential Learning • Collaborate Learning • Cognitive Apprenticeships • Scaffolding • Reflective Teaching and Learning

Hirumi's steps for course design based on the preceding two considerations

Step 1—Identify essential experiences that are necessary for learners to achieve specified goals and objectives (optional); Step 2—Select a grounded instructional strategy (Level III interaction) based on specified objectives, learner characteristics, context, and epistemological beliefs; Step 3—Operationalize each event, embedding experiences identified in Step 1 and describing how the selected strategy will be applied during instruction; Step 4—Define the type of Level II interaction(s) that will be used to facilitate each event and analyze the quantity and quality of planned interactions; and Step 5—Select the telecommunication tool(s) (e.g., chat, email, bulletin board system) that will be used to facilitate each event based on the nature of the interaction. Step 6—Analyze materials to determine frequency and quality of planned eLearning interactions and revise as necessary.

Figure 2. Six step process for designing and sequencing eLearning interactions

Appendix B

Testimonies from peer group members as to why they adopted the model/practice:

"Not only do online courses make education more accessible to students, they make students more accessible to teachers. . . I have been privileged to interact with students from many different provinces, states, and, indeed, countries. It's been an enriching experience for me that I would not otherwise have had."

"We believe online education makes theological education more accessible, more affordable, and more contextual for the students, and makes it much more likely to be global in scope and interaction."

"Online asynchronous courses allowed students with other life commitments and responsibilities to continue matriculating through the degree program. Students who had difficulty commuting . . . could have part of the geographic barrier removed. All programs had residency requirements, so it was not aimed primarily to benefit students at extension sites. . . . It did give a benefit of increased course options for students seeking to take the minimum allowable in residency. Now with our recently approved fully online MATS, we are able to reach those students for whom commuting . . . is a major barrier or impossibility. We also can serve students who cannot attend regular residential courses due to other life commitments . . . . As the lone denominational seminary . . . online education allows us to serve more of the candidates for ordained ministry."

Testimonies about educational effectiveness from academic deans of schools with comprehensive distance education, from the survey conducted by ATS in fall 2016:

- Because students in the online program learn in the ministry setting in which they will serve, we have had virtually no problems with graduates failing in their first congregations.
- For all the challenges, it gives students access [to seminary] who would not otherwise have it.
- Online learning addresses a multiple audience . . . . It is much more inclusive.
- It takes a clear goal and endgame. Online should not be done in a "shoot from the hip" manner and "fixed on the fly."
- It requires more work and more money to make this delivery format work effectively. However, when it works well, it works really well.
- It's extremely effective. It makes traditional teaching work better. So much more can be incorporated . . . . Online produces more engagement than we think.
- Online students are much more engaged in "in-class" discussions than students in standard on-ground courses.
- Our faculty are split on this matter. Some see better student engagement and learning, while others continue to wonder about quality [a comment not echoed by any others].

Comprehensive answers from the fall 2016 survey about how educational effectiveness is measured at particular institutions

"Our courses (online and traditional) are assessed through the regular course evaluations. Generally speaking, they are equivalent across the board. Some courses/faculty are better than others in different delivery methods, but that varies from faculty to faculty, from delivery system to delivery system. [X] also has an institutional effectiveness and assessment office whose job it is, among other things, to assess the programs internally. So, it looks at the student learning outcomes of specific courses, evaluates the assignments that are directly connected to the SLOs, and then gives a 'grade' for each delivery method.

As I understand the last figures I was aware of from this assessment, the online delivery is equal to the traditional delivery."

#####

"Distance education programs are given additional support, development, and assessment provisions in order to ensure the highest quality education. Every faculty member is partnered with an instructional designer to walk them through the design, development, and implementation of their courses. This partnership is key. Faculty are able to find answers to their pedagogical and technological questions quickly and efficiently. They also have someone available to talk through best practices and strategies for effective teaching. The instructional designer can also provide additional support for designing learning activities and resources for students requiring ACCESS services. Every online and hybrid course goes through a pre-course, mid-course, and post-course evaluation by the instructional design team. Faculty are evaluated on their course design, organization, clarity, and overall online presence. These evaluations are an invaluable tool for responsive teaching -- faculty are able to take this feedback and make course corrections immediately. . . The student feedback has become a tremendous resource for improving the teaching processes each term."

#####

"The online and hybrid modalities are extremely effective teaching methods. [X] Expects a high level of faculty engagement in each of these modalities—often resulting in an even higher attention to student progress than possible in traditional face-to-face classrooms. Each week students participate in a variety of learning activities actively engaging them with their course work, faculty, and peer students. This constant activity allows for high student accountability and, when needed, faculty intervention. The course expectations are identical to the related courses on campus. Students complete the same readings, the same assessments, and often engage in the same conversations that they would otherwise have on campus. All master's level courses are also incorporating Signature Assignments to monitor student progress across program learning outcomes (PLO). These Signature Assignments will provide further evidence of learning gains across modalities."

#####

"[X] Offers online courses and certifications, but no fully-online degree programs. All of our regular programmatic assessments are inclusive of our online offerings: student course evaluations; program-midpoint evaluation conferences with between students, advisers, and other faculty; alumni surveys; other institutional assessment. We also make assessments that are specific to our online course offerings. First, we added language to our student course evaluations to determine how our online learners experience "community" (acceptance, reciprocity, and trustworthiness) in our online course offerings. Second, we have a set of requirements for syllabi and courses specific to online courses, which we revise according to feedback from online faculty who have employed them. Third, we have a Digital Learning Committee whose charge includes soliciting and responding to the evolving needs of learners and instructors in our online course offerings. Finally, we plan for 2017–18 a targeted review of our online offerings for the previous two academic years."

#####

"Our online courses and programs are effective. Students in our online introductory courses are well prepared for the advanced courses for which the introductory courses are prerequisite. Students who have taken many online courses perform well on our MDiv-degree capstone project. Informally, students report that our online offerings are, on average, more challenging than the face-to-face counterparts."

Appendix C
For Further Reading

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Educational Values of Online Education Final Peer Group Report

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1. Why did the schools in the group engage this educational model or practice?

Overall, the schools in the peer group who responded to an informal survey about this question began online education because it provided flexibility, affordability, and accessibility for their students and because it had or could have a significant, even global reach (including in countries otherwise closed to

North American influence). Particular benefits are described under Question 3 below, but here is one story from one online instructor:

> *"This week, Colleen emailed me and asked me if it was permissible to fall behind a couple of weeks in my online class. She explained that the local authorities in her city, somewhere in North Africa, had recently ordered all Christians to leave. She said she would need to be 'off the grid' for about two weeks until her family was safely relocated… Colleen is just one of 25 students that I have in my Old Testament Survey course. She is currently in ministry, serving as a missionary, and is not at a stage in her life to move . . . to become a residency student. During this fall semester, I have been hearing positive feedback from many of my students on their appreciation of the flexibility that our online course design offers. The online course offers me a means to connect with these students and engage them in learning."*

2. What are the most crucial issues and questions engaged by the group?

Here are some of the questions discussed by this group:

- *Should ATS standards distinguish between online and residential education?* Our conclusion, expressed in Question 10, is that standards should be modality-neutral, expressing core values, principles, and educational goals that will apply to all models and all technologies (even chalkboards.)
- *What are the best principles or values of online theological education?* How are these best represented in the Standards? How do they differ from other educational models? (See preliminary checklist of quality online education in Question 8 and the proposed list of educational principles in Question 9).
- *Should we recommend that a school articulate its educational philosophy as part of Standard 1.1?* If so, how does this square with the fact that one of ATS's core values is faculty autonomy? What if faculty have differing educational philosophies? What value inheres in a diverse set of philosophies within a single institution?

3. What are the most significant potential opportunities/benefits for this model or practice? For the school, for students, for faculty, for the church, and/or for other stakeholders?

The experience of the group offers some opportunities and benefits that may not be obvious to those outside the field. Online education is:

- **More contextualized**: A student working in ministry can immediately apply the concepts from an online class in real-life experience.
- **More reviewable and repeatable:** A face-to-face (f2f) class session is experienced once, but online class sessions and materials can be reviewed multiple times to help clear up muddy points for students.
- **More personalized:** Online students can set their paces of working through content (within class deadlines and parameters), can fit classwork into their schedules, and can go into greater depth if needed or skim quickly through familiar content.
- **More focused on instructional design:** Online education is a newer modality for instructors and often leads to an increased emphasis on instructional design. Most in the group noted that this carried over into the f2f modality as instructors learned new techniques and skills.

- **More extensive in outreach:** Online learning provides an opportunity to extend a school's mission, especially to underserved populations, and thus expands the reach of the church.

A 2016 survey of the 141 academic deans of ATS schools with comprehensive distance education focused on the educational effectiveness of online learning at ATS schools with considerable experience and expertise in that pedagogy. According to the survey results in the March 2017 ATS *Colloquy Online*, "Among the biggest benefits of online education, these were the top five responses: (1) 99% said it gives students more flexibility, (2) 81% said it reaches more students, (3) 66% said it helps students learn in their own contexts, (4) 46% said it helps reduce the cost for students, and (5) 45% said it enhances the school's global outreach. The lowest rated benefit was 'helps reduce costs for the school,' chosen by only 14% of the respondents."

4. What are the most significant challenges/obstacles that could keep this model or practice from flourishing?

The top five challenges noted by respondents to the 2016 survey in the same March 2017 ATS *Colloquy Online* article were as follows: "(1) 60% cited training faculty to teach online, (2) 56% cited incorporating good instructional design, (3) 51% cited doing formation online, and (4/5) 34% cited 'building relationships' and 'addressing the technology have's and have not's.' Tied for last (with only 20% citing) were 'getting faculty acceptance' and 'school's ability to afford the technology needed.' Among 18 open-ended comments, concerns varied widely, but faculty training and suitability of the online format for certain students or courses were cited by about half."

Our peer group meetings bore this out. Participants cited **general challenges** to online theological education:

- There is a lack of understanding (among faculty, administrators, denominational executives, and ATS itself) that quality can be achieved through online education.
- There are concerns about the ability of the online experience to address specific curricular areas, chiefly preaching and spiritual formation.
- The government requires that military chaplains can only take a third of their total coursework online.
- Other government policies, like the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) in the United States, also present issues.

We also spoke of challenges in specific areas.

Recruitment, retention, and nurture challenges include:

- Many students are confused about whether online, residential, or some combination of both is best for them.
- Embedded schools are moving to a centralized marketing/recruiting process that limits seminary influence.
- Online recruiters have not always experienced the ethos of online education.
- Students do not understand how much work an online class is.
- Technology fees for online classes are prohibitive for some students.

- Students may have had poor experiences with online classes in the undergraduate context.
- Online students tend to be part-time, overloaded adults.
- Lack of spiritual formation opportunities hurts retention and nurture.
- "We seem to have a fair number of computer illiterate people who sign up for online classes;" learning course material as they learn course delivery method hurts retention.

Course design challenges include:

- Faculty are resistant to instructional designers, to professional development in education, and to the increased emphasis on pedagogy in online course design.
- The pressure for standardization doesn't give core faculty or (especially) adjuncts flexibility to make course adjustments.
- Our course design should be impacted by our theology, but isn't always.
- Technology should remain in the background to assist, but it doesn't always.
- The latest technology does not always equal using the most updated educational principles (i.e., using streaming to deliver traditional lectures).
- Asynchronous vs. synchronous debates need to be thought through across the program, not just in individual courses.
- We need a more diverse set of instructional methods and assignment possibilities.

Educational philosophy challenges include:

- Geographic and vocational contexts need to be made part of the content of an online class, not a background constraint.
- If you individualize for everyone, at some point the system will break down.
- Outcomes can decline because of an overcommitment to theory.
- Faculty need to be encouraged (forced?) to reflect on their educational philosophies.
- There is confusion about what "regular and substantive interaction" (see 1.6.2, 4.2.3) consists of in the online context.
- The technology/LMS may not be congruent with the institution's philosophy of education: a teacher-centered LMS can inhibit a student-centered educational philosophy.

Financial challenges include:

- Schools can assume that many online classes are taught by adjuncts, who are cheaper, but less integrated into the school's common life.
- Choosing an open-source LMS for its affordability can mean a steeper learning curve.
- Training for online instruction costs $500-1000 per professor.
- It costs to convert from one LMS to another.
- It can be a challenge to factor teaching online into faculty load.
- There are growing technological needs for modern education in general.

5. How is the educational effectiveness of the model or practice demonstrated?

The survey results described in the March 2017 ATS *Colloquy Online* article indicate the following:

- Almost half (45%) of the respondents offer degrees that are either completely or mostly online.

- Virtually all respondents evaluate the educational effectiveness of their online offerings through multiple means. The five most common measures of assessment are these: course evaluations by students (98%), course-embedded assignments with rubrics (79%), surveys of graduating students (73%), informal feedback from faculty (68%), and capstone projects (49%).
- About 40% of respondents have compared the educational effectiveness of their online programs to their onsite programs. Another nearly 20% have not yet done so because their online programs are still fairly new. A third of the respondents indicated that they did not compare results from the two groups because they felt it would be too much like comparing apples and oranges.
- Among those who have compared student learning assessment results for their online and their onsite offerings, the vast majority (71%) indicated that the best way to describe those two results was "similar."

The *Colloquy Online* article also reported data from the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ), which presents data on how both online and traditional on-campus students rated 15 areas of personal growth while in seminary. Some of the conclusions included these observations:

> *"Those who pursued their seminary degree mostly online rated higher items like 'enthusiasm for learning' and 'self-discipline and focus,' which tend to be characteristics of online learners. Graduates who studied mostly online rated lower items like 'empathy for the poor and oppressed' and 'concern about social justice,' which may be because a greater number of predominantly online students tend to be evangelical. . . One of the most surprising results relates to spiritual formation. In the personal growth area of 'strength of spiritual life' and in the ministry skill of 'ability to give spiritual direction,' online graduates rated themselves much higher than did onsite graduates. . . What is surprising about those results is that spiritual formation is frequently cited as a special challenge for online learning among theological schools—and a reason many seminaries do not do online learning. Yet, these online graduates affirmed, quite strongly, their own spiritual growth and their own abilities to give spiritual direction, much more so than onsite graduates."*

6. How is the financial viability of the educational model or practice demonstrated?

From the survey results published in the March 2017 ATS *Colloquy Online*: "Almost one third (30%) of the respondents have done some cost/effectiveness studies of their online offerings… Almost all said their online offerings were very cost effective, though most cautioned that online education should be looked at as a long-term investment, noting that initial (start-up) costs can be substantial and can take a few years to recover.… Several indicated that the biggest cost savings were for their students, not their institution, but added that any additional expenses were more than covered by more revenue from more students."

Anthony Ruger's "Seven Steps to Take Before Launching a New Program—And One to Take After" in the January/February 2016 ATS *Colloquy Online* gives guidance to schools hoping to start an online (or any other) program in order to demonstrate financial viability.

7. Are there unexpected insights, innovative ideas, or possibilities that have emerged through the group's work?

In **course design and philosophy**, insights and ideas included:

- Make online education an exemplar of good instructional design across the curriculum, including in f2f courses that may not have considered new pedagogies (one school requires professors to earn three "technology education units" per year by taking courses of about an hour each covering *MS Word*, *MS Office*, video tools, and the LMS).
- Give core and adjunct faculty a set way to share best practices among themselves.
- Recognize that the big cost of course design is *time*, not money.
- Have students evaluate the LMS, not just the professors, on course evaluations.

The group also looked at the model of the Minerva Project as one possible way to approach course design.

In **recruitment, retention, and nurture**, insights and ideas included:

- Make better use of tools related to search engine optimization (SEO) to appear where people do relevant searches.
- Work with local churches to plan special events related to vocation.
- Put recruiters through a short MA degree or at least online classes to make them better at recruiting online students.
- Adopt rolling registration to prevent the drop-off that happens if you give online students more than 30 days between registration and beginning of class.
- Require students to attend an initial in-person retreat with their cohorts.
- Require application fees to incentivize enrollment.
- Assign students immediately to mentors/advisors who guide them; if you can get students through the first semester then retention is not as hard.
- Make mentorship a requirement of *every* course.
- Keep students engaged by using social media tools where they already are: private Facebook groups, or a LMS app for their phones.
- Have a prayer forum, and *use* it.
- Have a staff member assigned as an "online pastor" who reaches out to students who seem lost or are not participating.
- Increase tuition after a period of time to incentivize completion.
- "Treat all students as if they are online students" (everyone sits on the front row in online classes).

8. List (briefly) key recommended practices for this educational model or practice.

A task force within this group developed a checklist to help identify what constitutes quality online education in light of overall ATS goals and recent theories of learning. Upon further exploration, the group concluded that the items on this checklist identified quality education regardless of the modality in which the teaching and learning occurred. The following is a checklist of modality-neutral qualities:

- **Accessible:** A quality theological education should be available to all interested. An online modality allows theological schools to reach, educate, and form those who could not otherwise attend our programs.
- **Affordable:** A quality theological education should be economically feasible for students. An online modality allows students to avoid relocating and giving up employment.
- **Communal:** A quality theological education offers multiple opportunities for deep interaction among students and between students and faculty. An online modality allows students the same interactions through the use of technology.
- **Connected/Missional:** A quality theological education ties to the core mission of the school. An online modality does not change this.
- **Contextual:** A quality theological education should allow students to reflect on their learning within the context of the church. An online modality keeps students in their already-embedded contexts and therefore allows them to reflect on their learning in these settings.
- **Deliberate:** A quality theological education is deliberate in the methods, resources, and theories employed. An online modality must also ensure that the right technology is used, adequate support (both technical and academic) is provided, a variety of learning styles are employed in a way that achieves course objectives, and student learning and program integrity is assessed.
- **Equitable:** A quality theological education should be equal for all students. An online modality can provide an equal footing for all students, including those who may have difficulty in an f2f modality (introverts, ESL speakers, etc.).
- **Flexible:** A quality theological education should be flexible to meet the needs of students. An online modality allows for this flexibility.
- **Formational:** A quality theological education needs to provide opportunities for personal and spiritual formation. An online modality provides students with multiple avenues for formation. (See peer group report from Group 1—Formation in Online Contexts for an in-depth explanation).
- **Global:** A quality theological education includes local and global diversity. An online modality allows for the participation of students and instructors from all over the world and celebrates diversity of students and their contexts.
- **Rigorous:** A quality theological education should be extremely thorough and demanding of students. An online modality compares well to the demands of an f2f modality.
- **Thoughtful:** A quality theological education should require students to reflect and discuss topics in a meaningful way. An online modality can enhance the depth of reflection and conversation as students have time to think, write, and edit.

9. As you work on this particular educational model or practice, what are the educational principles that are served by the model or practice?

Various enumerations exist of principles for effective teaching and learning, but most share an emphasis on the need for effective course design that communicates specific learning objectives and explicit expectations; community between students and instructors; activities that promote active learning; assignments and feedback that help develop critical reflection skills in students; and respecting diverse ways of learning. Our group looked at theories of learning in the online context, guided by two works: Heinemann and Estep's "Educational Theory and Online Education" in *Best Practices of Online Education:*

A Guide for Christian Higher Education (2012) and Hirumi's "Three Levels of Planned ELearning Interactions" in *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* (2013: 1-16).

Our peer group is proposing (see #10) that the standards should be "modality neutral," but not "neutral" regarding educational quality or the values and principles that undergird our educational models or practices. To that end, we offer here some key educational principles that we believe apply not only to good *online* theological education, but to *all* good theological education, regardless of model or mode.

To set these principles in the context of our current standards, we provide after each one some explanatory text taken from various standards (set off in quotation marks). The one exception is the last principle, which does not appear to be aligned with any current standard. We've included it because we feel this principle is important for any educational model or mode of delivery that seeks to provide good theological education.

Good theological education reflects common theological values. Good theological education, regardless of model or mode, reflects "a community of faith and learning that cultivates habits of theological reflection, nurtures wise and skilled ministerial practice, and contributes to the formation of spiritual awareness and moral sensitivity" (Standard 3 Introduction).

Good theological education prioritizes outcomes over inputs or methods. Good theological education is based less on the presence of various institutional inputs or instructional methods and more on the achievement of appropriate student learning outcomes. To that end, "assessment of student learning requires schools… to demonstrate the extent to which students have achieved the various goals [or outcomes] of the[ir] degree programs" (Educational Standard [ES], Introduction).

Good theological education requires a community of engagement. Good theological education "requires regular and substantive interaction between teachers and learners and among learners" (ES.4.2.3) within "a viable community of learning" (ES.1.1.2), regardless of the model or mode used. Education related to ministerial leadership requires students to be "engaged in a community of learning whereby faculty and students have significant opportunities for interaction, peer learning, development of pastoral skills, supervised experiences of ministry, and growth in personal, spiritual formation" (Degree Program Standards A.3.1.1, B.3.1.1, and C.3.1.1).

Good theological education prizes diversity. Good theological education uses "the diversity of life experiences represented by the students, by faith communities, and by the larger cultural context." All educational models or modes are "sensitive to the diversity of student populations, different learning styles of students, the importance of communities of learning, and [appropriate degree program] goals" (3.2.2.2).

Good theological education demonstrates appropriate institutional support. Good theological education, in whatever form, manifests "careful planning [and budgeting] … to ensure adequate infrastructure, resources, training, and support" for instructors and students (3.2.2.2).

Good theological education exhibits good instructional design. Good theological education involves educational experiences that are effective, efficient, and engaging, through a process of instructional design that defines appropriate educational goals, determines learners' educational needs, and then creates learning experiences that address those goals and needs, regardless of the educational model or delivery mode employed [not found explicitly in any current ATS Standard, but echoed in 3.1.2].

10. Are there implications from your group's work for the possible process of redevelopment of the Standards of Accreditation?

Our recommendation is that the standards should be blind to modality. In our final peer group meeting, we concluded that ATS schools should be focused on providing quality learning regardless of the modality of the learning. We determined that neither f2f nor online learning was superior to the other even after meeting with the peer group on Formation in Online Contexts. Instead, we feel the ATS standards would be best suited if they are modality-neutral. Good online education will attend to the same concerns that a good residential-based education does, so there is no need to distinguish between the two. Online programs that churn out graduates with little regard for the formation and growth of students would be just as bad a residential program that did little more than collect tuition and print degrees.

11. What are possible implications of your group's work for the broader work of theological education?

The most significant implication of accepting online education as an equal to f2f is the increased reach of theological education it makes possible. Technology provides us with the possibility to connect to underserved populations not only outside of North America but also outside of the traditional population of students who take the time to come to campus. Additionally, we heard from other peer groups that online education might be helpful when considering Duration, Accelerated Bachelor's/MDIV, Global Partnerships, Programs in Prison, and Students without Bachelor's.

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Duration (Reduced Credit MDiv) Peer Group Final Report

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Context

ATS Degree Program Standard A.3.2 states "… an MDiv program shall require a minimum of three academic years of full-time work or its equivalent." Anecdotally, in the 1980s, at many ATS institutions this meant six semesters of full-time enrollment (i.e., 72 semester hours), including supervised field education. It was not even necessary for students to enroll in classes during the summer in order to complete their degrees in three calendar years.

Since that time, ATS schools have gradually added to their degree requirements. The impetus to do this has come from several sources:

- ATS itself requires a more global perspective for MDiv programs, necessitating additional content.
- The core disciplines of theological scholarship have developed new knowledge, approaches, and methodologies that need to be covered in the curriculum.
- Constituent churches want coverage of leadership theory and skills not historically part of the MDiv curriculum, including community organizing, financial literacy, fundraising, volunteer management, risk management, strategic planning, and project management, all the while demanding improved preparation in fundamentals such as doctrinal theology and preaching.

- MDiv candidates come from increasingly diverse backgrounds and it has become nearly impossible to maintain any expectations of prior preparation for many schools. Schools utilize various strategies to fill gaps but they all require time.
- At one time the vast majority of MDiv candidates were preparing for local church ministry but it has become increasingly difficult to predict where students' careers will take them. The curriculum has to be adapted to this reality.

A survey conducted by ATS in 2016 indicates that roughly half of ATS schools require 90 semester credits or more for the MDiv. While some are designed to be four-year programs, many assume that students will be able to take 15 to 16 credits per term to complete the degree in three years. Many institutions have added summer term content and intensive courses during the traditional winter breaks in order to permit students to continue completing degree programs in three calendar years, but statistics reveal that many students are unable to accomplish that goal.

TABLE 1: Data from ATS Entering and Graduating Student Questionnaires	2006	2016
Percentage of entering MDiv students age 30 and younger	58.6	51.1
Percentage of entering MDIV students with one or more dependents	32.6	38.8
Percentage of MDiv students attending part-time	15.7	20.7
Percentage of part time students planning to work 20 hours or more	78.2	83.3
Percentage of full time students planning to work 20 hours or more	22.3	27.0
Percentage of graduating MDiv students taking four or more years to finish	24.7	29.3
Percentage of graduating MDiv students incurring $30,000 or more of educational debt in seminary	23.7 (2007)	39.0

At the same time, the typical MDiv student is changing (Table 1). Many MDiv students are now older and have families. They are more likely to be attending school part-time and more likely to be working 20 hours or more per week. These students struggle to maintain a traditional full-time course load and to pay tuition and expenses for additional credit hours. As a result, the number of students taking four, five, and even six years to complete an MDiv program is rising.

Motivation

The peer group members are all primarily focused on exercising proper stewardship on behalf of their constituents, although a significant subtext is a concern for offering programs that are competitive with other ATS schools that their potential students might choose. Time is a significant concern for many MDiv students, particularly those who are looking at a second career or bi-vocational ministry and who already have family responsibilities and dependents. Because many of these students cannot attend school full-time, their time to degree is already prolonged. There is an inherent financial component as well. More required course hours to fulfill degree requirements mean more tuition and other costs for the degree.

The question is how to balance appropriate rigor and comprehensiveness within the current reality of higher educational costs overall and increasingly more complex constraints on the time and resources of student constituents. No one wants to shortchange students on preparation for their careers in ministry and service. The challenge is to rethink and reimagine our programs, possibly employing technology and improved pedagogy, to accomplish our ends within a reasonable timeframe for our constituents.

Crucial Issues and Questions

The question at the core of our deliberations is, "What is the fundamental nature and purpose of the Master of Divinity degree?" This question can potentially be approached from many angles. It can be asked philosophically, historically, or comparatively with other programs of professional education. In practical terms, it must be asked and answered from each of these perspectives. However, given the ultimate goal of this project is the revision of the ATS Standards, that seems the place to begin.

Looking at the existing ATS Standards for the degree, several facets stand out:

- The MDiv is a generalist's degree. It is intended to prepare students for just about any kind of ministry. In that regard, it is ambitiously comprehensive.
- The MDiv is at once a professional and an academic degree. It is explicitly designated as potential preparation for advanced academic study. As such, it stands out among the standards for ATS degrees, most of which are firmly designated either academic or professional.
- While the standards do not reflect this, the MDiv is implicitly a foundational degree. It is the preparatory degree for what has traditionally been primarily local church-based ministry, although it is understood to be necessary for wider leadership in the church. Despite the comprehensiveness called for in the standard, it is impossible to provide a young woman or man with all the preparation s/he will find necessary in a career that may span 20 to 40 years. The best that can be hoped for is the establishment of a good foundation.

Within the standards, there is considerable disjuncture between the two professional degree standards (Standard A. Master of Divinity and Standard B. Master of Arts in (specialized ministry). The two standards contain a great deal of common language, particularly surrounding the content of the educational program. However, while the MDiv standard stresses comprehensiveness and generality, the MA standard stresses specialization and limitation. This seems a contradiction from the general pattern of professional education. In many fields, it is the shorter degree that is more general and the more advanced degrees that lead to specialization. The key to this relationship lies in the history of the degrees. The current MA standard has roots in earlier degree programs that were aimed primarily at groups who were excluded from the ecclesial roles that required an MDiv. Therefore, they are built around assumptions that the ministries of those with MAs will take place in contexts where they will be overseen by others with broader theological preparation. This also explains why there is no relationship specified between the two degrees nor a defined path from an MA to an MDiv.

These observations lead to some critical questions:

- Is the MDiv a *professional* degree, an *academic* degree, or is it by nature *both*? Can a single degree program of three to four years' duration provide both excellent professional preparation for ministry in virtually any context *and* sufficient academic rigor to qualify for academic doctoral programs? How helpful is the professional/academic distinction that holds through most of the degree program standards?
- Is the MDiv a *foundational* or a *terminal* qualification for ministry? It seems evident that most graduates will inevitably need further education in one form or another. Should this not be accepted in designing programs and reflected in the standards? What are reasonable expectations for a foundational degree?
- What should be the relationship between the professional MA and the MDiv? Does the understanding of the professional MA as an inherently "limited" degree hold up in a context where

many MA holders lead ministries with a great deal of autonomy and where many church bodies grant them equal voice and vote in church councils? Should pathways for further education be defined for both professional degrees?
- Is adequate *formation* related to degree *duration*? How do we define and measure formation to begin to explore this question?

Opportunities and Benefits

The potential benefits of limiting the required credit hours for the MDiv are closely related to the motivations of the peer group participants to develop them:

- Respond to the needs of students with real life constraints.
- Contain costs and decrease the level of student debt.
- Increase availability to underrepresented groups.

The opportunity here is to retool the professional standards to make them more practical, more flexible, and more responsive to current needs. This is, of course, a complex task and there is no desire to dismantle what has been a very successful core tradition. However, there are some clear possibilities:

- Focus on the foundational and professional facets of the MDiv.
- Rationalize the relationship between professional MA and MDiv and open the possibility of "stackable"[1] professional credentials. Perhaps include the possibility of "less than MA" credentials that can be combined to qualify for professional degrees.
- Provide an underpinning for differing approaches to credentialing, including "Competency Based Education" (CBE) and related variations such as offering academic credit for prior learning and experience.
- Provide support within the standards for ongoing learning[2] programs.

The goal is to provide ATS schools with tools that permit them to work with their constituencies to build programs that respond to their needs. For example, not all Christian bodies have a tradition of formal leadership education. This permits schools to offer these constituents opportunities that are more responsive to their needs while inviting them to consideration of broader issues.

The Master of Divinity has proven a remarkably robust credential. The standard has evolved beyond the needs of "mainline" Protestantism to be embraced by a broader fellowship of Christian organizations. That core vitality needs to be preserved. At the same time, adjustments are needed to respond to new developments in the church, in the academy, and in society. Historically, the trend has been for the MDiv to become more "professionalized,"[3] incorporating facets of professional education including supervised

[1] "Stackable credentials" are part of a defined sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to move an individual along a career pathway.

[2] In the context of this report, "ongoing learning" represents both "continuing education" and "lifelong learning." "Continuing education" connotes a formal, externally organized, and administered system of occasions for formal instruction. "Lifelong learning" connotes a set of skills, attitudes, and habits that lead primarily to ongoing self-education. A comprehensive program of theological education requires both approaches.

[3] In *Piety and Profession* (Eerdmans, 2007), Glenn T. Miller describes the increasing dominance of the professional model of ministry particularly as it was expressed in theological education. In *Piety and Plurality* (Eerdmans, 2014) he states, "Beginning in the 1960s, the professional model began to fray around the edges … The various visions that we discussed … were an attempt, in part to replace it with another vision or, in some cases to supplement it.
Although each had some effect on theological education, none became dominant." (p. 362)

field experience. Emphasizing its foundational nature and focusing on professional, applied knowledge are rational steps toward preserving its effectiveness. Professional preparation requires a solid academic foundation but concentrating on applying academic insights to pastoral situations will permit a more targeted and effective course of study.

Yet it is also desirable particularly for those who will teach in seminaries to have both pastoral and academic preparation. At least two paths to such preparation will continue. A student who has a strong undergraduate foundation in his/her discipline can do more advanced work in the course of the MDiv and thereby qualify for PhD work. A student who cannot do advanced work in the MDiv program may qualify by completing a ThM in one additional year. Schools with a strong tradition of preparing pastor/scholars, particularly those embedded in universities and those whose parent traditions embrace that model of vocation, will likely continue in that vein and they should have the flexibility to do so.

Challenges and Obstacles

One clear challenge is establishing standards that preserve the core strengths of the MDiv while creating a framework for greater flexibility and creativity. Not all institutions will embrace a tighter focus on professional preparation and they should not be forced to. Not all traditions will perceive "stackable" credentials as suiting their needs and, again, they need not be forced to do so. However, those schools that are prepared to work with their constituencies to respond creatively to emerging needs should have a framework that supports their efforts.

Working with ecclesial and other constituents represents another continuing challenge. This is especially true on two fronts: Competency Based Education and ongoing learning. The current standards allow ATS schools broad latitude in defining their own missions and outcomes. However, it is unclear that Competency Based programs can succeed on such an independent basis. Schools that wish to implement CBE would seem to need considerable buy-in from the churches they serve and, therefore, consensus on the competencies they are working toward. If accredited credentials are to be portable that would seem to imply broad consensus across disciplines as well. How will this consensus be developed, codified, and assessed?

Unlike the American Bar Association or the American Medical Association, ATS has no clear means to enforce requirements for continuing education. However, both common sense and anecdotal evidence show an obvious need for regular opportunities for ongoing learning throughout the career life of ministers and other church professionals. What can ATS do to help its constituencies realize and address this need? Would it make sense to create expanded standards for ongoing learning programs offered by member institutions? Would an institutional standard establishing continuing education offerings as a necessary component of a viable professional education program be appropriate? What resources can ATS bring to bear to help its member institutions make the case for ongoing learning to their constituents?

Demonstrating Educational Effectiveness

From one perspective, there is no inherent difference in demonstrating the effectiveness of a reduced credit MDiv program from any MDiv program. According to the standards, individual institutions determine the intended outcomes of their programs and the measures that are used to assess their effectiveness. While those outcomes and measures are subject to critique, a reduced credit program introduces nothing new into the process of assessment.

If an institution is running more than one MDiv program, as might be the case if the institution is operating a program that provides advanced standing for prior experience and CBE-type individualized curricula for older students and a more traditional program for younger students, it may be necessary to demonstrate that the two programs provide suitably comparable outcomes. This would be similar to the requirement to demonstrate that extension programs are producing comparable outcomes to residential programs.

However, as new programs are built it is vital to make assessment part of their intrinsic designs. Historically, ATS schools have had to superimpose assessment of educational effectiveness on pre-existing curricula and program designs. The results have not always been happy. With new and fundamentally redesigned programs, the opportunity exists to incorporate assessment from the beginning, developing program outcomes and measures in tandem with curriculum so that they form a coherent whole.

Ultimately, the success of graduates in their vocational careers is the best measure of the effectiveness of degree programs. While defining and tracking these outcomes is inherently difficult, schools should be encouraged to seek relationships and processes with their alumni/ae and their institutional constituents to do meaningful follow up on their educational programs. This can also produce benefits in designing and recruiting for continuing education programs.

Financial Viability

There is a financial impact upon institutions that shorten their degree programs. The crudest model of this is that the school loses the percentage of tuition and related fees per student that the program requirement is reduced. For example, if an MDiv program is shortened from 84 to 72 hours, the institution will lose 14.3% of its anticipated tuition and fees per enrolled student. The period of time during which the income is realized changes as well. Often, the change is made with the hope of enrolling more students, though in actuality matters are rarely so straightforward. The change may be made with an eye to remaining competitive and to losing fewer students to other schools. Part of best practice is for individual schools to define a careful business plan that articulates both the reasons for shortening the degree program and what will constitute a successful outcome from the change. This would hold true regardless of the kind of innovation a school is considering adopting.

Another aspect of best practice is to consider change in the context of the full educational program of the individual school. For example, a school that chooses to shorten its MDiv program as an act of proper stewardship for constituent resources may also choose to strengthen its ongoing learning program out of the same basic motivation. Depending upon the mission and resources of the individual institution, a holistic approach to an educational program that addresses the needs of primary constituents may well be the best overall approach not only to service but to financial viability. This will enable the school to better establish goals for the size of its faculty and staff as well as other necessary resources. Again, there may well be significant overlap in matters related to financial viability between a reduced-duration program and other models, such as the combined BA/MDiv model.

Insights, Innovations, or Possibilities

"Duration" seems to be a proxy for a spectrum of concerns regarding the quality and effectiveness of the MDiv degree. This became particularly clear in conversation with peer groups working on other models. The existing standards use a minimum duration to specify enough time to "fulfill the broad educational and formational goals of the MDiv." In other words, it is a measure of the adequacy or sufficiency of the degree. This perception that duration is a proxy for adequacy was reinforced by concerns from other groups about "watering down" the MDiv, particularly from the DMin peer group. Other peer groups expressed concerns related to perceptions that some programs are "second class," (i.e., lower quality, because they require fewer credit hours, are completed part-time, or are awarded on a nontraditional (i.e., CBE) basis.

The group wrestled unsuccessfully with identifying another way to describe the essential concept of adequacy. Time seems an arbitrary and poorly correlated measure of adequacy even though it is ubiquitous in academia. This is one of the foundational insights of CBE approaches and it may be that CBE can offer a better, more highly correlated way to specify sufficiency for the professional degree programs. A better way of defining the standard benchmark for the minimum quality of the professional master's degrees would be beneficial for all models and all types of institutions.

"Formation" seems to be a related proxy for concerns about quality and effectiveness. Formation is a complex concept that has tended to be referenced within ATS and within the standards without a solid definition. In part, this is excusable because different constituents within ATS have differing approaches to and emphases in formation. For example, although all ATS schools must contest racism, historically Black institutions face unique challenges for formation and cultural identity in the context of the contentious and unresolved history of slavery and Jim Crow in the United States. It is a sign of the times that concerns are being expressed that face-to-face teaching and residential education are being undervalued. Historically, these were the standard for theological education and they are strongly linked to effective formation. However, *how* they promoted effective formation has been poorly delineated, largely because there were no serious competing models. A stronger framework for conceptualizing formation would ultimately help improve all professional theological education.

Recommended Practices for Reduced Duration Programs

There is no one way to approach reducing the requirements for an MDiv program. Schools that are motivated to attempt it must duly consider their missions, their constituents, their cultures, and their resources. Negotiating this level of change is never simple. The members of the peer group all did it differently, but they perceived some helpful strategies.

1. Design programs holistically to preserve integrity, continuity, and purpose throughout the institutions offerings.
2. Explore the possibilities of greater integration across theological disciplines in the curriculum. Co-teaching integrated courses can support both time efficiencies and offer pedagogical benefits in helping students make better connections in knowledge and skill.
3. Consider organizing the faculty to better address the specific mission of the school and the goals of the curriculum rather than by traditional academic disciplines.
4. Deepen relationships with church constituents and develop means to leverage student work experience and integrate practitioner mentoring into the degree programs.
5. Develop a plan for ongoing education that includes both pathways for additional credentials (stacking) and continuing education.

Educational Principles

The members of the Duration Peer Group are committed to both the stated purpose of the MDiv degree, "… to prepare persons for ordained ministry and for general pastoral and religious leadership responsibilities in congregations and other settings," [Degree Program Standard A.1.1.1] and to the four broad areas of content aligned with that purpose [Degree Program Standard A.1.2.1. ff.]:

- Knowledge of religious heritage
- Understanding of the cultural context
- Growth in spiritual depth and moral integrity
- Capacity for ministerial and public leadership

However the peer group does not assume that these areas are listed in an order of priority even within the structure of the existing standards, and believes there are normal and necessary variations in how these areas are addressed and related among schools of different traditions and missions.

The group's discussions were undergirded by several additional principles:

- Theological education is not limited to formal education programs. It does not begin when the student begins a degree program. It does not end when the student graduates.
- Vocational discernment is incremental. Therefore, theological education is never "finished." Why should practicing pastors have less rigorous continuing education requirements than Zumba instructors?
- Theological education is essentially relational. Faculty mentoring and peer relationships are essential to student learning and formation.
- Received models of theological education must be continually reassessed in the light of new knowledge, cultural change, and emerging needs, and the exploration of alternative models must be allowed and encouraged. Traditional disciplinary boundaries do not necessarily serve contemporary needs.
- Theological education is not monolithic. Individual religious traditions have unique and valuable perspectives. Individual students have unique needs, capabilities, and resources. Schools must be flexible and responsive to the needs of their constituents.

Within the framework of the standards, ATS institutions have customarily developed their own approaches and balances to suit their missions and traditions. The challenge to this group is to maintain the integrity of purpose and the four broad areas of content while holding down the required number of credit hours. Of course, fundamental issues arise. The approaches of the members of the peer group are not uniform.

- Some members have attempted to restructure their curriculums to cover the core content in fewer classroom hours.
- Roman Catholic members have made a distinction between the requirements for lay vocations and those for candidates for the priesthood.
- One member has developed a proposal to take into account students' prior learning (specifically for older students) and build a shorter, more customized program based on that assessment. Their concerns intersect with those working on Competency Based Education approaches.

Recommendations for Standards Revision

As a result of our work together, the peer group offers these recommendations regarding the revisions of the Standards of Accreditation:

1. Clarify the professional and academic modes of the Master of Divinity degree:

    a. Define the MDiv *primarily* as a professional degree with learning outcomes oriented toward professional competencies. This is not to forbid the use of the MDiv as preparation for further graduate study but rather to emphasize that where it is so used; it will be because the professional competencies that it promotes are valued within the academic context.

    b. Emphasize the foundational nature of the MDiv as an introduction for students to a range of theological disciplines. The breadth must be delivered in a manner that maintains academic content appropriate to the master's level, but nevertheless it is the foundational breadth that reflects the character and purpose of the degree rather than the depth to which each discipline is pursued.

    c. Explicitly promote ongoing learning and formation for ministry beyond the MDiv. It should be recognized that this one degree cannot realistically provide all the knowledge and skills required for a full career in ministry.

    d. Establish a framework for appropriate specialization with the degree, (i.e., where can a level of specialization appropriately coexist with foundational breadth and the requirements to engage a variety of theological disciplines and to engender a range of professional competencies?) Also, can this specialization appropriately involve deeper engagement with an individual academic discipline or the development of a specific set of ministry skills or both?

2. Clarify the relationship between the professional MA and the MDiv:

    a. Explicitly permit using the MA as an entry-level degree for ministry with appropriate content requirements.

    b. Define a relationship between the MA and the MDiv that would permit the credentials to be "stacked." Consider accepting the MA, in conjunction with appropriate experience, as the prerequisite for the DMin.

3. Identify ongoing learning as an expected and necessary component of professional education and take whatever steps possible to ensuring a vital and effective ecosystem of education beyond degree programs.

4. Allow for the "stackability" of degrees and provide a framework to recognize lesser documented credentials (e.g., transcripted certificates) as stackable components that can be applied toward degrees.

5. Define a better benchmark for the adequacy of degree programs than duration.

6. Eliminate special cases for students without BAs and differing delivery modes and place all programs on a common standard for quality and effectiveness.

Broader Implications

It must be acknowledged that the circumstances that create pressure to contain the time commitment required to complete an MDiv are not universal among ATS institutions. The culture of priestly formation in Roman Catholic institutions mitigates many of the factors that create that pressure and the culture of some other traditions may do the same. Schools with very strong financial aid resources or very reliable feeder sources may not feel the same pressure either. However, schools that serve diverse church communities, operate in regions with many alternatives for theological education, or that have missional commitments to serve very diverse constituents will recognize the factors cited here. Their numbers are likely significant.

Engaging the issue of duration has led directly to consideration of the basic nature of the MDiv degree and its relationship to the other standard degrees of graduate theological education. The result is recommendations that may potentially lead to radical reframing of some of the basic concepts underlying the ATS Standards of Accreditation, including how to define quality in accredited programs and how to understand the relationship between professional and academic orientations in disciplines related to theological education. None of this will be easy and some of it may prove impossible. That is as it should be for striving for both quality and practicality are not light tasks, but they are the tasks of faithful stewardship. All ATS institutions will benefit from deep consideration and better shared understanding of the core concepts and values of our common task, even if they serve only to help them better understand the strengths and values of what they are already doing.

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Accelerated Bachelor's/MDiv Peer Group Final Report

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1. Why did the schools in the group engage this educational model or practice?

These programs allow seminaries to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with colleges in ways that put the possibility of seminary on the radar for students who otherwise might not have access. Participants agreed that there is a need for combined programs because people experience vocational callings at various times in their lives, sometimes early and sometimes late. This model/practice helps schools equip students at whatever stage they are in and launch them into ministry efficiently. In addition, schools who want to reach out to underserved[1] communities face the reality that many potential ministers do not already hold baccalaureate degrees. Schools also acknowledged that some of the reasons for accelerated programs focused on financial realities; combined programs can be more financially viable for students, and seminaries may leverage this fact when competing with other schools for the same students. Many students are eager to avoid additional debt. Participants also spoke of additional pressure on seminaries from some constituent communities, as well as from their own students, to compress certain academic requirements so that those with a call to ministry can be formed and placed more quickly.

[1] There was some concern in this group that the term "underserved" may imply a stereotype of specific racial or ethnic communities that is not intended here. These programs use the concept of "underserved" to mean communities or clusters of individuals who have not had easy access to higher education for a variety of reasons, including socioeconomic status and nontraditional educational paths.

2. What are the most crucial issues and questions engaged by the group?

Participants consistently cited assessment of potential students as a crucial issue: how can schools know that the students they are admitting to a combined program will succeed at the graduate level and, subsequently, in their ministries or vocational contexts? Combined programs also raise the question of how, precisely, undergraduate and graduate education are distinct from each other (for the sake of accreditation as well as pedagogy). Schools spoke of difficulty designing and tracking accelerated programs, particularly with varying requirements (from accreditors and others) for transfer credits, advanced standing, shared credit, and so on. Additional student support services are often needed in programs that are more oriented toward mature and nontraditional students.

Student experience is a crucial point to consider. Undergraduate students may be influenced by broader cultural pressures to aim their education directly at a viable career, but higher education should allow space for vocational uncertainty and provide "exit ramps" for students who need additional time to discern and for those who will take a different academic or vocational path. Combined programs need to be especially attentive to supporting students who are still exploring or who might discern their ways out of the program. Embedded seminaries will want to consider how their students adapt to being "betwixt and between" both academically and socially, though they have the advantage of accessing their student population earlier and spending more time in formation. The speed of the transition from undergraduate to graduate work could impact their undergraduate experiences. Freestanding seminaries spoke of challenges with financial models and curricular planning with their partner colleges, as well as the variation among schools and among prospective students; compatibility on doctrinal issues and in social and academic culture is not guaranteed even when the partnered schools are committed to working together.

3. What are the most significant potential opportunities/benefits for this model or practice? For the school, for students, for faculty, for the church and/or for other stakeholders?

Combined programs offer two distinct kinds of opportunities for their students at the same time; first, the chance for students to practice bi-vocationality from the start through an undergraduate major that prepares them for employment or service in a non-religious context (though this is not available in all such programs), and second, the chance for students to seamlessly move from undergraduate-level formation and education into graduate-level academics. The opportunity to be bi-vocational is especially prominent in programs that are able to flexibly integrate a variety of methods to bridge the transition between undergraduate and graduate studies, including transfer credit, advanced standing, and combined level courses. However, bi-vocationality might be a limited benefit for programs that require a particular undergraduate major or minor area of study for admittance, and not all undergraduate majors or minors are well-suited for combination with MDiv programs. Yet, the chance to lean into flexible learning paths can extend outward beyond the combined program alone; undergraduate institutions that partner with seminaries might be encouraged to integrate new ways to prepare their students for graduate work, and embedded schools might experiment with sharing faculty across levels so that professors can grow their pedagogical skills in new environments.

Regarding the seamless movement between the undergraduate and graduate levels of study, embedded seminaries have an advantage over stand-alone schools because the educational context can be crafted and sustained throughout their programs; participants noted that the established, more mature students often step into leadership roles and act as the cultural "glue" that helps the program cohere. Because these programs typically admit a relatively small number of students, it is often easier for faculty to informally assess the overall quality of the program because they are familiar with the cohort as a whole. Stand-alone schools may benefit from requiring certain courses to be taken at the undergraduate level, or collaborating with their undergraduate school partner by periodically exchanging faculty in order to establish the same kind of unified educational context.

The peer group noted that combined programs might offer an advantage over the practice of admitting students without baccalaureate degrees into seminary directly in that students who discern out of ministry or who are unable to complete the MDiv will still have earned a bachelor's degree and have the benefit of that educational credential regardless of their new paths. Schools with combined programs may also see benefits in the retention of students, especially in embedded seminaries where students may prefer to continue their educations with reduced time and overall cost or debt burden where they are already established instead of applying to seminaries elsewhere. Participants noted that, in some situations, combined programs help seminaries appeal to younger students who can start their vocational journeys earlier in life, a practice which could be a boon to denominations where ministers are typically middle-aged or older.

4. What are the most significant challenges/obstacles that could keep this model or practice from flourishing?

Participating schools noted that "speed is not a pedagogical value" and that combined programs can raise the question of where to place the line between time-efficiency and hastiness. Schools do not want to be perceived as devaluing the education they provide or as not providing sufficient time for students to come to clarity about their vocational paths. (For this reason, several schools avoid calling their programs "accelerated" and instead call their programs by the number of years, 3/3 or 3+2). Seminaries note that there can be added administrative time involved as they evaluate individual students for admission to combined programs. Transfer credit and equivalency take time and research to vet properly even when both undergraduate and graduate schools have crafted their programs well. Schools recognize the need to invest in support structures for these students (such as tutoring, counseling, and spiritual direction) but may not have the financial ability to create those structures. Participants noted that faculty being aware of which students are part of the combined program can work both positively or negatively if combined students are treated differently than their more traditional peers.

Accrediting agencies that limit the number of students who may be admitted into a graduate program without a bachelor's degree (the "fifteen percent rule" in ATS Commission Standard A, section A.4.2, and Standard B, section B.4.2) adds additional complexity—especially for smaller schools—both in terms of admissions (including potentially having to defer some admissions when the number has been exceeded) and in terms of assessment (it can be difficult to collect representative/meaningful data on these small cohorts). Combined programs often compete with online programs for similar pools of potential students in some contexts, or in contexts where the MDiv is not required for ordination, students may simply choose a two-year program or stop after the undergraduate degree rather than pursuing a combined program.

5. How is the educational effectiveness of the model or practice demonstrated?

Useful data on these combined programs can be difficult to come by. This is partly because sample sizes are always small and year-to-year admission in the combined program can be highly variable, partly because many of the peer school participants are very early in the process of beginning these programs and do not have much to evaluate, and partly because the programs represented appealed to enormously different student populations and data likely would not translate across those differences. However, this question raises other significant questions about assessment of learning in all seminary students and the benefits and limitations of judging effectiveness with GPAs, placement rates, student-reported readiness, and faculty-reported readiness of students. These measures all require context in order to be useful. Participants were readily able to articulate the effectiveness of these combined programs by way of qualitative and anecdotal evidence, but did not have statistical information to confirm or nuance these perceptions. For schools who have a stake in demonstrating that combined degree programs are not a lesser or devalued form of education, establishing assessment tools will be especially important. Schools with combined programs may wish to collaborate with the ATS to identify the students who emerged from the combination program on the Graduate Student Questionnaire in order to begin tracking educational effectiveness at a broad level.

6. How is the financial viability of the educational model or practice demonstrated?

Schools noted that combined programs have complex (and often unclear) financial effects on the seminary. For example, a freestanding school that establishes partnerships with a freestanding college might choose to share the student's tuition for the overlap year—is this a loss for the seminary, who otherwise would have had the full tuition amount or a gain because they may not have successfully recruited this student without the combined arrangement? Schools are aware that they need to invest in personnel or programs to support these students' specific needs, which may incur upfront costs if they need to increase staffing or staff hours, but these investments ideally will attract more students and be financially positive. Embedded seminaries typically do not confront the same issues with tuition, but may experience other financial complexities. While combined programs may appear to be a money-making solution because of engaging new markets or by attracting/retaining students who might have applied elsewhere, the actual finances of the situation are difficult to evaluate and ultimately unclear.

7. Are there unexpected insights, innovative ideas, or possibilities that have emerged through the group's work?

Participants noted throughout the discussions the significant variety of combined programs represented in just the five schools who participated in this peer group conversation, and how each school has to approach their own challenges in a highly contextual way. It was unexpectedly difficult to determine the fundamental common denominator that connected all of these programs to one another. There is a multiplicity of ways in which schools refer to similar programs, especially in-house: terminology included 3/3, dual degree, 5-year, fast track, cooperative program, seminary track, MDiv program (for undergraduates), BA-MDiv, Honors MDiv, and others. In general, "accelerated" was not preferred by the participants because they felt it highlighted speed over quality, but some programs use the term deliberately because it clearly communicates what is unique about the program and is appealing to prospective students. The variety of vocabulary offers some insight into what motivates each school to provide this type of program and how the schools understand their programs fitting into their unique missions and contexts. However, this variation in terminology also makes related research difficult. Participants also observed that their programs were typically more oriented toward one of two student groups; either younger, high-achieving, traditional undergraduates or older, nontraditional, underserved, or educationally-interrupted students, though even these two large categories fail to capture the variety of populations each school sees or anticipates in their own student bodies. They noted the difficulties of trying to engage such a variety of populations simultaneously, and wondered whether they should be segmented into separate educational models/practices (including that there might be value in different accrediting standards, guidelines, or practices depending upon what cluster of populations the program is designed to best serve).

Participants cautioned that seminaries should consider carefully whether beginning a combined program is "worth it" both financially and in terms of their missions and contexts. Alternatively, they wondered if combined degrees are becoming the norm in other fields and discussed the advantages and detriments of setting young students on a singular career path early in life. Similarly, while this group's charge was to deal specifically with combined programs leading into the MDiv, participants noted that MDiv enrollment is dropping across denominations and wondered about whether combination programs with other degrees (such as the MA, MRE, or MTS) would actually prove more popular or more significant.

Participants commented on the similarity of the combined program discussion to early discussions of online programs, in that the effectiveness of online delivery often raised questions among theological faculty and administrators, but which is now a thriving educational model that can demonstrate its own strengths. There was great interest in how the implementation of combined programs connected to conversations about competency-based education. Ultimately, participants agreed that this educational model was valuable to discuss because of its incredible variety and diversity rather than its particularity.

8. List (briefly) key recommended practices for this educational model or practice.

For schools that may be considering some version of a combined or accelerated program, this peer group highlighted a number of recommended practices, all of which are meant to be examined and weighed according to the mission and context of each institution. First, a school should be clear on its target population for this type of program and be candid about structuring the program for those students' needs—the structures required to appeal to a geographically specific underserved population will look different from those intended to attract traditional undergraduates with a clear sense of ministerial vocation. The program structure should also account for the needs of a variety of stakeholders, including denominational requirements and the expectations of non-ecclesial bodies that the students may be in relationship with after graduation.

Second, an institution should identify its resources and use connections expansively. For embedded seminaries, this may mean cooperating directly with a particular department; for freestanding schools, finding and securing partner schools within their own denominations or geographical areas to cooperate with will be essential. In either case, preparing formal agreements with these partners will help clarify roles and responsibilities as students move between the undergraduate and graduate level, as well as attend to the specifics of tuition and fees so that the program will be financially viable from both sides. Constant, productive communication is essential to the success of these programs; for this reason, institutions should carefully consider how they will assign responsibilities across faculty and staff so that the program can have the scaffolding and attention it needs to launch successfully. As noted above, the time commitment involved in vetting prospective students is substantial and may require additional personnel. This is especially true for admissions staff, as the program will need targeted and precise marketing in order to be sustainable.

Student experience should be a central concern for the faculty overseeing the program as well as staff in admission, advising, and student success services. Students will need careful orientation to the specific requirements and expectations of this program structure, and will benefit from success services that are attentive to their unique statuses as they move between undergraduate and graduate academics.

Finally, the importance of flexibility and responsive management cannot be overstated. Peers in this group noted that their programs sometimes attracted populations that were not at all what they had designed the structure to serve; those who had to evaluate prior learning and determine transfer credit often faced unique challenges appraising each individual student. A wide variety of models already exist for combined programs and institutions should not expect to easily copy the method of another school—mission, context, population, personnel, finances, accrediting bodies, and other factors should combine to form a program that is unique to each institution.

9. As you work on this particular educational model or practice, what are the educational principles that are served by the model or practice?

Participants noted that combined undergraduate-graduate programs serve at least two distinct (although sometimes overlapping) populations: one, highly motivated young students who seek to combine their undergraduate and graduate work as a way of streamlining their education and getting into full-time professional ministry more quickly, and two, students for whom a traditional degree has not been a feasible option, sometimes from underrepresented racial/ethnic and socioeconomic communities. For the latter group, many come from nontraditional educational paths and a non-combined college and seminary educational experience might be financially impossible. In either case, combined programs permit flexibility for students with complex life circumstances, serve their constituencies by preparing needed persons for ministry and/or leadership in a reduced amount of time, allow collaboration between educational institutions (colleges and seminaries) in a time of diminishing resources, and offer consistency and integration between undergraduate and graduate paths so that students are able to be focused and immersed in spiritual and academic formation throughout their educational journeys. While combined programs have often been framed as a financial necessity, participants agreed that they have their own educational strengths, especially in coherence of the program, and the chance to engage in extended formation and community-building with their students. In sum, the educational principles that stand out from this practice are collaboration among and integration of learning environments.

10. Are there implications from your group's work for the possible process of redevelopment of the Standards of Accreditation?

Since this peer group concluded that combined programs do not and cannot adhere to a single structural model, they support redeveloping the ATS standards to reflect the ways in which ATS evaluates combined programs and how schools should assess their students from the start. These standards may more fruitfully explore principles that guide combined programs rather than practices that are necessary for them.

This group also noted some difficulties with the "fifteen percent rule" in the current standards which limits the proportion of students who can be admitted into a graduate program without a baccalaureate degree. Because institutions handle the compression of undergraduate and graduate work differently through advanced standing, transfer credit, and timing of formal admission into the graduate program, the fifteen percent rule has been variously interpreted and may contribute to administrative confusion.

11. What are possible implications of your group's work for the broader work of theological education?

This group continually wrestled with the implications of combining educational programs and how "accelerating" the rate at which students can complete graduate school may affect their long-term vocational paths. As combined undergraduate-graduate programs become more common in other fields, ATS member institutions will need to have continual conversation about how they can best serve students with strong vocational calls in a way that is rigorous, formative, financially viable, swift, and affirming.

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
DMin Admission Peer Group Final Report

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The **DMin Admission Peer Group** examined Commission on Accrediting Degree Program Standards that pertain broadly to the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree and specifically to DMin Admission.[1] The

[1] Advanced Programs Oriented toward Ministerial Leadership. Standard E: Doctor of Ministry (DMin), 20-25.
E.4 Admission
E.4.1 Students must possess an ATS Board of Commissioners-approved MDiv or its educational equivalent from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency. Degrees from institutions outside of North America may be accepted provided schools can demonstrate that they meet the Standards of the Board-approved degrees for admission. MDiv equivalency is defined as 72 graduate semester hours or comparable graduate credits in other systems that represent broad-based work in theology, biblical studies, and the arts of

Group gave priority to examining the DMin admissions prerequisites of an MDiv degree or its equivalent and three years of post-MDiv ministry experience and to considering how theological schools might respond to changing ministerial and educational needs to create new potential pathways to DMin admission. The following eleven questions were addressed in the course of the peer group's work, which spanned a period of eighteen months and included three face-to-face meetings by the peer group.

1. **Why** did the schools engage this educational model or practice?

Until recent years, the MDiv degree has provided theological schools with a clear standard for DMin admission. Yet, data from The Association of Theological Schools has projected that by 2022 if present trends continue, the combined number of graduates of two-year master's programs (professional and academic) will exceed that of MDiv graduates. What does this mean for admission to the Doctor of Ministry degree program?

Traditionally, seasoned clergy with MDiv degrees have returned to theological schools for advanced DMin study. However, recent changes in ministry and education appear to indicate a need to create new potential pathways to MDiv equivalency for DMin admission. For example, in the Roman Catholic context, the MDiv is the master's degree required for priests but often not for deacons or lay ecclesial ministers. Yet, advanced ministerial formation for priests, deacons, and lay ecclesial ministers is increasingly needed in the Church.

This is the case in other traditions, as well, where ministerial roles are expanding beyond congregational leadership and more and more ministers wish to build upon their master's-level study by pursuing advanced ministerial study—though their master's is not an MDiv.

Additionally, increasing numbers of ministers bring substantive previous ministerial experience to their master's-level study of theology or pursue a master's degree while in full-time ministry. The current standard requiring three years of experience after an MDiv degree does not take these ministers' previous or concurrent experiences into account. While the current standard allows that "as many as 20 percent of the students in the DMin program may be enrolled without the requisite three years of post-degree ministry experience at the time of admission, provided that the institution can demonstrate objective means…" (Degree Program Standard E.4.3), many schools experience this allowance as restrictive—given a growing number of DMin applicants with substantive ministerial

ministry and that include a master's degree and significant ministerial leadership. Ministerial experience alone is not considered the equivalent of or a substitute for the master's degree

E.4.2 Educational equivalency for these master's degrees shall be determined by the institution through appropriately documented assessment that demonstrates that students have the knowledge, competence, or skills that would normally be provided by specific MDiv-level courses. The process, procedures, and criteria for such determination shall be published in the institution's public documents.

E.4.3 Applicants to the DMin degree program should have at least three years of experience in ministry subsequent to the first graduate theological degree and, as part of the program goal, show evidence of capacity for an advanced level of competence and reflection in the practice of ministry beyond that of the master's level. However, as many as 20 percent of the students in the DMin degree program may be enrolled without the requisite three years of ministry experience at the time of admission, provided that the institution can demonstrate objective means for determining that these persons have been prepared by other ministry experience for the level of competence and reflection appropriate for advanced, professional ministerial studies.

E.4.4 If an institution offers specialized DMin programs, it should set appropriate standards for admission to such programs.

experience prior to or concurrent with their master's-level study of theology.

Finally, as theological schools consider the potential for competency-based ministerial education, it may behoove our schools to address some competency-based questions to the subject of DMin admissions.

2. What are the **most crucial issues and questions** engaged by the group?

The two most crucial issues articulated above (recent changes in ministry education and substantive previous or concurrent ministerial experience in relation to master's degree study) both have to do with the proper standards of assessment of a potential DMin student's prior theological formation and ministerial experience. The answers to these questions as posed by the DMin Admissions Peer Group will influence ministers, congregations and denominations, and seminaries and schools of theology. As potential and active ministers pursue master's-level study of theology in any number of life and ministerial contexts with increasing numbers taking master's degrees other than the MDiv, these vocationally committed and gifted ministers often want to do advanced professional study commensurate with any number of DMin degrees. In the context of the current standards, their question is one of access. Congregations and denominations both want their ministers to excel and recognize a need to open more contextually inclusive and realistic avenues for more women and men to pursue a ministerial calling. Schools increasingly recognize their responsibilities to align their efforts with the contextual realities and needs of the church, and of course schools exist above all to serve real students. Schools are also concerned with assuring academic rigor at both the master's and doctoral levels in terms of systematic theology, biblical studies, church history, biblical languages, practical theology, and ministry. The questions and issues at play in DMin admissions affect the sustainability both of church ministry and theological education.

In an April 2017 Pittsburgh break-out dialogue between the Students without Bachelor's Peer Group and the DMin Admissions Peer Group, similar concerns were expressed about changing patterns of prior education, the desire on the part of the schools to provide variable on-ramps for master's or DMin study, and the success of many students for whom such opportunities are provided. In the case of DMin admissions, current admissions standards require 72 graduate theology credits and put a 20 percent cap on students without three years of post-degree ministerial experience. As described above, these rules no longer align with the diverse contexts and realities of potentially successful DMin students. Can a new way of assessing basic competency for successful DMin study be found?

In April 2017, 44 of the 101 ATS schools offering the DMin responded to an Educational Models and Practices Doctor of Ministry Peer Groups Survey (see Appendices). The data below indicates that freestanding schools report higher percentages of students entering the DMin with an MDiv.

Percent of Entering Students with MDiv by School Structure (% within Structure)		
	Embedded (N=14)	**Freestanding** (N=30)
Low—30-59% of Entering Students w MDiv	29%	13%
Mid—60-79% of Entering Students w MDiv	50%	13%
High—80-94% of Entering Students w MDiv	14%	57%
Highest—95%+ of Entering Students w MDiv	7%	17%

As seen in the data below in a question about students' "ability to integrate ministry and theology," while it appears that having an MDiv supports preparedness to integrate ministry and theology in DMin study, the data also supports a conclusion that at least a number of students without a previous MDiv are also prepared to integrate ministry and theology in DMin study. To hold that more master's level study is better does not preclude the ability of many students with less master's level study (and perhaps with additional formational credentials) to succeed. This point is supported anecdotally by the schools in the DMin Admission Peer Group. Again, the DMin Admissions Peer Group is asking this fundamental question: Aside from the current practice of documenting prior degrees and credits, can a new and way of assessing basic competency for successful DMin study be found?

Students' Ability to Integrate by Students with MDiv (% within MDiv Holder Group)				
	Low—30-59% of Students with MDiv (N=8)	**Mid**—60-79% of Students with MDiv (N=11)	**High**—80-94% of Students with MDiv (N=19)	**Highest**—95%+ of Students with MDiv (N=6)
Minimally prepared	25%	0%	5%	0%
Somewhat prepared	13%	73%	42%	33%
Well prepared	38%	18%	53%	33%
Very well prepared	25%	9%	0%	33%

3. What are the most significant potential **opportunities/benefits** for this model or practice—for the school, students, faculty, the church, or other stakeholders?

Given that the DMin is an advanced professional degree, all members of the peer group concur about the necessity for all DMin students, as a matter of basic competency, both to hold a master's degree of a theological nature and to have three years of foundational ministerial experience. The peer group sees all-around benefit to detaching basic competency for beginning DMin study from the MDiv degree *per se* and from a transcript, 72-credit based equivalency formula. Schools, rather, can be invited to determine and demonstrate programmatically and contextually specific outcomes and competency-based processes for assessing basic entry-level competency. In other words, schools can now take benefit of the opportunity presented by the Association's learnings and best practices in outcomes-based and competency-based assessment in order to give DMin access to a wider range of qualifying students.

The peer group is mindful that some professors perceive the DMin to be a diminished degree compared with the PhD. However, the peer group believes that by taking advantage of the opportunity of more assessment and competency-based standards of admission, the authenticity of this advanced professional degree can only be enhanced.

The peer group also is mindful of concern by some congregations that pastors will move on after completion of a DMin. This peer group, however, sees advanced professional study as an opportunity for potential students to enhance career satisfaction and congregational commitment through a deepening of their skills as reflective practitioners.

The peer group realizes also that schools will need to assure sufficient institutional resources such as teaching and administrative capacity to support potential increase in DMin admissions. Increased numbers of students also will require increased scholarship support from schools, congregations, and denominations in order to mitigate against the negative impact of new student debt.

4. How is the **educational effectiveness** of the model or practice demonstrated?

Under **recommended practices** in question 7 below, the peer group has, in broad terms, articulated four outcomes to be desired for all graduates of all DMin programs, along with four sets of corresponding entry-level competencies needed by students to begin DMin studies. Individual DMin programs differ variously in emphasis, curriculum, teaching-learning modalities, and capstone products. Educational effectiveness of student learning, the curriculum, and the overall program must therefore be defined and measured by each school, as evidenced in the school's academic assessment plan. A school's assessment plan also must define and measure student retention and pragmatic success against the school's initial admissions assessment of a student's basic competency to begin DMin study. Other elements of assessment also will be beneficial, for example, in reviewing longer term impact on student debt, ministerial satisfaction, and congregational retention of graduates.

5. How is the **financial viability** of the educational model or practice demonstrated?

Creating alternative pathways to DMin admission will influence direct costs of faculty salaries and stipends and indirect costs of student services (e.g., admissions services, student services, writing services, hospitality services). Increased enrollment can enhance both a school's financial viability and institutional visibility. Graduates, in turn, can contribute more competently as leaders in their congregations and denominations.

6. What unexpected **insights, innovative ideas, or possibilities** have emerged?

As Dan Aleshire observed in his closing address at the Educational Models and Practices Peer Group Forum in Pittsburgh on April 20, 2017: "What makes a practice theological is its end, not its content or methodology." By defining the basic competencies for DMin admission and the desired outcomes for DMin graduates in terms of theological integration, contextual analysis, strategic planning and integration, and personal and spiritual maturity, the DMin Admissions peer group has sought to keep "the end" in mind. In doing so, the peer group has realized that each program must particularize these basic competencies and desired outcomes as a school and according to the ministerial contexts, backgrounds, and needs of potential students. Each school must clearly and publicly communicate to its student, faculty, and accrediting stakeholders the policies, processes, and the avenues of accountability by which it will assess basic competency for DMin admission and then advanced competency as it is spelled out for a particular DMin program.

7. Briefly list key **recommended practices** for this educational model or practice.

Peer group representatives from five schools compared their current institutional processes for determining MDiv equivalency. A published list of MDiv equivalency requirements, articulated clearly for applicants, is required by Degree Program Standard E, section E.4.2. When determining MDiv equivalency, an applicant's transcript is now compared with the school's MDiv credit requirements based on a 72 minimum credit requirement, and lacunae are identified. Additional courses are required to fill in lacunae. Equivalency is not granted without a master's degree, and any course with a grade below 3.0 is dismissed from consideration for equivalency. If an applicant possesses sufficient breadth in coursework and sufficient grades, MDiv equivalency is granted. Depending on the school, a year of probation may be stipulated with prescribed check-in points with an academic advisor.

In current practice, a number of theological schools are creating alternative streamlined educational pathways or on-ramps to a DMin program for applicants who lack one or more criteria for MDiv equivalency. These applicants may be admitted pending prerequisites, and program status for these admitted students may be changed once prerequisites are successfully completed. In many DMin programs, applicants who are graduates of two-year master's programs (professional and academic) complete additional work to achieve MDiv equivalence, specifically, a broad preparation in biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, practical theology, spiritual formation, and field education. Such students may take up to an additional two years to complete the DMin degree. Pedagogical advances, particularly online education, assist theological MA students to achieve MDiv equivalency.

While these practices in many cases will remain relevant, they do not sufficiently provide for the spectrum of potential students who hold a master's degree of a theological nature and seek to demonstrate basic competency for beginning a DMin. Also, these practices often fail to take sufficiently into account the particularity of DMin programs according to each school's ministerial priorities and contexts.

The peer group therefore asked, what are the educational criteria necessary for DMin admission to ensure the intended outcomes of a DMin program? After extended discussion as a peer group and also in dialogue with the DMin Identity peer group, the DMin Admissions group identified the following four **Intended Outcomes of a DMin Program** that a school could address in the particularity of its context:

- *Advanced Theological Integration*: The DMin program gives graduates the ability to effectively engage cultural context with advanced theological acumen and critical thinking.
- *In-Depth Contextual Competency*: The DMin program gives graduates the ability to identify and frame crucial ministry issues.
- *Strategic Planning and Implementation*: The DMin program equips graduates to enhance their impacts as ministerial leaders.
- *Personal and Spiritual Maturity*: The DMin program enables graduates to reinvigorate and

deepen vocational call and extend tenure in ministry.

Stemming from these four intended outcomes of a DMin program, the peer group determined the following aligned **Entry-level Competencies** that would be necessary to successfully begin DMin study:

- *Theological Integration*: the ability to exegete and thoughtfully interpret scripture and the theological tradition in the ministerial context
- *Contextual Analysis*: basic understanding and ability to adapt ministry to the fluid context of culture
- *Ministerial and Leadership Identity*: basic self-understanding of one's ministerial identity and call to leadership
- P*ersonal and Spiritual Formation*: basic readiness and engagement in ongoing spiritual and human growth for ministry

Then, based on the intended outcomes of a DMin program and the entry-level competencies necessary for DMin study, the peer group developed the following statement reflecting its understanding of foundational requirements for DMin admission:

Foundational Requirements for DMin Admission
The DMin presupposes broad foundational competencies of theological integration, contextual analysis, ministerial and leadership identity, and personal and spiritual formation. While an ATS-accredited MDiv degree ordinarily may be accepted by a school as sufficient demonstration of these competencies, DMin applicants who hold a master's degree of a theological nature may qualify by demonstrating a broad foundation in biblical studies, theological and historical studies, ministerial and contextual studies, and ministerial experience as determined by the school to be commensurate with entry level competency for DMin study. All applicants also must have at least three years of substantive ministry experience.

While requirements among schools differ for determining the foundational competency of applicants with three years of substantive ministerial experience and a theological degree other than the MDiv degree, schools are recommended to follow announced processes, procedures, and criteria for reviewing such formative experiences and understandings as:

- Intellectual, pastoral, spiritual, and human formation;
- Demonstrated ability to reflect theologically and personally on ministry;
- Ability to exegete and interpret the scriptures (and possibly knowledge of one or more biblical languages);
- Understanding of church history, including church councils and the reformation;
- Understanding of the Christian theological heritage, as defined by the school;
- Knowledge of theology and the ability to integrate theology into ministry;
- Preaching formation;
- Supervised Field Education;
- Psychological evaluation, as a shared responsibility with ordaining bodies;
- Ability to disciple and be discipled and a sense of mission in God's kingdom;
- Clear personal or ministry call experience;
- An acceptable TOEFL score for students with English as a second language.

8. What **educational principles** are served by the model or practice?

DMin programs offer theologically well-formed men and women with ministry experience the opportunity to reflect theologically on issues of ministry and to grow in ministerial capacity and spiritual maturity. Ministerial leaders want ongoing, systematic, and accountable educational formation, and churches want this for their leaders too. DMin programs throughout ATS offer collegial learning environments where students actively ministering within diverse ministerial contexts can reflect critically on theological issues in ministry within a learning cohort of ministerial peers.

DMin cohorts across Canada and the United States exemplify the rich ecumenical and cultural diversity that ATS schools so positively associate with the ATS experience. In these changing educational times, the DMin Admissions Peer Group proposes that ATS more formally acknowledge the diverse ways by which successful ministers approach their initial ministerial formations. While the MDiv remains a valued pathway to ministry and then to the DMin, churches clearly sponsor other effective pathways, as well, thanks often to church sponsored formation programs and opportunities afforded by online education. Ministerial learning occurs in multiple ways, and thanks to what ATS schools have learned about outcomes-based assessment and competency-based education, tools now exist to measure basic competencies associated with successful DMin study without narrowly construing the MDiv degree as the only pathway to DMin admission or success.

DMin Values Held by Constituencies of DMin Degree Programs

The DMin Admissions peer group asked, what are the values underlying DMin programs, and how do current DMin admission practices reflect these values? By way of information, the following chart displays twenty possible values of a DMin degree that may be held by the six primary constituencies of DMin degree programs.

Values of a DMin degree as held by six constituencies						
	Admins	**Faculty**	**Grads**	**Prospects**	**Congregations**	**Denominations**
Prestige: institutional, social, ecclesial	x		x	x	x	
Ministry skill development		x	x	x	x	
Retool: enhance old and develop new skill			x	x	x	
Lifelong learning: currency and freshness	x					x
Preparation for future ministry			x	x		x
Teaching opportunities	x	x	x	x		
Fruitful ministries			x	x	x	x
Enhance tenure: longevity in congregation			x	x	x	x
Flexibility: scheduling, structure, access		x	x	x	x	
Income: personal, institutional	x	x	x	x		
Collegial investigation: peer learning	x	x	x	x		
Ecclesial leadership: develop and promote	x		x			x
Transformational approach to ministry practice	x		x		x	
Communication skills: writing, speaking		x	x	x	x	
Mission fulfillment: institutional, personal	x		x	x		
Personal growth		x	x	x	x	
Connection to local ministry context	x	x				
Field research: context assessment	x	x	x			
Academic excellence: enhancing ministry	x	x		x		
Diversity: ethnic, gender, generational	x	x	x	x		
Curriculum: major, concentration	x	x	x	x		
Tradition/Denomination ordination training	x			x	x	
Experiential learning: DMin uniqueness	x	x	x	x		

As indicated in a simple listing of these six constituencies—faculty and administration, graduates and prospects, congregations and denominations—Doctor of Ministry education takes place at the permeable interface of the academy and the church. Our job as DMin educators is to foster reflective practice on behalf of mission so that the power and richness of the Christian theological tradition can bring the transformative revelation of the Gospel to life for congregations, ministers, and denominations living lives of discipleship in diverse, changing, and challenging cultural contexts.

9. Are there implications for redevelopment of the **Standards of Accreditation**?

The DMin Admissions peer group concurs with the statement of the Educational Values of Online Education peer group that “standards should focus more on quality improvement, not compliance; educational principles, not practices; student outcomes, not institutional resources; and flexible options, not fixed models.”[2]
More specifically, the peer group also sees the benefit of allowing local institutions to have the greater burden of DMin admission, while being accountable to ATS by means of programmatic outcomes assessment.

This report of the DMin Admissions peer group suggests two primary implications in respect to a next iteration of the 2012 DMin Standard E:

- The four recommended DMin outcomes discussed in Question 7 above could guide work to rewrite the current Standard E.1.3 on Learning Outcomes.
- The language throughout Standard E and the protocols in Standard E.4 on Admission which tie DMin admission to an MDiv degree or a 72-credit MDiv equivalency and to three years of post MDiv ministry experience all could be reconsidered in light of the changing trend described here toward other degrees of a theological nature and in light of the benefits for individual schools of designing their own competency-based assessments of potential students’ basic competencies for succeeding in DMin study.

10. What are possible implications for the **broader work of theological education**?

Theological educators can replace admissions language of equivalency, credits, and percentages with a process of delineating and ascertaining basic competencies for admission vis-a-vis outcome competencies to be acquired in the course of completing a degree.

It is time to harness all that is being learned about programmatic outcomes assessment and competency-based education in order to give schools broad flexibility in direct oversight of degree program design and admissions.

[2] Educational Models and Practices Peer Group Forum (April 19–20, 2017), program book, 32.

Appendix

Educational Models and Practices Project Report

Doctor of Ministry Peer Groups Survey (Deborah H. C. Gin, ATS)

101 invitations; 44 completions = 44% response rate
Sample selection: all schools in ATS/COA database that offer the DMin; invites sent to directors of DMin programs at those schools; contacted ADME for assistance with DMin director names where none were listed in the database.

Representative Quality of Response Set

Response Set	Sample Pool	ATS/COA Database
11.4% Canada	5.9% Canada	15% Canada
61.4% EV 29.5% ML 9.1% RC/O	56.4% EV 36.6% ML 7.9% RC/O	44% EV 34% ML 22% RC/O
31.8% Embedded	36.6% Embedded	33% Embedded
2.3% Small (1-74 HC) 11.4% Mid-sized (75-149 HC) 40.9% Large (150-299 HC) 45.5% Largest (300+ HC)	5.0% Small 24.8% Mid-sized 35.6% Large 35.6% Largest	20% Small 28% Mid-sized 30% Large 23% Largest

Key Findings

The following lists several key findings. For further description, see relevant sections below.

- Student preparedness for integrating ministry and theology *is* related to the percentage of students entering with an MDiv. (See Level of Preparedness: Ability to Integrate Ministry and Theology below.)
- Perceptions on the challenge of the 6-year maximum *is* related to whether the school uses cohorts. (See Challenge of Program Duration.)
- Graduation rate (percentage of students graduating within six years of start) *is* related to perceptions on the challenge of the 6-year maximum. (See Challenge of Program Duration.)
- Perceptions on the challenge of the 3-year minimum *is* related to whether the school offers courses by fully online-synchronous delivery. (See Challenge of Program Duration.)
- Graduation rate is *not* related to the percentage of the school's full-time faculty teaching in the DMin program; it *is* related to the percentage of core DMin faculty with empirical (qualitative or quantitative) research expertise. (See Competencies of Core DMin Faculty.)
- Graduation rate *is* also related to whether the school uses cohorts. (See Course Delivery and Registration: Cohorts.)

Descriptives and Comparisons

The following are average responses of all respondents. For selected items, I included comparisons across a particular institutional characteristic or by a group characteristic identified by a particular survey question (e.g., school uses cohorts or doesn't). Unless otherwise indicated, significance is at the .05 level.

Because of the small number of responses in the dataset, findings reported in this document should not be considered conclusory, even when statistical significance is indicated. Rather, findings in this report are meant to serve as points of discussion and as potential evidence of underlying patterns. Triangulating these findings with other confirmatory studies is recommended.

Level of Preparedness

- Lowest ratings were for Research Skills (2.70[3]) and Ability to Implement a Project Plan (2.93); highest rating was for Experience with Practical Application of Theology to Ministry (3.67).
- Note that lowest standard deviations were for Writing Skills (.540) and Time-Management Skills (.625), indicating that responses for these items were not as spread out, as those for Ability to Implement a Project Plan (.873) and Research Skills (.851).

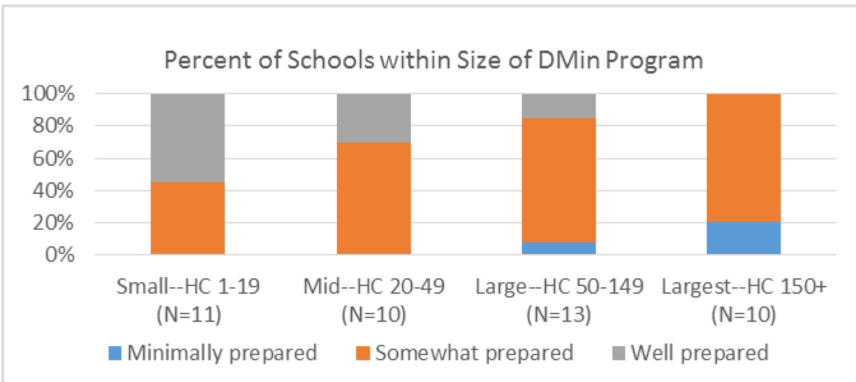
Area of Preparedness	**Mean,** S.D. (N=44[4])
Research skills	**2.70**, .851 Somewhat prepared
Writing skills	**3.18**, .540 Somewhat prepared
Time-management skills	**3.43,** .625 Between somewhat and well prepared
Ability to implement a project plan	**2.93,** .873 Somewhat prepared
Ability to integrate ministry and theological or related disciplines	**3.55,** .791 Between somewhat and well prepared
Experience with practical application of theology to ministry	**3.67,** .808 (N=43) Between somewhat and well prepared
Financial preparedness for the costs of the program	**3.55,** .730 Between somewhat and well prepared
Preparedness of the ministry settings for DMin students' participation in the program	**3.55,** .832 (N=42) Between somewhat and well prepared

- Comparing responses on these items, by various groupings, yielded a mixed picture. No significant differences were found on any student preparedness items, by school structure (embedded versus freestanding) or school denominationality (denominationally affiliated, including Roman Catholic/Orthodox, versus independent).
- Responses to some items did differ statistically[5] across certain groupings:
    - Student Preparedness in ***Research Skills***—significant differences[6] by school's ecclesial family; do these patterns reflect the type of student, admissions criteria, interpretations of what constitutes good preparation, or some other difference?

[3] 5-point scale, ranging from 1=Not prepared to 5=Very well prepared.
[4] All items have N=44 unless otherwise stated.
[5] Unless otherwise noted, statistical significance levels for reports of X^2 analyses throughout are at the .05 level.
[6] X^2=14.464, df=6.

Students' Research Skills by Ecclesial Family (% within Ecclesial Family)			
	Evangelical Protestant (N=27)	**Mainline Protestant** (N=13)	**Roman Catholic/ Orthodox** (N=4)
Not prepared	4%	23%	0%
Minimally prepared	26%	39%	0%
Somewhat prepared	63%	15%	50%
Well prepared	7%	23%	50%

- Student Preparedness in ***Writing Skills***—significant differences[7] by size of DMin program; why did smaller programs report better preparation for writing among their entering students? Is there something inherent in the smaller program?



Student Preparedness in ***Writing Skills***—significant differences[8] by size of school as well; similarly, what is it about smaller schools that their students are (perceived to be) better prepared for writing?

Average Rating of Students' Writing Skills by School Size	
	Mean[9], S.D., N
Small (HC 1-299)	**3.46**, .509, 24 Between somewhat and well prepared
Large (HC 300+)	**2.85**, .366, 20 Less than somewhat prepared

- Students' ***Financial Preparedness***—significant differences[10] by school's ecclesial family; why are students at evangelical schools (perceived to be) better prepared financially? Why didn't more Roman Catholic/Orthodox schools report their students as being very well prepared financially?

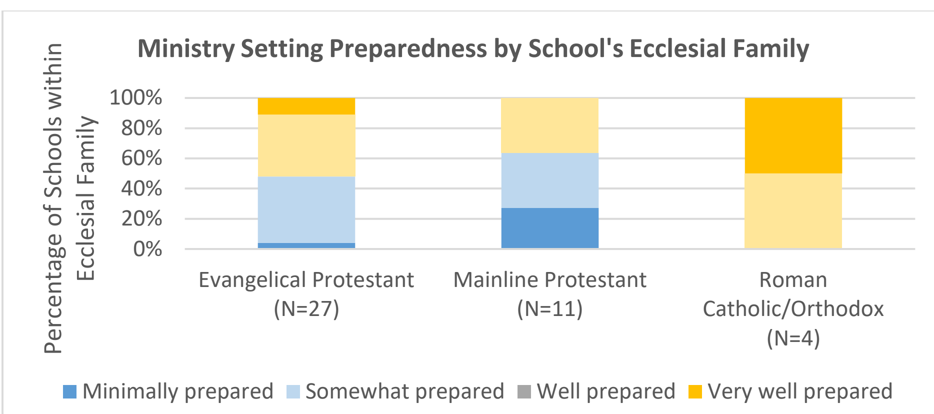
[7] X^2=12.105, df=6. Significant at .10 level.
[8] Writing skills: $t(42)=4.464$, $p<.001$, Cohen's D=1.38.
[9] 5-point scale, ranging from 1=Not prepared to 5=Very well prepared.
[10] X^2=13.082, df=6.

Students' Financial Preparedness by Ecclesial Family (% within Ecclesial Family)			
	Evangelical Protestant (N=27)	**Mainline Protestant** (N=13)	**Roman Catholic/ Orthodox** (N=4)
Minimally prepared	0%	31%	0%
Somewhat prepared	30%	39%	25%
Well prepared	63%	31%	75%
Very well prepared	7%	0%	0%

- Students' ***Ability to Integrate Ministry and Theology***—significant differences[11] by number of students entering with an MDiv; the largest percentage of minimally prepared students to integrate ministry and theology within any group was found in the Low group (schools where 30-59% of entering students have an MDiv); a predominance of somewhat prepared students within a group was found in the Mid group (schools where 60-79% of entering students have an MDiv); and the largest number of well prepared students within a group, in the High group (schools where 80-94% of entering students have an MDiv). It appears that having an MDiv and preparedness to integrate ministry and theology are related.

Students' Ability to Integrate by Students with MDiv (% within MDiv Holder Group)				
	Low—30-59% of Students with MDiv (N=8)	**Mid**—60-79% of Students with MDiv (N=11)	**High**—80-94% of Students with MDiv (N=19)	**Highest**—95%+ of Students with MDiv (N=6)
Minimally prepared	25%	0%	5%	0%
Somewhat prepared	13%	73%	42%	33%
Well prepared	38%	18%	53%	33%
Very well prepared	25%	9%	0%	33%

- ***Ministry Setting Preparedness***—significant differences[12] by school's ecclesial family; the largest percentage of schools reporting minimally prepared ministry settings was among mainline schools; all four of the Roman Catholic/Orthodox schools reported only well prepared or very well prepared ministry settings; evangelical schools reported mainly somewhat or well prepared ministry settings.

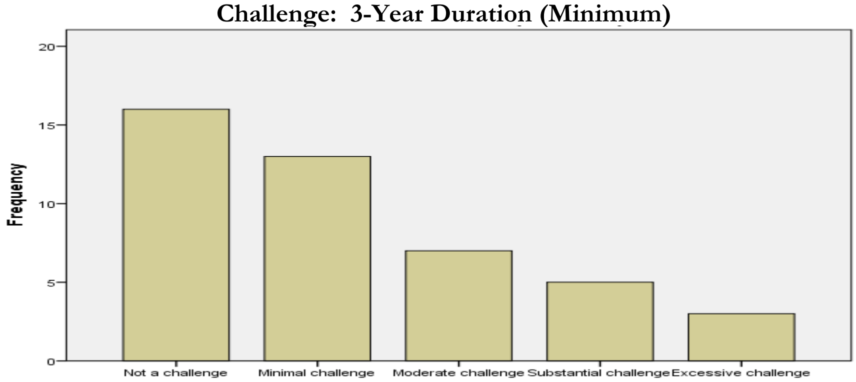


[11] X^2=17.480, df=9.
[12] X^2=13.134, df=6.

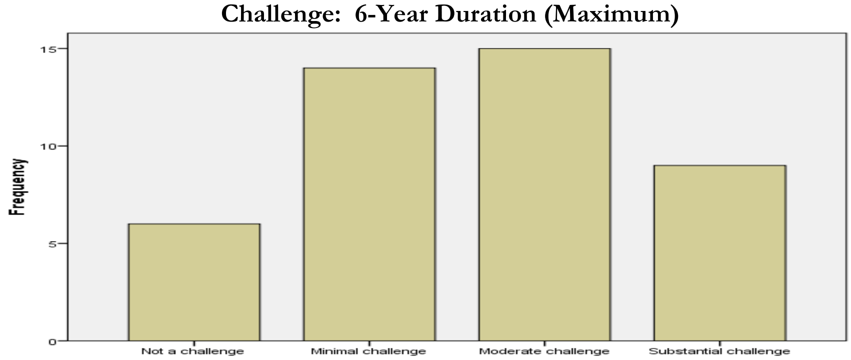
Challenge of Program Duration

- Responses for the challenge of a 3-year minimum skewed toward Not a Challenge; responses for the challenge of a 6-year maximum followed a normal distribution, peaking between Minimal and Moderate Challenge, with none marking Excessive Challenge.

Challenge: 3-Year Duration (Minimum)



Challenge: 6-Year Duration (Maximum)

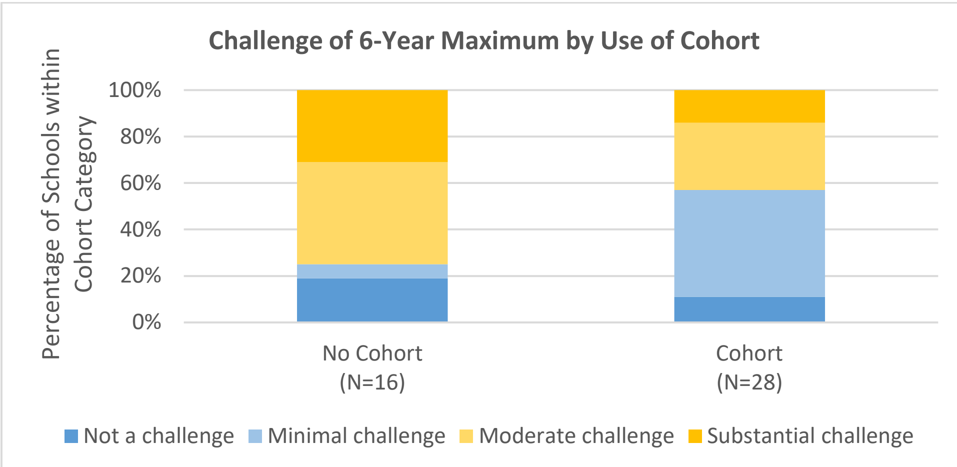


- The extent to which the 6-year duration maximum is a challenge did not differ by a number of groupings: all measures of student preparedness, percent of entering students having an MDiv at the school, percent of full-time faculty who teach in the DMin program, and percent of core faculty with empirical research expertise. No differences were found by school structure, denominationality, size of school, or size of DMin program.
- Perceptions on the challenge of the 6-year maximum differed[13] by percent of full-time faculty teaching, leading, or supervising in the DMin program. The 6-year maximum is more of a challenge for schools who have fewer full-time faculty teaching in the program than those with more full-time faculty.

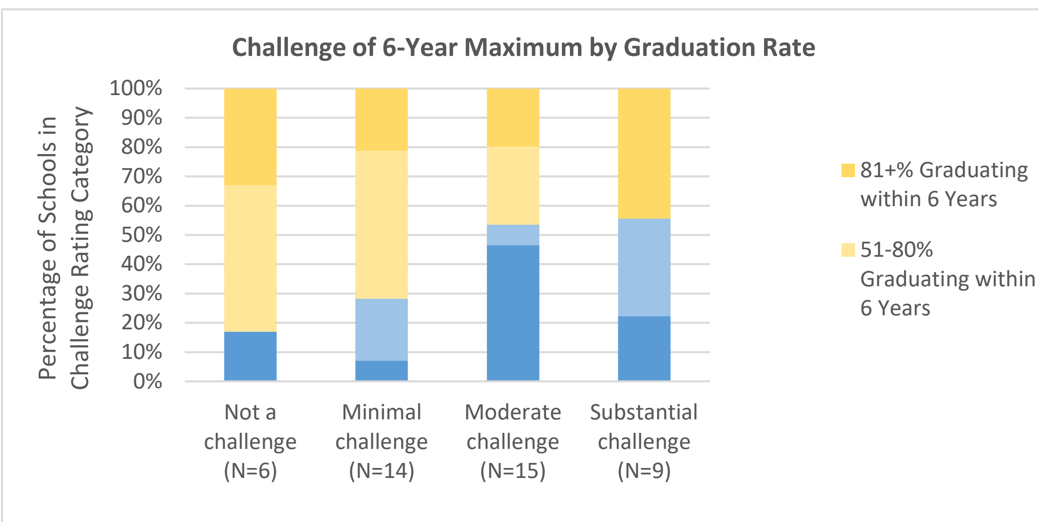
Average Rating of Challenge of 6-Year Maximum by Percent FT Faculty in Program	
	Mean[14], S.D., N
Low **(0-60% of FT Faculty)**	**2.91**, .971, 22 Just under moderate challenge
High **(61%+ of FT Faculty)**	**2.32**, .894, 22 Between minimal and moderate challenge

[13] Challenge of 6-year maximum: t(42)=2.100, p=.898, Cohen's D=.63.
[14] 5-point scale, ranging from 1=Not a challenge to 5=Excessive challenge.

- Views on the challenge of the 6-year maximum also differed[15] by whether the school offers the DMin via cohorts. About 43% of the schools that use cohorts felt the 6-year maximum was a significant challenge (14%, a substantial challenge); whereas, over 75% of the schools that do *not* use cohorts felt the 6-year maximum was a significant challenge (31%, a substantial challenge). (See also discussion below on cohorts.

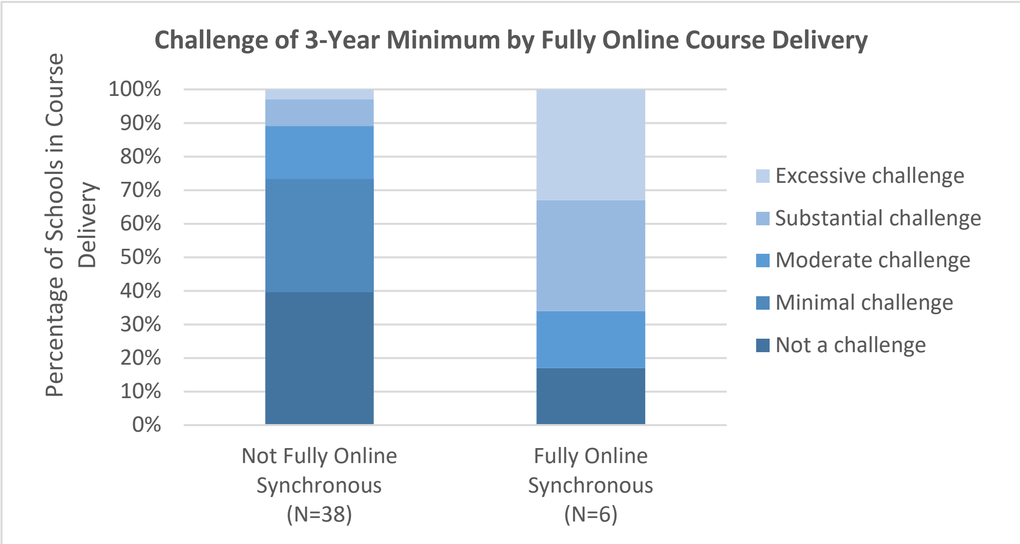


- Finally, schools' DMin graduation rates[16] differed[17] by perceptions on the challenge of the 6-year maximum. Among schools that felt the 6-year maximum is not much of a challenge (Not or Minimal), over two-thirds had graduation rates of over 50% (i.e., over 50% graduating within 6 years of start). Among schools that felt the 6-year maximum is an important challenge (Moderate or Substantial), less than half had graduation rates of over 50%. The data suggest that graduation rate and challenge of the 6-year maximum are related.



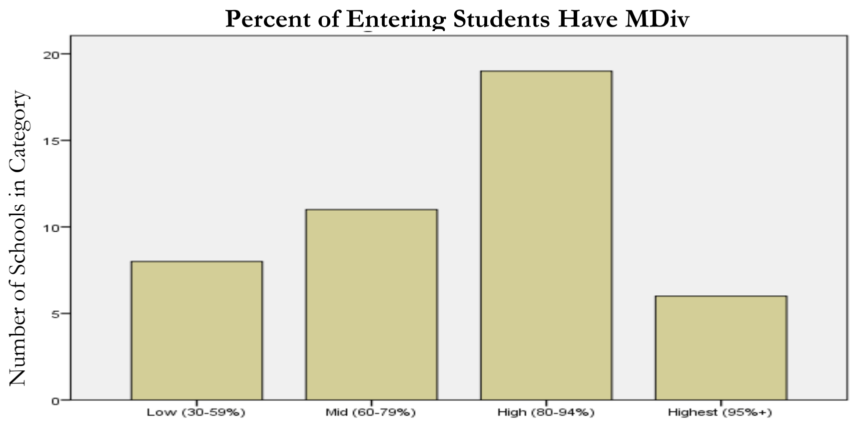
[15] X^2=7.769, df=3. Significant at .10 level.
[16] In this analysis, graduation rate for each school was computed as the percentage of DMin graduates in 2015-16 per the number of DMin graduates in 2015-16 that graduated within 6 years of start.
[17] X^2=15.129, df=9. Significant at .10 level.

- Regarding the challenge of a 3-year minimum requirement, no differences by institutional characteristic, student preparedness, faculty characteristic, perceived value by constituent group, graduation rate, or other item surfaced. The only exception was Fully Online Synchronous course delivery[18]. The 3-year minimum is much more of a challenge for those schools that offer fully online synchronous course delivery than for schools that do not. Might this reflect a difference in time to complete courses/degree between schools offering fully online degrees and those that do not?



Percent of Entering DMin Students Who Have an MDiv

- Taking all responses and grouping them by Low (30-59% of students), Mid (60-79%), High (80-94%) and Highest (95% or more), most (25 schools) responded that 80% or more of their entering DMin students have an MDiv. Eight schools indicated a percentage of entering students between 30-59% as having an MDiv. The average response landed between Mid and High[19].



[18] X^2=12.911, df=4.
[19] μ=2.52, S.D.= .952, N=44.

- The only institutional characteristic that proved salient[20] on this item was school structure. Freestanding schools reported higher percentages of students entering with the MDiv.

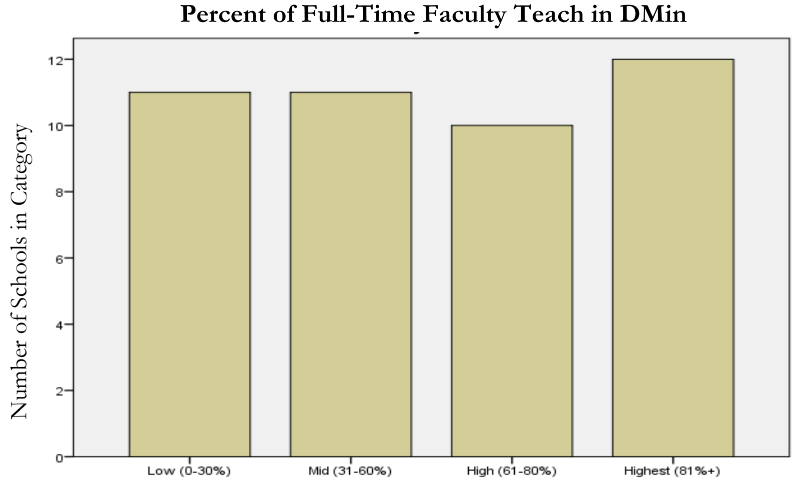
Percent of Entering Students with MDiv by School Structure (% within Structure)		
	Embedded (N=14)	**Freestanding** (N=30)
Low—30-59% of Entering Students w MDiv	29%	13%
Mid—60-79% of Entering Students w MDiv	50%	13%
High—80-94% of Entering Students w MDiv	14%	57%
Highest—95%+ of Entering Students w MDiv	7%	17%

- Percent entering students who have the MDiv is related to perceived levels of preparedness to integrate ministry with theology, as indicated above (see Level of Preparedness discussion above). No other significant differences were found on this item.

Percent of Full-Time Faculty Who Teach/Lead/Supervise in the DMin Program

- Taking all responses and grouping them by Low (0-30% of faculty), Mid (31-60%), High (61-80%) and Highest (81% or more), half of the schools indicated that over 60% of their full-time faculty teach, lead, and/or supervise in the DMin program. The average responses landed between Mid and High[21].

Percent of Full-Time Faculty Teach in DMin



- Schools did not differ on the percent of full-time faculty that teach, lead, or supervise in the DMin program, by a number of institutional characteristics.

- The proportion of full-time faculty in the DMin program is also *not* related to graduation rate.

Competencies of Core DMin Faculty

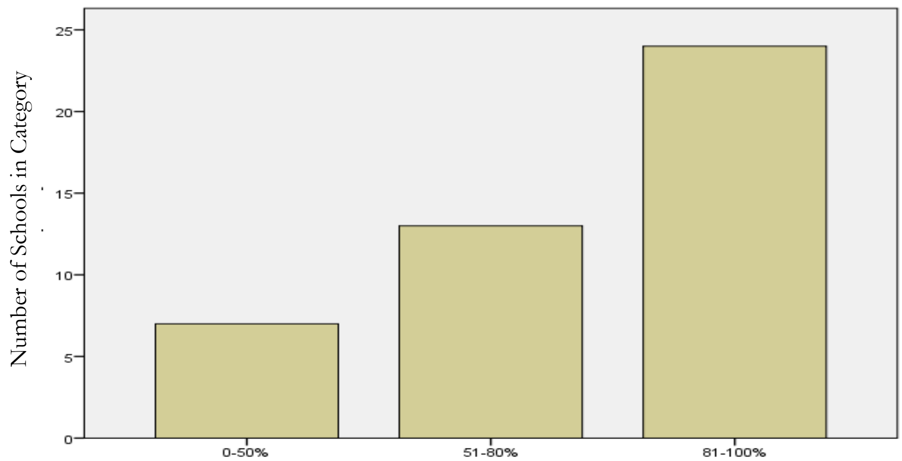
- Respondents were asked to identify up to five core DMin faculty and rate competency levels in five areas. These data were collapsed into a single data point for each measure (i.e.,

[20] X^2=10.958, df=3.
[21] μ=2.52, S.D.= 1.151, N=44.

ratings for all faculty were aggregated for each school). Additional analysis protocol explanation is given below, per competency type.

- ***Empirical research expertise***—this was a yes/no question for each faculty listed; for each school, I divided the number of faculty with research expertise (Yes) by the total number of core faculty listed to provide a measure of the school's % of core DMin faculty who have empirical research expertise. The following chart indicates that, for more than half (24) the schools, greater than 80% of the faculty have research expertise; for a majority (37) of the schools, greater than 50% of the faculty have research expertise.

Percent of Core DMin Faculty with Empirical Research Expertise



  - Earlier, I reported that graduation rate is not related to the proportion of full-time faculty teaching in the DMin program; however, perhaps one of the more important findings of the survey is that graduation rate *is* related to the percent of core faculty with empirical (qualitative or quantitative) research expertise[22]. Graduation rates were higher at schools where there is a greater percentage of core faculty with empirical research expertise.

Percent of Faculty with Empirical Research Expertise by Average Graduation Rate	
	Mean, S.D., N
Low Graduation Rate (0-50% of Students[23])	**71.0%,** 29.156, 18
High Graduation Rate (51%+ of Students)	**86.9%,** 22.609, 26

- ***Pastoral competencies***—this item asked for ratings on four competencies (Interpersonal Skills, Congregational Skills, Practical Theology Awareness, Mentoring Skills); rating options included four possibilities (1-Not at all, 2-A little, 3-Some, 4-A lot). I aggregated the ratings for the (up to five) core faculty at each school on each competency. The average ratings across all schools are listed below. Additionally, I pulled the average *lowest* rating across all

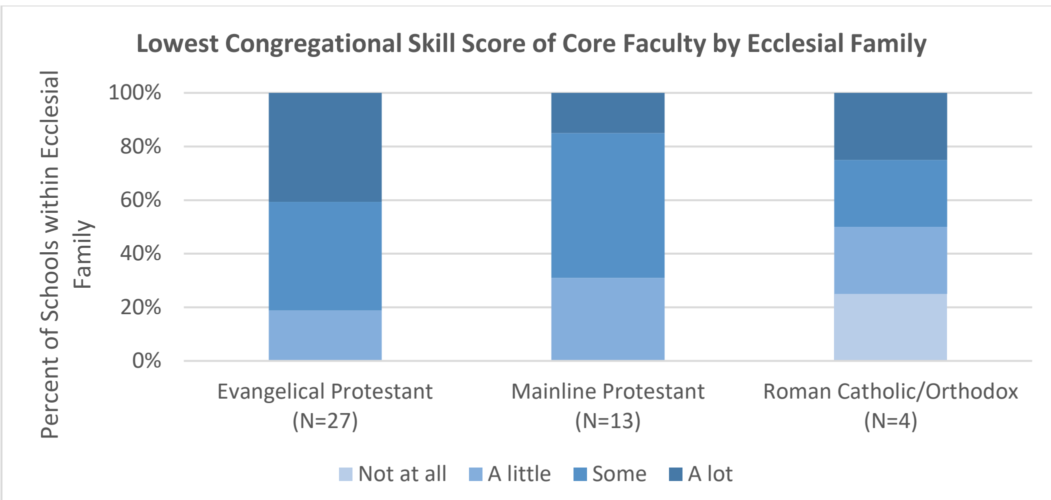
[22] Percent core faculty with empirical research expertise: t(42)=-2.029, p=.209, Cohen's D=-.61.
[23] As a reminder: in this analysis, graduation rate for each school was computed as the percentage of DMin graduates in 2015-16 per the number of DMin graduates in 2015-16 that graduated within 6 years of start.

schools for each competency, as these scores showed the greatest variability among the various competencies. These are listed in the table below.

Note that, while ratings were generally high (all between Some and A lot), there was more variability among the lowest faculty ratings, with Congregational Skills averaging at 3.05.

Competency	Average Faculty Rating Across Schools	Average Lowest Faculty Rating Across Schools
Interpersonal Skills	3.82	3.55
Congregational Skills	3.61	3.05
Awareness of Practical Theology	3.78	3.43
Mentoring Skills	3.73	3.34

- Comparisons of lowest pastoral competency skill ratings by various institutional characteristics yielded no significant differences, with one exception. Data suggest that faculty congregational skill is related to ecclesial family of the school[24]. Why might this be the case? Are there inherent differences in faculty recruiting or hiring strategies, expectations of faculty, institutional and/or faculty culture, or other areas that are reflected in these data?

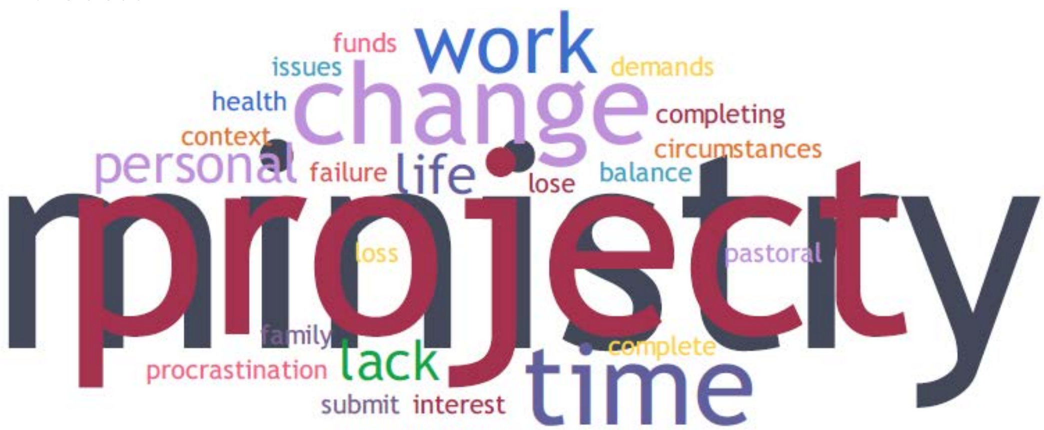


Reasons Students Fail to Complete

- Respondents were given five textboxes to list the most common reasons students fail to complete their DMin programs. The following word cloud depicts the reasons reported, with larger fonts representing higher word frequency.

[24] X^2=13.113, df=6.

- The next word cloud is a representation of reasons listed in the *first* box and is presumably what came to mind initially. Note the equal space that "ministry" and "project" occupy in this cloud.



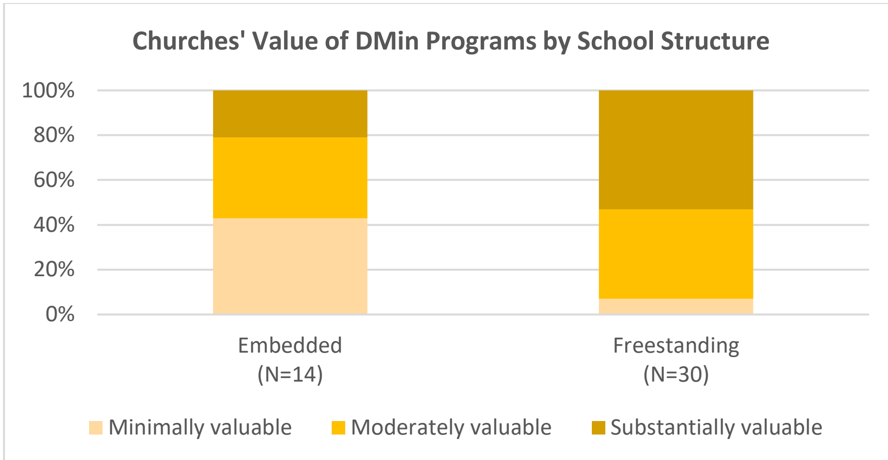
Perceived Value of a DMin/Professional Doctoral Program

- Respondents were asked to rate the perceived value of a DMin or professional doctoral program for a number of constituencies associated with the school; the following table shows average responses, on a scale from 1 to 4 (Not Valuable to Substantially Valuable); a N/A (no associations) option was provided.
- The lowest two ratings were for Churches/Congregations (3.25) and Denominations Associated with the School (3.11). The highest rating was for Administration.

Constituent Group	**Mean,** S.D. (N=44[25])
Students	**3.61**, .493
Administration	**3.66**, .526
Faculty	**3.34**, .680
Churches/Congregations	**3.25**, .751
Denominations Associated w/School	**3.11**, 1.083

[25] All items have N=44.

- Perceptions of the value of a DMin program for churches or congregations differed[26] by whether the school is embedded or freestanding. Freestanding schools believe churches value DMin programs more highly than embedded schools do.



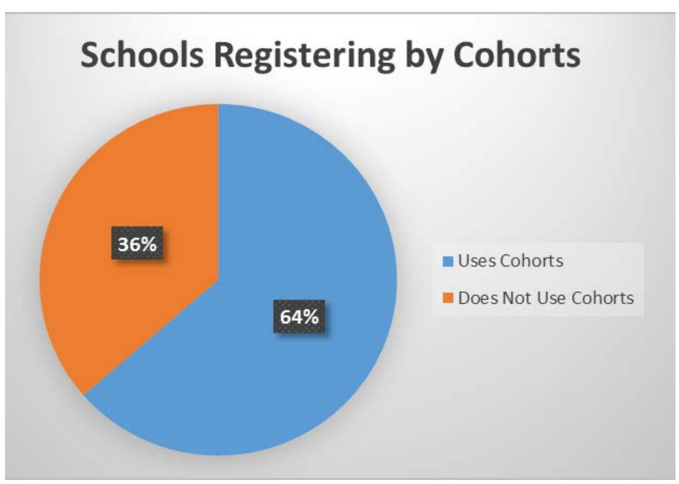
- No other differences in perceptions of value for all constituent groups surfaced by institutional or faculty characteristic.

Research Character of Final Projects

- Over 4/5 of the schools reported that a majority (over 50%) of their students are pursuing empirical research projects.
- Of these schools (35), 16 indicated that 60% or more of their students are using primarily qualitative methods, 1 indicated that 60% of its students are using primarily quantitative methods, and 13 indicated that 60% of their students are using primarily a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

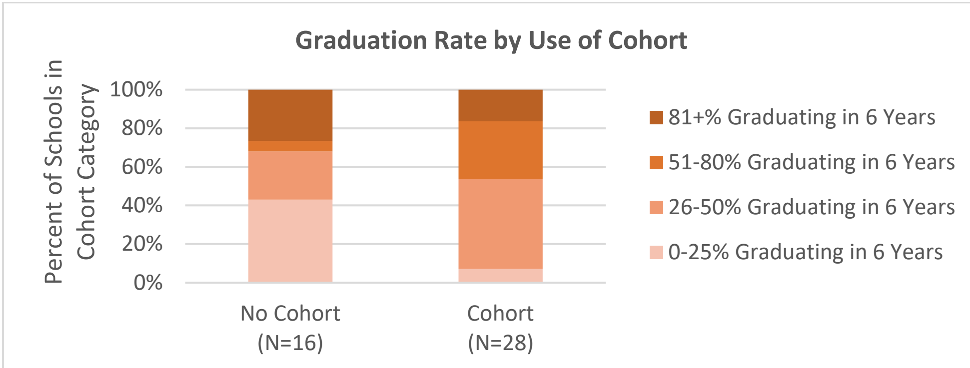
Course Delivery and Registration

- ***Cohorts***

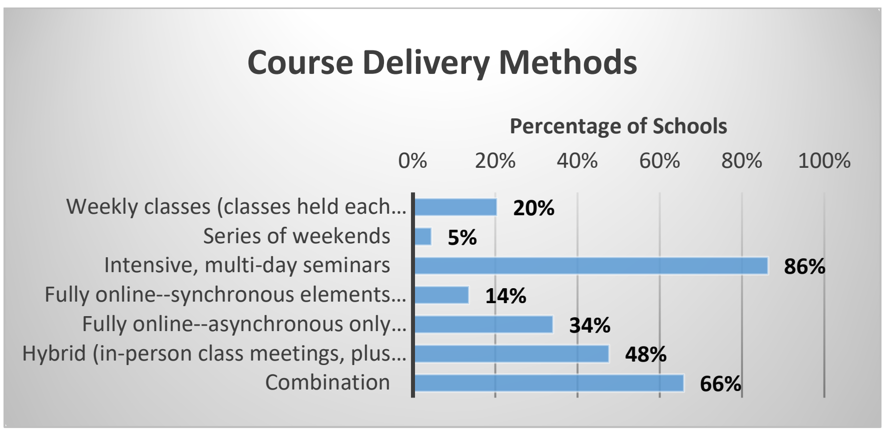


[26] X^2=9.172, df=2.

- Another important survey finding is that graduation rate is related to the use of cohorts[27]. Similar to the report above—that the challenge of the 6-year maximum is perceived to be less among schools that use cohorts—a greater percentage of schools who use cohorts have more students who graduate within six years of starting.



- ***Modes of Delivery***
  - The most commonly used course delivery method is Intensives (86% of schools).
  - Combinations of delivery methods was next frequently named (66% of schools); the most common combination was Intensive-Hybrid course delivery (43% of schools).



- No differences were found in the various course delivery offerings (i.e., intensives, fully online, hybrid) by institutional or faculty characteristic.

MDiv Courses Counted as DMin Credit

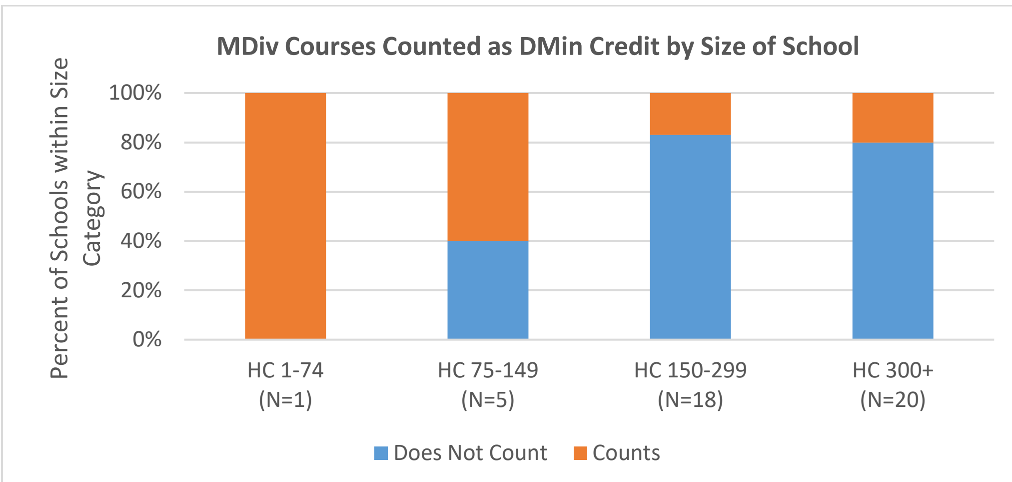
- Nine schools (20%) said they permit MDiv courses to be counted for DMin credit; 1 school marked this item but explained that the practice was used for pre-DMin students trying to meet the minimum credit-hour requirement for matriculation.

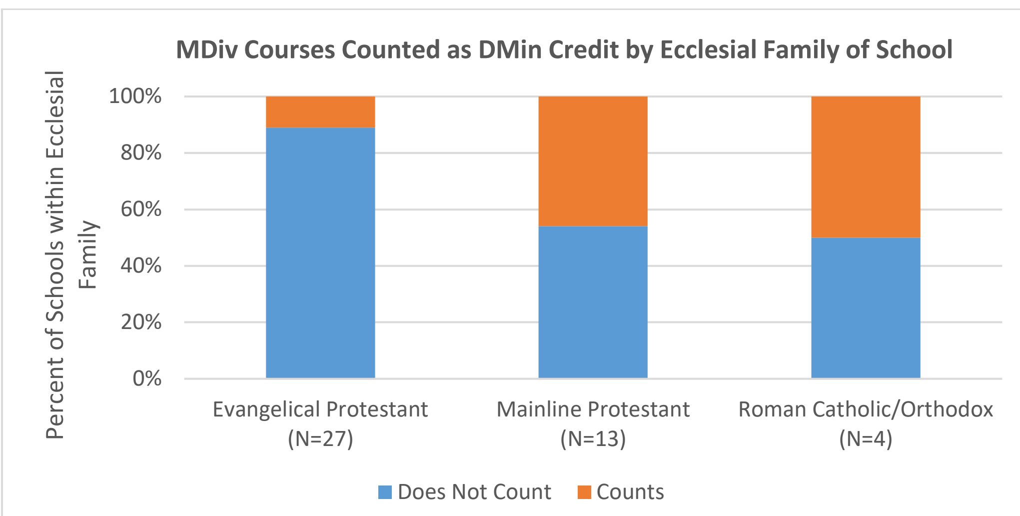
- In describing how DMin credit is achieved, respondents named several variations of one main ***approval mechanism***—proposal by the DMin director or student and approval by the professor, also approval by committee (minority of schools); ***course requirements*** generally included some form of extension beyond MDiv course requirements, ranging from additional reading to more

[27] X2=11.781, df=3. Significant at .01 level.

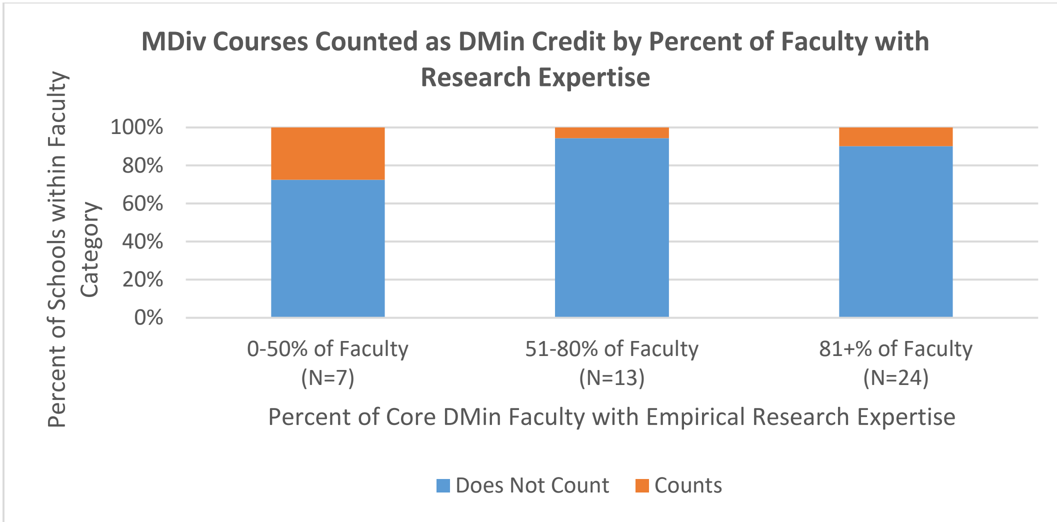
demanding assignments (e.g., major papers), an extra presentation, deeper analysis, and flexibility to tailor an assignment for contextual application to ministry settings; one school named a ***course credit limit***—up to four [master's] courses.

- Two institutional variables and one faculty variable proved salient with respect to whether MDiv courses were counted as DMin credit: size of school[28], school's ecclesial family[29], and percent of core DMin faculty with empirical research expertise[30]. Larger schools, evangelical schools, and schools with greater percentages of faculty with research expertise are the schools that do not count MDiv courses as DMin credit. Why might this be so? Is this reflective of a difference in the way the DMin programs operate, the kinds of resources they have at their disposal, the availability of courses, or some other combination of conditions?





[28] X^2=7.200, df=3. Significant at .10 level.
[29] X^2=7.214, df=2.
[30] X^2=9.578, df=2. Significant at .01 level.



Usefulness of Student Outcomes

- Responses to the usefulness of all three student outcomes skewed toward Very Useful. For one student outcome, 100% of the schools rated it Very Useful: Students' ability to identify and frame crucial ministry issues. The table below shows the average ratings of each of the three outcomes, on a scale of 1-4 (1=Not Useful, 4=Very Useful).

Student Outcome	**Usefulness** Mean, S.D. (N=44[31])
Students' ability to effectively engage cultural context with **advanced theological acumen**	**3.82**, .390
Students' ability to effectively engage cultural context with **critical thinking**	**3.89**, .387
Students' ability to **identify and frame crucial ministry issues**	**4.00**, .000

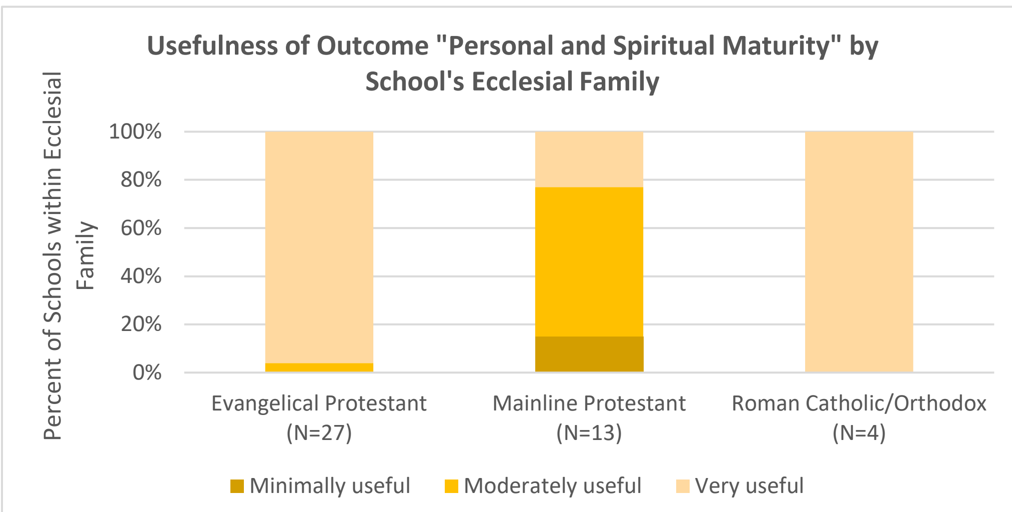
Usefulness of Program Outcomes

- Responses to the usefulness of the four program outcomes showed somewhat greater variability than those of student outcomes. Responses for all program outcomes skewed toward Very Useful, but three outcomes included a handful of schools that felt the outcomes were minimally useful (enhancing impact as ministerial leaders, reinvigorating and deepening vocational call, and enhancing personal and spiritual maturity) and not useful (extending tenure in ministry). The table below shows the average ratings of each of the four outcomes, on a scale of 1-4 (1=Not Useful, 4=Very Useful).
- While the program outcome of extending graduates' tenure in ministry was the lowest rated for usefulness (3.32), it still fell between Moderately and Very Useful. It also had the largest spread of responses (S.D. .800).

[31] All items have N=44.

Program Outcome	**Usefulness** Mean, S.D. (N=44[32])
Program’s ability to equip graduates to enhance their **impact as ministerial leaders**	**3.93**, .255
Program’s ability to enable graduates to **reinvigorate and deepen vocational call**	**3.70**, .509
Program's ability to enhance graduates' **personal and spiritual maturity**	**3.70**, .553
Program's ability to **extend graduates' tenure in ministry**	**3.32**, .800

- Only one program outcome (spiritual maturity) resulted in different responses[33]; this was by ecclesial family of the school. While nearly all schools, across ecclesial family, felt this outcome was at least moderately useful, Evangelical Protestant and Roman Catholic/Orthodox schools indicated the outcome was very useful. In what ways might this reflect a difference in the mission of schools, by ecclesial family? Does this pattern reflect other inherent differences?



- No other differences were found (all program outcomes) by institutional, program, or faculty characteristic.

Evidence Collected to Indicate Whether Outcome Was Met

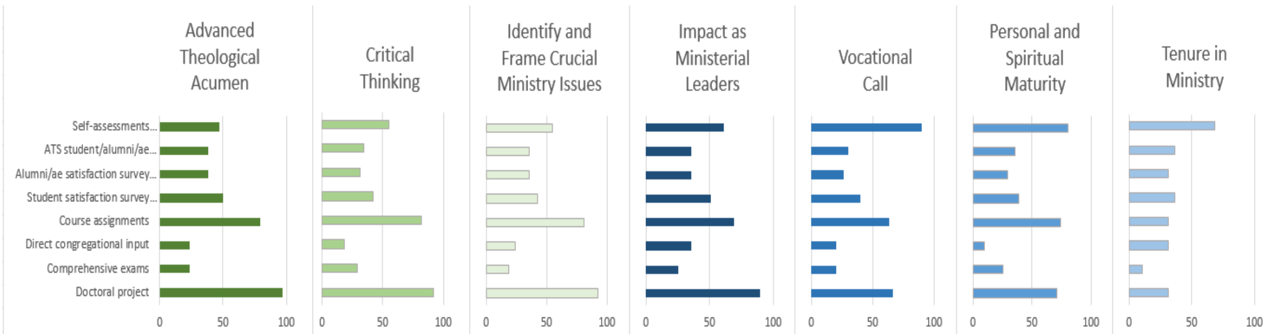
- For each outcome marked as Very Useful, respondents were asked to indicate any type of evidence used to assess the success of meeting outcomes. The graph below shows the frequency of response of each type of evidence for each of the seven outcomes.
- Note that the doctoral project and course assignments are used most frequently for all three student outcomes and for the program outcome related to assessing impact as ministerial leaders. Self-assessments on growth/development goals were most important as evidence for

[32] All items have N=44.
[33] X^2=26.658, df=4. Significant at .01 level.

program outcomes related to vocational call, spiritual maturity, and tenure in ministry. As direct measures, these are important sources of outcome achievement.

- Note, also, that the least-used measures are comprehensive exams and direct congregational input, even for assessing graduates' impact as ministerial leaders. Instead, the doctoral project and course assignments are used most frequently to indicate impact as ministry leaders. Collection of direct congregational input can be difficult to implement, but, for this particular outcome, it would seem the most appropriate measure. It appears there may be a mismatch between intended outcomes and the measures used to assess achievement of this outcome.

Types of Evidence Collected by Student/Program Outcome



Percent of Schools Using Particular Type of Evidence

DMin Identity Peer Group Final Report

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The **DMin Identity peer group** examined the Standards of Accreditation as they pertain to the nature and purpose of the DMin degree and to the culture of teaching and learning offered in DMin programs. The peer group also identified educational principles pertaining to the DMin degree and, bearing these educational principles in mind, the peer group considered the most common challenge faced by DMin students: completing the doctoral project.

What is the DMin degree?

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) is a degree designed for practitioners in the field of ministry. The DMin degree is addressed by the Standards of Accreditation in Degree Program E, which commends the following goals of a DMin programs to ATS-member schools in Degree Program E, section E.1.2.1: “an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry, new knowledge about the practice of ministry, continued growth in spiritual maturity, and development and appropriation of a personal and professional ethic with focused study on ethical standards and mature conduct in the profession.”

Nature of the DMin as a professional doctoral degree
The DMin is a professional degree at the doctoral level. DMin students who are experienced practitioners come to a DMin program to reflect with faculty and ministerial peers about the practice of ministry. DMin students play a substantial role in shaping the teaching and learning culture of a DMin program. DMin applicants are typically in ministry leadership roles recognized by their judicatories, religious organizations, or other accountability bodies. DMin programs assume that admitted students have demonstrated a theological foundation at the master's level sufficient to engage in the doctoral study of practical theology (Degree Program E, section E.1.1). DMin programs are integrative in that they are focused on spiritual, personal, moral, and ministerial formation. They are designed to serve the unique needs of clergy and persons in ministry (E.2.1.5). Studying in the context of a cohort of student peers is advantageous to DMin students and encourages students with substantial ministry experience to work together to reflect on practical issues of ministry (E.3.1.1). The adult-education pedagogy of a DMin program involves a collegial learning community, self-directed learning, and practical research in ministry. The DMin degree is located in the field of practical theology.

Nature of the DMin student
DMin students commonly are midcareer practitioners who are highly competent in their professions and who are motivated by a need for professional and personal development. The average age of an entering DMin student, according to ATS data, is 45**.** Students choose a DMin program for several reasons, including: the desire for an advanced degree, further development of ministerial competence in a specific subject area, and refreshing of skills after a long period away from formal education. Students often enter DMin programs after 20 or more years of ministry, sometimes with the realization that they have not made the cultural transitions necessary for ministerial effectiveness in contemporary culture and that current methods are no longer working or are less effective than they have been in the past. As a result, the DMin program by its nature often supports students in vocational clarification or reassessment.

Nature of the DMin program director
The DMin program is formational in nature and requires students to confront challenging issues in ministry. Given the distinctive nature and purpose of the DMin degree program, the program director often exercises a pastoral function and may be directly involved in the lives of DMin students. The DMin program director also balances the complex roles of administering admissions, interfacing with institutional departments, and assisting students to develop in vocational identity and integration (E.1.3.1). In addition, because most faculty possess PhDs, rather than DMins, and may not be ministerial practitioners themselves, the DMin program director often must provide these faculty with substantial orientation in offering a combination of academic and pastoral support to DMin students. Often, DMin administrative practices necessarily diverge from those of other degree programs, and so the DMin director needs to communicate, and advocate for, these differences within an institution.

Nature of the DMin project and research
The contextual ministry project is essential to the DMin program. Degree Program E, section E.2.4 provides criteria for the DMin project: "The program shall include the design and completion of a written doctoral-level project that addresses both the nature and the practice of ministry. This final summative

project should be of sufficient quality that it contributes to the practice of ministry as judged by professional standards and has the potential for application in other contexts of ministry or presentation in professional forums." The DMin project differs in nature from the PhD thesis, and the term "thesis" does not appear in Degree Program E. DMin projects emphasize the application of established theory in context, rather than the development of new theory. Schools offering DMin degree programs have embraced the identity of the DMin as a professional practitioner's degree and, as more DMin graduates have become DMin program directors, an increased level of agreement on the professional emphasis of the DMin project has developed. DMin programs now employ a wide range of terms for the summative written project, including project, dissertation, thesis, capstone, demonstration, and portfolio.

The DMin project involves approaching a ministry problem, designing a project, and conducting research. The DMin project should "reflect the candidate's depth of theological insight in relation to ministry" (E.2.4.2). DMin research usually employs methods from the social sciences and field research. In the course of DMin research, new knowledge is gained that is intended to contribute to the understanding and practice of ministry. DMin projects usually involve practice-based research, in which the validity of a practice derives from its outcome, providing an objective means to evaluate whether an approach has produced desired results. DMin projects usually involve participatory-action and/or community-based research focused on producing positive social change. Because DMin project research often is community-based, involving artifacts demonstrating DMin program outcomes, schools offering DMin programs must be astute regarding human participants and must practice appropriate ethical protocols.

Nature of the DMin project presentation and evaluation

The requirements of presenting the research of a DMin project are described in Degree Program E: "Upon completion of the doctoral project, there shall be an oral presentation and evaluation" (E.2.4.2). The DMin project also involves providing a written record of the research completed, as explained in Degree Program E: "The completed written project, with any supplemental material, should be accessioned in the institution's library" (E.2.4.2). These writing requirements are intended to allow for a wide range of DMin research projects while supporting the integrity of the accredited DMin degree.

1. **Why** did the schools engage this educational model or practice?

DMin programs have the potential to positively influence the midcareer development of ministerial practitioners. Within ATS member schools, DMin programs and students may benefit from changes leading to the improvement of DMin program standards and of DMin progress and completion.

2. What are the **most crucial issues and questions** engaged by the group?

Based on Degree Program E, DMin programs expect students to apply "an advanced understanding and integration of ministry in relation to various theological and other related disciplines" (E.2.1.1) and to "make a contribution to the understanding and practice of ministry through the completion of a doctoral-level project that contributes new knowledge and understanding of the practice of ministry" (E.2.1.4).

However, many of the students for which the DMin is intended possess weak preparation at the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels for doctoral-level research and writing, particularly in the social sciences, interdisciplinarity, and integration between ministry and related disciplines. DMin students are expected to complete doctoral-level research and writing (1) for which their education may not have prepared them, (2) within a brief period of time, (3) while remaining in ministry, (4) as taught by faculty unlikely to have been trained in or prepared to teach what is expected in such areas of interdisciplinarity. DMin programs expect competencies which faculty often lack resources to teach and students often lack preparation to engage.

DMin directors report that students frequently experience difficulties in completing the required written summative project due to the realities of pastoral ministry and the challenges of doctoral research and writing. DMin students often are educated and experienced in writing sermons rather than developing scholarly publications or conducting research and, consequently, some students struggle with designing and writing the summative project.

3. What are the most significant potential **opportunities/benefits** for this model or practice? For the school, for students, for faculty, for the church and/or for other stakeholders?
DMin projects are intended to contribute to the understanding and practice of ministry, as well as to increase the ministerial capacities of the student. It has also been observed that students who complete a DMin program often assume leadership roles in their dioceses, synods, conventions, conferences, and seminaries, potentially making valuable contributions to the church. Completion rates also impact the reputation and effectiveness of theological institutions offering DMin programs. DMin degrees offer faculty the opportunity to teach advanced courses in practical theology and to engage students in smaller and more personal settings. A DMin degree can also be a setting for pedagogical innovation (e.g., hybrid courses, retreat-style settings, prominent speaker focus).

4. What are the most significant **challenges/obstacles** that could keep this model or practice from flourishing?
Limited institutional resources to assist DMin students with project completion present a challenge. DMin programs are not always represented on institutional committees, and while there is institutionalized delegation for other degree programs, a DMin program often must interface with departments of admissions, communications, and student services independently. The DMin curriculum may be customized for a DMin cohort and may not overlap with the curricula of other degree programs. International DMin student applications are time consuming for admissions and may drain institutional resources. Faculty asked to teach in a DMin program often are unfamiliar with the program's values and the characteristics of DMin students. Methods used by institutions to market and administer a DMin degree may not be effective in meeting the needs of a DMin program. Supervision of DMin projects is labor intensive, and theological faculties often are not appropriately sized or structured to sustain the demands of supervision inherent in a DMin program.

Limited congregational or denominational resources and support can also make it difficult for clergy or persons in ministry to complete a DMin project. The demands of ministry present a challenge to successful project completion, and congregations may have concerns that their clergy will be promoted and/or will leave the congregation after successfully completing a DMin program.

DMin students, who are ministers in a range of contexts, often arrive with gaps in their preparation for field research and scholarly writing, and these students need additional support and education to prepare them to design and complete a DMin project that contributes to the understanding and practice of ministry. The ways individual schools choose to address gaps in the preparedness of DMin students varies based on both the individual student and on the institution offering a DMin program. Recent increases in the cultural and language diversity of applicants have challenged DMin programs to develop support systems that serve a wider range of students effectively.

5. How is the **educational effectiveness** of the model or practice demonstrated?
Addressing the challenges involved in completing the written summative project could result in increased DMin completion rates for ATS member schools. However, the primary demonstration of DMin effectiveness is the development of personal and professional ministry practice. Successful completion of a DMin degree should lead to improvements in personal formation and competency and in greater awareness of how to conduct effective ministry.

6. How is the **financial viability** of the educational model or practice demonstrated?
A variety of institutional characteristics and student demographics may affect the financial viability of a DMin program. Denominational affiliation, endowments, public funding, and students with tuition-paying capacity can increase access to financial resources, whereas lack of affiliation, highly tuition-dependent budgets, and students with financial need can lead to financial challenges.

7. Are there unexpected **insights, innovative ideas, or possibilities** that have emerged through the group's work?
DMin programs in ATS member schools could benefit, in terms of opportunities for pedagogical innovation, from collaboration between proximate schools, collaboration among schools that address the needs of underserved communities (e.g., Latinos/as, Africans), and DMin programs in non-English languages.

8. List of key **recommended practices** for this educational model or practice
The DMin Identity Peer Group recommends the following practices:

- The written summative project requirement (E.2.4) may be fulfilled, in some cases, by a combination of oral public presentation and written project defense (academic hearing). The oral public presentation may be given to ministerial peers, and the written defense (academic hearing) may be given to a project supervisor, project readers, and institutional faculty. The oral and written defenses may be held in equal balance, presenting the data in a manner most useful to those it is intended to benefit.

- DMin programs may benefit from considering the readiness of applicants for DMin research, identifying lacunae, and developing educational resources to prepare DMin students to engage effectively in field research that can contribute to the understanding and practice of ministry. Some type of pre-DMin preparation program may make the degree accessible to more populations and lead to higher-quality students.

- ATS member schools may benefit from considering how to effectively prepare theological faculty to supervise DMin projects.

- Improved institutional and faculty awareness of the nature of the DMin degree would reduce friction in the implementation of the degree and may lead to increased institutional support.

- DMin degree programs would benefit from improved institutional support in doctoral-level writing-center assistance and services for many students—including those whose first language is not the language of instruction—to meet the unique challenges of the DMin degree (e.g., need for high-level language competency, pressures of writing at a doctoral level).

9. What are the **educational principles** that are served by the model or practice?
Schools offering DMin degree programs have embraced the identity of the DMin as a professional practitioner's degree. As more DMin graduates have become DMin program directors, an increased level of agreement on the professional emphasis of the DMin project has developed. Adult educational principles are embraced and practiced in most DMin programs.

10. Are there implications from the group's work for the possible process of redevelopment of the **Standards of Accreditation?**
In these changing educational times, the DMin Identity Peer Group is proposing that redeveloped Standards more formally acknowledge the diverse ways by which successful ministry professionals approach the DMin project.

The peer group considered the definition of ministry, as it provides the context for the required written summative project. The peer group considered how the definition of ministry might be updated to reflect a broader range of contexts while preserving the identity of the DMin degree as a doctoral degree designed for practitioners in ministry. Expanding the definition of ministry beyond that of congregational leadership may provide guidance for ATS-member schools responding to a broader pool of applicants and students.

The peer group considered the nature of the written summative project, which is described in Degree Program E, section E.2.4 as a written project that is "accessioned in the library." DMin programs employ a wide range of doctoral projects. The peer group considered whether all projects are suitable for an academic library. Clarification of the nature of the written summative project in Degree Program E may provide guidance for ATS member schools conducting a wide range of DMin research.

The peer group considered that entering DMin students, while possessing a theological education, often do not possess a background in conducting field research in the social sciences or writing at a doctoral level. Degree Program E may provide clarification of the competencies considered necessary for preparation to conduct a DMin project.

11. What are the possible implications of the group's work for the **broader work of theological education?**

Theological educators may reconsider approaches to provide additional education for DMin students in methods of field research and support for academic writing. These approaches may be applied to increase DMin completion rates and to enhance the ministerial effectiveness of DMin graduates.

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Permanent Diaconate Final Peer Group Report

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The peer group studying programs for preparation of permanent deacons began its work at the Educational Models and Practices Peer Group Forum in February 2016. The group continued its work through conference calls, met face-to-face on October 27-28, 2016 in Pittsburgh, and completed its work at the Educational Models and Practices Peer Group Forum in April 2017.

Why the Schools Engaged this Program
The peer group has identified permanent diaconate formation as among the most promising educational practices to enrich the active ministry of the Church. Deacons serve in the various spheres of existing pastoral structures, school, work, family, etc., and can help the Church adapt and respond to the rapidly

changing needs of society. The Second Vatican Council restored the Sacred Order of Deacons as a "proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy." Permanent deacons serve in three particular areas of the Church's ministry: Word, liturgy, and charity.

The Bishops in the United States authorized diaconal ministry in 1968 and subsequently established guidelines for the ministry in the United States. Over the years, these guidelines have been assessed and revised in consultation with the Congregation for Catholic Education's "Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons." The current guidelines, contained in the USCCB's 2003 edition of the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, outline the formation dimensions and requirements that shape diocesan formation programs for deacons in their journeys from aspirants, to candidates, to post-ordination. As educators, the particular interest of our peer group is in the formation requirements of the *National Directory*, which call for the development of the whole person to be achieved by continual integration of four specific areas—human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral.

The peer group's concerns center on the fact that most permanent diaconate programs do not integrate the four pillars of formation effectively. Many provide for intellectual formation by affiliating with Catholic universities or colleges, leaving spiritual, pastoral, and human formation as the responsibility of diocesan personnel. The result is a fragmented approach to formation, with little cross-pollination across the four pillars. The quality of diaconate formation and education largely depends upon the value assigned to it and the resources allotted to it within each particular diocese. The quality, academic level, and duration of diaconate formation programs vary considerably from diocese to diocese across North America. While some variance is understandable and even necessary, given each bishop's governance of his diocese and pastoral sensitivity to its particularities, the group is concerned that the formation programs developed diocese by diocese may lack an effective model for education and formation.

Crucial Issues and Questions

This vision of diaconate education and formation is well-developed and robust, but its implementation is often lacking. Appropriate educational resources, for example, are not always available. The result is that the vision of diaconate formation and education has not yet been fully realized. Through our peer group's initial conversations with a core member of the USCCB's Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (CCLV), we have identified the central problem with current permanent diaconate education and formation to be this gap between vision and adequately-resourced implementation.

For example, through the work of our peer group, we have articulated a shared concern for needed improvements in the following areas of diaconate formation programming.

- More effective integration of the four dimensions of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral).
- Development of formation programs in Spanish, with appropriate courses, well-qualified instructors, and suitable textbooks.
- Opportunities for language study to address needs of: 1) English-speaking candidates to learn Spanish or other appropriate languages use in the diocese and 2) Non-English speaking candidates to study English and the cultural subtleties of the United States and Canada.
- Programming to help develop intercultural competencies of diaconate candidates, enabling them to be sensitive to the cultural subtleties and historical constrictions of the diverse-faith communities within the candidate's diocese.

- Greater attention to the role of the wife and children in the married participant's diaconate formation.
- Exploration of distance learning opportunities and challenges for diaconate formation.
- Development of metrics to assess essential competencies (possibly utilizing alternative competency-based education models).

This rapid growth in the US Hispanic/Latino population indicates a significant potential demand for Spanish-language permanent diaconate formation programs. According to statistics published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 71% of US Catholic population growth in the United States since 1960 has been Hispanic.[1] Yet only 3% of US Catholic priests and 16% of permanent deacons self-identify as Hispanic or Latino.[2]

Opportunities and Benefits

The permanent diaconate is a growing ministry within the church and the ministry needs quality educational programming. There is an important opportunity for ATS member schools to provide the theological education that is needed with the level of quality, theological depth, educational sophistication, and ministerial integrity that these schools can best provide.

Members of the peer group have noted the openness of many bishops to development of programs for deacons. The schools are in a strategic position to nurture collaboration, for example, between dioceses of various sizes. Some smaller dioceses don't have the necessary resources to develop and implement robust programs of preparation of the diaconate. Schools can be the nexus points for this collaboration and sharing of resources. Schools are often places of intercultural presence and interaction. Because those who will serve the church in the future will need ever greater intercultural skills, theological schools can be ideal providers of this training.

The schools also see the present moment as including an opportunity to educate the church, including bishops, priests, and the faithful about diaconal ministry and best ways to prepare candidates for that ministry.

There is discussion below of the possibility of online learning as a tool to enhance programs for permanent deacons. If appropriate forms and systems can be devised, online learning could provide an important benefit for these programs and their students.

Members of the peer group are connected with persons and organizations supporting the work of deacons, such as the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), the National Association of Diaconate Directors (NADD), the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and the USCCB sub-committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations (CCLV). These connections have enabled the group to include research questions in a major survey of deacons (CARA) and may provide opportunities

[1] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Hispanic Ministry at a Glance*, accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/hispanic-latino/demographics/hispanic-ministry-at-a-glance.cfm.

[2] Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, *Fact Sheet: Hispanic Catholics in the U.S.*, accessed February 23, 2017, http://cara.georgetown.edu/staff/webpages/Hispanic%20Catholic%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf.

to discuss their findings about formation of permanent deacons with representatives from the CCLV and the USCCB.

Challenges and Obstacles

Issues related to programs:

The group's work has confirmed something the participants already knew; that programs for permanent deacons vary greatly from school to school and diocese to diocese. While the expectations of the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* are consistent, programs take a wide range of approaches to fulfill the expectations. Some schools offer programs for graduate credit, in many cases leading to master's degrees and in other cases leading to certificates. Other schools offer non-credit programs. In fact, only a handful of dioceses in the United States and Canada require a master's degree for the diaconate. The schools in the group are somewhat different than the norm with their programs' emphases on graduate credit and degrees.

The group identified the distinctive challenge of maintaining high academic standards when students working for graduate credit and students seeking non-credit certificates are in the same classes. Because of relatively small numbers and limits on resources, it is not feasible to run separate programs for the two groups of students. On the other hand, some students bring a high level of academic skill and professional experience to their studies even if they do not hold baccalaureate degrees. The current ATS Standards limit the admission of those students to degree programs to 15% of those enrolled in the program. Schools must require students to demonstrate academic ability to do graduate-level work, but how that ability is demonstrated may vary widely. The group expressed the desire to develop better ways to assess prior learning, especially for those students whose first language and academic credentials are not in English, so that students could be better placed in programs matching their abilities.
Programs of similar types are of different lengths and are asked to address (or not) the different areas of formation. Some dioceses ask the schools to focus only on intellectual formation relying on other sources for pastoral, human, and spiritual formation. Other dioceses expect the schools to provide all four areas. Schools are often best equipped to provide intellectual formation and even when the other areas are desired they may not be well integrated. In addition, it is sometimes the case that faculty members focus exclusively on the intellectual pillar and some are not open to or formed themselves to assist the process of broader integration. It is, of course, somewhat artificial to separate the four categories of formation from one another at all and many programs seek to weave them together in a holistic way that will be of greatest benefit to the students and their ministries.

The group explored competency-based education as a form that might provide a model or at least insights to their work. Study by a subgroup and a report of a conversation with President Kent Anderson of Northwest Baptist Seminary—the only school in ATS approved (at that time) for a competency-based program—informed the group. The directory emphasizes the competencies needed by permanent deacons so a significant part of the work is already in place. At the forum in April 2017, the group engaged the Competency-Based Education peer group in a conversation about possible applications of CBE to programs of diaconate education and formation. The *National Directory* identifies the competencies the Church requires of permanent deacons and the CBE process rightly orients seminary study to meet student learning outcomes, including mastery of these competencies, to address the needs of the Church.

Issues related to faculty:

Faculty members in many theological schools are oriented to the training of candidates for the priesthood. Some have found difficulty in making adjustments to providing education and formation for permanent deacon candidates. Many programs find it hard to find, assess, and keep adjunct faculty, especially if they come from outside the seminary.

Issues related to students:
Some programs are finding it hard to attract sufficient numbers of candidates. Some men who express interest are inadequately prepared for the academic rigors of more advanced programs. Others are not suited for the ministry of the diaconate. Given the growing Spanish-speaking population in the United States, the need for Spanish-speaking deacons (and priests) is obvious, but there are relatively few programs equipped to provide instruction in Spanish. The group gathered information from the *Diaconate Directory* about offerings in the United States and found that of 162 total programs, 37 were listed as offering programs in Spanish. Members contacted a number of the schools on the list and discovered that for a variety of reasons a substantial number of them no longer offered their programs. The group will continue to explore possibilities in this area.

It is sometimes difficult to attract younger men with families to the diaconate. These young men could have longer terms of service, of course, but they are normally employed full-time and frequently have families, some with young children. The demands of jobs and families, both of which are appropriate priorities, make fulfilling the extensive requirements of deacon formation programs daunting. In response, some programs work to adapt their programming as far as possible to meet the needs of students. Programs must also find ways to serve and assist the formation of spouses and children as well as the candidates. The peer group is gathering information about programming for spouses.

In some dioceses, especially those with extensive geographic size and relatively small population, access can be a challenge for students. Some programs are exploring online programming to help meet this need. This raises the question, of course, about the adequacy of online programs to meet the educational and formational needs of deacons and some bishops are understandably wary of asynchronous forms of education. If schools wish to adopt online methodologies, they will need to help bishops understand the possibilities of current forms of online education. Some schools are working with synchronous models and would be helped if distance students could count synchronous video classes as counting toward residency requirements of degree programs.

Issues related to parishes:
In some cases priests and deacons have struggled to work well together. Sometimes priests are uncomfortable sharing duties with deacons. In other cases, deacons exceed the boundaries of their roles. Rarely are those pursuing the priesthood and those in diaconate programs brought together for study or formation. Both might benefit by collaborative learning. And clarity of roles is essential.

In some programs, difficulties arise by having deacon candidates and laity studying together. This, of course, is a larger issue—part of the growing challenge of effective collaboration among priests, deacons, and lay ecclesial ministers.

Given the growing cultural diversity in the United States and Canada, the group affirmed the need to prepare deacons to minister in cross-cultural settings.

Educational Effectiveness
Members of the peer group agreed that the final measure of the effectiveness of programs is the quality of graduates. Evidence can come from a number of sources including good feedback from parishes, requests from bishops and parishes for more deacons—"send us another one" patterns of ongoing connections

and support among deacons who have studied together—and deacons who continue their work of formation indicates at least the appetite for formation perhaps whetted by the schools' educational programs.

Student evaluations of programs and institutional measures of student progress and growth are also important indirect measures of effectiveness.

Financial Viability
Programs for the formation of permanent deacons are often funded by the dioceses that send candidates. Sometimes costs are shared by parishes and occasionally by the candidates themselves. Perhaps a greater challenge is the more common lack of funding for continuing education to support the ongoing formation of permanent deacons.

Educational Principles
A number of principles have emerged from the group's conversation, including the following:

- Theological education should be integrative; both in terms of topics of study and across the areas of formation.
- Deacon preparation must nurture the ability to apply knowledge to ministry situations.
- Cultural competence and sensitivity are central for theological education to the permanent diaconate.
- Theological education and ministry in the twenty-first century will require familiarity with digital communication.
- Regardless of the educational model, a high level of interaction among students and between professors and students is crucial for effective education and formation.
- The Four Pillars of Formation provide the central model for the formation of deacons.
- Formation across all four dimensions is crucial in theological education.
  Attention should be given to formation of faculty appropriate to their roles in formation of students.
- Related to the conversation with the Competency-Based Education group, it is clear that whatever form of education theological schools undertake, it should begin with desired student outcomes and shape the institution and its resources most effectively to achieve those outcomes. This process is often referred to as "backward design" or "reverse engineering."
- CBE likely requires faculty to undergo a "paradigm shift" in their roles and expertise.

Unexpected Possibilities
An unexpected opportunity that emerged was the chance to collaborate with CARA's major survey of the diaconate and include a few questions of particular interest to the peer group. Also, four schools from the group formed two collaborative teams and each was awarded an ATS innovation grant to pursue projects. St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry will collaborate with Pontifical College Josephinum to develop a "Formation Programming Model for Permanent Deacons" through a process of shared discernment with core members from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations, and faculty and staff from other ATS schools offering permanent deacon programs. St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology will work with Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University to produce a Spanish-language curriculum for intellectual formation of permanent deacons.

Recommended Practices
The foundation for permanent deacon preparation and expected outcomes is the National Directory.

Implications for the Standards of Accreditation
The group identified the following areas of possible implication for the Standards from the group's conversations.

- The group recommends reevaluation of the 15% rule that limits the number of students in degree programs without baccalaureate degrees. The limit may create particular hardships for programs that enroll small numbers of students and that need to serve nontraditional constituencies.
- Schools need better methods and tools for assessment of readiness for graduate-level theological education.
- The Standards could recognize synchronous distance education as counting toward residency requirements. Given the broad geographic territory covered by some dioceses, travel to the school's campus can be a challenge. Flexibility in this area could greatly assist some students and schools can develop other ways of building the learning community.
- The Standards might have an even stronger emphasis on intercultural competencies. Given the demographic changes in the US and Canada—and particularly as they affect the Catholic Church—religious leaders must be effectively equipped to serve across cultural differences.
- Members of the group agree that there is unequal emphasis across programs on the areas of formation. The Standards might stress a more equal emphasis on all areas of formation.
- With the wide variations in expectations for training, especially in non-degree programs, the Association might strengthen efforts at consistency by recognition and/or accrediting of Certificate credentials.

Implications for Broader Theological Education
The need for Spanish-language materials and professors cuts across much of theological education. More broadly, theological education must continue to focus on preparing religious leaders with intercultural skills. This includes deeper understanding of cultural identities, modes of thinking in different cultures, and the need for many serving in the diaconate to bridge cultures.

Appendix

Preliminary Findings from the
USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations and
National Association of Diaconate Directors
Survey of Diocesan Diaconate Directors

(Responses to questions added by the Permanent Diaconate Peer Group)

Is any portion of the academic formation of deacons provided through distance learning?

- 30 percent of responding diaconate directors responded in the affirmative
- Among those who responded "yes" to this question:
    - 52% offer synchronous learning (i.e., interactive video conferencing)
    - 64% offer asynchronous learning (i.e., online courses)
    - 17% offer distance learning in some "other" format (e.g., formation in another diocese, DVDs, video-taped presentations, and lectures)

Please select the category below that best describes the academic formation program for your deacons:

- 21% offer a graduate-level program associated with a Catholic institution—degree awarded
- 28% offer a graduate-level program associated with a Catholic institution—no degree awarded
- 10% offer an undergraduate-level program associated with a Catholic institution
- 40% offer a freestanding program only—no degree or certificate awarded

How are wives of deacons incorporated into the academic formation for your deacons?

- 9% say that no participation by wives is expected or encouraged
- 60% say that participation by wives is optional but not required
- 38% say that wives can participate by audit only, but not for academic credit
- 18% say that wives can receive academic credit for those who enroll

How are wives of deacons incorporated into the spiritual formation for your deacons?

- 1% say that no participation by wives is expected or encouraged
- 20% say that participation by wives is optional but not required
- 48% say that wives are strongly encouraged to participate
- 30% say that participation by wives is mandatory

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
RC Schools Formation of Laity Peer Group Final Report

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Appendix: Summary Chart

Why Form Catholic Laity for Ministry and Service in a Variety of Sectors?

To intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God, the most holy synod earnestly addresses itself to the laity, whose proper and indispensable role in the mission of the Church has already been dealt with in other documents. The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it. Sacred Scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful such activity was at the very beginning of the Church (cf. Acts 11:19-21; 18:26; Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 4:3). (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, AA 1)

Nine of sixteen documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) affirm the role and contribution of the laity to the mission of the Church, to evangelize and catechize future generations of Catholics and potential converts.[1] In particular, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964) and

[1]cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Nature of the Church, nos. 33 ff.: A.A.S. 57 (1965) pp. 39 ff.; cf; also Constitution on the Liturgy, nos. 26-40; A.A.S. 56 (1964) pp. 107- 111; cf. Decree on Instruments of Social Communication: A.A.S. 56 (1964) pp. 145-158; cf. Decree on Ecumenism: A.A.S. 57 (1965) pp. 90-107; cf. Decree on Pastoral Duties of Bishops, nos. 16, 17, 18; cf. Declaration on Christian Education, nos. 3, 5, 7; cf. Decree on Missionary Activity of Church, nos. 15, 21, 41; cf. Decree on Priestly Life and Ministry, no. 9.

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem,* 1965) affirm the call to form lay leaders and ecclesial ministers to serve in collaboration with clergy and to be salt and light (Mt. 5:13-16) in a variety of sectors, serving in various professions and states of life. The Council Fathers emphasized the need for proper training and formation, encouraging lay people to use their gifts to bring the Gospel to their families and workplace environments, and to assist clergy in a variety of diocesan, parish, and school ministries.

Pope St. John Paul II maintained and confirmed the magisterium's commitment to lay formation in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici,* On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World (1988). As "labourers in the vineyard," (CL 1), lay people collaborate with clergy and spread the Gospel throughout the world with their gifts, serving the Lord in a variety of vocations and states of life. Consequently, many Conferences of Catholic Bishops throughout the world have issued their own documents celebrating the role of the laity in their own communities, providing training and support through diocesan offices for lay discipleship and training and partnerships with seminaries and universities, offering non-credit programs as well as diploma, certificate, and degree programs designed to form lay leaders for professional ministry within a parish or diocesan context or in other disciplines and occupations.

American bishops have published documents such as *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* (1995), *Together in God's Service: Toward a Theology of Ecclesial Lay Ministers* (1998) and *Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (2005). Similarly, Canadian Bishops have published *Responsibility in Ministry* (1996) and *On Good Soil: Exploring Best Practices for Adult Formation* (2015). To be sure, Bishops have committed to forming "missionary disciples" who will participate in the building of the kingdom through communion and collaboration.

Members of The Roman Catholic Schools Formation of Laity Peer Group have studied the successes and challenges associated with providing this level of training in their respective schools. The following report will summarize and address the group's deliberations regarding guiding principles for lay formation. Each principle will be explained, including an analysis of crucial issues, challenges, obstacles, educational effectiveness, financial viability and innovations to be considered.

Guiding Principles for Lay Formation

The Peer Group has developed and identified six principles that support the basis of lay formation:

***1. The universal call to holiness (LG 40) affirms the secular and ecclesial vocations of the laity as authentic charisms*.**

This means all people are called to holiness regardless of state of life. A single lay person or married person is called to achieve the same level of sanctity as a member of a religious community or the clergy. A desired outcome of lay formation and the call to holiness is clarity for the discerning layperson regarding their vocational paths and uses of gifts. This outcome can be achieved by fostering a culture of personal and communal vocation and discernment; forming and providing accountability for disciples who witness to Gospel values; promoting the dignity of the person and social solidarity, and preparing students to understand and engage the culture, showing them how to serve and lead within it as witnesses to Christ's love, truth, and beauty. This desired outcome requires communal support and sharing of resources for lay discerners.

The call to holiness is infused throughout programming initiatives, shaping and influencing the level and intensity of preparation for laity coming from diverse backgrounds. Although all people are called to holiness, screening and preparation of candidates vary according to states of life as most schools have a longer history of forming men for the ministerial priesthood and permanent diaconate than they do forming lay people for ministry.

Various schools noted the need to articulate the distinction between screening and preparation of candidates in the ordination stream versus the lay ministry stream. Most seminaries and theological schools have rigorous screening tools for candidates for the ministerial priesthood. Although screening for lay candidacy varies from school to school, with some schools placing more emphasis on psycho socio competencies than others, other schools have designed programs to address the needs of the growing Hispanic population in the United States and members of other Christian communities through ecumenical initiatives.

Another challenge involves those lay candidates who receive training but do not seek church employment. Rather, they are being equipped to evangelize by serving in secular employment, infusing their Catholic identities into their secular vocations. They are called to be witnesses to Gospel values in a variety of sectors. Although it would be fruitful to have trained lay people infuse Gospel values into their secular settings, some may limit the use of their gifts to apologetic or political matters without applying their gifts and knowledge to other sectors. This concern needs to be addressed. Consequently, member schools noted the need to encourage and assist these individuals with job searches, placement, and follow-up.

2. ***By virtue of baptism, Christians are called to participate in the threefold office of Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King.***

The Church's mission of salvation in the world is realized not only by the ministers in virtue of the Sacrament of Orders, but also by all the lay faithful; indeed, because of their Baptismal states and their specific vocations, in the measure proper to each person, the lay faithful participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. (CL 23)

Participation in the three-fold office of Christ suggests collaboration between clergy (bishops, priests, and deacons) and the priesthood of the baptized, the laity. Member schools noted the need for partnerships and support from diocesan leadership.[2]

Pope St. John Paul II, in his apostolic exhortation on the laity, confirmed the need for collaboration between lay people and clergy. Similarly, in 1997, various Vatican offices, congregations, and commissions issued guidelines for this collaboration in their document titled, *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest.* Although the respective Vatican offices underscored the need for lay assistance, they caution against confusion regarding the rights, roles, and obligations of the lay faithful:
Because these tasks are most closely linked to the duties of pastors, (whose offices require reception of the sacrament of Orders), it is necessary that all who are in any way involved in this collaboration exercise particular care to safeguard the nature and mission of sacred ministry and the vocation and secular character of the lay faithful. It must be remembered that "collaboration with" does not, in fact, mean

[2] Group members recommended consulting *In Fulfillment of their Mission: Duties and Tasks of a Priest* prepared by the National Catholic Educational Association in 2008 as a guideline that could assist with collaboration between clergy and laity.

"substitution for." (Introduction)

One school has developed a "coordinating model" to ensure the collaboration and distinction between the ministry of the ordained and the lay faithful. The challenge remains preserving the unique identity of the priest and/or deacon and the unique contribution of the laity to the life of the Church. A few schools noted mixed classrooms where lay people are invited to attend the same classes as candidates for the ministerial priesthood. One school offers a course called *Lay Ministry in the Diocesan Church* that includes a unit on the legalities and boundaries associated with lay diocesan ministries, emphasizing collaboration and distinction between the two ministries, ordained and lay.

Field Placement provides another opportunity for collaboration. Most schools require MDiv students to complete placements in various settings, including parishes. It was noted that MTS or MRE students might not normally have access to such experiences, depriving them of the opportunity to collaborate with members of the clergy. MDiv students are evaluated in these placement settings by qualified supervisors, offering invaluable insights to formators or school administrators. Lacking a degree-program requirement, MTS or MRE students might not receive this important feedback as they prepare to serve in a variety of ministerial settings.

3. Theological education for laity encompasses all four pillars or dimensions of formation: pastoral, intellectual, spiritual, and human.

The emphasis on the formation of the whole person requires faculty members who are trained to cover all four formational areas. Some faculty members may have a strong academic background, but little ministerial experience. The desired outcome is a candidate for ministry or secular service who is well integrated or equipped with resources to become well integrated. This might be achieved using a multidisciplinary approach to formation, emphasizing the need for self-knowledge and the consultation of the science of psycho-socio development. This approach calls for regular assessment and screening, and monitoring spiritual and psycho socio growth. This approach to formation will assist with the integration of learning into a pastoral context.

This continues to be a challenge for schools with limited resources and assessment tools, making it difficult to measure spiritual and human growth. One school's educational principles have a deep grounding in a Vatican II ecumenical vision, and have been informed by these four pillars of formation. These pillars are addressed in their "three-legged-stool" approaches to lay formation: student formation, development of ministerial competence and integration, and demonstration of academic learning and intellectual development.

Various member schools indicated the use of this approach in their lay formation programs. In particular, one school has a more developed approach to the human formation of the laity. It uses a process called "Integration and Processing" to integrate the four pillars. Students are evaluated based on supervision reports, candidacy reviews, case studies, and peer reviews.

Although this school has been innovative in this area, other members noted the assessment of human formation is difficult as best practice models have not been well researched. Other schools offer some days of human formation, but those offering mostly online learning noted difficulty in addressing this pillar of formation in distance education. The intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral pillars are far more developed and well established than the human pillar or dimension of formation. Some schools offer non-credit days of formation for lay people that address each of the four pillars. Although some schools offer online learning opportunities that are attractive to introverts, or have various teaching sites, some students do not have access to some of the spiritual supports that can assist them with their human and spiritual flourishing.

At one school, the work of the formation of distance education students is chiefly intellectual but the school's faculty is discussing how the spiritual and human pillars can be better responded to by their work. This can be challenging due to the high cost of providing on line education. Moreover, large class sizes might compromise the sense of community. Similarly, another school noted that its focus is primarily on intellectual formation. To attend to this concern, our group discussed the possibility of referring students to known spiritual directors and human formation counselors and other innovations including hybrid courses with some online and on campus options. Another option includes hiring faculty members who have had some practical ministerial experience. These individuals bring a combination of intellectual formation and years of ministerial experience.

4. This theological education is offered in continuity with the Tradition using innovative and proven techniques, practices, and insights.

Tradition might be understood as the handing on of "the living memory"[3] of our faith. This "living memory" of revealed truths or the deposit of faith is transmitted through Sacred Scripture, Liturgy, Liturgical Art, Early Church Fathers, Councils, and Creeds. Theological education must engage these pillars of Tradition, encouraging faculty to further develop their spiritual characters and theological bases so that students can be fully catechized before they are entrusted with the care of souls.[4] The mission statement of one school relates well to this principle: "Formed in tradition, trained in compassion, prepared to shepherd—Together in Christ, we are Mundelein, we form parish priests and those who collaborate with them in ministry." Mundelein uses the methodology of "See, Discern, Act, Evaluate, and Celebrate" and the pedagogy of the oppressed as ways of transmitting the Tradition to its students. These models encourage outreach and sensitivity to different cultural backgrounds.

Elsewhere, graduates of another school are expected to "be familiar with the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and will be able to use the *Catechism* as an instrument to inform and to guide their own catechetical teaching." Hence the touchstone for all work of formation at this school is the Catechism of the Catholic Church. They have built their scholarship program to keep costs down and to assist students with this training. Similarly, another school offers several bursaries and scholarships and uses a catechetical approach to form lay people for ministry. They are catechized before they engage in theological discussion. Yet another school has a different approach. Given that this school's context is ecumenically diverse, it utilizes principles that flow specifically from Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism (UR 7, 8, 9, 11, 16). This school has been raising money to secure a $35 million dollar endowment to cut down on school expenses.

Although most member schools offer courses rooted in Tradition, some schools are finding that students are lacking in basic elements of preparedness for graduate study, such as mastery of the liberal arts, especially as they relate to written and oral expression and reasoning, and also conversancy with the history and culture of the Church. Some schools noted the lack of training in Philosophy, an essential foundation for the study of our Tradition.

[3] See Yves Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004.
[4] See John Paul II, *On Catholic Universities* (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* 1990), 22.

5. Catholic social teaching principles provide the foundation for institutional policies and practices.

This means policies and practices must honour the sanctity of life, understanding that all people are created in the image and likeness of God with the dignity this mystery entails. These principles inform policies that promote respect for all persons and the development of resources that assist with job placement opportunities in a variety of contexts. Although one school requires all faculty to integrate Catholic Social Teaching Principles into each course, other schools offer separate, required courses on the topic of Catholic Social Teaching and inform their policies with these principles. One school promotes these principles in their efforts to promote dialogue and ecumenical sensitivity in their programs. Notwithstanding the effort that has gone into the promotion of Catholic Social Teaching Principles, various schools noted cultural shifts, societal fluctuations, distance and economic barriers and insufficient institutional support as challenges for the engagement of this principle in all programming efforts. Some students live in rural settings, requiring more technical or online support in their training. This might add additional costs and resources. Moreover, Social Justice Principles apply to administrative practices as well as curricular planning.

The need to assist clergy and other administrators with human resources related issues was also noted. Transparency should be encouraged at all levels regarding hiring practices and protection, advising on career paths, and other decisions pertaining to job security and institutional integrity. Compensation of lay staff may vary depending on school or parish involvement. This led to some discussion regarding viability of various new degree programs and training since there are very few positions waiting for students upon graduation. Employment counseling was recommended as a response to this issue. Job counseling could include some assessment of transferrable skills. The service of financial advisors may help with the securement of endowments and grants for this type of training.

6. Lay theological education promotes and supports a culture of encounter, solidarity, and accompaniment in participation in the life of the Church, infusing Gospel values in all sectors of our community.

The New Evangelization targets baptized Catholic Christians who have fallen away from the Church for one reason or another. Using witness and proclamation, evangelizers—consisting of lay, clergy and religious—reach out to these individuals using their gifts and skills in a variety of professions and in all sectors of our community.

The working document (2012) for the synod on the New Evangelization lists seven sectors in need of an encounter with Christ:

1. Culture
2. Social Sector
3. Economy
4. Technology and Scientific Research
5. Civic Life
6. Media and Social Communications
7. Religion

Lay Formation programs provide ecclesial formation for the parish and training of the lay apostolate in the world. Forming lay evangelizers for accompaniment of others in the life of the Church requires an encounter with Christ and His truth, goodness and beauty, properties of God's being. This calls for an awareness of the signs of the times and the reality of cultural diversity in Canada and the United States, especially the large Hispanic presence in American Catholicism through an experience of *Encuentro* (faith gathering). *Encuentro,* as a model of faith formation, contextualizes the candidates' faith experiences. Several schools noted the use of this model in their programs. One school designed a program to prepare lay ministers in East Los Angeles where its fastest growing demographics and greatest pastoral challenges are faced.

Although *Encuentro* and accompaniment requires understanding and empathy, some schools noted the difficulty some faculty members have relating to students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Online learning was cited as another obstacle to accompaniment and encounter as meeting with mentors and advisors is key to integrating the learning and applying it to their personal lives. This same school faced another problem with students who could not physically access the seminary. To meet this challenge, they have begun discussions to implement distributive learning and technologies by which lectures can be broadcast to remote locations and student learning managed in a meaningful way.

Similarly, several schools noted partnerships with dioceses, publishers, Catholic media, and religious communities. Moreover, they offer a wide variety of credit, non-credit, residential, and distance education opportunities. Some schools are more advanced in their uses of technology for distance education. Some schools cited financial limitations, delaying plans to implement the use of technology to reach those students who may not be able to take credit courses or attend non-credit lay formation days in person. One school has purchased some equipment with the help of a grant, but will need to acquire more resources in order to secure the services of professional technicians.

Many schools are engaging in innovative ways of reaching students who cannot attend in person. Encouraging partnerships with diocesan offices and Catholic media can ensure the delivery of such programs, securing funding for programming and technical needs to reach a wider audience. These new approaches must consider the emerging reality of more students whose normal intellectual habits do not involve the reading of books, presenting new pedagogical challenges.

Implications of our work for the broader work of theological education?

Theological education consists of external and internal curricula.[5] The external curriculum consists of training in the area of catechesis and doctrine, or training in our intellectual tradition. The internal curriculum emphasizes human formation, the cultivation of virtue and other important life skills: how to manage conflict; how to manage anger; how to forgive; self-knowledge and self-awareness; how to communicate tactfully, yet truthfully. Moreover, the internal and external curriculum should consult the expertise of other disciplines, offering important insights into the human condition. It is worth the effort to explore options and resources to ensure a balance between the two approaches to formation for discipleship.

Implications of our work for the possible process of redevelopment of the Standards of Accreditation

We, members of the Roman Catholic tradition, have a lot to offer other Christian communities and schools by way of language of our four pillars, or dimensions of formation. Some of our member schools could assist with the development of approaches to learning based on these for dimensions of formation. Additionally, our committee proposed the following:

[5] For more on this see Josephine Lombardi, *Experts in Humanity. A Journey of Self-Discovery and Healing* (Toronto: Novalis, 2016).

- Clearer definition of the kinds of formation needed in different degree programs. For example, there are variations of the MA degree
- Clearer recommendations regarding residency and online learning communities
- Clarity regarding prerequisites for theological education with some validation of prior learning experience
- Creation of separate standards for the formation of lay people
- Clarity regarding the training of rural part time pastors with no credentials
- Discussion of the external and internal curricula, balance between intellectual and pastoral
- Discussion on the variation within degree programs regarding the following: ministry, context, history, and personal development.

Overall, our involvement with the ATS Education Models and Practices in Theological Education Peer Group Forum has been quite fruitful—encouraging, and inspiring dialogue, fellowship, and the sharing of best practices. The study has affirmed the important work of lay formation, showing how rewarding it is.

Principles	Crucial Issues/Questions	Opportunities/ Benefits	Challenges/ Obstacles	Insights/ Innovations
#1 ***1. The universal call to holiness (LG 40) affirms the secular and ecclesial vocations of the laity as authentic charisms*.**	Screening for lay people vs. Screening for clergy candidates	All people in all states of life are called to holiness. Affirmation of the service the laity provide the Church and the secular environment.	Address the needs of growing Hispanic Community. How to prepare lay people who will not serve in a ministerial setting, but in secular service?	Assist students with employment counseling, job searches, placement and follow-up.
#2 ***By virtue of baptism, Christians are called to participate in the threefold office of Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King.***	How to encourage collaboration between clergy and laity without compromising the nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood.	Some schools have mixed classes with lay people studying alongside with seminarians. Particular courses offered to prepare lay people for diocesan service.	Need clergy support and encouragement. How to reconcile collaboration with distinction of roles.	Most schools offer courses to prepare lay people for this level of collaboration. Some dioceses and media have partnered with schools to support this initiative.
#3 ***Theological education for laity encompasses all four pillars, or dimensions of formation: pastoral, intellectual, spiritual, and human***	How to measure and assess human formation? Human formation is a dimension/pillar that requires special attention and consideration.	Lay people are being formed using the same four pillars of formation used for clergy formation.	Schools that focus mostly on online learning and the intellectual tradition noted the need to consider how they can assist their students with human formation.	USML uses a process called "Integration and Processing" to integrate the four pillars.
#4 ***This theological education is offered in continuity with the Tradition***	Some students need to be catechized before they can engage in graduate theological study. It is important that they know the	Several schools ensure the students are fully catechized as part of their formation. This will prepare	Some students are lacking in basic elements of preparedness for graduate study, such as	A combination of online learning and in class preparation can make the

using innovative and proven techniques, practices and insights.	Tradition before they prepare for ministry.	them to be catechists and defenders of the Tradition.	mastery of the liberal arts. Funding for programs and tuition continues to be a concern for most schools.	programs more accessible to students.
#5 ***Catholic social teaching principles provide the foundation for institutional policies and practices.***	Including Catholic Social Teaching Principles in programming and course content.	Students and staff will be mindful of the dignity of all persons and will use this principle in their day-to-day administrative activities.	How to address cultural shifts, societal fluctuations, distance and economic barriers and the challenge of institutional support and partnerships.	USML requires that all faculty members integrate Catholic Social Teaching Principles into each course. Other colleges have required courses.
#6 ***Lay theological education promotes and supports a culture of encounter, solidarity, and accompaniment in participation in the life of the Church, infusing Gospel values in all sectors of our community.***	Faith gatherings (*encuentro*) and other educational opportunities encourage the New Evangelization, infusing Gospel values in all sectors of our community.	Encourages an encounter with Christ's truth, goodness and beauty. Facilitates an awareness of the signs of the times and cultural diversity.	Some faculty members experience difficulty relating to students from diverse backgrounds. In one case, students had difficulty accessing the campus for training.	Some schools are using distributive learning techniques and technologies by which lectures can be broadcast to remote locations. Partnership with media and publishers has assisted with making educational material more widely available.

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Programs for Latino/a Students Peer Group Final Report

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Introduction

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) reported a continued decline in the enrollment of Anglo students attending ATS schools in the last 10 years, while students of color show a steady increase during the same period. While the number of Latino/a students inches upward, it is not keeping pace with the growth of the Latino/a population as a whole.[1] (See Appendix 1 for ATS data tables). This does not follow the population trends. The Pew Hispanic Research Center states that the number of Hispanics in the US has increased from 14.6 million in 1980 to 45.5 million in 2007, a rise from 6% to 15% of the total population. In 2000, Hispanics surpassed African Americans as the largest minority in the US, and many expect these immigration trends to continue (Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, 2004).

[1] In this report, the gender inclusive designations Latino/a or Latin@ will be used interchangeably.

At the present time, Latino/as comprise a growing segment of the population who are members of Christian churches in the US and Canada. Nevertheless, the number of Latino/as enrolled in theology schools is not representative of the general population, (6% of total enrollment in ATS schools in 2015) and a much smaller proportion of students completing their degrees (4%)[2]. Similarly, the number of Latino/a faculty has remained the same at 4% over the last three years.[3]

The challenge facing ATS schools is how to make theological education available and relevant to this growing population of Latino/a students.

A Latino/a Educational Model or Practice: What is it?

The Latino/a peer group met to discuss the best models and practices in theological education that foster the recruitment and retention of Latino/a students. Latino/as come from a wide diversity of geographic locations, cultural backgrounds, and religious affiliations. For this reason, identifying any *one* model or educational practice that best serves such a varied population is difficult. Nevertheless, the peer group carried out an informal survey of its member institutions to see how each one tried to foster the recruitment and retention of Latino/a students. Three very general categories emerged:

[2] Source: ATS Data Tables 2015-2016: 2 – Enrollment, http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2015-2016-annual-data-tables.pdf, accessed 3/5/2017.

[3] Source: ATS Data Tables 2015-2016: 3 - Composition of Faculty and Compensation of Personnel, http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2015-2016-annual-data-tables.pdf, accessed 3/5/2017.

Theological Education Models (TE) of Schools Participating in the Latino/a Peer Group

	1	2	3
Education	"Standard" theological education- provides a standard curriculum without any adaptation to Latino/a cultural or educational needs	"Standard" theological education with: • Support from Latino/a and Spanish speaking faculty • Occasional courses given in Spanish • Some undergrad pre-reqs. available in Spanish • Students able to write in Spanish • Spanish resources available in syllabi • Student advising conducted in Spanish	Culturally adapted "standard" theological education available: • Taught by Latino/a and Spanish speaking faculty • Courses (more than 50%) taught in Spanish or bilingually • Undergrad pre-reqs available in Spanish • Resources (text books, library resources) in both Spanish and English • Student advising conducted in Spanish
Recruitment	• Standard recruitment practices applied to all • Occasional bilingual staff	• Standard recruitment practices applied to all • Written material available in Spanish • Electronic media available in Spanish • Registrar and recruitment staff is bilingual	Standard recruitment practices plus: • Written material available in Spanish • Electronic media available in Spanish • Targeted opportunities for face-to-face interaction with Latino/a serving congregations, parishes, associations • Registrar and recruitment staff is bilingual
Institutional Support	• No institutional support articulated by school mission statement or administration • Institutional support for Latino/a students is the same as those given to others, in the areas of finances. This could range from scholarship and grant programs, to assistance from the student's congregation or religious affiliation • Outreach to provide TE to Latino/a students, not an explicit goal, assumed to be implicit in the school's mission statement	• Institutional support articulated by school mission statement and/or administration • Institutional support for Latino/a students is the same as those given to others, in the areas of finances. This could range from scholarship and grant programs, to assistance from the student's congregation or religious affiliation • Reduced tuition • Outreach to provide TE to Latino/a students, explicit goal for a particular department OR: • Outreach to provide TE to Latino/a students, explicit goal in institution's mission statement	• Institutional support articulated by school mission statement and administration • Institutional support for Latino/a students is the same as those given to others, in the areas of finances. This could range from scholarship and grant programs, to assistance from the student's congregation or religious affiliation • Agreements with Latin American institutions allow schools to offer reduced tuition • Outreach to provide TE to Latino/a students, explicit goal for a particular department OR: • Outreach to provide TE to Latino/a students, explicit goal in institution's mission statement

None of the schools participating in the Latino/a peer group could be classified completely in one category or another. This could be a sign that each school's constituency requires a different approach, or it could also indicate that institutions are adapting to the needs of Latino/a students in an ad hoc way. Category 3 is an attempt to recognize that Latino/a students come from a different educational system in their countries of origin and may need support in terms of *both* content and skill to serve in a North American context. This is possibly the best category for first generation immigrant populations, and also provides the broadest support for access to graduate education. Category 2 probably serves second generation immigrants who have received a North American high school or (rarely) undergraduate education. These two categories factor cultural competency into their outreach to Latino/a students. (See description below). Category 1 serves Latino/a students who have thoroughly assimilated to a North American standard of education.[4] Unfortunately, at the writing of this report, we did not have data about student completion rates for each of these educational categories.

Crucial Issues

The peer group identified crucial areas for the recruitment and retention of Latino/a students in the areas of programming, finances, and the cultural competence of institutions involved in theological education. This is a brief summary of its findings:

Programming and Assessment

As the table above shows, schools are devising a broad variety of programs, procedures, and student-faculty-staff arrangements to address the needs of Latino/a students. This subcommittee developed a tool for auditing institutions. (See the complete audit form in Appendix 2). Its recommendations and questions are designed to provide Latino/a students with resources consonant with their cultures, social, and educational realities. The audit takes into account the fact that those studying for ministry in North America must know US and/or Canadian cultures and the English language. Several of the peer group member schools have given the assessment tool a dry run and report that it has stimulated reflection and change in their institutions.

A second, extremely important issue is to develop more flexible "on ramps" into theological education for Latino/a students. "Schools of theology must seek ways to encourage programs of theology at other levels, to train their teachers, and to make it easier for students at those other levels to pursue theological education."[5] A recently published text, describes approaches to these issues that are being pioneered by ATS schools.[6] We recommend that the peer group working on Students without Bachelor's Degrees work closely with the Latino/a group to address this issue. Other groups that could contribute positively to this discussion could be Competency-Based Education as well as the Roman Catholic Schools exploring Formation for Laity.

Finances

The high cost of theological education in North America is a major barrier for Latino/a students. This subcommittee looked at the availability of funding from both the private and public sectors specifically for students or programs for Latino/a populations. How can ATS schools find new resources, or

[4] For more information on this topic consult: Edwin I. Hernandez, Milagros Peña et al., "Finding the Right Fit: How Latino/a Seminarians Choose Their Schools" in *Spanning the Divide: Latino/as in Theological Education*, Orlando, FL, AETH, 129–146.

[5] Justo Gonzalez, "From the Last Fifty Years into the Next Fifty" *Theological Education* vol. 49, 1 (2014): 43–49.

[6] Hernandez, Edwin I., Milagros Peña, Caroline Sotelo Viernes Turner and Ariana Monique Salazar, *Spanning the Divide: Latino/as in Theological Education*, Orlando, Fl., Asociación para la Educación Hispana, 2016, ch 11–14.

reallocate from other programs, to serve a growing demographic? Here are some perspectives on the fund development landscape in the United States.

Some public funding is available through the US Department of Education. These include Federal Direct Loans for students. Schools that are able to qualify as Hispanic Serving Institutions may have access to Title V programming grants.[7] Private sources could be corporations and foundations. Corporations could be limited from providing funds for religious purposes, as would some foundations. However, there are some foundations or associations of foundations that particularly target religious giving.[8] Finally, another source of private funding would be denominational regional structures, local churches, and religious communities. Schools must aggressively pursue a long-term funding campaign that explicitly targets a portfolio of sources for Latino/a theological education.

Cultural Competence of the Institution

Many institutions not only have to deal with the educational and socioeconomic limitations among Latino/as, but also with cultural issues. Their main challenge is to establish culturally competent programs that can effectively engage Hispanics and their constituencies. There is a correlation between culturally competent programs and the students´ academic well-being,[9] student retention,[10] and engagement.[11] Self-assessment becomes an important starting point for institutions that are willing to transform their cultures. We recommend ATS schools use the Intercultural Development inventory (IDI) in conjunction with the Institutional Self-Audit (in Appendix 2) to get an objective picture of their cultural perspectives and resources.[12]

Conclusion

Latino/a students have, themselves, identified the cultural competency of their schools as a major help or hindrance to their academic success. Research into the inclusion of Latino/a students in both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches shows that there is a crisis in theological education.

> It is a crisis of relevance. Theological education as it is conceived and practiced in the vast majority of theological schools is rapidly becoming obsolete and irrelevant, as well as unattainable—and sometimes undesired—by the vast majority of Hispanic church leaders and prospective church leaders.[13]

[7] The process to apply for inclusion as a Hispanic Serving Institution is fairly complex. Information for this can be found at: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idues/eligibility.html.

[8] Access to these foundations can be found through the Foundation Center, Guidestar and FADICA databases.

[9] DeGarmo, D. S., & Martínez Jr., C. R. "A Culturally Informed Model of Academic Well-Being for Latino Youth: The Importance of Discriminatory Experiences and Social Support." *Family Relations*, *55*(3), (2006) 267–278.

[10]Gonzalez, K. P., *Campus Culture and the Experiences of Chicano Students in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities.* ASHE Annual Meeting Paper. 1999.

[11] Kezar, A. "Creating and Sustaining a Campus Ethos Encouraging Student Engagement." *About Campus*, 11(6), (2007) 13–18.

[12] However, we recommend that institutions also check at least 10 different options: (http://spiritualityandculture.com/uploads/Cultural_Competence_Assessment_ Tools.pdf) is to use the Intercultural Competence Inventory (IDI).

[13] Edwin, Hernández, Milagros Peña Caroline Sotelo Viernes Turner et al. *Spanning the Divide: Latino/as in Theological Education*, Orlando, FL: AETH., 2016, 19.

Relevance, theological education meeting the needs of a worshipping community, is the issue addressed in *all* sections of this report.

Epilogue

Opportunities, Collaborations, and Partnerships
This group focused on finding institutions that could support new program development in existing schools to serve Latino/a students. A place to start:

1. South East Pastoral Institute (SEPI) http://www.sepi.us/Default.aspx
2. Congar Institute : www.congarinstitute.org/
3. Asociación para la educación teológica hispana : http://www.aeth.org/en/
4. Hispanic Theological Initiative
   http://hti.ptsem.edu/old-prod.ptsem.edu/hti/index.html
5. Institute for Hispanic/Latino Theology and Ministry at Barry University: https://www.barry.edu/hlinstitute/
6. Instituto Fe y Vida
7. US Hispanic Ministry
8. Hispanic Summer Program: https://hispanicsummerprogram.org/
9. Mexican American Catholic College (MACC)
10. Hispanic Leadership Institute at College of St. Elizabeth
11. Institute for Hispanic Ministry at Andrews University
12. Programs in Hispanic Ministry at Boston College
13. Satellite Theological Education Program (STEP) at the University of Notre Dame (Camino Program)

Another source of information would be the annual gathering of *La comunidad*, a sizeable group of Latino/a scholars who meet to network at the AAR. The group recognizes that this may not be a complete listing and encourages readers to network through these institutions and organizations to broaden the scope of resources for new programs.

Dialogue with Other Educational Model Groups

The Latino/a Educational Model Group targeted and visited several other educational model groups. (These groups and participants are listed in Appendix 3) This process fostered further thinking and questioning. Some of the highlights are:

1. The need for Latino/a presence in all the other educational models, as demographics project that Hispanic will continue to grow at ATS.
2. The generational differences among Latino/as—should a school focus on the second or third generation? Language proficiency does not guarantee cultural competency in students, so programs need to aim for cultural competency more than only Spanish language competency.
3. Establishing advisory boards of local Hispanic pastors and other community leaders.
4. The conversation with the African Americans and Asian American schools generated a number of good ideas/suggestions. We suggest further collaboration.
5. ATS standards will require changes in the following areas:

- Measures of equivalency and effective assessment of studies completed abroad.
- How to reach out to 15% of students without bachelor's degrees. Why is the standard 15%, should it be raised? And if so, to what level?
- Prior learning assessment—How do we assess prior learning? How do we quantify this learning? How do we ensure that students are able to fully participate in theological education at the school?
- Competency Assessment—Who sets the standard to be assessed? Are these culturally relevant to the Latino/a context?
- Contextualization of Courses—How can that become part of the standards? An expectation of contextualization should be embedded in the standards not seen as something other, an add on.
- A requirement of cultural competency should be incorporated into the ATS standards.

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Appendix 1

Table 2.12 from the ATS data tables shows enrollment of "Hispanic" students as follows:

2012 - 3,835
2013 - 3,772
2014 - 4,082
2015 - 4,318
2016 - 4,525

http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2016-2017-annual-data-tables.pdf, accessed 10/14/2017.

Appendix 2
Institutional Self-Audit

BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION OF HISPANIC/LATIN@ AND OTHER MINISTRY CANDIDATES IN NORTH AMERICA

Preliminary notes

This instrument is meant to encourage initiatives to foster theological education among Hispanics by providing institutions with a self-audit instrument. The audit focuses primarily on providing Latino@ students with resources consonant with their cultures, social, and educational realities. It assumes that students study for ministry in the United States, and must know both English and US culture, as well as the Latin@ cultures and Spanish.

A. <u>Providing Educational Resources to Latin@ Students</u>

1. **Credentials required of candidates** by the institution's principal constituencies or judicatories for acceptance of graduates into ministry or employment:

What is the ethnic/linguistic composition of the student body, both in general and in the various programs?

What competencies in Latin@ cultures do the school's principal constituencies have for the acceptance of graduates into ministry or employment?

Does the mission statement of the school include any reference to Hispanics, directly or indirectly?

2. Personnel (administration, faculty, staff, governing board) and administrative structure:

Strong attentiveness to Latin@ realities and students demands a critical mass of very responsive school personnel that includes at least the president or the academic dean and at least two or three full-time faculty. These persons do not necessarily have to be Hispanic themselves, nor even fluent in Spanish, but they must certainly be strongly supportive of this dimension in the institution.

a. Top administrators

How strong is the level of support, proficiency in Latin@ cultures, and Spanish fluency among the top administration (board of trustees, president, academic dean, any other officer who has real decision-making authority)? How many are Hispanic? If personnel lack these skills, what efforts are being made to address this?

b. Full-time faculty

How strong is the level of support, proficiency in Latin@ cultures, and Spanish fluency among the full-time faculty? How many are Hispanic? If numbers and competencies are lacking, what efforts are being made to address this?

c. Part-time or adjunct faculty

How many part-time or adjunct faculty with competency and commitment to Latino@ issues are employed and what responsibilities are they given? If numbers and competencies are lacking, what efforts are being made to address this?

d. Administrative staff

How many of the administrative staff, especially those who deal with students regularly (receptionist, registrar, librarians) speak Spanish?

How attentive to Hispanic realities are staff responsible for providing funding for the institution and its students (development officers, grant officers, financial officers)?

If personnel lack appropriate cultural competencies, what efforts are being made to address these staff questions?

e. Board of Trustees

How strong is the level of support and proficiency in Latin@ cultures among the members of the Board? How many are Hispanic? If personnel lack appropriate cultural competencies, what efforts are being made to address this?

3. Strategic planning and implementation

Is theological education for Hispanic ministry a regular dimension of the strategic planning of the school at each level?

What offices and/or processes within the school's institutional structure exist that have Latin@ realities as their primary responsibility? What kind of support do they receive from top administration and full-time faculty? How effective are they?

If personnel lack appropriate cultural competencies, what efforts are being made to address this need in strategic planning and implementation?

4. Programs and Curricula

a. Graduate programs and curricula

What graduate programs are offered by the school that have the Hispanic communities in view? Are there current programs that should, but do not?

How is the curriculum for each program designed to include appropriate attention to Latin@ cultural realities and intercultural proficiency by both Latin@s and non-Latin@s?

What is the rate of degree completion by Hispanics? What does this point to? How is this being addressed?

b. "On ramps" to prepare for graduate theological study

Does the school itself and/or through partnering institutions provide programs that allow Hispanic students to obtain the necessary qualifications for graduate theological studies? What are these programs? What efforts are being made to address this need?

c. Continuing education and community resourcing

Do the school's offerings in learning events for the general public address the realities of Latin@s?

Are such events available in Spanish and/or with translation provided from English?

What efforts are being made to address these needs?

5. Pedagogy/Language

N.B. For language requirements upon admission, see B.2 and B.3 below.

What is the basic language policy of the school in relation to instruction and assignments in the various programs?

How competent is the faculty in bilingual education and the different learning styles involved?

If students are expected to increase in English competency during their programs of studies, which programs have such a requirement and what are the expectations? What aids are provided students in gaining competency in English? How and when is English competency assessed?

If students are expected to increase in Spanish competency during their program of studies, which programs have such a requirement and what are the expectations? What aids are provided to students in gaining competency in Spanish? How and when is Spanish competency assessed?

Are the school's communications—print, audio, and digital—adequately bilingual?

Are the school's community events – worship services, assemblies, graduations, etc.—appropriately inclusive in content, language, and style in view of the diverse participation of Latin@s?

What efforts are being made to address these needs?

6. Library resources

How well does the library make available, including in its own holdings, materials in Spanish and by Hispanic theologians?

What policies and processes are in place to assure this? If there are deficiencies, what efforts are being made to address these needs?

7. Budgeting, funding, and student scholarships

Are there line items in appropriate places in the budget specifically designated for addressing Hispanic realities and Latin@ students?

Does the institutional development office regularly seek funding for the Hispanic dimension in the school? What avenues have proven more successful?

Has this institution sought to be qualified as an Hispanic-serving institution in order to obtain government funding for undergraduate programs? See https://www.ed.gov/programs/idueshsi/definition.html

What financial aid, and help to access this aid, is available for Hispanic students?

What efforts are being made to address these matters?

8. Recruitment

In what ways does your school seek to recruit Hispanics? How successful are they?

Do you have recruitment material—brochures, websites, social media—in Spanish and English? What have you found to be more helpful?

Is the staff that normally responds to information requests fluently bilingual in Spanish and English?

If there are deficiencies, what efforts are being made to address these needs?

B. <u>Assessing the Academic Competence of Hispanic/Latino/a Applicants to Graduate Theology</u>

1. Admission requirements: prior academic achievement

What are the requirements of the various graduate programs with regard to prior academic achievement? How are those requirements implemented (e.g., equivalencies, probationary admission, ATS exceptions, etc.)?

Are the instruments being used to assess academic eligibility appropriately sensitive to the cultures and learning styles of Latin@s? Is there one that you would particularly recommend? Do you accept instruments that are administered in Spanish?

What is the expertise and knowledge of Latin American academic programs of those assessing incoming students?

If there are deficiencies, what efforts are being made to address these needs?

Appendix 3

Peer Group #1, "Formation in Online Contexts," visited by Mariano Avila, Elsie Miranda, Jose-David Padilla, and John Johnson.

Some suggestions/questions/concerns from our Latino/a context include:

· What are distinctive characteristics of effectively teaching formation in Spanish (cultural context)?
· Given the relational aspect of Latino culture, what does this kind of online formation look like?
· What are some of the models currently being employed and perspectives that undergird the program?
· How do we assess competency for ministry utilizing this model in a Latino/a context?

Peer Group #2: "Educational Values of Online Education," visited by John Johnson, Elsie Miranda, and Victor Carmona

Some suggestions/concerns from our Latino Context include:

· What are some of the models currently being used? How are these evaluated?
· Is the online degree perceived as a lesser than degree than the residential program by faculty and students?
· How is contextualization handled in this educational model?
· Is there a residency requirement in the program or is all online?
· How does the program reach Latino/as ?
· Are there strategic partnerships associated with such a program?

Peer Group # 3 "Duration (Reduced Credit MDiv)," visited by Bob Wright, Alvin Padilla, and Victor Carmona

Some suggestions/concerns from our Latino perspective include:

· What constitutes an MDiv? And how does an MA in Christian Ministry differ from an MDiv?
· Are programs like this "MDiv lite"?
· What in particular is the "credit" issue?
· What would be the particular attraction of programs like this for Latinos?
· What does the church require for ordination?
· Given fewer credits and time for study, how are the changes to society and church incorporated into this program?

Peer Group # 4, "Accelerated Bachelor's/MDiv," visited by Andy Peloquin and Jose-David Padilla

Some suggestions/concerns from our Latino perspective include:

· How important is the Bachelor's degree in this case? Why get both if you are Latino?
· How much collaboration does this model require with the wider church? Other schools?

· What kind of student would be attracted to this model?
· If a select group of students are targeted (e.g., high achievers, is this elitist)?
· How is mentoring handled? Are there Latino mentors?

Peer Groups # 5, 6 “DMin Admission, DMin Identity,” visited by Victor Carmona, John Johnson, and Joanne Solis-Walker

Some suggestions/concerns from our Latino perspective include:

· How is the theological research/inquiry component adapted effectively to the practitioner/student?
· Is there an alternative way for engaging theological research?
· What are some of the reasons students are not completing their DMin programs?
· At what point is disconnection between academic programs and practitioner’s needs discernible?
· What role does TOEFL play in the admissions process and how does it affect Latino students?
· Is there a DMin in Spanish?
· Concerning the requirement for three years in service after earning the MDiv or equivalency, how about students who were in the pastorate while completing the MDiv?

Peer Groups # 10, 11 “Global Partnerships,” visited by John Johnson, Elsie Miranda, Joanne Solis-Walker

· What is the impact of these global partnerships on US Latinos?
· Is there a danger of avoiding engaging local issues while focusing in the global issues? That is, addressing concerns about mission in Latin American countries while ignoring Latinos in your local community.

Peer Group # 14, “Competency-Based Education,” visited by Jose-David Padilla, Joanne Solis-Walker, and Mariano Avila

Peer Group # 16, “Students w/o Bachelor’s,” visited by Alvin Padilla, Joanne Solis-Walker, Bob Wright, and Mariano Avila

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Global Partnerships Peer Group Final Report

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Introduction
The current global climate fosters shared resources and creative solutions based upon collaborative learning in business, medicine, science, explorations, politics, advocacy, and higher education. This trend is also seen in theological circles, where theological education and discourse, missional ventures, and ministry are no longer restrained by nationalism, culture, or geography. Indeed, an explosion of individuals and institutions now train lay and professional ministers around the world, responding in ever-increasing numbers to reach across old boundaries to form partnerships to achieve similar tasks.

In this collaborative effort for theological education between peoples in global contexts, however, dissimilarities have been noted regarding resources (libraries, trained faculties, and facilities), the way these are allocated to achieve the goals of the institutions, and approaches used to ensure consistent quality outcomes. Global partnerships, in their proliferations, have become too unwieldy for clear or common views of models or practices to emerge readily. With a view to exploring this broad topic and finding some common wisdom, the ATS Global Partnerships Peer Group has met, deliberated, and answered the questions assigned. Before the discussion begins, two brief definitions may aid the clarity of the report.

Working Definitions
As modernity has transformed the world across the past five centuries, a universalizing of culture has resulted. One consequence has been an "increasingly interconnected global system of relationships [wherein] … a new stage in this process toward an integrated world system has been reached. We have

no choice but to recast knowledge and relationships in light of the processes of modern globalization."[1] Because of this reality, the term "global" is also no longer associated solely with geographic, culture, or linguistic paradigms.

"Global Partnership" is an umbrella term that, by its diverse nature, is changeable, open-ended, and fluid. Partners may teach international students in North America, or send faculty or students to teach or learn in international settings, or offer courses taught by international faculty either at home or in an international locale. They may offer non-credit courses or fully ATS-accredited degree programs (bachelor/master/doctor/ professional).

Further, when any or part of the education is conducted online, the demarcations among the above categories become blurred. The locations of teachers and students and settings become indistinguishable, except by the online platform and language used to conduct the educational delivery. Global Partnerships are of different types, exist for different purposes and durations. When used in this report, "Global Partnerships" include all of these variables and makes difficult the precise articulation and generalization of the findings.

"Reciprocity" for this group is defined as a bi-directional relationship that produces mutual benefit for the purposes of God in the world. It is characterized by a mutual willingness to learn—a heuristic humility that begins from a right understanding of oneself before God in order to understand the other person.[2]

With these brief definitions in place, the report now turns to the topic of Global Partnerships.

ATS Questions

1. Why did the schools in the group engage this educational model or practice?
Each school in this peer group submitted its reasons for engaging in partnerships with other global institutions. From this data, several explanations emerged, each founded upon and developing from the first, which was theological. The infinite value of human life, founded upon the *Imago Dei*, combined with the *Missio Dei*, gave birth to institutional visions for and participation in this work of missiology and ecclesiology consistent with the historic purposes of the global community of faith. Simply put, the institutions exist to help the global Church to accomplish what God intends in the world. All the schools represented in this peer group have purposed from the beginning to interact with and learn from the global community of faith. *(See Appendix A for an Overview Chart of the Programs and Initiatives from the Peer Group Seminaries Engaged in Global Partnerships, 6 October 2016, compiled by Dr. Jo-Ann Badley)*

[1] Craig Ott and Harold Netland, *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), pp. 8–9.

[2] *World Orphans* website expresses the idea of reciprocity in ministry clearly: "It is vital in cross-cultural partnerships to understand that we all have 'poverties' that need to be addressed…. Fortunately, our poverties are an invitation to another to share their gifts, therein affirming their value and contribution. This requires a spirit of humility, recognizing that we are interdependent and in need of each other." (https://www.worldorphans.org/world-orphans-news/2015/03/values-of-church-partnership-reciprocity-and-learning).

2. What are the most crucial issues and questions engaged by the group?
This Global Partnership peer group found that the most crucial issues and questions associated with the practice of global partnerships are the intertwined complexities of reciprocity, spiritual formation in study abroad or immersion learning experiences, and international accreditation.

Reciprocity
With regard to reciprocity, several questions emerged, foremost among them how institutions attend to the complex theoretical and ethical issues that arise within global educational relationships. For example, different cultures foster different learning styles and approaches to education and learning. They may also view ethical concerns (like plagiarism) differently. Another substantive complexity is the nature of the relational frameworks that govern their relationships, whether transactional or covenantal, and how stakeholders attend to the dynamics of privilege within the relationship. Added to this is how institutions assimilate insights from global partnerships back into their own cultures and contexts.

Spiritual Formation (Study Abroad/Immersion)
The most critical issues and questions arising from the Study Abroad models divide into two categories: pedagogical and financial. Pedagogically, the perennial issues involve how best to create experiences, even though short-term, in which students will undergo the formative experiences, especially intercultural competency, self-knowledge, spiritual formation, and increased sensitivity to the *Missio Dei*, for which the programs are designed. Financially, the obvious challenge is convincing constituencies that these aims in student learning are sufficiently significant to support and sustain.

International Accreditation
The primary questions concerning the possibility of forming an *International Accreditation* entity are several. The first is whether a set of mutually agreed-upon standards for institutions that engage in global partnerships may be constituted, particularly regarding such matters as transferring students' credit between institutions, defining residency, identifying elements to comprise common theological degrees, the language(s) to be used in discourse and scholarship, and assessment measures for quality outcomes.

Next is the essential need of *guidelines for the sharing of resources* between partnership institutions, such as libraries, faculties, finances, administrative processes, personnel, information technology, and other resources. This is particularly challenging when partners operate in different contexts where institutional resources across most categories are unequal.

The last question asks whether a formal *global facilitation entity* designed to help partnerships to conduct their joint work together might be beneficial. Ideally, this would be a voluntary group that could represent all willing constituencies and recognize, foster, and hold in common best practices (assessment rubrics, credit hours, degree compositions, teaching, curriculum, learning, and research models appropriate to each region, culture, and people group). This body would, by necessity, need to be collegial, dialogical, reciprocal, and model cultural diversity and contextualization within its own constituency.

3. What are the most significant potential opportunities/benefits for this model or practice? For the school, for students, for faculty, for the church, and/or other stakeholders?
Theological education as a globally-shared and -inspired enterprise could motivate a joint vision for outcomes beyond the scope of any one partner and foster a network of multi-layered relationships that would beneficially influence the course of global ministry training. Global partnerships could also enrich the spiritual, intellectual, and community life of each institution to the extent that they openly share

students, faculty, resources, and unique curricular, cultural, and ministry perspectives. This interaction could generate a context from which learning communities are transformed through their mutual relationships.

Students and faculty are a large part of institutional transformation. Students gain intercultural competence, deepened self-awareness, and exposure to global Christianity. Faculty opportunities largely parallel those of students, with the added benefit of the possibility of "internationalizing" the composition and character of faculties. Institutions benefit intangibly from better serving the global church and tangibly from the public relations potential of partnerships and immersion programs as attractants for students and donors. Given the increased pluralism of North American societies, and that globalization has colored world Christianity, churches benefit from minister-graduates who have greater cultural sensitivity, intercultural competence, and who desire to be engaged in cross-cultural ministry. Such interaction at numerous levels could ultimately serve the larger church for the purposes of the mission of God and the advancement of His Kingdom, in the spirit of the Cape Town Commitment.[3]

4. What are the most significant challenges/obstacles that could keep the model or practice from flourishing?

Challenges and obstacles that may thwart the effectiveness of global partnerships include failure to do the following: agree upon standards of effectiveness and accountability; provide adequate financial resources and enlist other entities to help sustain the partnership; collaborate on all matters affecting the partnership as a whole; respect and value the contributions of all partners; serve one another and learn from each other; fulfill a specific role or responsibility; or revise the roles and responsibilities in the partnership as needs change and as each member develops capacity to serve in new or different ways.

Obstacles may be diminished by partners who value mutually agreed upon terms and standards of effectiveness, while understanding that not all relationships will be symmetrical; share financial resource partners; hold a core respect of the "other" and a willingness to learn, live, and minister together; and finally, acknowledge the danger of creating theological and ecclesiological silos. Ethnocentrism seems pervasive and represents one of the challenges the model addresses, as does the difficulty of ensuring the quality of on-site supervision, especially in the contexts of academic processes and student immersion learning.

The development of an international accreditation system has inherent and obvious challenges, such as language barriers, a sometimes-damaged past history between peoples and educational systems, and the ever-present political and economic inequities that continue to plague our world and its peoples. Added to these imbedded realities are questions concerning who would initiate and direct the development of such an entity, how international accreditation would be mutually ratified, implemented, and collaboratively governed by institutions across the globe. Major barriers confront the idea of operationalizing accreditation standards in cross-cultural contexts, both at the macro and micro levels. In the large view, for example, the varied ways in which international institutions perceive, define, and use

[3] The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (Cape Town, 16–25 October 2010); see the Foreword to the *Cape Town Commitment,* which notes that it "brought together 4,200 evangelical leaders from 198 countries, and extended to hundreds of thousands more, participating in meetings around the world, and online." Its goal was to "bring a fresh challenge to the global Church to bear witness to Jesus Christ and all his teaching in every nation, in every sphere of society, and in the realm of ideas;" accessed 8 February 2017 at https://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment.

the terms “degrees,” “residency,” “credit hour,” “campus,” “extension” and “occasional” sites, and “alternative delivery” methods, affect the programs of partnership institutions. These terms help institutions to understand with clarity what an institution actually does, where it operates, and how it conducts its educational programs. Without a shared academic vocabulary and a mutual comprehension and acceptance of practices employed, the effectiveness of partnerships may suffer. At the micro level are issues like the perceptions of plagiarism and research methods.

Another challenge is the lack of standardization concerning the practice of certificate-level training as it transitions to bachelor- or master-level academic credit. Enlarging these impediments is the problem of how accredited institutions operate in different regions; in some areas, institutions must qualify with multiple accreditation agencies each year. This drives the cost of education ever higher and further complicates the formation of an international accreditation system that could prove flexible enough to interact with varying levels of fraternal and governmental educational entities. Finally, the lack of guidelines concerning shared resources is another sobering obstacle when those who sit around the negotiating table have such disparate means at their disposal for educational delivery.

5. How is the educational effectiveness of the model or practice demonstrated?
Assessment of the educational effectiveness of global partnerships is similar to the processes and procedures used in ATS member schools. Partnerships have unique features, however, that call for additional appropriate assessment and evaluation. Added to the multiple layers of data gathered from students, faculty, administration, individual partners, churches, and other stakeholders, reciprocity generates extra dimensions to the assessment process, as in the mutual responsibility to assess each entity as well as the overall effectiveness of the partnership. Schools that participate in immersion learning partnerships employ a number of assessment tools, most of which are qualitative, such as pre- and post-experience intercultural competency exams, reflection papers; participant journaling; and feedback from alumni.

Concerning accreditation, assessment is linked to the rationale and desired outcomes of both the partnership itself and the individual partners. Effectiveness is enhanced as both the individual partners and the partnership use the mutually-agreed-upon conclusions drawn from the assessment data to make adjustments to the desired outcomes and to the roles and responsibilities of each partner. Consideration is given to the adaptation and contextualization of assessment tools currently used by member institutions and partners. A catalog of such tools used by institutions currently in partnerships and the willingness to allow other institutions to borrow and adapt them would be of great benefit to global partnerships.

In lieu of a more structured guide for international partnering, many institutions exchange Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with partner institutions. Very little hard data exists at this point concerning the nature and content of the MOUs currently used among global partners. To this end, our peer group asked ATS to help to design a survey of ATS member institutions that operate their partnerships under MOUs. This data was gathered and assembled; however, the response sample was not of an adequate size to use to draw generalizations about how member schools relate to their global partners. A more comprehensive survey may be of benefit for future study. *(See the ATS Educational Models and Practices Project Report: Global Engagement Peer Group Survey, 7 February 2017, compiled by Dr. Deborah Gin, in Appendix B.)*

6. How is the financial viability of the educational model or practice demonstrated?
Financial viability in global partnerships is crucial for the long-term. In part, financial stability flows from a mutual generosity toward the relationship. Each partner has its own capacity for adding resources to the enterprise while recognizing the multiple forms of currency to be invested. For some, providing room and board in country will be a substantial investment. For others, covering all financial costs would be a possibility, although that position might counter the very definition of reciprocity. Other covenants might invite third party funders into the relationship to alleviate some of the financial stress. Robust engagements will reflect a commitment to invest in equitable ways, including in-kind options. Immersion learning may be best funded by an endowment devoted to underwriting student travel.

On the other hand, financial viability could be a hurdle in developing an international accreditation entity. Such a system would require a new paradigm that provides for institutions of multiple variations and kinds. To require the payment of significant fees from smaller schools seeking recognition and/or membership and the funding of site visit teams to each international site (including satellite campuses) could render this model unattainable. Institutions could demonstrate greater stewardship of resources by engaging in strategic planning to economize using in-kind global partner competencies, strengths and resource sharing, including specialized staff to process institutional effectiveness requirements and reporting.

7. Are there unexpected insights, innovative ideas, or possibilities that have emerged through the group's work?
ATS member institutions have an opportunity to bring the strengths of each institution to the global context. For example, a means for sharing library and other learning resources beyond North America, as well as receiving the gifts of the majority world into North America, creates a *koinonia* structure for theological education for all. Without full institutional collaboration, however, reciprocity is diminished. Institutions will need to incentivize the engagement of faculty and staff in international partnerships.

From a cross-cultural immersion learning perspective, a number of instruments for assessing intercultural competency exist, but costs are prohibitive. A call for cultural intelligence testing programs that could be used by ATS member and global partnership schools would be ideal. Also, several innovations and possibilities surfaced that could help to bridge the current gaps in the lack of international accreditation. One possibility might be the creation of a recognized consortium of five to ten schools, each with a specialization (like library holdings, MDiv degree excellence, PhD degree, theology or missiological focus or praxis), that could offer something like an accredited "Global Theological Degree" from the combined resources of the consortium. Another possibility is the development of a "pool" of shared faculty, curriculum, and syllabi for all to use. Similarly, a consortium could offer a strategic specialized degree (Global Church Planting, for example) to be taught in various cities (like London, Petrograd, or Mexico City), made up of a cohort of students that speak different languages and taught by a team of expert faculty from different language and cultural contexts. A final similar concept would be Certificate-level training in specialized "modules" of content, where students could take several learning experience units to equal a credit hour, and have the option to transfer these in the future to a higher academic level with the addition of appropriate academic work.

8. List (briefly) key recommended practices for this educational model or practice.
Global Partnerships' "Best Practices" would touch such areas such as residency requirements, pedagogy, formation, faculty development, accreditation standards, and articulation agreements. *Perhaps, because of the issues they raise and to which they are integral, the topic of Global Partnerships needs to be diffused among all*

Standards and addressed as a major theme in the new Standards. This group suggests five areas of best practices that might be beneficial for sharing with sister institutions in theological educational circles.

For Initiating Global Partnerships, both parties would ensure that shared theological rationales are articulated, check for compatibility of institutional visions, missions, educational values, and philosophies, and agree upon and state a clear purpose of the partnership. They would adhere to the principles of reciprocity, mutuality, humility, and flexibility, and develop a mutually-acceptable educational plan based upon accreditation standards. They would also develop a sustainable funding model and articulate all of this in a MOU for guiding the operation of the partnership (see #5 below).

For Practicing Global Partnerships, both parties would attend to and comply with governmental regulations even as they adhere to agreed-upon standards. They would contextualize educational objectives and pedagogy with sensitivity as they promote faculty ownership of and competency in this work. They would strive for coherence of degrees offered each in their contexts while honoring their respective theological heritages. They would deploy catalytic leaders and ensure that the work is adequately resourced.

For Sustaining Global Partnerships, both institutions would maintain trust and transparency, open communication, and honor, value, and acknowledge the contributions that all partners bring. They would promote intercultural competence among all entities involved in the partnerships and implement periodic reviews with robust assessments according to developed protocols/processes for coping with differences and problems.

For Concluding Global Partnerships, both partners would develop a sunset clause in the MOU from the beginning (see #5 below) after determining the right reasons for concluding the partnership. When it happens, they would celebrate the past and learn from the experience.

Memoranda of Agreements would state shared values (e.g., common theological ground), the intention to foster intercultural mutuality and steps by which this would occur, how the curriculum would be developed, assessed, transcribed, and shared between institutions. It would clarify the roles, indemnification of reliability, paths for resolving possible conflict, and construct a shared resources plan, including such elements as assets and commodities, personnel, finances, and library holdings and access.

9. As you work on this particular model or practice, what are the educational principles that are served by your model or practice?

The educational principles served by the model and practice of engaging in global partnerships begin with and are founded upon the fact that the knowledge of God is the basis of truth (Psalm 111:10). This basic assumption combines with the biblical admonition to strive for excellence in the journey toward spiritual maturity, both individually and collectively (Matthew 23:37-38; Philippians 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 8:7). Mature followers of God will abound in excellence both in who they are (inward character) and in what they do (behavior or good deeds). Institutions that train ministers to be this kind of leader, who serve congregations marked by these attributes, do well to *model excellence in all aspects of institutional and educational practices*. Who we *are*, and what we *do*, and *how* we do it, all matter to God.

Another educational principle served by global partnerships is that diversity is good, for God created the world in its variety and pronounced it so. Based upon Christ's salvific work on behalf of humanity, each person is infinitely valuable and may contribute to the learning, skills, and spiritual growth of others. *Globalization in theological education recognizes this diversity as vital and strives for humble, reciprocal, and* *mutually-beneficial partnering to accomplish shared goals.* The values of *interconnectedness and interdependence* with others, particularly as these relate to the mission of the church, enhance ways in which institutions and their graduates participate in the ecumenical, dialogical, evangelistic, and justice efforts of the global church (taken from Chapter Six, Globalization, *ATS Self-Study Handbook*).

Reciprocity is a primary educational practice that matters for global partnerships. It is a practice that embodies the grace and justice of God, our opportunity to participate in the self-giving life of God. Since we are "in Christ;" each member of the body of Christ is gifted by God, and the mutual giving and receiving of the gifts God has given strengthens the body. Cross-cultural learning serves a number of education principles, chief among them are *experiential learning*[4] for students and faculty in rich, unpredictable encounters with peers and hosts. Immersion experiences are *inter-disciplinary*, reflecting a holistic pedagogy and worldview that fosters student facility with *qualitative* methods of research and learning. Because immersion experiences involve interaction with hosts and peers, the learning experience occurs inherently as *group learning* requiring students to engage with *group dynamics*.

This foundational principle, then, creates opportunities for *personal and faith formation* in a variety of ways. Externally-oriented objectives involve increased *global awareness;* the development of skills in *inter-religious faith dialogue*, especially a heightened sensitivity to the faith journeys and experiences of others; and a sharpened appreciation for the necessity, role, and function of *cross-cultural hermeneutics* in a globalized world. Internally, immersion experiences offer students the opportunities to become aware of their own *cultural assumptions*; they can see with new eyes that strange things are familiar and familiar things are strange, and thus gain *freedom from cultural parochialism*. Group experiences can hone their *relational wisdom*.

Finally, the formal assessment and measurement of the quality of theological education is essential. For those who labor to equip men and women for ministry in the world, nothing less than *integrity, excellence, and accountability* suffices. Training leaders and laypersons to minister in the global Church, exercising due diligence in seeking avenues for better efficiency and best practices, and reporting of financial and educational stewardship to constituencies with transparency are all weighty, spiritual, and educational concerns that are both appropriate to the broader context of higher education and sensitive to the educational needs of religious communities they serve across the world [See Chapter One, ATS *Self-Study Handbook*].

10. Are there implications from your group's work for the possible process of redevelopment of the Standards of Accreditation?

The Global Partnership Peer Group identified at least three implications for possible Standards redevelopment. First, the matter of residency could be redefined or clarified to include the varied ways that students and institutions understand the term in their contexts. Next, the group wonders if a reconsideration of current educational models could help as a way forward. Perhaps adjusting the Standards on Educational Models to include international contextualization might be profitable to ATS member schools. Finally, the idea of "monitoring our own Colonialism" was considered significant, and

[4] While Immersion Experiences in our context typically resemble "mission trips" in many ways, suggesting that they be characterized as *service learning* opportunities, service learning terminology carries with it connotations that can color the experience negatively in two important ways. First, it promotes the idea that the experience aims primarily to provide students with an opportunity to accomplish some objective on behalf of their hosts, thus, detract from the true objective – learning. Second, it increases the likelihood that students exhibit paternalistic attitudes and behaviors and that hosts may perceive student attitudes and behaviors in that fashion.

yet our group recognized the difficulty inherent in writing Standards for a non-standard practice like global partnerships. The thought was that we need to hold ourselves, and one another, accountable to engage with global partner institutions in ways that will eliminate harm and foster reciprocity and mutuality. Perhaps the best route may be the creation of a heuristic framework, as global partnerships impact the Standards at almost every level due to the complex negotiations required.

11. What are possible implications of your group's work for the broader work of theological education?

In the quest for full interconnectedness and interdependence within the global community of faith, the incorporation of effective global partnerships into the broader work of theological education could be explosively positive. If there were commonly held standards of educational, institutional, and missional processes and practices between global partners, the result could be beneficial collaboration, even between institutions and governmental entities.

International accreditation could streamline processes that could better steward resources and minimize the risks of inequity. Global partnerships foster and affirm shared values and build bridges between people groups, geographical distances, and across cultural divides. They link hearts and visions and theological work for the mission of God in the world.

Theological educational institutions could report a greater degree of effectiveness in the ministry contexts of their graduates. If the family of faith were invited, welcomed, valued, and seated around the table in dialogue, our work together could be strategic, result in exemplary stewardship and eternal significance. In such a world as we live today, this is a strong and abiding hope. Effective global partnerships are a critical key to this hope becoming reality.

Appendices:

- **Appendix A:** *Overview Chart of the Programs and Initiatives from the Peer Group Seminaries Engaged in Global Partnerships*
- **Appendix B:** ATS Educational Models and Practices Project Report: Global Engagement Peer Group Survey, 7 February 2017, compiled by Dr. Deborah Gin

Sources Used:

- Initial Peer Group Summary, including Appendices, Jo-Ann Badley, 6 October 2017
- Reciprocity Subgroup Report, Tom Tumblin, 3 January 2017
- Study Abroad/Immersion Subgroup Report, Mark Biddle, 16 January 2017
- International Accreditation Subgroup Report, Karen Bullock, 14 January 2017
- ATS Peer Group Report Template, Stephen Graham, 20 January 2017
- ATS Global Partnerships Survey Report, Debbie Gin, 7 February 2017

Helpful Resources:

UNESCO GUIDELINES for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning, published by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany, 2012. See at: www.unesco.org/uil

Appendix A: Programs and Initiatives from the Peer Group Seminaries Engaged in Global Partnerships

School	Teaching Students from International Contexts	Faculty Teaching in International Contexts or with International Experience	Educational Setting (teaching students in international contexts)	Curriculum (program and courses) Developed for Cross-cultural Contexts	Nature of the Collaboration: Informal or Formal (MOU)
Seminary in Ambrose University	1. Mandarin students in CCSTAS 2. Other international students at Ambrose	3. International experience and connections 4. Teaching in international contexts (angExchange)	5. Online and mobile learning	6. CCSTAS 7. Multi-cultural Internships (inSight) 8. Travel study 9. Jaffray Centre 10. Kairos course	MOU with ICCTE and CCACA for CCSTAS Informal
Asbury Seminary	1. PhD students (90% international; 10-12 in residence annually)	2. Annual international travel (2012-2014: 47 teaching trips in 26 countries) 3. International scholars visit	4. Lay training for churches (lifelong learning institutes)	5. Program: MA Intercultural Studies: Church Planting in Global Contexts 6. Course delivery (two week modules) 7. Centre for the Study of World Christianity; tri-annual world summits	Formal partnerships (15 MOU's; reviewed every 3 years) including Langham Trust Overseas Council ATA
Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond		1. International experience	2. Global Mission Immersion Experience (China, Australia, South Africa, Kenya and India)		
BH Carroll Theological Institute	1. PhD students (24%) are international	2. International study experience 3. Mission field experience	4. Teaching Vietnam students in Vietnamese, Chinese students in Mandarin, Russian students in Russian, and Cuban students in Spanish 5. Students travel to study in international classes	6. Cuba: masters program (Spanish); China: masters program; Russia: masters degree (Russian); Vietnam: masters program (Vietnamese)	MOU with domestic churches and international educational institutions or churches
International Theological Seminary	1. Majority world (90% of students) or immigrant church	2. International faculty or faculty with international experience		3. Programs in Korean and Chinese languages (in Korea and China) 4. Feeder programs in various international contexts	Partnerships with international churches and educational institutions ATA

Appendix B

Educational Models and Practices Project Report

Global Engagement Peer Group Survey (Deborah H.C. Gin, ATS)

- 61 invitations; 33 completions = 54% response rate

Representative Quality of Response Set

Response Set	Sample Pool	ATS/COA Database
18.2% Canada	9.8% Canada	15% Canada
51.5% EV 36.4% ML 12.1% RC/O	47.5% EV 39.5% ML 13.1% RC/O	44% EV 34% ML 22% RC/O
24.2% Embedded	29.5% Embedded	33% Embedded
12.1% Small (1-74 HC) 21.2% Mid-sized (75-149 HC) 30.3% Large (150-299 HC) 36.4% Largest (300+ HC)	13.1% Small 24.6% Mid-sized 24.6% Large 37.7% Largest	20% Small 28% Mid-sized 30% Large 23% Largest

Frequencies

Nature of Engagement

- 58% of responding schools **offer courses and programs** in international contexts
- 82% of responding schools **collaborate with an international institution** in international contexts
- 91% of responding schools have **faculty who teach** in international contexts
- 100% of responding schools have **faculty who have prior experience** in international contexts
- 97% of responding schools have **international students** who study in their institutions
- 76% of responding schools have students who **study in international contexts**
- 36% of responding schools offer courses in **North America in languages other than English**
- 21% of responding schools offer courses **internationally in languages other than English**

Comparisons by Institutional Characteristics

Offers courses and programs in international contexts:

- Of schools that engage globally in this way (N=19), 63% are freestanding; of schools that do not engage globally in this way (N=14), 93% are freestanding; this represents a statistically significant difference.[5]

[5] Unless otherwise stated, differences reported are at a .05 significance level.

- Of schools that engage globally in this way (N=19), 58% are largest (HC 300+), 26% are large (HC 150-299), 16% are mid-sized (HC 75-149), and none are small (HC 1-74).
- Of schools that engage globally in this way (N=19), 95% are US schools; of schools that do not engage globally in this way (N=14), 64% are US schools.

Collaborates with institutions in international contexts:

- Of schools that engage globally in this way (N=27), 89% are US schools; of schools that do not engage globally in this way (N=6), half are US schools.
- Of schools that engage globally in this way (N=27), 44% are Evangelical, 41% are Mainline, 15% are Roman Catholic/Orthodox.[2]

School's students study in international contexts:

- Of schools that have students studying in international contexts (N=25), 68% are freestanding; of schools that don't have students studying in international contexts (N=8), 100% are freestanding.[6]
- Of schools that have students studying in international contexts (N=25), 40% are largest (HC 300+), 36% are large (HC 150-299), 20% are mid-sized (HC 75-149), and 4% are small (HC 1-74).[2]

International students study in school:

- Of schools that have international students (N=32), 38% are largest (HC 300+), 31% are large (HC 150-299), 22% are mid-sized (HC 75-149), 9% are small (HC 1-74).[2]

Memorandum of Agreement:

- Among schools that collaborate with an international partner (N=27), 74% have a memorandum of agreement. Of these, 55% are Evangelical, 40% are Mainline, 5% are Roman Catholic/Orthodox.

Sharing Standards of Assessment:

- Among schools that collaborate with an international partner (N=27), 30% share resources with their international partner. Of these, three-quarters are Evangelical, a quarter are Mainline, and none are Roman Catholic/Orthodox.[2]

Elements of Collaboration

Twenty-seven (27) schools reported that they collaborate with an international institution. The following is a summary of information about the 27 schools and the elements of the collaboration:

- ***Memorandum Of Agreement***

[6] At a .10 significance level.

- 74% have a memorandum of agreement; 1 school that did not report a collaboration with an international institution also has a memorandum of agreement; this school offers a ministry certificate for a Spanish-language program.
- Of the 21 who have an MoA, 16 share resources with, 12 extend and/or accept the transfer or sharing of credit with, and 6 share assessment standards between the international partner institution.

- ***Transfer or Sharing of Credit***
  - 59% extend and/or accept the transfer or sharing of credit with the international partner.
  - **Evaluation processes for transfer of credit** ranged from external agencies (ATS, a "credential evaluation center", US certification agency, or the respective country's department of education) to internal mechanisms (e.g., case by case—named 3 times; office of Registrar; in conjunction with a director of international programs) to transfer-credit arrangements set up in advance with specific schools, to ensure compatibility with the North American institution. Two schools reported that international credit transfer policies mirror those of domestic credit transfer.
  - **Criteria for credit transfer** included categories such as participation in a pre-established program (summer program, 3-week intensive), courses taught by the North American school's faculty, minimum grade received, course tasks that are substantively similar to those in North American courses, courses for which an equivalent exists in the degree program in the North American school, graduate-level, year of earned credit.
  - **Limits for credit transfer** ranged from two courses to 50% of total course requirements; credits applied also ranged from half the number (i.e., 8 units earned internationally translate to 4 units received by North American school) to equal number (i.e., 4 units earned internationally translate to 4 units received by North American school).

- ***Sharing of Resources***
  - 74% share resources with the international partner institution; 1 school that did not report a collaboration with an international institution does share resources with an international partner.
  - Categories of resources include:
    - Human resources—
      - Faculty (all but 2 schools reported this as a shared resource; 1 school's global partner hires the North American school's adjunct faculty as dissertation advisors)
      - Administrative personnel (4 schools named this as a shared resource, e.g., student services, directors)

    - Infrastructure/Processes—
        - Library (10 schools named this as a shared resource; 1 school reported tighter university regulations on access to electronic resources as a challenge)
        - Facilities (e.g., classroom, housing)
    - Finances—
        - Either named generally or by particular item funded (e.g., transportation, travel, hospitality, scholarships)
    - Student Materials—
        - Translation services (including textbook and course-lecture translation)
        - Computers and e-textbooks
    - Curriculum—
        - Named by 5 schools; 1 school, in particular, reported the use of a process of "open source mutuality"

- ***Assessment Standards***
    - 30% share assessment standards between institutions.
    - Four of the eight schools that reported sharing of assessment standards referenced some form of US standard (ATS or regional); another three schools reported a process of determining standards that align with both global partners (US and international); in one case, the respondent recognized that because level of delivery of the same course varies greatly, per country, acceptance of transfer credit was not advised—"sharing does not mean implementation"; this same respondent also noted that practical expertise is often greater in the global partner institutions and that this expertise is what is needed by US schools—"US profs have little expertise when it comes to slum ministry".

- ***Definition of Residency***
    - Wide range of definitions given for residency: from contact hours to physical location to synchronicity of engagement and to "ownership" of the course.
    - *Duration*—several reported a definition of residency according to a minimum length of engagement; this ranged from a "class or two in intensive format" to a week, a semester, or a 50% minimum of the degree program.
    - *Mode of delivery*—a quarter of the schools offer their programs (at least in part) in online format; face-to-face online delivery was reported by two schools as a potential way of meeting ATS residency requirements; one additional school reported most courses being done in face-to-face classes, with one semester required in an urban poor setting local to the US credit-granting school (in order to satisfy ATS' "require[ment]… 1/3 resident in the US"); this same school indicated that "contributing missions would prefer it if [they] could do a completely field-based degree".

- *Hosting/Credit-granting status*—a third of the schools defined residency according to the entity offering the credits; for some, residency is defined by physical presence at the host school; for others, residency definitions are determined by the host school; in one case, students studying in the context of the partner institution are "not treated as if they are in residence but are entered as full-time, zero credit exchange study".
- *No definition*—another third of the schools reported they do not have a formal definition of residency as part of the collaboration; three of these indicated that a definition is not relevant (e.g., program does not exchange courses/credits); one school reported the same residency requirement is applied to *any* transferred course (global or domestic, presumably); two schools simply do not have a definition; and one did not know, as the respondent is new to the position.

Significant Correlations—Selected Items

An analysis of correlating items yielded the following significant items.

School that:	Is likely:	Correlation Coefficient [0-1.0]
Offers courses and programs in international contexts	Country: US	.390
Collaborates with international institutions in international contexts	Country: US	.389
Offers courses *internationally* in languages other than English	School size: larger Offers courses in *North America* in languages other than English	.359 .532

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Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Global Partnerships Peer Group Final Report

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Preamble: Introduction to project and purpose
This report is born out of the work of a diverse group of individuals gathered by ATS from different seminaries across Canada and the USA (See Appendix A). The group gathered for the purpose of working together to establish good practices and principles for forming and sustaining Global Partnerships. With the advancement of technology, the steady influence of globalization, and the hope for ecumenical collaboration, seminaries discover, and even realize, the possibility and desire for Global Partnerships.

Institutional Motivations and Temptations
For some of the participants in this group, something in their heritage, history, tradition, and or mission motivates them toward global partnerships. Other participants find themselves merely sustaining, or building upon, past successes in this area. Some participants sought these partnerships out of a desire for

a more collaborative approach to theological education. Finally, other participants deepened their realizations of the need of global partnerships due to missed opportunities. Motivation, therefore, at the institutional and personal level, remains an important factor, especially in light of two temptations when seeking global partnerships.

The first temptation is to understand global partnerships in terms of missions programs where institutions consider missions metaphorically, as a "tack-on" or "after dinner mint" to the theological curriculum. The second temptation entails seeking global partnerships as a means of some financial gain, or ensuring the institution's survival.

This report demonstrates that global partnerships help put missions in the center of the goals for theological education, providing a tangible expression of this mindset within the institution, and helping to create a more educated minister in terms of contextual awareness both locally and globally. Similarly, the report reveals that global partnerships do not translate into increased revenues; however, they prove vital for a solid well-rounded theological education, recognizing the interdependence of churches throughout the world.

The group hopes that all Canadian and American seminaries will seek to create conversations and educate institutions, so as to foster global awareness and recognize some of the benefits of global partnerships. The group believes that the future of theological education is tied to global education and that real, genuine global partnerships will result in better education for students, faculty, and administrators of the respective institutions.

Definition of Global Partnership

By definition, a partnership is the association of two or more groups working together for a common purpose and goal. Global Partnerships within and among theological institutions bind partners together in a mutual association in order to fulfill an agreed purpose or goal. So, schools may form different kinds of partnerships depending on their goals. Traditionally, Global Partnerships have been defined geographically in which at least one of the partners is from outside Canada or the US—this definition needs further refinement. Schools may also define these partnerships through a missional lens so that a need drives these partnerships to serve underrepresented people or populations in need. Culture and ethnicity also provide another lens for defining partnership.

The committee also noted the multicultural state of Canada and the US and the increasing number of new immigrants to Canada and the US. This challenge presents a situation in which the need for partnerships with these groups may be important. The group notes the strong similarities in creating partnerships with partners separated geographically and culturally (e.g., US seminary partnering with a Latino seminary in South America), and creating partnerships with partners who are not separated geographically but remain culturally distinct (e.g., US seminary partnering with an unaccredited Latino training center in the US)[1]. Based on the overlap, the group believes the principles born out of this report could be transferable, though some members also observe there may be significant cultural differences between groups. For example, a student studying in Mexico and an American of Mexican heritage studying in the US maintain significant cultural differences even though they may speak the same language(s). On the other hand, participants observe that the hybrid nature of many immigrant churches does not change with the end of the first generation, rather it often continues across multiple generations, this has been seen particularly

[1] Other important examples would include the Chinese, Korean, and Filipino churches in the US and Canada and some of their respective training institutions.

in the Chinese church[2]. Nevertheless, the group agrees that, in terms of definition, schools should understand Global Partnerships primarily in terms of geographical separation and then cultural differences.

Global Partnerships can take different shapes. Some partnerships could be *degree oriented* in which the outside partner (i.e., outside of the boundaries of the American or Canadian context) seeks to receive (or is offered) an ATS accredited degree through the established program of an American or Canadian institution (see Appendix A Example #1). Some arrangements could be non-degree oriented, where the outside partner seeks to receive (or is offered) academic credit, but not an ATS accredited degree (see Appendix A Example #2). Finally, there are those partnerships, which could be *collaborative oriented*, in which both parties express reciprocity and mutuality in establishing and running the program (see Appendix A, Example #3).

Those creating this report desire that this information might help ATS in establishing best practice and standards for Global Partnerships and aiding those parties (e.g., seminary boards and administrators) concerned with curriculum and the establishment of the mission and goals of theological institutions.

Crucial Issues
Several significant issues arise when considering, initiating and sustaining a global partnership. This process requires ongoing discernment and adaptation as partnerships unfold.

First, the faculty must take ownership of the globalization processes. This ownership includes a commitment to maintaining and deepening their theological and/or missiological undergirding. In some cases, taking ownership may require a paradigm shift, requiring faculty members to rethink their understanding of mission and theological education.

Second, schools need to establish some coherence in articulating degrees offered in different global contexts. Institutions need to understand how the varying degrees not only compare with one another in intensity and student learning hours (like the Bologna process), but also reflect the mission of the school.

Third, leaders need to investigate the philosophical and theological mindset behind a global partnership. Schools must ensure this perspective remains congruent with ethos of the institution and serves as an expression within the campus.

[2] For more discussion on this topic see:
Craig A. Smith, "A Way Forward for 1 & 2 Generation Chinese Churches: The Issue of Culture." *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* July (2017).
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Fourth, global partnerships generate a need for deepening and rediscovering our respective theological heritages in the midst of accelerating social and technological changes in the world.

Fifth, global partnerships may need an *influencer, or champion*, within the institution to ensure that reciprocity in the program as well as *catalytic leaders* to foster transformation at every level of institutional life (as opposed to "top down" or "bottom up" approaches alone). These leaders not only address the implementation of the initiative/model within the institution, but often must articulate the place of these initiatives within the governing boards as well. It is best if this influencer serves as the president, provost, or academic Dean.

Sixth, for Global Partnerships to succeed, there will be a need for innovative thinking in setting up these partnerships. The inherent "conservative" nature of theological education, with its tendency to recognize and safeguard tradition, may create a barrier. Often, the approach that may overcome resistance occurs as global partnerships highlight the recognition of the shifting culture of education and the broad need of ministry to a changing constituency.

Practicing Global Partnerships
Challenges
Any new initiative creates challenges and forming a global partnership is no exception. Each attempt of forming a global partnership will have its own set of challenges and most of them are related to institutional praxis for both partners. Some of the more pressing challenges include:

- navigating communication and language often to the degree to which the respective cultures differ.
- resourcing partnership to the degree they can be effective and sustainable.
- acknowledging and negotiating differences between educational philosophies and the level of standards of the respective partners.
- navigating the differences in theology and practice intrinsic to each partner.
- accomplishing the respective goals of the partnership as expressed in the method and outcomes of the partnership agreement.

Specifics will be given about the core elements needed for a successful partnership under the heading of "Effectiveness," though, in general, both institutions should aspire to create a learning organization ethos that instills mutuality, reciprocity, flexibility, and humility in its theology and educational practice. This mindset helps the institutions successfully navigate challenges in communication and language, resourcing, and the differences in their educational philosophies when forming partnerships.

At all times, but particularly in the initial stages of setting up a partnership, the principles of transparency and honesty remain essential. These two qualities are needed to safeguard against the temptation to use the partnership as an attempt to leverage a particular institution's brand or to support colonial structures that mitigate against reciprocity.

Opportunities
The opportunities and benefits of global partnerships outweigh the costs and challenges created by these initiatives. There are specific opportunities with global partnerships:

- to embrace models of practice that maintain reciprocity between all partners based on a recognition of the respective variety of gifts and needs of each partner,
- to adapt organizational communication styles and classroom teaching methodologies that are culturally sensitive and mutually empowering,

- to deepen educational practices – such as transforming syllabi, pedagogy, theological influences, and reading scripture, theology, and church history in context,
- to extend the mission of seminaries for the purpose of strengthening the church worldwide whether by denomination, order, new relationships or networks, and
- to serve others, including alumni and people in our relational or networks, who offer us new opportunities for service.

In general, Global Partnerships offer the opportunity for personal transformation of faculty and students, as well as transformation of the respective institutions. This transformational experience can then be replicated in alumni and their ministry contexts. All parties can expect to receive as much as they give.

Effectiveness
Global Partnerships demonstrate their effectiveness through the development of leadership: as US/Canada students serve in missions, as global partners assume leadership, and as new partnership networks develop. Schools may need to adopt specific alternative assessments (e.g., rubrics and portfolios) though the greater evidence of effectiveness occurs in the mutual transformation of students, faculty, and institutions as they are shaped by global awareness. These may be more resistant to quantitative measurement.

To create an effective partnership, the group identified eight necessary core elements in terms of disposition, posture, and practice.

- Partnerships must create a climate of reciprocity, flexibility, humility and mutuality, expressed by all the individuals of the respective partnerships.
- Clear communication between partners, particularly in terms of setting up the partnership and managing it.
- Partners need to be open and willing to work with other agencies/entities to fulfill their commonly agreed upon goals.
- Partners require an attitude of adaptability in order to move with the organic and institutional changes that will inevitably occur.
- Partners need to see their partnership as one of reciprocal servanthood.
- Commitment to the partnership requires perseverance in the same way the marriage vow requires daily commitment.
- Participants should view results of these partnerships from a qualitative perspective rather than quantitative results.
- The posture of partners should be missional, as service to the wider church and world, and not with the view of a money-making venture since Global Partnerships tend to be financially costly in terms of hard currency.

Financial Viability
Traditionally, North American seminaries have been tuition-based, though this trend has changed during the past years with an ever-increasing emphasis on endowment funds to support the financial needs of institutions. Funding for Global Partnerships will rarely be tuition-based, so schools must look beyond traditional ways of creating financial viability. Funding must be contextualized to global student capacity, recognizing the cultural capital gained as students and faculty gather in safe spaces and grow through the rich cross cultural narratives. Schools may find that funding usually occurs either through ecclesial commitments or donor partners, who often serve as advocates of the initiatives. Raising funds for global partnerships resembles more closely mission groups, which raise money for particular projects.

At the same time, the group agrees that some level of investment (not necessarily all in terms of hard currency) should be required for students and institutions based on their cultural contexts.

Educational Principles and Insights from Partnerships

Theological education is a wonderful expression of the Kingdom of God as it seeks to form men and women for ministry in the world. Typically, this education focuses more on the institution's immediate culture and less on the cultures beyond, although ATS Standards states that institutional and educational practice should "contribute to an awareness and appreciation of global interconnectedness and interdependence, particularly as they relate to the mission of the church" (ATS General Institutional Standards 3.3.4).

With the increase of technology, and the reality of immediate global communication, the world has metaphorically shrunk. The possibility of true cross-cultural education emerges as a reality. This reality, to some degree, crept up surreptitiously upon North American educational institutions, though the benefits are largely untapped. The group lists some of the principles and insights that have been accumulated to this point in time and provide a springboard for more thinking in the future.

- Mutuality in educational partnership involves a shared understanding of purpose of the partnership, a shared agenda, and a willingness to develop trust. Both sides are part of strategic planning and both sides anticipate their own transformations in the process. This requires clear articulation on the part of all parties involved.
- Reciprocity in partnerships respects all sides as essential for effective learning and teaching. All sides anticipate learning and transformation through this partnership.
- Reciprocal scholarship builds collaboration and knowledge for global engagement.
- A healthy institutional and ecclesial culture of global engagement and humility is essential to the development of healthy partnerships. This often begins as we create safe spaces within our institutions and classrooms where people can share opinions and viewpoints across boundaries, including ethnic, gender, national, socioeconomic, generational, etc.
- Healthy educational partnership necessitates holistic formation of the person (student and faculty) that includes spiritual formation. This encourages humble listening and engagement with others, as well as a commitment to unity in Christ.
- Flexible forms of quality assessment allow for new forms of education in new contexts. This requires flexible methodologies of teaching and assessment that lead to agree upon standards while not compromising consistency of outcomes.
- Flexible models of assessment must move beyond education as solely the transfer of information and see education in terms of transformation too.
- Faculty development remains critical, and the best faculty formation necessitates education in cross-cultural education and immersive cross-cultural experiences.

Implications:

Built upon a preliminary report, this edition assimilates some important information and forms several, tentative, conclusions. The group seeks to establish best practices for global partnerships and determine principles upon which ensure they remain sustainable and effective. Nevertheless, it is important to note that even good global partnerships will raise implications and ongoing issues/questions (some of which follow) and, therefore, there is a need for continued research and reflection.

For the Broader Work of Theological Education

- This group avers that the future of theological education is tied to global education and therefore must be to a greater degree present within and possibly even central in the creation of the ATS guidelines.

- Because global awareness remains such an important topic with respect to theological education, the group suggests the formation of a small group to think carefully about global awareness and partnerships and to provide a sounding board for considering changes in standards as ATS prepares for the 2018 biennial event. The concern is born out of a concern that we do not lose momentum and impact, recalling the 1990s initiative concerning global awareness and partnerships that seemed to lose steam. Possibly an ATS working group formed and functioning, like the race and ethnicity group, would prove beneficial.
- Create a "Global Partnership Handbook" that includes academic resources for understanding residency, faculty formation, faculty development, pedagogy, navigating contextual differences, articulation/accreditation while accepting the belief that global awareness and Global Partnerships will create better theological education (see Global Partnerships Bibliography in Appendix C).
- Global partnerships can reveal to ATS institutions the limitations of their educational processes and, therefore, emphasize the need for humility in proceeding with global partnerships—especially because they are resource rich and may come with entrenched models of education and administration.

For the Development of the Standards of Accreditation

The ATS General Institutional Guidelines state that "global awareness and engagement [are] cultivated by curricular attention to cross-cultural issues as well as by the study of other major religions; by opportunities for cross-cultural experiences" (see 3.3.4.2). Global Partnerships draw its basis from this insight but goes beyond (*plus ultra*) in terms of what it means to have a cross-cultural experience.

- Qualitative Standards: Create qualitative parameters, rather than prescriptive standards for global partnerships to encourage development towards building healthy relationships.
- Residency: The definition of "residency" as it stands presently in the ATS may mitigate against global partnerships. The Association will need to reconsider and modify these guidelines.
- Formation: Global Partnerships often mean an increased role of online delivery that will have a direct impact on the formation of the student. Similar to issues around the ATS understanding of residency, the Association will need to redefine appropriate standards for this area.
- Equivalence: Different parts of the globe have different educational backgrounds (e.g., parts of Africa are based on a British educational model). This will have an impact on entrance into the different academic programs. For example, students in Africa may have taken a BA in science but also have a BD (Bachelor of Divinity). NA standards require an MDiv degree for entrance into the DMin program and, therefore, would require the African student to do an MDiv degree first before entering the DMin program. Therefore, it is important to allow for equivalence, as the BD in this case might be equivalent to a North American MDiv. Degree articulations based on student learning hours, like the Bologna agreement in Europe, may provide future guidelines for exploration.
- Certification vs. accreditation: Examine the nature of Global Partnerships in terms of certification of the program versus accreditation of the institution.

Appendix A

Example #1
A North American seminary partnered with a Mission Agency who was seeking to develop leaders for a particular denomination in Eastern Africa. The denomination desired that their leaders have DMin degrees from an ATS accredited institution in part because of the importance of status in their culture but largely because of their concern to have strong leadership in place for a rapidly growing denomination. There were three partners in this partnership, though the Mission Agency had the same denominational affiliation as the North American seminary. Thus, the Mission Agency functioned more like a mediator for the two parties and was very helpful in bridging the issues of culture and communication.

Example #2
A North American seminary partnered with a very large church in Southeast Asia. The concern of the latter was to create a body of lay leaders to help the full-time leaders deal with the increasing need for pastoral care and small group leadership in their church. Non-degree accredited certificates of ministry were offered, as the participants were not so concerned with having an accredited degree as having good quality teaching.

Example #3
A North American seminary partnered with a Latin American institution. Initially, the LA institution approached the NA seminary because of its need for an ATS accredited seminary and for an institution that could provide needed resources (e.g., online services, library access). At the same time, the NA seminary was working on conceiving an entirely new curriculum that would set aside the "Berlin" model for a more missional paradigm. It became quickly apparent to the NA seminary that the LA institution had created an excellent program that was transferrable and adaptable to different contexts including the NA context. At this point, the negotiations began and were mutual, reciprocal, and equal, though the LA institution probably contributed more in the earlier stages of set up because the NA seminary was embracing the LA institution's program. Both parties won. The currency for this partnership was more in terms of bartering, not hard currency (e.g., for use of the IT services, the LA institution provided a teacher to teach one of the classes for the NA seminary).

Appendix B
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Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Asian Schools Peer Group Final Report

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The number of Asian-serving schools in The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is growing. There are nine member schools that are predominantly Asian. Additionally, three Asian schools maintain candidate or associate status with ATS. Of these twelve schools, nine are located in or near Los Angeles County, which with 1.5 million Asian Americans is called the capital of Asian America. Throughout the ATS Educational Models and Practices project, the representatives of seven schools (two Chinese, four Korean, one both) have participated in the Asian schools peer group.

The work of the Asian schools peer group has consistently focused on these three key areas: formation of second-generation church leaders; expansion of educational programs through transnational connections; and collaborative partnership among the Asian schools. The most significant result of the group's work is that all the participants strongly believe that the Asian schools must continue to work together beyond the EMP project. What this recognition means for the Asian schools is that they can contribute to the larger ATS community's understanding of theological education.

Cultural and Global Contexts

One conspicuous feature of the Asian (Chinese and Korean) schools is that all are rooted in the post-1965 ethnic immigrant communities. There were 3.8 million Chinese Americans and 1.7 Korean Americans during the 2010 census. Scholarly research has pointed out that many families in the Chinese and Korean immigrant communities participate in ethnic churches to meet their sociocultural and religious needs. For a majority of the Korean immigrant families the Korean church is the most significant social institution. Chinese and Korean seminaries and schools of theology therefore play an important role in their ethnic communities.

One of the widely recognized challenges in Chinese and Korean immigrant families is a cultural gap between the first-generation parents and their Americanized children. Both Chinese and Korean parents are expected to raise their children according to the Confucian norms of filial piety and unconditional obedience. But their children, who are exposed to American cultural norms, are expected to be independent individuals, and therefore resist the traditional ways of socialization. The bicultural tensions and conflicts in the ethnic family typically carry over into the ethnic church, where the cultural values of the old world are often enforced.

The cultural gap is integral to the sociocultural context in which the Asian schools carry out the task of theological education. Theologically, the Asian schools readily and uniformly identify with conservative evangelicalism. However, the Chinese and Korean immigrant churches they serve hardly resemble mainstream evangelical churches. Those Chinese and Korean Christians who immigrated to the United States after the passage of the 1965 immigration law, including those who have become practicing Christians after immigration, have not left the old world entirely.

So, the educational practices of the Asian schools must take into account the unique sociocultural and religious experiences of their ethnic constituencies. The process of contextualization is encouraged by the model of theological education the ATS community embraces, one that recognizes the importance of cultural context, and therefore encourages "opportunities to develop a critical understanding of and creative engagement with the cultural realities and structures within which the church lives and carries out its mission" (Degree Standard A, section A.2.3). Instituting contextualized educational practices is a long-term task requiring a consistent commitment of resources. The consensus of the Asians schools peer group is that the task is best accomplished by collaborative partnerships.

Although the Asian schools are rooted in the immigrant communities in the United States, they also maintain strong transnational connections to Asia. For the Korean schools in the United States, their continuing relationships with the vibrant Protestant denominations in Korea are crucial for their long-term viability. Similarly, the Chinese schools depend on the resources generated through the various Christian networks they have cultivated in Taiwan, Hong Kong, mainland China, and Southeast Asia. The presence of a substantial number of international students in all the Asian schools epitomizes the importance of the transnational connections.

The continuous engagement with global Christian networks also gives the Asian schools opportunities to deliver theological education to students in Asia. Accredited theological programs are, in fact, in great demand in many parts of Asia. The Chinese schools have worked closely with partner schools in Asia to address the theological needs of specific Chinese Christian communities there. In the case of the Korean schools, some partner with Korean mission agencies to promote distance education in Asian countries, where more than 10,000 Korean missionaries minister.

Contextualization and globalization provide frameworks for understanding the Asian schools, their educational practices, and their global constituencies. This growing ethnic group in the ATS community contributes to the diversity of accredited graduate theological education. The Asian member schools, however, need more experiences and resources to realize innovative educational models and practices.

Bicultural Leadership

The religious and cultural formation of English-speaking students and church leaders has emerged as one of the major themes common to both Chinese and Korean schools. Although the Asian schools have long been aware of a silent exodus—the flight of a substantial number of young people from the churches of their immigrant parents—they have only recently begun to address it. Significantly, there are now a growing number of autonomous ethnic churches in major cities in the United States that serve specifically those young people who do not feel at home in either immigrant churches or mainstream churches. At the same time, many Chinese and Korean churches have developed English ministries for those who remain in the ethnic churches. What concerns Asian schools is the formation of present and future, second-generation church leaders who want to develop an understanding of the spiritual and cultural experiences of their immigrant parents' generation.

Asian American churches are facing a leadership gap because many English-speaking pastoral leaders who graduated from mainstream seminaries have not been prepared at all for the ethnic churches' unique religious and cultural practices. To address the leadership gap, China Evangelical Seminary North America has recently added a second-generation leadership concentration to its Doctor of Ministry program. In 2015, China Evangelical Seminary offered two seminars designed to engage both local Chinese pastors and American-born Chinese pastors in finding ways of dealing with the leadership crisis. This initial effort was followed by the development of several DMin courses addressing the leadership issues in Chinese American churches, which now constitute the DMin concentration in second-generation leadership.

Among the Asian schools, only Grace Mission University Graduate School offers a Master of Divinity program in English. Grace Mission University maintains a close relationship with a 5,000-member, local Korean American church that supports English-language ministries for young people as well as a diversity of international ministries. Drawing students from these ministries, the Graduate School's English-language MDiv program promotes a multicultural and multiethnic environment for theological education. Such effort is in line with the Graduate School's mission and is supported by the faculty who possess substantial experiences in intercultural ministries. The formation of English-speaking Korean American students is carried out in interactions with both first-generation Korean students and students of other ethnic backgrounds. It is notable that the small Korean American group, a minority within a minority, has a positive impact on the religious and cultural formation of the larger Korean group.

Delivery Modalities

Most, if not all, of the Asian schools comprehend their institutional missions in the larger contexts of their home countries and overseas ethnic communities. Some of the schools share a particular interest in providing graduate theological education inside the Chinese mainland. The China factor is enormous in the enterprise of theological education. For the Korean schools in the United States, their motivation is to help those Christian leaders ministering among roughly 2.3 million Chinese Koreans, who comprise one of the distinct ethnic minorities in China. As a member of our peer group pointed out, "many regions of the world have a shortage of accessible theological education; however, it is not a simple task to bring the abundance in the West to places where needs are great."

Asian schools' efforts may be described as experimental in that they are still seeking the best ways to deliver effective theological education to students outside the United States. Logos Seminary, for instance, offers its campus-based Doctor of Ministry program in an intensive teaching format; but studying abroad is costly for most of their students who live and serve overseas. Thus, Logos Seminary has been seeking to establish indigenous education in Asia through partnerships with local theological institutions, which may ensure relatively adequate learning resources and a relatively stable learning environment, especially in places of unfriendly political systems. Combining intensive and indigenous teaching formats is a viable option for a DMin program that enrolls local pastors from overseas ethnic communities, although assessing and monitoring the educational practices of local theological institutions is a challenging issue.

World Mission University School of Theology is another school that has been experimenting with different delivery models. Serving the Korean diaspora is integral to the WMU School of Theology's mission. Currently around 100 students, located in overseas Korean communities outside the United States, are enrolled in the fully online Master of Divinity program. Many of these students are lay missionaries who demonstrate high levels of spiritual maturity and professional competence. Perhaps the greatest challenge for their distance education is to adequately assess students' masteries of foundational ministerial competencies. Directly relevant is the question whether the established competencies are in fact effective in students' diverse ministry contexts. The School of Theology faculty are considering developing and adding a context-based component to their distance education; that is, a delivery modality that facilitates student development and assessment under the guidance of local mentors.

A Common Agenda

For the Asian schools peer group, the Educational Models and Practices project has served as an important forum for raising critical questions concerning theological education in their cultural and global contexts. And there is a strong desire to continue the forum, in another form, in search of credible educational models and practices. It is germane for both Chinese and Korean schools to nurture an ongoing conversation because both exist and operate in similar cultural and global contexts. As more Asian schools join the community of ATS schools, the visibility of the Asian schools peer group, and its common agenda, would become more vital.

One of the critical questions for the Asian schools concerning theological education is whether their theological curricula are appropriate for their students. The following demographic profile provided by Georgia Christian University School of Divinity is useful in that it describes student characteristics that prevail in other Asian schools as well.

- The average age of master's students is close to 40.
- Women number more than half.
- International students number nearly half.
- Students who plan to be ordained are less than half.

Given that the typical student population is more or less equally divided in terms of age, gender, acculturation, and career goal, an adequate theological curriculum must be highly flexible to achieve diverse outcomes. Evaluations of a theological curriculum become more complicated when overseas students such as students in mainland China or lay Korean missionaries in Asian countries enter the picture.

Another pertinent question for the Asian schools has to do with religious heritage. For the larger ATS community, religious heritage means both "the broader heritage of the Christian tradition as such" and "the more specific character of particular Christian traditions and communities" (Degree Standard A, section A.2.2). Chinese and Korean immigrant Christians are nearly at home in contemporary American evangelicalism, but they actually inhabit an expansive space where evangelicalism coexists with Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism, and folk religion. And, in this religious and cultural space, the boundaries among the religions are not always clear. Chinese and Korean Christians believe that their ethnic spiritualities are unique. What, then, are the distinctive characteristics of Chinese or Korean spirituality?

Then there is the question of the diaspora perspective. How crucial is the diaspora perspective for the Asian schools for understanding theological education? Overseas Chinese, those who reside outside

Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China, can be tens of millions. While most of the old migrants settled in Southeast Asia, a majority of the new migrants of the last half century settled in North America. In the case of Koreans, those living outside the Korean peninsula are about 7 million. The largest Korean diaspora communities are in the United States and mainland China. The Chinese and Korean immigrant communities in the United States show some key elements of an ethnic diaspora. Most Chinese and Korean Americans maintain ethnic identities, ethnic institutions and associations, and a variety of transnational connections to their homelands.

The diaspora experiences of Chinese and Korean Americans have important implications for theological education. In developing the capacity for pastoral and public leadership, for instance, Asian schools could take into account the fact that the ethnic church functions as a sociocultural and religious space. As such, bicultural and other conflicts are expected to play out in the ethnic church. This aspect of the ethnic church is crucial for pastoral leadership, and so is the question of the Confucian values. Is the pastor the authority in the church, as the father is in the home? An effective education in the context of diaspora teaches how to discern and evaluate different and competing notions of such basic idioms as home and church.

The diaspora experience has a missiological implication also. For many Chinese and Korean Americans, coming to America means becoming Christian. It is well known that a substantial number of Chinese and Koreans convert to evangelical Christianity after migrating to the United States. It is common for the Asian schools to find students who testify "I decided to study theology because I accepted Jesus Christ in America." An effective theological education in the context of diaspora attends to the narratives of those who experience religious transformation while recreating their lives anew in a strange land. It is also well known that many Chinese and Korean Christians utilize their transnational social connections to their homelands to convert those they left behind.

In the 1970s, a group of Presbyterian leaders left Korea and arrived in Los Angeles. As they were building their small congregations in Koreatown, they also founded a school—Presbyterian Theological Seminary in America. These leaders were doing what early American Presbyterian missionaries to Korea had done—converting Koreans and building schools—in the American missionaries' home. Over the four decades, their small seminary has grown steadily but its faculty, curriculum, and resources can be compared neither with those of mainline Presbyterian seminaries nor with those of its sister schools in Korea including Presbyterian Theological University and Seminary in Seoul. But what makes this seminary unique is that its faculty teaches *imin shinhak* (Korean immigrant theology). The Asian schools, as a whole, could carry on the conversation about contextualization, serving as a forum for Asian immigrant theology and ministry.

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Historically Black Schools Peer Group Final Report

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Summary of Prior Report and Discussions
Per our last report submitted in March, the Historically Black Theological Schools (HBTS) Peer Group had several meetings and engaged in conversations that responded to both questions posed by The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and our own emerging questions, self-definitions, and communally identified practices. We responded to several questions presented by ATS:

1. **Why** did the schools in the group engage this educational model or practice?
2. What are the **most crucial issues and questions** engaged by the group?

3. What are the most significant potential **opportunities/benefits** for this model or practice? For the school, for students, for faculty, for the church and/or other stakeholders?
4. What are the most significant **challenges/obstacles** that could keep this model or practice from flourishing?
5. How is the **educational effectiveness** of the model or practice demonstrated?

We summarized points related to our uniqueness and ongoing celebrations and challenges in the world of theological education. We engaged the task of continuing to articulate the significant and unique importance of our approaches to and manifestations of our educational models and practices as under girded by certain principles. During our conversations, we responded to *several crucial issues and questions, including:* "What is the distinctiveness of HBTS schools?" "What are the distinctive pedagogical practices of the HBTS?" "What is unique about the HBTS that might make all students feel that they are at the right place?" Out of our dialogues about the educational models and practices that distinguish historically Black theological schools, we developed a condensed list of HBTS practices.

In sum, we noted several points of distinction, namely: community-wide empowerment, support, and confidence, preparation for vocation, appreciative inquiry (naming what is right in a context or situation and discerning how to strengthen it), self-esteem building, and integration. We also articulated several essential and critical principles related to our distinct nature(s):

1. Students receive a contextualized and personalized educational experience that has as one of its centers, an intentional, nurturing community. Of central import to a contextualized education is the ability to teach and communicate in the primary cultural language of the students. The theological school becomes a space of cultural embeddedness. This is a significant part of a sense of belonging for students. The HBTS is committed to being connected to the communities from which students come. Concomitantly, they are uniquely situated to offer a critique of the Black church in ways that majority white institutions cannot. This becomes critical as students engage embedded theologies and the cognitive-spiritual-embodied dissonance that accompanies deconstructive work. The HBTS becomes a community where students can articulate constructive appraisals of their own spiritual communities and find solidarity and support. Of note, was an observation about the important role of the staff working in our institutions in the lives of students and as keepers of institutional memory. We are keenly aware that accrediting bodies need to be aware of their roles and consider the centrality of what they bring to not only the unique nature of HBTS life, but to any standards that assess and evaluate the substance of that life.

2. The transmission of culture through distinct cultural vehicles. HBTS' help people honor their own value and serve as incubators of the humane. By fostering spaces and opportunities for authenticity, a sacred self is affirmed (generally not affirmed by dominant culture) and the HBTS becomes a womb for the safety of one's personhood.

3. We answered the question, "What is the distinctive academic anthropology that connects the experiences of the HBTS schools?" The availability of faculty and staff to be with the whole person as part of a person-centered pedagogy, in the classroom and beyond. Many professors and administrators are also church/clergy practitioners who provide hands-on, experiential insights on vocational locales and dynamics. Understanding the central role of the Black church in the life, survival, and thriving of Black people in tangible ways matter in the quest to provide personalized theological education.

How we form community and our basis for being relationship oriented is a natural part of who we are and what we do. Professors are pastors/practitioners and in the academy. This issue is not settled at every school, but we engage in conversations about it with intentionality. This requires our investment in students and in their communities. We need to be aware of what our students expect of us and where are they going to do ministry. For example, you can have DMin students in large numbers, but if you don't have faculty mentors who are willing to be guides and invest in the students, you do them a disservice. Even so, we are clear that we are operating out of a spirit of generosity and not scarcity. You don't teach generosity, but you learn it in contextual practice.

Our HBTS session at the ATS Pittsburgh meeting assisted a Caucasian colleague in understanding his African American student and his experiences. The conversation led to further questions: Does having Black students in a white school contribute to a Duboisian notion of double-consciousness? How do faculty not contribute to their fracturing. Are we doing justice by them? What is the difference for students who attend PWIs before an HBTS?

We also discussed multiple intelligences and why the recognition of them and integration of them pedagogically is important. Per our first report, a need to develop centers and programs that respond to faculty concerns about student writing and help students develop graduate level proficiencies, was noted. Some of these same students have great verbal/oral skills (that need to be valued and not seen as deficiencies) but cannot translate these ideas into their writing. We asked, "How do we value both as obstacle and strength?" "How do we teach to multiple intelligences?" For the HBTS, it begins by learning to listen on different levels. Something in our cultural reality makes us sensitive to human value and worth. It erupts naturally when we live authentically. It is not created but is innate. Part of cultural retention and memory—intuitive genius. It is related to the grounding value of "somebodiness." Commonality and interconnectedness with community and praxis.

What follows in the next section of the report is responses to questions asked by ATS (some of which is found in the first report), and further elaboration on questions 10 & 11, namely, "As you work on this particular educational model or practice, what are the **educational principles** that are served by the model or practice?" "Are there implications from your group's work for the possible process of redevelopment of the **Standards of Accreditation**?"

Response

Responding to both questions jointly, one of our participants noted, "part of the academic anthropology is an ecclesiology." Therefore, how do we get students back to their congregations after education? This points to **ATS Standard 3, The Theological Curriculum: Learning, Teaching, and Research**, which speaks to both what students learn and how. Perhaps ATS should look at the liminal spaces of the seminary environment and how the standards can nurture more closely the transition back to communities.

A second emphasis of Standard 3 is the notion of engaging "Involvement with Diverse Publics" (3.3.3) and "Global Awareness and Engagement" (3.3.4) A major point of discussion related to ATS standards raised by one participant was, "How does ATS write standards for inclusion, while also affirming Black schools and values?" We noted that there is more than one way to think about diversity in regard to Black schools, and we can't fulfill our mission(s) without addressing our particular contexts. The problem many have not been able to solve is not wanting to insist on diversity at schools that won't be prepared to teach students toward their contexts, and we don't want segregation. Moreover, common to the founding of each HBTS is racial inclusion. This legacy is evident at the outset of each institution, whereby no persons were denied admission on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin. This is also a distinction and why the issue of balance is one for the HBTS schools.

Per ATS Standard 5.1.3, "Hiring practices should be attentive to the value of diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender. The faculty should also include members who have doctorates from different schools and who exemplify various methods and points of view. At the same time, faculty selected on will be guided by the needs and requirements of particular constituencies of the school." Maybe an answer is, out of a spirit of generosity, we should collaborate and partner with HBTS that value us rather than replicate what we do. Not, what we can do to make life better for majority schools, but invite those schools to relinquish privilege and value us as equals and continue to note that this means your faculty will have to change. How diverse are we willing to be among African Americans? Where have the diasporic students gone? Does this include the LBGTQI community? These questions also apply to interreligious realities.

Against this backdrop of the foregoing conversation, we considered the current state of ATS standards that require schools to demonstrate racial inclusion. The HBTS recommends a shift in emphasis to require each ATS schools to demonstrate educational effectiveness with communities that represent its student body. To hold schools accountable for educationally resourcing and effectively addressing this institutional responsibility, the HBTS further recommends that ATS schools be required to identify and describe the institutional resources they are devoting to such effectiveness outcomes.

A second implication for redevelopment of standards concerns the faculty/practitioner as a legitimate qualification for accreditation. There is a sense that faculty/practitioner-professor is no longer an accrediting issue, obstacle, nor concern. Under this new interpretation, one HBTS is asking adjunctive faculty to take on faculty advising roles beside full time faculty. We recognize the faculty's exclusive control of the curriculum, which involves advising. While our conversation did not lead to a consensus of the role of adjuncts in HBTS, we recognize the significant and unparalleled impact of learned, yet unlettered clergy in the storied history of our institutions. An innovation to expand sources of instruction might be to integrate adjunctive faculty into advising, as Payne is now doing. This is consistent with and an outgrowth of the HBTS apprenticeship model that can strengthen the preparation of students for ministry.

Our joint discussion with Latina/o and Asian schools also proved fruitful. We discussed the similarities and distinguishing marks of our schools and the practices and methodologies embodied. Per the question asked by ATS, "What are possible implications of your group's work for the **broader work of theological education**?" we noted that even as we desire to speak back to ATS standards, we also desire to maintain ongoing connections beyond the auspices of ATS in order to continue more in-depth conversations about minoritized realities.

We affirmed the need for arenas for conversations among HBTS, Programs for Latino/a Students and Asian Schools. Such conversation would enable the sharing of common agendas among the three marginalized groups who are siloed in ATS. It is clear that each group uses language differently. Recognizing our need to advance such dialogue, it would also be helpful to have ATS support of opportunities for these three communities to meet, particularly during the next ATS Biennial Meeting.

We further affirmed the need of HBTS faculty and staff for cultural competency training and exchange. ATS is encouraged to support the dialogue in a systematic way, advisedly in leadership education. This would build cultural capacity and partnerships. Latino/a faculty challenged the nomenclature "cultural competence" as inadequate and too limiting. Rather, they encouraged theological education to view the desired competency as an outcome of cultural participation and as part of a continuum of cultural infusion, while still preserving Latino/a identity. Possibilities for such dialogue could begin with professorial exchanges through one-week intensive visits or summer sessions. The visiting faculty would share academic and cross-cultural nuances and culture-centric perspectives to the host school's faculty, students and staff.

The University Embedded conversation was more challenging to get kick-started. Initially, we were cordially queried about things rather than engaged in dialogue with institutional peers. The areas of inquiry included, how to transfer what HBTS does to a different (PWI) context. We spent time explaining our understanding of academic anthropology. This involves the importance of context, the importance of connection to community, and the importance of it being more than an appropriation—not tactical tools—but it's rather about university communities systemically changing/transforming their environments. Consequently, it's not "you come and be a part of us," rather "your coming means we become something else; something better and more consequential."

There was transparency by peer institutions had about their abilities to hire but not retain faculty of color and the direct impacts on their students. There was a commitment by one PWI university to hire four Latino/a faculty, which saw an increase in the student enrollment. However, a similar commitment was not made regarding African American faculty. Today, their students—particularly African Americans—are suffering in painful ways. Their sharing evidenced the consciousness of pain in knowing they have not been able to provide for those students what they are able to provide for Latino/a students because of the distinctive formational structures of Hispanic Serving Institutions. The HBTS is the only institutional type that originated for the purpose of educating and forming African American clergy while inclusive of all racial groups.

In our discussion of online learning, we raised concerns about the one-year on campus requirements found in **ATS Degree Program Standard A.3.1.3**, for example. While we understand the need to ensure that students experience the optimal learning environment and that learning outcomes be demonstrated, we are also aware of the challenges the requirement brings to students who have to travel. This effects enrollment on the front end and matriculation rates on the back.

As part of a discussion about personalized instruction and how we assess the effectiveness of our pedagogy, we spent a significant amount of time in dialogue about online teaching and learning. We noted the challenges/obstacles related to this practice. Of central importance was the need for financial investments in distance education, investing in the technology that best achieves the goals of learning including training on the utilized platform, given the shifting need to hire faculty prepared for the online teaching and learning environment. Many HBTS' have older students who want to be online to keep second jobs, but younger students who want personalized instruction on campus. Second career persons are bright and talented but are looking for blended learning and want the flexibility of face-to-face experiences.

We acknowledged the opportunities, benefits, challenges, and obstacles created by financial constraints that are the legacy of underfunding for HBTS, which is consistent with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). We must change our development and fundraising messaging from a crisis-orientation as a dominant appeal strategy to our community of donors. The cycle of crisis that gave rise to our institutions needs to be disrupted. The deep dive extends beyond the administrative infrastructure. It has to do with transformation of an internal culture so that we become more strategic in the long view around mission renewal and less tactical as past practices required. Best practices in financial development and fundraising are easier to see in the PWI, which has a much longer and sustained legacy of funding. A transfer of knowledge requires a shift in practice and thinking from this is mine to this is ours. These best-practices should be shared in an institutional way and HBTS should be doing it in a seriously reflective and fundamental way.

Upon reflection, we realized the time we apportioned to appreciate inquiry (i.e., finding creative ways to work around the fiscal obstacles). The consequence of such response is a lack of conversation or lament about what we don't have. While this orientation has been vital to our survival, it is important to also consider whether HBTS are as well-resourced as we could be because we've learned to "live poor from prior necessity rather than current possibility." In view of the underfunding legacy of our institutions, we considered to what extent the funding burden needed to be spread more broadly. An example was offered about the possibility of a "tithe" from institutional budgets to support the HBTS schools.

We continue to note from our last report that, "… the reality that some of what we do is ineffable. This is critical. Ways of knowing that move beyond just ocular and oral articulations are key. The HBTS is an experience, some of which can only be understood empirically—assessed and measured in and through our central practices." We look forward to future gatherings and conversations to respond to ongoing questions and observations and to engage in a more pointed discussion of how our educational models and practices can possibly inform the standards of our accrediting bodies.

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"Let's Begin with the End in Mind"
Competency-Based Theological Education

Competency-based theological education (CBTE) is an educational model that emphasizes: (1) learning over seat time, (2) the mastery of professionally-oriented competencies, (3) well-planned learning activities or assessments (class-based or not, online or onsite) that students may complete at their own pace, and (4) a community of learning in which regular and substantive interaction occurs between qualified faculty and students. CBTE programs may be course/credit-based or non-course/credit-based or both. One way to compare and contrast CBTE with more traditional educational models is that the CBTE model holds learning constant while time varies, whereas traditional models hold time constant while learning varies.

As we have progressed through this project, we have come to realize CBTE is more than merely a model to replicate. It is a value system that forms a foundation for a renewed approach to theological education. As evidence of this, two of the ten schools in our CBTE peer group have been approved by the ATS Commission for non-credit/course-based CBTE programs as five-year experiments: Northwest Baptist Seminary in June 2014 and Grace Theological Seminary in February 2017. A third school (Sioux Falls Seminary) operates a CBTE program that is essentially course/credit-based, which does not require the approval of ATS, regional accreditors, or the Department of Education. *(For a side-by-side comparison of the three schools, see the last page of this report.)*

Clearly, schools can deliver programs rooted in a CBTE value system in different ways. At the same time, all three of the programs in our peer group share a similar set of underlying values that form the foundation for their approaches to theological education. This value system calls us to think of theological education not as a transcendent *form* of education (graduate-level, traditional courses and credits, residency requirements) but as a transcendent *function* of education. As such, it needs to reinterpret itself from setting to setting to optimally fulfill its function.

We recognize CBTE as a movement that has outgrown "niche" status and rapidly is gaining traction in higher education. More than 600 institutions have some form in place; however, we're convinced that one size doesn't fit all, and that prevents our schools from blindly joining the wave. Not only does theological education in general have unique characteristics and requirements, but individual schools within the theological education world have distinct characteristics and requirements. Seminaries that embrace CBTE need to consider its underlying value system and discern if it fits in their contexts. CBTE may require schools to raise the value they place on certain aspects of theological education while lowering the value for other aspects. Member schools also must allow for differences that arise among sister schools that implement CBTE programs.

The goal of our research is twofold: to help seminaries determine if CBTE is right for them; and to help seminaries design and initiate CBTE programs that support their missions, meet the needs of their constituents, and follow best principles and practices for ATS member schools.

Common Characteristics

Three characteristics are fundamental to all CBTE programs, especially in a theological, ministerial setting. In no particular order, competency-based education is:

- **Customized.** Students work with teams assembled and overseen by a credentialed member of the faculty. This team creates a unique pathway through the degree, using resources inside and outside the seminary. The path follows no predetermined route. Students pursue competencies at their own paces and in their chosen orders.

- **Communal.** Students travel the path in the company of peers and mentors. Interactions are substantive and occur in a secure and private environment, although contact is not always face-to-face. To help participants bond with one another, the seminary may form affinity groups, with members sharing the same faculty mentor or coming from the same denomination. Credentialed faculty initiate and engage in dialogue that addresses content related to the competencies.

- **Contextualized.** The ministry context of a student is intentional and integrated into the educational process, the design of assignments, and the assessment of learning. The context helps shape the journey and may result in students enrolled in the same degree program completing different sets of assignments.

The role of faculty is less about creating and imparting content and more about helping students navigate content, acquire knowledge, master skills, and think theologically. In CBTE, learning is constant, whereas "seat time" varies. Inputs are flexible; outcomes are fixed. Competencies that students master typically include knowledge of their traditions' theologies; the ability to interpret and apply biblical text; proficiency in performing key ministerial duties; and personal and spiritual formation. Beyond these expectations, a school can add any number of competencies that address constituents' needs. As an example: MDi. students at Northwest Baptist Seminary must achieve 27 outcomes, each with academic and practical components. Among the 27 outcomes are the four content areas that the ATS Commission on Standards of Accreditation requires: religious heritage, cultural context, personal and spiritual formation, and capacity for ministerial and public leadership.

Regardless of the number or nature of the competencies, each one must lend itself to assessment. A school's assessment strategy begins at the design stage, continues with the assignment and collection of artifacts, and culminates in the interpretation of the artifacts. Almost everything in a CBTE program is anchored in assessment.

A team of experts is responsible for overseeing and measuring a student's progress through a degree program. This team is composed of faculty, administrators, and constituency representatives, some of whom may lack terminal degrees but excel in a given competency unit. The team monitors and assesses the student's performance in activities that go beyond standardized tests and paper-writing. Creative curricula may call for artifacts such as videos, structured interviews, debates, group projects, role-playing situations, and journal entries.

Peer group insights: Because assessment is at the heart of CBTE, training in assessment protocols is essential. Mentors decide by consensus if students have mastered the competencies in question, therefore they must follow the same evaluation guidelines. As CBTE becomes more widespread among theological schools, a preferred lexicon must emerge so all parties speak the same language. Common terminology will promote consistency in student evaluation, program assessment, and mentors' performance. As an example: Defining with precision the meaning of “substantive interaction” will help students and mentors understand the frequency and depth of communication expected of them. We, as a group, endorse the following definition of substantive interaction:

> *Regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students means frequent dialogue initiated and pursued by credentialed faculty and responded to by students in a timely manner. The exchange should address substantive content related to the competency/competencies that the students are learning.*

The Financial Impact of CBTE

CBTE is still a work in progress. Proponents might say we’re breaking new ground, whereas opponents might argue that we’re flying a plane as we build it. Both observations are correct. Two things are certain: First, schools may know they *need* to change, but they may be *unwilling* to change. Second, CBTE is not a silver bullet that dramatically increases enrollment, decreases costs, and solves all problems related to educating pastors in the twenty-first century. But it does offer a new way of thinking about how we design our educational, financial, and operational models. Among innovations that CBTE encourages schools to explore are the following:

Tuition structure

- **CBTE may take one of two forms.** The first is credit/course-based; the second is non-credit/course-based. While the first form plays down the role of the credit hour, the second form eliminates it almost entirely. In those senses, the credit hour is no longer the coin of the realm in CBTE programs.
- **Students pay a subscription fee.** The fee may be paid monthly, per semester, or per year and is unrelated to credit hours. This creates a more predictable cash flow for the school.
- **Instruction costs vary.** Mentors’ compensation is determined by the number of students assigned to them. Faculty workload no longer is articulated in credit hours.
- **Schools move away from FTE tracking.** CBTE allows schools to move toward developing new metrics for projecting revenue rather than using FTE as a financial planning or enrollment tracking tool.
- **Student registration is streamlined.** CBTE lends itself to automated registration, which requires fewer staff hours and results in heightened efficiency.
- **Student advising is less burdensome.** CBTE relies on mentors whose role is not to tell students which courses to take and in what order to take them; instead, mentors walk alongside students and offer support and guidance. This frees faculty for other tasks.
- **Institutional financial aid can become a tool.** Rather than basing financial aid on enrollment status, schools can use it as an enrollment management tool or eliminate it if they are able to reduce the costs of tuition dramatically.
- **Partnerships possibilities increase.** CBTE creates opportunities for collaboration within the church and beyond. Because more focus is on the outcomes of the educational process rather than the process itself, seminaries can become platforms that connect students to multiple learning experiences on and off campus.

Peer group insights: Implementing a CBTE program or a CBTE track within an existing degree program does not mandate that schools abandon their traditional business practices. But it allows them to do so. Moving away from credit hours is more a shift in philosophy and how we understand the structure and flow of education. It's a new philosophy that provides a fresh perspective on what should drive the educational journey and enterprise model. If member schools with CBTE programs want students in non-credit/course-based programs to be eligible for USDE Title IV loans, then they must also petition for approval from the USDE.

Challenges to Overcome

CBTE requires a certain amount of upfront investment, part of which supports technology upgrades. Essential to the CBTE model is a highly specialized learning management system. Whereas several tech companies—Brightspace, Fidelis, and Brainstorm among them—are developing products to meet the emerging CBTE market, no "perfect" platform exists. At least not yet. To compensate, some schools have tweaked familiar platforms such as Wordpress or Google Docs to meet their needs. Others have cobbled together bits and pieces of existing programs with mixed results. Northwest Baptist Seminary and Sioux Falls Seminary currently are working together to market and make available a platform that can serve seminaries and the wider church. Their partnership will combine the proven practices and technological engines behind the schools' successful Immerse and Kairos CBTE programs. The result will be a platform specifically designed for CBTE. Whatever system an institution chooses, that system needs to provide five services:

- Produce a digital record of learning that justifies student grades
- Ensure a secure environment for mentor/student interaction
- Offer elongated schedules to accommodate learning that doesn't fit rigid timeframes
- Help students plan and track progress as they navigate the complex structure
- Allow mentors to customize learning for students based on individual variables

Over the long term, a sophisticated learning management system more than pays for itself because it enables a school to engage in predictive analytics. This means the school has the capacity to run algorithms through a sea of data—not just a sample—looking for patterns and connections. Like pilots rely on their instruments to fly, schools rely on analytics to plan programs, track progress, predict outcomes, and prevent missteps. This is possible because the learning management system collects data 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The longer a school implements CBTE, the more data it amasses and the more reliable its analytics.

An example of the practical applications of this capability: Predictive analytics can help a school improve student retention by having its learning management system comb through data, red-flagging the presence of indicators common to students who have dropped out. The information enables a school to predict with great accuracy the likelihood that a current (or even a future) student will drop out. The sooner the school makes that prediction, the sooner it can step in and work with the student to reduce the flight risk.

Data analytics also has application in a seminary's marketing and admission processes, donor development efforts, and in tracking a student's progress toward mastering a certain competency. It can measure the amount of time spent on a task, the rapidity of responses, the level and quality of participation in discussions, and the amount of time each mentor is spending reviewing performance. Whereas data analytics is particularly effective within the CBTE format, it is a valuable tool in all traditional and nontraditional formats. For schools that lack risk capital, it reduces the chances of making costly mistakes.

As an interesting side note, a 2016 study of four higher-education institutions (none was a seminary) revealed that three of the four expect their CBE programs to break even within five years of launch; by the sixth year, all four schools project that their CBE programs will be operating at half the cost of their traditional programs.

Peer group insights: Schools that lack in-house technical expertise will have to either create staff positions or rely on outside providers for ongoing maintenance and management of their software systems. Of some concern: The concept of data collection and predictive analytics raises an ethical question related to the private online interactions between students and mentors. Should such conversations be excluded from routine data collection and analysis? The solution may be as simple as giving students the opportunity to "opt-in" or "opt-out" of some aspects of data collection.

Next Steps: Recommendations

From our experience, CBTE has the potential to revitalize a seminary's connection with its constituencies, create an educational pathway that is more affordable for students and less expensive to operate, and touch on a felt need within the church. But to fully realize this potential, we believe schools need to consider a series of shifts as they take steps toward initiating CBTE programs. We offer the following recommendations:

- **The school-network connection.** We need to begin to see theological education as something that flows out of the church and/or context rather than something that simply serves the church or context. A school that implements CBTE must work hand-in-hand with ministry practitioners and local contexts to plan, prepare, and assess education. This creates a need to ensure that church-based mentors fully understand and appreciate the importance of accreditation standards.
- **Content as subservient to outcomes.** While content is important and education without content is formless, we can't allow it to govern our measurements of success. Outcomes become the primary focus of the educational journey and replace content as the orienting purpose of a degree.
- **Data pool expansion.** The value of predictive analytics could soar if schools were to pool the data that their learning management systems collect. CBTE has the capability to foster collaboration among theological schools on issues as broad as collective licensing of learning systems, shared faculty development, and assessment practices.
- **Global expansion.** Many schools have significant foreign enrollment; others have extension campuses off shore. How well CBTE might serve persons from other cultures is undetermined. This deserves further examination.

- **Educational effectiveness.** Certainly, the most important "unknown" is how CBTE's educational effectiveness stacks up against more traditional education models over the long haul. Any attempts to report percentages related to graduation, placement, and long-term success in the field are premature. However, Northwest Baptist Seminary, with the longest CBTE track record of any ATS school, graduated 14 students in 2017, and its retention rate is higher than the norm. Sioux Falls has graduated six in its CBTE program and has decreased student debt by 67 percent in three years. CBTE enrollment is growing and CBTE programs are earning high marks from relevant constituents. Extensive data collection will confirm the educational effectiveness of CBTE and also will help fine-tune existing programs as well as meet ATS requirements.

	Grace Theological Seminary *Deploy*	**Northwest Baptist Seminary** *Immerse*	**Sioux Falls Seminary** *Kairos*
Program Content/ Curriculum Distinctives	❖ Integrated Outcomes Curriculum ❖ Mastery Model ❖ 18 Competencies (MDiv) ❖ 15 Competencies (MA) ❖ 4 Resource Modules	❖ Integrated Outcomes Curriculum ❖ Non-Linear (as compared to term based) ❖ Mastery Model ❖ 27 Ministry Leadership Outcomes (collaboratively defined with client network) ❖ Adaptable Outcome Development Assignments ❖ 16 Instructional Seminars delivered quarterly	❖ Integrated outcomes curriculum ❖ Mastery model ❖ Non-linear ❖ 9 Outcomes (MDiv), holding a total of 170 targets (competencies) and 9 master assignments (summative assessments) ❖ Equivalency between clusters of targets and traditional courses ❖ Interchangeable systems of targets and credit hours ❖ Six on-campus intensives are required
Methodology Distinctives	❖ Two mentors for each student (Ministry mentor and Formation mentor) ❖ In-Ministry context ❖ Network, not student driven ❖ Academic, doctoral credentialed faculty member for each student	❖ Mentored Mastery o Mentored Learning o Required Mentor Training ❖ In-Ministry Context ❖ Strategic Partnerships ❖ Network, not student driven ❖ 3 Person Mentor Teams per student *Academic *Ministry/Pastoral *Network/Denomination	❖ Three mentors per student (faculty, personal, ministry) ❖ Whole curriculum may be done in ministry context, overseen by mentor team; traditional courses may be substituted in ❖ Each assignment (except the master assignments) may be adapted ❖ Student driven
Technology	❖ Moodle Platform ❖ Logos Bible Software (Gold, customized package)	❖ NBS Custom Designed Online Student Portfolio * "Silo"ed Individual student and Mentor Team record of learning *Objective Outcome *Assessment Rubrics *Metrics for Program Analytics and Student Support	❖ Google Drive (houses student portfolio) ❖ Moodle (houses resources)
Finance	❖ Tuition: Semester block-pricing ❖ Logos Bible Software rolled into tuition ❖ Applying for Title IV financial aid	❖ Tuition: Annual Subscription *Annual Mentor Stipend *Additional Instructional Seminar Fees *Additional Mentor Community and Training Fees	❖ Monthly subscription service ❖ Monthly faculty mentor stipend for non-core faculty
Additional Information	❖ ATS accredited ❖ HLC accredited (pending)	❖ ATS accredited	❖ ATS accredited, HLC accredited and approved for Title IV

Appendix

Summary of Educational Principles and Practices for Competency Based Theological Education

Definition

Competency Based Theological Education (CBTE):

- is grounded in the theological and ecclesiastical values, practices, and competencies required by institutions and organizations that will be served by graduates.
- allows students to progress at their own pace to achieve mastery of identified competencies,
- may be based on credit equivalencies or utilize direct assessment, and
- is facilitated by regular and substantive interaction with faculty as well as mentors and others involved in the educational process, including the robust community of learners,

Educational Design, Resources, and Institutional Procedures

As with other models of educational programming, Competency Based Theological Education will:

- be designed so that the mastery of competencies follows careful curricular design and models educational coherence,
- include all areas of learning appropriate to particular degree programs, with coherent plans for demonstration of mastery of competencies,
- utilize resources appropriate to the program, including faculty, practitioners, mentors, and other learning partners, all of whom are verified by the school as having credentials and skills appropriate to the educational process,
- provide access to library resources needed to support the educational programming,
- be supported by technical support services, such as a learning management system capable of providing reliable and current records of student progress, faculty and mentor feedback, and findings of assessment tools,
- support faculty in adapting to and facilitating the distinctive character of CBTE,
- develop effective administrative structures and training for administrative personnel to support CBTE,
- be periodically reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness,
- be presented accurately in publicity, including descriptions of the skills needed for student success

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Programs in Prison Peer Group Final Report

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What is theological education in prison?
ATS Member Schools are offering theological education in prisons on roughly two models: one model in which incarcerated students can pursue a degree and one in which incarcerated students can pursue a certificate.

In the degree model, a theological school often forms a partnership with an undergraduate institution to offer a BA in a field relating to Christian ministry. In this model, professors from the ATS school are paid at an adjunct rate to go into local prisons and teach classes of incarcerated students. In addition to courses in the traditional theological disciplines, these programs provide the general education requirements needed for an undergraduate degree. These programs are accredited through regional bodies rather than through ATS and tend to establish their respective prisons as satellite campuses of the undergraduate institution. Schools operating on roughly this model include New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Calvin Theological Seminary, Chapman Seminary of Oakland City University, Divine Hope Reform Bible Seminary, Appalachian Bible College, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Columbia International University and Seminary, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. New York Theological Seminary follows this model but is unique in offering a master's degree instead of an undergraduate degree.

In the certificate model, professors from ATS member school go into local prisons to teach, but they are often bringing MDiv and MTS students with them to learn as fellow-students alongside the incarcerated learners. These classrooms follow an "inside-out" model, in which incarcerated and non-incarcerated students learn alongside one another. Often, these programs do not offer enough courses for incarcerated students to pursue a full degree, but most schools offer some sort of certificate program to formally acknowledge the work of the incarcerated students. Professors often receive in-load credit for teaching in these programs, and schools utilize graduate students in a variety of ways, including as teachers. Schools operating on something like this model include Candler School of Theology at Emory University and the Atlanta Theological Consortium, Drew University Theological School, Duke University Divinity School, Princeton Theological Seminary, North Park Theological Seminary, and Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

It is worth noting that schools using these two models have learned significantly from one another through the ATS EMP peer group process, and some schools are now actively seeking ways to enact the benefits of the other model. Schools offering degrees are trying to find ways to incorporate their non-incarcerated students more directly into prison classrooms, and schools that are currently offering certificates have been challenged to seek out the partnerships necessary in order to begin offering full degrees. When there is overlap between these models, as in one case where courses in an "inside-out" model can earn credits in a non-theological school BA program, it is a result of particular institutional partnerships that developed organically in that context.

Why offer programs in prisons? Benefits and Educational Principles

The following educational principles are at the heart of teaching theological education in prison. Sometimes these principles represent pre-existing commitments that motivated schools and professors to develop programs in prisons, and sometimes these principles have been learned through the process of engaging in prison education.

1. **Theological education is *trans*formational for everyone involved.**

- Much like the presence of a university in a neighborhood, a seminary inside prison walls can have the effect of improving the surrounding neighborhood and impacting the quality of life. Programs report measured reduction of violence in prisons hosting seminary programs, reduction of recidivism rates of program graduates, and qualitative reports of student empowerment, positive changes in thinking, and increased vocational opportunities due to engagement in these programs.
- Transformation is not limited to incarcerated students but includes effects on prison personnel, co-learners, teachers, and even visitors to the programs. Program graduates have ongoing transformational impact on their communities, having gone on to start similar programs in other states, lead state-wide prison education programs, pastor both free and incarcerated churches, and become advocates, prison chaplains, and activists.
- Many schools consider the formational process of seminary education to be the key to transformation. Most programs weave together traditional academic disciplines with personal spiritual development, leadership and social formation, as well as relationship building within

cohorts—often across the divisions of race, class, denominational backgrounds, and carceral status. Some schools connect personal transformation to social transformation, framing prison education programs as partners with various efforts to end the practices and effects of racialized mass incarceration in the United States.

- Finally, successful prison programs have a catalytic effect, one that is both centrifugal and centripetal. Our cohort found that programs in prisons spin off other similar programs elsewhere. We also found that programs in prisons impact the learning experiences of 'traditional' seminarians and can attract resources to the hosting schools.

2. **Theological education should be available and accessible to anyone who wants it.**
   In many cases, programs in prisons began in response to local opportunities to increase availability and accessibility to theological education. Once teaching in prisons had started, faculty and staff realized that this principle meant much more than simply offering theological education in prisons:

- Availability meant pursuing financial models and fundraising that would render classes affordable and even free for incarcerated students.
- Accessibility meant shifting pedagogies to adjust to the needs of adult learners with a wide variety of educational backgrounds. Additionally, many of these prison classes contain students from different races, classes, religious backgrounds, and political beliefs. Many programs have come to use peer to peer education models that make use of students' prior learning and varied life experiences in the apprehension and application of theological material.
- Especially in programs that had operated for more than five years, teaching incarcerated persons had prompted concern about education for officers. The principle of availability and accessibility has meant that some programs have begun offering opportunities for officer education including scholarships and specific certificate programs.

3. **Theological education happens in the context of a community.**
   Many schools expressed that prison policies offered initial barriers to creating a community of theological learning. Sometimes prison policies prevented students from congregating outside of class for study groups or peer-revision. Policies prevent non-incarcerated students from sharing materials or notes with incarcerated students. In many states, "inmates" are barred from roles of religious leadership, effectively banning them from practicing the arts of preaching and pastoral care. *Yet many schools reported that in the face of these policies that work to individuate, the principle of community became even more evident as a bedrock of theological education.* Each school had stories about the slow transformation of prison policies to accommodate communities of learning—study groups were permitted, book quotas overturned, and prisoner-to-prisoner leadership was permitted in some states with Louisiana going so far as to permit "inmate pastors" who had been trained by New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

4. **The theological disciplines must hear, incorporate, and learn alongside the wisdoms of marginalized people.**
   Especially in the certificate model described above, schools expressed a sense that something was missing in the theological reflection of the institution when theological thinking occurred predominantly within the seminary walls. The sense that voices were missing from the conversation prompted the start of many of these programs. All participants reported that they think differently about God and ministry in some way from having engaged in these programs.

Faculty report shifts in research foci and students report shifts in worldview and vocation from having participated in programs in prison.

5. **Theological institutions should attend to the continuing education needs of their students, both degree and non-degree bearing students.**
   Most schools named that continuing education needs are different for their incarcerated students than their traditional, non-incarcerated students. Yet each program named that this principle has pressed them to explore the fullness and limits of what they are able to offer students who graduate from these programs in prison, including:

- *Pathways to post-secondary education* (AAs, Bas, or MDivs depending on the program). This can include advocacy work around barriers to admitting and financing the education of formerly incarcerated persons at the federal, state, and institutional level.
- *Ongoing clergy support for inmate pastors who are serving churches within prisons*
- *Transitional and post-release needs for students who are being released from prison.* These programs have stretched the boundaries of what is considered "continuing education needs" in that faculty and staff have realized that if students do not have homes, work, and family stability, they will not be able to pursue their vocations and educations. Some programs are pursuing ministries and partnerships that will help students with all the needs that arise in release from prison.

6. **Theological institutions operate with integrity: offering dependable, authentic, and contextually appropriate education.**

- Most of these programs have turn-over in students and some have had significant turn-over in faculty and staff throughout the life of the program. Programs in prison rely on the theological institution itself to provide the dependability necessary to maintain relationship with a Department of Corrections. Incarcerated students must be able to trust that a program will last long enough for them to receive their degrees or certificates. This requires institutional commitment.
- Students must be able to see how theological education makes sense in their lives and in the lives of their future parishioners. Programs in prisons have challenged theological educators to see how their own theological teachings have been contextually formed and to adjust those teachings to fit the carceral context. Institutions must be dedicated to training faculty and staff in the skills needed to provide authentic and contextually appropriate education for the prison environment.

What are the key recommended practices?
Establish prison partnerships. Programs that have been successful have established strong and respectful partnerships with specific prison administrators. This has included strict adherence to prison policies and trainings, even when such adherence has meant tweaks to pedagogical practice. For instance, class times might be lengthened and interrupted for facility count times or professors might return to the facility midweek to allow for a study hall, given the restrictions on how inmates can and cannot gather together without an outside volunteer. Those programs and professors that were flexible and able to accommodate learning to the uniquely demanding prison environment were those whose programs have grown and flourished over decades.

Connect the school's primary campus to incarcerated students whenever possible. Schools that began on an inside-out model in which classrooms are evenly divided between incarcerated and non-incarcerated students report that this co-learning is the most important aspect of this pedagogical practice. In programs that educate only incarcerated students, ATS schools have still found ways to incorporate their MDiv, MTS, and DMin students into the prison programming. Upper level students have been course instructors, others have served as teaching assistants or tutors, DMins have conducted dissertation projects within the school's prison programs, and many prisons have welcomed MDiv chaplain interns because of the prior partnerships built upon educational programs in prisons. Participants repeatedly report that involvement of traditional students in prison teaching programs brings renewed vitality to the home institution.

Prepare ALL participants for the learning experience. Programs in prison require a certain level of emotional health, educational ability, and adaptability on the part of all involved faculty and students. We recommend some sort of screening or application process for both students and professors with input from both seminary and prison staff about the readiness of any given participant for such a program. After selection, faculty must be trained in what to expect in a prison classroom and provided with support in crafting a syllabus that satisfies both prison policy and the educational needs of the population. Incarcerated students may need extra writing aids, workshops, or tutorials to address personal histories marked by systemic barriers to education characteristic of America's prison population. Non-incarcerated students should be trained not only by the prison but also by the theological institution about hopes for their experiences and their approaches to incarcerated peers.

What are the challenges? Finances, Measuring Effectiveness, Finding Partnerships

Finances. Because schools are committed to the availability of theological education and because incarcerated persons represent a sector of the population that has limited financial resources and restricted access to education, many schools have committed to offering theological education to incarcerated persons at no charge. Some schools also provide books and materials free of charge. Those schools that are charging tuition are doing so at radically reduced rates that require some sort of subsidization. All schools offering programs in prison are engaged in some sort of fundraising. Schools have a wide variety of funding streams including individual donors, grants, foundations, and state funding. Many schools are "absorbing" some of the cost of the programs as the work of the program is spread across various administrators, faculty, and administrative assistants. While fundraising can be a challenge, it is also a potential strength of the model in that schools report increased donor interest when the institution is engaged in prison education that is understood to have a wide social impact outside the school.

Measuring effectiveness. Most measurement of the effects of programs in prisons has been qualitative. Schools have gathered stories of personal transformation—of students catching a vision of further education, of students finding purpose and committing to whole and healthy lives, of students realizing that those inside and those outside prison walls are very much alike in their shared humanity before God. Schools also have years of reporting on what has been done—impressive numbers of students educated or graduated, numbers of students retained and numbers of students lost to transfers and infractions, numbers of faculty engaged by the programs, etc. Most schools use end of course evaluations to gather student feedback, and many professors indicate that those evaluations have substantially shaped their programs.

However, very little quantitative data regarding effectiveness of the programs is being gathered. What has been gathered reflects donor and prison interest: the program at Angola Prison has been able to measure substantial reduction in prison violence in the 20+ years since the seminary program has been running. Duke University Divinity School has been able to measure significantly lower recidivism in its participants as compared to the wider prison population. Some schools are beginning to measure educational effectiveness but have not yet produced data points. This is an area for growth.

Partnerships. Most programs found that in offering education specific to Christian ministry there were hurdles to forming partnerships with other institutions on at least three axes:

- Prisons have strict policies around religious practice in order to uphold the first amendment rights of all incarcerated persons to religious freedom. The state cannot offer substantially more opportunities to Christian residents than to residents of other faith groups. In some states, this means that residents of any religion must be permitted to apply to seminary programs in prisons.
- When ATS member schools have pursued partnership with undergraduate institutions in order to offer AA and BA degrees, they found that some undergraduate departments of religious studies have resisted offering coursework specific to Christian ministerial practice. Some schools were able to negotiate partnerships even in the face of this concern, while other schools had yet to find undergraduate institutions willing to partner with an explicitly Christian seminary on explicitly Christian coursework.
- In pursuing funding for educational programs in prisons, many foundations restrict the use of funds for religious purposes. The funding available for the education of prisoners that also permits education specific to Christian ministry is a narrow funding stream, yet the programs in our cohort had been successful in locating those available funding sources. Some prioritize individual donors for this reason.

Looking Ahead: Implications and Standards of Accreditation

Programs for theological education in prisons are spreading and multiplying nationwide. These programs have impacted participants, individual ATS schools, and the landscape of theological education as a whole. Implications are wide-ranging, and we have included a modest reading list at the end of this report for those interested in a more robust analysis. Here, we offer four key implications of programs in prisons on the broader work of theological education:

1. Programs in prisons ***invigorate students and educators***. In prison education, principles like transformation and accessibility come pressingly alive. Vibrant communities of reflection form in the liminal space created when social boundaries are transgressed for the sake of learning and friendship.
2. Prison programs ***enhance the missions of theological institutions***. These programs reach previously unreachable students, attract non-incarcerated students who might not have otherwise considered the institution, and open access to a ministry field that can provide multiple avenues for ministerial training.
3. Prison programs have ***broadened the funding base and institutional partnerships*** of participating schools. Amid cutbacks, closures, and financial shortfalls, the steady growth of theological education in prisons has the potential to be a ***compelling counter narrative.***
4. Programs in prison ***do the work of the Gospel while simultaneously equipping leaders to do it***, thus serving a powerful dual purpose. Participants report that these programs are reparative at the individual and social level. Prison programs offer a vibrant model for contextual education, joining theory and practice together in God's work to heal the world.

Despite the vitality of programs in prison, the programs face two serious issues when considering ATS Standards of Accreditation: 1.) these programs are not offered on campus and cannot be offered on campus 2.) the majority of incarcerated students have had severely limited access to education throughout the entirety of their lives, and most do not come to seminary training with BAs. Given these two realities, we would request that ATS consider the following:

1. **Can ATS accredit undergraduate degrees like the AA, BA, or historic BD?** We understand that currently the Department of Education only accredits ATS to accredit upper level

degrees, but the hope that our theological institutions could educate incarcerated learners for ministry at their current educational levels from within our own home institution was repeated over and over again every time we gathered.

2. Similarly, our programs could benefit from **a reevaluation of the "15% Rule."** Could there be some difference between those who have an AA or some level of college and those who have none when addressing this rule? Could the practices of Competency-Based Education inform a candidate's preparedness for ministry training regardless of the candidates' history of formal education? Could that "preparedness" then be considered when deciding how many such students might be admitted within an ATS institution any given year?
3. In many contexts, incarcerated learners could benefit from **a system that allows certificates to be stacked toward a degree.** We were unclear about the ways in which ATS standards do and do not encourage and facilitate this sort of "stackable" learning. We would advocate for standards that normalize and encourage this practice.
4. We would advocate for **a simple process by which theological schools can educate people who cannot come to the primary campus** due to their incarceration. This might mean a full elimination of the residency requirements or a standing exemption for incarcerated students. While we acknowledge the ability to apply for a secondary site status under the current standards, we have also found that this is a barrier to some schools growing their prison programming into a full, degree-bearing program.
5. Finally, we want to acknowledge in this report the **synergy between our group and the Competency Based Education cohort.** Many of the practices in the CBE model resonated strongly as practices that would work well for Programs in Prison and honor the prior-learning, learning styles, and learning goals of incarcerated students. We would lend our support to the recommendations of the Competency-Based Education Cohort.

A Few Suggested Readings

God in Captivity: The Rise of Faith Based Ministries in the Age of Incarceration by Tanya Erzine
The Angola Prison Seminary by Michael Hallett et al.
"Project TURN: Portrait of a Prison Ministry" by Sarah Jobe in *Christian Reflection a Series in Faith and Ethics*, at http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/163071.pdf
Liberating Minds: The Case for College in Prison by Ellen Lagemann
Radical Discipleship: A Liturgical Politics of the Gospel by Jennifer M. McBride
Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy by Heather Ann Thompson
Understanding by Design by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Students without Bachelor's Peer Group Final Report

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Why did the schools in the group engage this educational model or practice?

Schools in the peer group, as well as those who were surveyed, indicated a variety of reasons for admitting students without bachelor's degrees. Some do this simply within the accrediting category of "educational equivalency" (Educational Standard, section ES.7.1.2), where prospective students have had formal postsecondary education but did not earn a baccalaureate degree (as might be the case for international students, for example). Others do this within the "fifteen percent rule" (Standard A, section A.4.2), which allows schools to admit students without the baccalaureate or its educational equivalent as long as prospective students demonstrate appropriate academic ability. In this latter category, in many cases, admitting students without baccalaureate degrees allows schools to further their missions of diversity, especially for educationally underserved populations. Others schools engage in this practice at the request of ecclesial partners, who wish students to be prepared for ministry without undue delay (as would be caused by requiring students to complete a BA prior to entering seminary). Some schools admit students who are still enrolled in their undergraduate programs, as in the case of accelerated degree programs, with the understanding that such students will complete their bachelor's degrees before completion of the MDiv. Others engage in this practice when it seems clear that an applicant has the requisite knowledge and ability to succeed in graduate study and that requiring the applicant to first earn a bachelor's degree would be burdensome, for financial and other reasons.

What are the most crucial issues and questions engaged by the group?
This group wrestled with two major questions. First, do students without bachelor's degrees negatively impact the classroom experience of other students or otherwise call into question the academic legitimacy of a school? To this question, participants noted that ATS accreditation standards allow for the "fifteen percent" rule only in the MDiv and professional MA degrees (Standards A and B), and not for the academic MA degrees (Standard D). This suggests that the ATS membership affirms diversity of backgrounds within the professional degrees, in contrast to the stricter and narrower expectations for the academically-focused programs, and perhaps even see this as an asset to classroom learning. Participants noted that, from an instructional perspective, it can be difficult to have ill-prepared students in class—but also quickly noted that this dynamic seemed to have little correlation to the degrees held by students. This observation raises the larger and ever-present concern for theological schools about how they can be assured that they are admitting good quality students, regardless of their educational backgrounds.

This leads to the second major question for this group, which has been: does baccalaureate education actually provide the groundwork for successful graduate-level theological study? Participants are wary of implying that baccalaureate degrees are not of value, and are well aware that the standard of admitting students with bachelor's degrees into graduate programs will not substantially change in the coming years. At their best, baccalaureate programs offer content knowledge and critical thinking skills that are vital for graduate theological education (and, many argue, for ministry). However, it is clear that not all students with a bachelor's degree have gained such content or skills, and that baccalaureate programs are not the only places where such skills and knowledge can be gained. And, as participants noted, the goal of the MDiv is not academic formation alone, and the relationship between academic preparedness and success in ministry is not always a simple one.

What are the most significant potential opportunities/benefits for this model or practice? For the school, for students, for faculty, for the church and/or other stakeholders?
The clearest benefit of admitting students without bachelor's degrees to MDiv programs is the ability to prepare qualified and competent ministers for churches that would otherwise be lacking. For example, in the Roman Catholic Church, where new priests are badly needed, schools who will admit such students clearly benefit their Diocesan stakeholders. Additionally, because many students without bachelor's degrees come from underserved populations, this practice not only serves the communities from where such students come, the school and all students can also benefit from increased diversity in the classroom. Participants noted that this is also an opportunity for schools to live into their missions regarding outreach to underserved groups.

In addition, several participants noted that students without bachelor's degrees often come into theological school highly motivated and thus can actually increase rigor in the classroom; faculty also benefit from teaching more diverse students, a situation that encourages their professional development as they explore new pedagogical methods. When non-BA students graduate, they may encourage other potential students to look at the school that gave them the opportunity to pursue graduate-level education, thus benefitting the reputation of the school. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) also came up frequently in this discussion and others. Peers agreed that admitting non-BA students prompted their schools to develop effective PLA methods and accommodations for students who came into theological school underprepared; therefore, schools who admit students without bachelor's degrees may also be better equipped to work with bachelor's-holding students who are struggling at the graduate level. In these ways and others, admitting students without bachelor's degrees not only serves those students, it also can be greatly beneficial for the church, the school, the learning environment, and even other students.

What are the most significant challenges/obstacles that could keep this model or practice from flourishing?
Participants noted three significant challenges. First, PLA is especially important for schools admitting non-BA students because of the need to ensure that these prospective students are academically and intellectually ready for graduate theological education. Ensuring that a particular school's PLA model is robust, sensible, fair, and credible is very difficult, and schools are often left without specific guidance on best practices for PLA. Because PLA involves lengthy time and administration, smaller schools in particular may have difficulty finding someone to handle such cases. If the admitted students require more accompaniment after admission in order to succeed in the program, similar question of time and student support resources will apply.

Second, participants are cautious of promoting a practice that devalues education. Schools do not want a reputation for having "lowered standards" or for being a school that "takes anybody." In addition, some denominations or organizations (such as the military) require baccalaureate degrees for particular positions, and students who come into seminary without bachelor's degrees could experience further professional limitations.

Finally, participants noted obstacles related to accreditation, including the "fifteen percent" rule from ATS. This number does not appear to be based upon any specific research, and may be unduly restrictive to smaller schools as well as to schools that emphasize underserved populations as part of their mission and context.

How is the educational effectiveness of the model or practice demonstrated?
Schools (in the peer group as well as those surveyed) sometimes use the basic outcomes of GPAs, retention/graduation rates, and placement rates to determine if the students they admit without bachelor's degrees have been able to succeed through their programs. These are data that schools regularly collect regardless and thus are easily accessible, though they may lack nuance. Some schools indicate that non-BA students are admitted into a conditional status, which allows for closer tracking in the first year of MDiv studies. Others do not track non-BA students once they have been successfully admitted. Participants wondered if analysis of course evaluations or assessment of classroom experience (to measure how non-BA students may impact the in-class learning environment) might be helpful in measuring effectiveness, but such research would be highly specific and qualitative. Participants noted that educational effectiveness, here and elsewhere, is often centered on individual student's success or failure; tools for assessing multi-directional impact at the community level would be a helpful new trajectory (looking both at the school's impact on the student and on the student's impact on the school).

How is the financial viability of the educational model or practice demonstrated?
Admitting students without bachelor's degrees has some indirect financial impact regarding resources and scaffolding that schools should reasonably offer to, first, determine if prospective students are ready for graduate theological work (e.g., PLA) and, second, to support them throughout their graduate work (e.g., student success coaching). Beyond this, participants noted that expanding non-BA admissions could result in a loss of income (e.g., if the school acquired a reputation for being less academically rigorous such that churches and related organizations might become less inclined to recommend students to them) or could result in a gain of income (e.g., income from tuition and fees from the non-BA students). It was also noted that students also stand to benefit financially if they are not required to go back for an undergraduate degree and can move more quickly toward their vocational goals.

Are there unexpected insights, innovative ideas, or possibilities that have emerged through the group's work?

This peer group had significant conversation around the question of how schools construct and assess learning environments more generally, and how prior learning and active learning can be integrated into the theological school experience. Most critically, the topic of classroom environments raised the concern: How can schools better evaluate prospective students of all educational backgrounds to know that they are admitting students who exhibit readiness for theological education and who are likely to succeed through graduate school and in later ministerial placements? The group also spent ample time discussing the ideal and practical relationships between baccalaureate education and graduate-level theological education, as well as the overall nature and purpose of the MDiv.

List (briefly) key recommended practices for this educational model or practice.

While noting that a large number of ATS schools are already engaged in this practice, participants highlighted some considerations that would be necessary for a school that is only beginning to admit non-BA students or is looking to increase enrollment of that population. First and most crucially, all schools admitting non-BA students should take care when researching and developing methods of PLA so that each candidate can be assessed fairly on their own merit. When possible, PLA should be the task of particular, trained faculty and staff who work in conjunction to ensure that potential students are appropriately evaluated. This assessment can be productively paired with a plan for scaffolding and assessing the student's first year in the program. Furthermore, evaluation of students should be done throughout their time in the program and not only when they are seeking admission. The group also recommends gathering interview data from non-BA students midway through their programs and again at completion, as well as seeking interviews with mentors and supervisors from their eventual placements. This lengthy chain of evidence can provide a means of assessing non-BA students beyond GPA and graduation rates by focusing on the qualities that will help them succeed or struggle along their vocational paths.

Finally, this group repeatedly affirmed the importance of adequate student supports (such as tutoring, study skills training, and mentoring) necessary to best serve this population. All seminaries and theological schools admit students they believe will succeed in their programs; structural supports for students who do not have the same background as the majority of their peers increases the chances that non-BA students will meet the challenges of graduate level theological education and ultimately succeed in their vocational goals outside the institution.

As you work on this particular educational model or practice, what are the educational principles that are served by the model or practice?

In the early years of ATS, many students sought a graduate degree in theology without holding an undergraduate degree. In recent memory, the expectation for the MDiv has been to primarily or exclusively admit students after they have completed a baccalaureate degree (among other qualifications). In practice, however, many seminaries (more than half, at least) admit some students without bachelor's degrees, for a variety of reasons. By participating in this practice, schools acknowledge that a bachelor's degree in and of itself does not always reflect the academic and pastoral readiness to begin graduate-level education—or, at a minimum, that the lack of such a degree does not necessarily indicate a lack of readiness. This group observes, thus, that admitting students without a bachelor's degree is neither a "new" practice nor an "uncommon" one—and, in that context, that it raises the question of the necessary and desirable qualifications for candidates for master's degrees, and to what degree a bachelor's degree indicates readiness for graduate theological study.

Are there implications from your group's work for the possible process of redevelopment of the Standards of Accreditation?

This group strongly recommends that the redevelopment of the Standards include an alteration of the current "fifteen percent rule" that allows ATS member institutions to have non-BA students comprise only fifteen percent of their professional master's degree seeking student population. The language of the current standards has led to a variety of interpretations of this rule, with some schools applying fifteen percent to each incoming cohort and others applying the rule to the student population as a whole, among other variations. This inconsistency has bred confusion about how the Standards are applied and assessed at each member school. In addition, this rule appears to disproportionately affect small schools where the rule may mean only one non-BA student will be admitted per year, or that non-BA students will be admitted some years and not others depending on the overall population of the school. For these schools in particular, the fifteen percent rule may be experienced as an insurmountable barrier to admitting underserved student populations.

Participants suggested a number of ways in which the fifteen percent rule might be adapted or rewritten to allow ATS schools to better serve their student populations. These recommendations include:

- Maintaining the fifteen percent rule for schools that do not experience it as a significant difficulty
- Allowing institutions that wish to exceed fifteen percent to use a PLA model that could determine BA equivalency relative to the outcomes and competencies that a baccalaureate degree is expected to provide (thus reclassifying some students to not count against the fifteen percent)
- Admitting all students under a PLA model that assesses students on their own merit and readiness for graduate theological education instead of assuming readiness for students who hold baccalaureate degrees
- Constructing pre-theology programs (up to 60 credits) alongside general education requirements that can be counted as BA equivalency
- Creating an expedited process for small schools to petition for exemption from the fifteen percent rule when seeking to increase their population from underserved groups
- Separately classifying students who will earn a baccalaureate degree prior to graduation and those who will not, with only the latter group counting towards the fifteen percent

While this rule was the primary focus of the group regarding the Standards of Accreditation, participants noted that they will also be attentive to new developments regarding PLA and competency-based education.

What are possible implications of your group's work for the broader work of theological education?

This group strongly felt that the question of admitting qualified, prepared students without baccalaureate degrees is a justice issue at the core. Students without bachelor's degrees are frequently also students from underserved populations, and it is the mission and context of each institution that propels them to seek ways to serve constituencies that do not have the same privileged access to education as many of their other students. Thus, this educational model serves as one example of how the commitment to social justice must be reflected in the practices of schools.

Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education
Residential Theological Education Peer Group Final Report

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In their fascinating and informative study, *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools*, authors Daniel Aleshire, Barbara Wheeler, Jackson Carroll, and Penny Long Marler describe and analyze their in-depth experiences at two theological schools, seeking to understand “the role of culture in the educational process” at these institutions. They conclude that “one must ‘be there’ to be formed in any significant way by the culture.” (p. 266)

Indeed, for a number of decades, the predominant model of theological education among ATS schools was a “residential” model that required students to reside on or near a theological school campus, take classes during normal business hours Monday through Friday, and assumed that students would study full-time in order to complete their degrees within a specified time frame. In many cases, faculty also resided on or near the campus, students, faculty, and staff worshipped regularly together in a seminary chapel, and shared meals provided on campus.

Until the most recent revision, the ATS *Standards of Accreditation* assumed the residential model and even in the current Standards, the learning outcomes most people assume are produced by the residential model provide the norm against which other models are judged.

In many ways, the situation is changed. According to the recent survey of academic deans by the ATS project on educational models and practices (EMP), across the Association an average of roughly 25 percent of students now live on or near campus, about half are classified as "local commuters," and the remaining 25 percent are "long distance commuters." Obviously, these percentages vary significantly school by school, but the shift is clear and dramatic.

The EMP project formed eighteen peer groups to explore models and practices that have sought to adapt to the changing circumstances of denominations, congregations, higher education, society, students, and a range of other factors that have brought challenges and opportunities to theological schools. Data show that across ATS many students are taking significantly longer than program designs specify to complete their degrees. More students are pursuing theological studies part time and many are accumulating burdensome debt to finance their education. The average age of theological students has risen to the mid-30s and many are seeking theological education while already serving congregations or other ministries. These factors have been described when introducing peer group participants to the project and most in the groups have agreed that they exist in their schools.

For this peer group, however, almost none of them are true. In the midst of the strong current of innovation across ATS these schools for the most part have maintained the traditional residential model, with some exceptions as noted in this report.

While there are some important differences between the schools within the group, they all understand "residential" theological education to include students taking all or nearly all of their classes on the school's campus who regularly interact with faculty members, many of whom may also live on campus and who often host students in their homes for social or educational gatherings. The schools offer regular worship services that gather the community and involve faculty, students, and staff and many of them regularly share meals provided by the schools' food services.

Why did the schools in the group engage this educational model or practice?

The schools in this group maintain their residential model of theological education for a number of reasons that will be described below. Fundamentally, though, they have all found the model to be effective in preparing the religious leaders needed by their constituencies.

The two Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LCMS) schools, Concordia Seminary (MO) and Concordia Theological Seminary (IN) follow their denomination's mandate to provide theological education in this way. Faculty members and students are nearly all members of the LCMS. The schools are deeply embedded in their denomination's culture and systems, relying on the LCMS to prepare and send students, many through LCMS colleges, on congregations of the LCMS for field education and a twelve month, third-year internship ("Vicarage") that includes virtually all MDiv students, and placement of graduates. Admission for both schools is a strenuous process involving the schools and various denominational bodies. Congregations within the denomination have high expectations of seminary graduates and the schools believe that the residential model is the best way to educate and form leaders for those congregations. Each school includes daily worship (5 days/week) with responsibility and leadership shared by faculty, students, and staff, followed by time for conversation.

Students at Virginia Theological Seminary are nearly all Episcopalian, most are pursuing the MDiv and studying full time. Students for the MDiv are admitted through a rigorous denominational process. Most students and faculty live on campus and all are involved extensively with "chapel, class, and lunch." In harmony with the Anglican/Episcopalian tradition, worship is celebrated three times per day, with attendance required at least once per day. Students and faculty are involved in planning and leading worship, and academics and other programs are shaped around the worship schedule. Lunch together is presumed to provide an opportunity for formation, but full schedules sometimes challenge that assumption. Most faculty are ordained priests. One morning per week formation groups of 12 students each meet with faculty in faculty homes. Students are provided access to spiritual directors from outside the community to assist in that area of formation.

The two Presbyterian schools are much more denominationally diverse in students and faculty than the LCMS schools or VTS. Louisville Presbyterian has about 50 percent Presbyterian Church in the United States of America students and Princeton's PCUSA enrollment is about 30 percent. The remainder of the students represent a range of denominational families and independent churches. Faculty members are also members of a range of denominations. At both institutions the great majority of students live on campus and take advantage of the schools' meal service. Louisville Presbyterian has a large Marriage and Family Therapy program that requires face-to-face study and this ethos influences the rest of the school's programming. The school's location in a border state and urban setting is distinctive as well as its heritage as a progressive institution dedicated to activism. Princeton is a larger school with a median student age of 26, significantly lower than the mid-30s average across ATS. The school's curriculum assumes full-time students and all classes are offered on weekdays during daylight hours. The school's board, administration, and faculty are committed to the residential model and consider residential theological education a core value. Chapel services are five days per week with leadership one day per week each by the president, the faculty, and the choir, and two days per week by students. The new seminary library is a hub of campus activity and most faculty and administrators live on or near the campus.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary has by far the largest enrollment within the group and is distinctive within the group by offering both strong residential theological education and a robust online program.[1] The school's large enrollment and high student to faculty ratio creates a challenge for in-depth interaction between faculty members and students, but the dedication of the faculty to mentoring students prompts students to name their relationship with faculty as the most important facet of their seminary education year after year. The school recognizes a recent change in students who are less clear about vocational goals than previous generations. The students bring a high level of commitment but are less likely, for example, to have clarity about a call to serve in existing congregations. The face-to-face model of education facilitates mentoring and advising that helps clarify ministry opportunities and vocations. The faculty and administration of the school have a strong commitment to the school's mission.

Each school spoke of the attractiveness of their campuses as an asset for their residential programming.

Crucial Issues and Questions

Like many schools across the Association, these schools that feature residential theological education also wrestle with the question of how, exactly, is the success or failure of their model of theological education to be measured? They recognize that some facets of formation are more difficult to measure than others,

[1] Southeastern compares student achievement in online courses with those in on-campus courses and has found equivalent performance. In biblical languages, the online students perform somewhat better than on-campus students.

such as maturity, character formation, and spiritual formation. There is also some question whether schools have been truly effective in measuring academic formation. The group heard descriptions of the student portfolios used by Virginia Theological Seminary and the assessment program being implemented by Concordia Seminary (MO), which attends to each student's personal and spiritual formation emphasizing eight outcomes and employing 130 different markers of growth and progress.

Also like other ATS schools, these institutions are facing the question of whether the residential model is financially sustainable, especially in the face of declining denominational support for some institutions. This question was named and remained on the edges of the discussions, both in terms of institutional financial viability and the financial viability of this model of theological education for students. Despite the robust financial aid offered to students by some schools in the group, many students use debt to finance their living expenses during seminary. The residential model is a very resource intensive way of doing theological education and it is crucial to be able to demonstrate its effectiveness, both for accountability and stewardship of the resources, but also to be able to make the case to constituents that the expenditure of resources is effective and necessary. Much is invested in students, for example, but some don't continue long-term in ministry.

Many schools are feeling pressures to explore less resource-intensive models or more efficient ways to utilize the resources they have.

Additional questions that arose include:

- What has been and will be the impact of competitor institutions on the viability of the schools that maintain emphasis on the residential model? Can the schools committed to the residential model effectively "make the case" for the value of this model?
- Can schools that continue the residential model learn from other models being used by other schools? Can that learning be applied effectively to their programs without compromising the heart of the residential model?
- In an increasingly digital world, how can schools using the residential model utilize digital technologies appropriately and resist inappropriate pressures? And how can they effectively discern between the two.
- How does the growing diversity of constituencies and populations affect the work of these schools? Do their models work only or best with their traditional constituencies? Does the model exclude some communities who find it difficult to attain the financial or educational requirements for study in these schools?
- The residential model has been described as an incubator. There are numerous benefits from this intensive nurturing environment, but does it best prepare religious leaders for real world ministry? Once they enter ministry, graduates often don't experience the strong support in ministry, regularity of worship life, community life, and mentoring that they experienced in seminary.
- One participant noted that "There are students we would 'mess up' if they uprooted from where they are living and serving and came to seminary!"

Opportunities and Benefits of the Residential Model

There is a distinctive opportunity of these three or four years of seminary study for focus on education and formation. It is a remarkable opportunity for both the school and the students for intensive attention to learning and shaping the person intellectually, pastorally, spiritually, and humanly.

When provided with thought and intentionality, formation happens both in the classroom and through a variety of circumstances, programs, and occasions of face-to-face interaction, both programmed and informal.

At the April 2017 Peer Group Forum, members of this group explored this question in some depth. The greatest amount of conversation centered on possible advantages of residential education with regard to student formation, and best practices or models for formation. While different schools and traditions have different language and understandings of "formation," most include four dimensions similar to those named in the Program for Priestly Formation of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: *Intellectual*, *pastoral* [some might say *vocational*], *human* [some might say *ethical*], and *spiritual*.

Being in-residence for theological education can require that students learn to listen actively and deal with conflicts that are inevitable in intentional communities. Mentors from a range of roles can guide people through incidents of conflict to make them better pastors.

Several schools have had good success with "formation groups." Concordia Seminary (MO) has a particular hour set aside each week, during which 5 or 6 students gather in groups for discussion of various topics, and utilizing a 360-degree assessment with set outcomes and agreed-upon markers of growth and progress. Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is considering forming regular formation groups, with the added feature of requiring attendance at a certain number of events on campus. To serve non-PCUSA students, LPTS also gathers denominational affinity groups such as the "Wesley Connection" and the "Presbyterian Connection." Virginia Theological Seminary has formed faculty advising groups that meet in faculty homes once per week. All schools value regular worship, ranging across the schools from three times per day (VTS) to twice per week (LPTS). Worship was highly rated by all participants as important for community and spiritual/vocational formation. Other practices mentioned as important for formation included groups of students cooking for one another, providing hospitality and service.

The relationships forged in the residential situation can last for a lifetime. This is especially important for those denominations that value connections between religious leaders that serve within their congregations and other ministries. Peer group members believe that the residential experience can shape people in a more consistent and common way than may be the case with some non-residential approaches. Residency facilitates common experiences in a common place, and likely assists in the placement process through the relationships and networks that have developed.

There is also value in moving people outside their comfort zones, to a new campus, to a more diverse community than their home congregation, and to a focus on academic and other processes of formation that seeks to minimize distractions. The "disruptions" of relocation could mean that students coming to campus *may* be more open to formation than those remaining in their current settings.

The group noted the potential for residential seminaries to function as gravitational centers or "planets" around which peripheral "satellite" programs could revolve, (e.g., programs for education in prisons). The satellite programs need the residential programs' core faculty, library, and the potential for long-term relationships in order to thrive.

There was discussion about differences in field education experiences of students at residential programs compared to those in online programs. Online programs require partnerships with local churches but the scale of some programs could make it hard to make sure all is happening as it should. Residential programs may be positioned to offer more oversight and accountability, as well as the opportunity to interact with other field education students. It also may be that there is more potential for exposure to different types of settings than is true for online programs.

Challenges and Obstacles for the Residential Model

The group was committed to identifying and avoiding "blind spots" that might hamper their effectiveness.

While the schools in this group are generally free from a substantial tuition burden on students, some students do accumulate debt due to living expenses. Indeed, studies from the ATS/Lilly Endowment Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers project reveal that covering tuition charges through financial aid does not fully address the problem of student educational debt.

Most of these schools have lengthy traditions of very successful theological education. That is a strength, but can also inhibit creative thinking and impede action to adapt to changing realities in higher education, the church, and the larger society. The group wondered how they might take full advantage of learning across the Association about educational models and practices.

All of the schools, their faculties, and their students find themselves to be very busy. There are numerous events and programs on their campuses that, if attendance is expected, can create additional stress for students in programs with very high academic expectations. Along with busy campuses and full academic responsibilities some of the schools require labor intensive work from faculty in student mentoring and formation. Field education and internship expectations place additional demands on students. Assessment of student learning and fitness for ministry are responsibilities also carried by faculty

Some of the schools fear that despite the outlay of resources and the opportunities provided for student education and formation, not all students are taking advantage of them. Due to a range of factors, including pervasive social media, today's students form community, communicate, and perhaps engage means of formation differently than previous generations. A number of people in the group remarked that is it important to be much more intentional that in the past about aspects of formation and ensuring student engagement and benefit.

There is a perception by some members of the seminary community (notably faculty), that if an activity or practice is not part of the academic curriculum it is less important than academic study. Many of the things that make the residential model of theological education particularly valuable and effective are *not* in the curriculum. How do schools help emphasize their importance in the educational and formational process?

At the April 2017 Peer Group Forum, members of the "residential" peer group engaged other peer groups in conversations. Insights from those discussions included:

Peer group 2 Educational Values of Online Education. Improvements and innovations in pedagogy from online teaching can enhance face-to-face teaching also.

Peer group 3 Master of Divinity Degree Duration. This group is proposing revising the ATS Standards of Accreditation to allow "stacking" the MDiv onto MA, rather than requiring surrender of the MA.

These schools have discovered that reducing required credits, e.g., from 90 to 72, has led to reduced revenue, which has not been made up through increased enrollment.

Peer group 4 Accelerated Bachelor's/MDiv. The group described 3-3 and 3-2 plans—with some appealing to older students without a bachelor's degree, and others appealing to students of usual college age. There was concern expressed about 22-year-old MDiv-pastors lacking time to develop wisdom and maturity for effective leadership. The group presented a helpful proposal to change ATS/HLC limits on non-degree admissions to exempt students who are in joint degree program.

Peer group 5 DMin Admission. This group raised questions about admission of students to the DMin with degrees other than the MDiv, and about asking ATS to change standard to permit this, with the MDiv still to be the norm.

Peer group 6 DMin Identity. Many programs appear to have high numbers of DMin students who complete their coursework but never go on to finish the project. Reasons for non-completion include general life issues, lack of clarity of degree purpose, and "fit" with their chosen program. Not all faculty are well suited to teaching in DMin programs. On the other hand, when they try it many who are initially reluctant find that they enjoy teaching DMin students very much. Some seminaries require a portfolio rather than project.

Peer group 9 Programs for Latino/a Students. The group noted some "tokenism" at work in schools. The group believes that the 15% exception in the ATS Standards for students without the B.A. is not high enough. It can also be a challenge to evaluate credentials from countries other than the U.S. and Canada.

Peer group 10 Global Partnerships. The group identified a number of options including: international students who coming to ATS seminaries, professors who go overseas to teach, and collaborations of various kinds. Reciprocity agreements can be difficult to formulate.

Peer group 11 Global Partnerships. The conversation included many inspiring stories. Reciprocity can have great potential for our seminaries in terms of learning from majority world, even if finances/resources are not an equal exchange.

Peer group 12 Asian Schools. Some students come from Asia to study here and go back, others come from Asia to study and stay with first-generation immigrant congregations in North America, others simply want to study at English language seminaries.

Peer group 13 Historically Black Schools. Many students are already serving in and/or stay in their home congregations. Some unique aspects of these schools are the emphasis on identity as African-Americans, close mentoring relationships with faculty, and relationships with pastoral mentors (many of whom are faculty). These schools emphasize their strong connection with community outside of seminaries.

Peer group 14a Competency-Based Theological Education. Schools using this form of theological education develop lists of competencies (27 at Northwest Baptist; 18 at Grace), that are verified and checked off by 1) faculty person, 2) mentor pastor, 3) church official. In the experimental version developed by Northwest Baptist, there are no traditional classes. Rather, students attend four weekend retreats annually. Fees are an annual flat rate until graduation. Course credits are no longer "coin of the realm."

Peer group 14b Competency-Based Theological Education. Competency can be assessed by direct assessment or by course credit. In a course credit model, students register for classes when they near mastery and are ready to demonstrate competence in that area.

Peer group 15 Programs in Prison. There must be a residential program in order to have program in prison in order to build trust with local prison over many years.

Also at the April 2017 meeting, the full residential group met with two other assigned groups for more extensive discussions.

Peer group 1 Formation in Online Contexts. The conversation was marked by some defensiveness and apologetics on both sides, which hindered genuine and open exchange. Because of this, the two groups were unable to focus on shared values. The exchange did lead to significant conversation among our peer group about how important it has become to be committed in residential programs to caring for students who have been displaced to new environment. Such stress *can* be wholesome for growth for students and their families, preparing them for what is to come, but it can also lead to negative outcomes for some students.

One highlight of meeting with **peer group 18 (University Divinity Schools)** was to appreciate how residential seminaries are able to bond in worship (at least in some cases, perhaps more so at more homogeneous institutions), while one member of peer group 18 commented that the diversity of the university made worship anything but unifying.

Remaining Questions and Areas for Needed Exploration

- How best to assess the transformation that takes place in community, within the residential model of theological education.
- It would be helpful to know how many graduates of the schools remain in ministry beyond five years, and how these schools and their partners within denominations can be more efficient.
- There needs to be more thorough analysis of the financial models associated with their residential educational model.
- How might residential theological schools might collaborate more effectively? Are resources being used as effectively and efficiently as they could be?
- The question of access to theological education. To whom is the system closed?
- It could be instructive to have a comparison of graduation rates between those from residential programs and online programs.
- Ultimately, we want to see that ATS standards still reflect what residential seminaries do.

Educational Principles that are Served by the Model

- Theological education should broaden horizons, experience for students, socially, culturally, spiritually, theologically.
- Students must be educated and formed to understand different contexts and to apply their learning in those contexts.
- Theological education involves the formation of whole persons.
- Theological education should develop relational abilities.
- Faculty, administration, and staff should be equipped to model community.
- The faculty as a whole, as a community, must have the training, abilities, skills, etc. necessary to fulfill the school's mission and its programming.
- Theological education must prepare students for lifelong learning.

The modifications that have taken place, or that are being contemplated by these schools can be very instructive to the many other schools that emphasize the values of residential theological education but are finding it harder and harder to maintain.

Appendix

What Residential Theological Education Fosters
(Melody D. Knowles, Academic Dean, Virginia Theological Seminary, August 2017)

It was not too long ago that packing up one's material possessions and moving onto a campus for three years of full time study was the norm for those earning an M.Div. degree. But this model is becoming increasingly rare at the almost 300 institutions that comprise the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and also within the narrower circle of post-graduate education in The Episcopal Church. In the context of declining enrollment and revenue, the past several decades have ushered in a sea-change regarding the ways in which seminaries and divinity schools across North America fulfill their calling. Online or hybrid programs are probably the most usual alternative, but other forms such as competency-based programs, programs where the M.Div. degree is "stacked" together with a B.A. degree, programs aimed at those in prisons, and programs co-taught with international partners are now not infrequent.

As a way to record and assess these changes, the ATS has been hosting focused conversations with representatives from member schools over the past year for a study titled "Educational Models and Practices." VTS was part of this conversation, and worked with a peer group to think about residential theological education. The peer institutions who also do most of their teaching in a residential context included two Lutheran seminaries (Concordia Seminary in MO and Concordia Seminary in IN), two Presbyterian seminaries (Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary), as well as a Baptist seminary (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary).

Given that what we do is now not the norm, it is helpful to articulate the advantages which have for so long simply been assumed. And given the considerable resources that such a model demands, it is good to consider whether these advantages are worthwhile. As VTS charts out its future course, this exercise of naming & evaluating should better equip us to ensure that distinctive values are preserved & enhanced.

As the group talked together, one of the first realizations was that our peer groups lived out residential education in a variety of ways. Our group of six seminaries counted no less than five different versions of "residence," ranging from almost all students and faculty living on campus, to mostly just students on or close to campus with faculty commuting, to both students and faculty commuting from up to 100 miles away. It is particularly striking that, even when compared to our cohort of residential seminaries, VTS is even more residential than most in that the large majority of both faculty and students live on campus.

Regardless of our residential differences, certain shared distinctives that our model fosters emerged.

Fostering Growth through Dislocation, Conflict, and Community
Most of our students have moved onto our campuses to learn as full-time students for several years. Leaving a community, especially one that has nurtured a vocational call, is disorienting. Suddenly, one is no longer "at home," but has joined up with those who do everything differently. Assumptions about everything from the creed to child rearing are all upended, and one becomes a stranger. In this context, education moves from the rehearsal of enshrined certainties to the engagement of difference. Further, since residency usually lasts for several years and includes family units, such an educational environment exposes us to life-wide modes of living — we witness the many different ways that Christians endeavor to live lives of faithfulness and even resistance to oppressive cultural norms. And because we can't avoid each other, living in residence hones our skills in communication and reconciliation. Finally, in this 24-

hour educational platform, we are better able to support non-traditional and international students learning in an immersive context in which so much may be new.

Fostering Daily Worship

Our communities have the opportunity to worship together regularly. Nothing in theological education replaces an experience of daily worship, with expectations for the participation and leadership of both students and faculty. As Dr. Ruthanna Hooke wrote in her Dean's Commentary on Aug 21, 2017, worship is where major modes of pedagogy all come together: "In worship we interpret and contextualize the texts and traditions of the faith, we are formed in the habits and disciplines of the faith, and we learn how to perform the leadership roles entrusted to us." While communally participating in our highest duty, our souls and vocational visions are formed for the service of God in the context of daily worship.

Fostering Pedagogical Innovation

Residential education embraces a variety of pedagogical platforms, and, at its best, has the potential of leveraging skills crucial in certain contexts to the benefit of others. Almost all of these differently-residential seminaries had some online offerings, some to a very significant extent and usually taught by the same faculty teaching in face-to-face contexts. As such, faculty teaching on residential campuses have the potential benefit of allowing different pedagogical practices and skills from a certain platform to enhance another one. Thus, for example, how can the necessary clarity and planning needed to develop a syllabus in an online context enrich the preparation of syllabi of face-to-face classes? And how might a largely-preplanned online context be deliberately stretched to allow for the innovation and tweaking mid-course that face-to-face teaching can more easily accommodate?

Fostering Emerging Scholarship

In a context where the religious mainline has lost its cultural dominance, and where its standard canons and operating procedures are called into question, the church needs leaders able to engage swift cultural changes as public intellectuals. Such leaders are most likely to be formed by an engaged faculty body committed to bringing the tradition to bear on the issues of the current age. And faculties that can model and resource a committed engagement with the big questions are well supported by institutions that can make long-term commitments to their scholarship and flourishing.

Fostering Risk

Residential education can also be sturdy enough to absorb risk and innovation. For many residential schools, a healthy endowment and valuable property mean that they are not likely to go under if a single idea doesn't work, a long-term commitment to a particular geography means that connections to social services agencies such as women's prisons and shelters can last over the years, and every emerging "revenue stream" does not have to be pursued for the sake of increasing financial reward. This is not to be taken for granted, and we are all vulnerable to institutional extinction. But the potential is present for fostering the kind of a thoughtful intellectual and/or pedagogical risk that could reap rich dividends or result in a failure that aids learning. Indeed, it just might be that stasis is the true enemy of residential schools, and avoiding it a constant prod to analysis and new ways of thinking.

Fostering Non-Residential Programming

With regular worship, support staff that works year round, and courses offered in online, intensive, and evening-only formats, the "full time, residential" program supports those who can only study part time. With a fully running chapel program and lively community gathering spaces, part time students can come from work to join in a service of Evening Prayer before their evening class, then share a meal at 1823 or a cup of coffee at the Flamingo with other students. Doctoral students who study on campus for three-weeks in the summer enjoy a fully-running library and core courses taught by full-time VTS faculty. Anglican Studies students can earn their required credits by being on campus from noon on Wednesday thru noon on Friday. VTS aims to be a residential program that supports and encourages others to join in and participate as fully as they can.

Fostering Gratitude and Giving

No student at VTS pays the full cost of their education. And it would be a rare community who could go out today and buy all that VTS has built over the last 200 years. Thanks to the generosity of donors over the years was well as prudent investment and spending strategies, the "full price" of our tuition and programming is highly subsidized. All who study and work here are the beneficiaries of thousands of strangers who came before us, and the recipients of gifts without measure. Properly acknowledged, we can live each day in gratitude and foster lives of generosity and service to God and the world.

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Introduction
The distinctive character of the mission, institutional, and educational work of the University Divinity Schools[1] prompted the formation of this peer group. All are embedded within research universities and emphasize both high-level academic education and preparation for professional ministries. Among these schools are those that provide through their doctoral programs many of the faculty who serve in ATS institutions. At the same time, the schools variously offer professional degrees such as the Master of Divinity, professional Master of Arts, and the Doctor of Ministry. Six of the schools offer the professional Master of Arts (relatively small programs at Truett, CUA, Candler, and Boston University, a bit larger at Duke, and at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry roughly 25 percent of its enrollment). Five schools offer the Doctor of Ministry (BU, Candler, CUA, Duke, and Truett). Duke, Truett, Candler, Vanderbilt, Wake Forest, and Yale have large Master of Divinity enrollment, while Ph.D. enrollment is largest at CUA and the University of Chicago.

As one participant put it, there can be tension between the "generative" and "preparatory" roles these schools assume. This tension cuts both ways, of course, and can be the catalyst for fruitful shaping of both functions. Some schools are closely affiliated with denominations, and others are either completely independent or only loosely connected with any particular denomination. They are generally more highly selective in admission than the norm across ATS, and their students are more usually full-time and younger than the average age of seminarians across the Association.

Perhaps more than is generally true of other schools, the University Divinity Schools train students for a remarkably broad range of "ministries," well beyond a focus on communities of faith, including many students in the Master of Divinity programs who serve in a range of non-congregational roles. In addition, some schools are multi-faith in their personnel and programming.

In some of the schools, a large percentage of students are religiously "unaffiliated." This raises questions about fitness of training and placement of graduates. Some schools have revised curricula to serve those with a variety of vocational goals and have revamped advising practices to help students with their vocational discernment. Some also have implemented programs to connect students with alumni and others to address issues of transitioning into various roles after graduation. In contrast to the past, some of the schools' graduates are experiencing greater difficulty in finding positions upon graduation.

Like relatively few other schools in the Association, these institutions live in the tension between "academic" and "professional," and, in fact, have done so from their founding. They are "hybrid" institutions and consider that the right place for them to be, providing possibilities for fruitful dialogue and effective preparation. The peer group's conversations raised the question of whether the current degree categories (academic, professional) are adequate and appropriate. Perhaps in a redevelopment of the Standards the categories need to be re-evaluated.

While theological research is an important part of most schools within the Assocation, it can be said to be at the core of University Divinity Schools' missions in a way that it is not and cannot be at many other ATS institutions. The distinctive mission of the University Divinity Schools provides both a model and a resource for other schools in the Association. These schools are also distinctively positioned within ATS to preserve key humanistic elements of the liberal arts.

[1] The phrase "University Divinity Schools" is used as shorthand in this report to refer to this group of schools that contains theological schools of a variety of names, including, "School of Theology and Ministry," "School of Theology," "School of Theology and Religious Studies," and "Theological Seminary."

Crucial Issues and Questions

The University Divinity Schools are unlike most members of the ATS community of schools because of their location in research universities. Yet their differences from one another are striking as well. Within the group of ten schools in the group, almost no statement includes all of them.

Some of the schools find themselves in situations that require defense of the theological disciplines within a university curriculum. Others are highly valued within the university structure and relish the opportunity for regular conversations with a different range of partners. In some cases, for example, the divinity schools are a moral voice and resource, an important role, perhaps especially in a secular university. At other times the prophetic voice of the divinity school can cause tensions with less progressive elements of the university community. Divinity school deans often serve on university cabinets affording them the opportunity to influence broader university policies.

Intersecting lines of a wide range of diversities remains a challenging issue for these schools. For example, the schools often find it hard to provide education for the Latino/a community since lower percentages of that community have bachelor's degrees, and these schools do not accept students lacking that credential. To do so would compromise their academic standing in the university. One dean noted that core elements of the "diversity" conversation are the same as those in the 1970s and 1980s and wondered why progress is so hard to achieve and sustain. There is also sometimes the irony of some groups' interests and challenges being "dropped" from the conversation, such as women on the faculty, when other issues surface. All participants agreed that the characteristics of students coming to and graduating from their schools are dramatically different from the students of a few decades ago.

Several schools also noted they have significant populations of LGBT students, faculty, and staff. Their presence offers important opportunities in the current political and religious environment and also poses challenges, especially in vocational development, placement, and educational indebtedness (particularly at the intersections of race/ethnicity and sexuality). Some of the schools specifically requested that the Association of Theological Schools attend to these changing demographics in their collection and interpretation of data, even if it is on a voluntary basis for individual schools.

These schools also have remarkable theological diversity, most common among students, but also to a certain extent with faculty. Schools have adopted a number of practices to enable contributions from students across the theological spectrum.

An area of challenge relates to the formational character of theological education. Theological, cultural, and religious diversities complicate the work of the schools related to student formation. The ATS *Standards of Accreditation* degree program standard for the Master of Divinity degree names four areas of required program content. "The learning outcomes for the MDiv shall encompass the instructional areas of religious heritage, cultural context, personal and spiritual formation, and capacity for ministerial and public leadership."[2] For some of the University Divinity Schools this requirement creates a tension between what is required by ATS and the expectations of regional accreditors and their universities. While intellectual and leadership formation are clearly part of their mission, "personal" and "spiritual" formation are not (or at least of much less emphasis). In some schools, indeed, diversity among the faculty and students makes it difficult to agree about what constitutes formation. In others, Christian practices of formation cannot serve all students. For more denominationally-oriented schools, this can be

[2] ATS Standards of Accreditation, Standard A, Master of Divinity, A.2.1.

less of an issue. Part of this distinction, both within the peer group and across the ATS membership might be the historic difference between a “seminary,” oriented toward pastoral and spiritual formation, and a “divinity school,” more commonly focused on intellectual formation.

How might redeveloped Standards of Accreditation accommodate a breadth of possibilities for this diversity of missions?

It may also be the case that facilitating healthy productive conversations about these diversities is an area in which the University Divinity Schools can provide leadership within the Association.

Another area of significant difference between the University Divinity Schools and most other members of the Association is the role and expectation of faculty. For example, the University Divinity Schools frequently evaluate tenure and promotion primarily or exclusively on academic productivity, and in some cases decisions about tenure and promotion are made by committees made up of personnel from across the university whose focus and expertise are academic rather than involving other areas of formation. In contrast, while most seminaries emphasize the importance of academic work, their criteria for tenure and promotion can be much broader.

Opportunities and Benefits
Because of their location in universities, these theological schools have regular interaction with faculty and students from other professional schools within the university. As one participant put it, these schools are among the few theological schools whose location within a community can facilitate a “broad humanistic education,” including the arts, history, philosophy, and the sciences, with those resources easily accessible on campus.

Offering master’s degree programs within a school that also offers academic doctoral programs provides a number of benefits to students in the master’s programs. Working with doctoral students can nurture scholarly skills within master’s students. The academic emphasis of University Divinity Schools can help develop the identity of “scholarly-pastor” and “pastoral-scholar.” In addition, the study of theology within the larger context of the disciplines of a university can provide opportunities for students to experience theology as a “discipline of engagement” with other areas of study. Finally, these schools frequently offer dual degrees, formally wedding the study of theology to study in other graduate professional disciplines.

The denominational schools work to balance ecumenical (and in some cases interreligious) diversity with maintaining denominational identity. Their denominational identity brings both strengths and challenges. The denomination is an important source of students who can receive the training they need for service, both at the Master’s and Doctoral levels. On the other hand, expectations and requirements imposed by denominations can limit the curricular and program freedom so important within a university context.

These schools are well positioned for the production of theological research. In fact, the schools named as a distinctive strength having research as a *basis* for the effective preparation of religious leaders. The research emphasis of the schools can also contribute to the effectiveness of master’s degree graduates. For example, those taking the MDiv degree in preparation to serve as chaplains frequently engage in research within health care institutions to show the efficacy of spiritual care and health care outcomes. Similarly, other graduates serve in a range of contexts that value research skills.

These schools have the resources and the context to be able to provide leadership in thinking globally about religions other than Christianity.

Challenges and Obstacles
The pool of applicants seems to be declining. This creates particular difficulties and tensions when compared to enrollment growth in some departments of the larger university. Some schools would like to attract more international students, from Africa for example, but financial issues are a problem. The group named these possible contributors to the decline in applications:

- The sources of students are not the same, and the schools can no longer rely on the "pipeline" from churches and college and university chaplains.
- There is a growing problem in North American society with perceptions of the profession of ministry. Many parents do not encourage their children to consider ministry.
- Unfavorable media portrayals of ministry and the church damage perceptions. Students are interested in religion, but not *that* religion.
- Denominations "shoot themselves in the foot" by the way some of their people and leaders behave.
- Many persons' view of "religion" has changed, for example, by being less oriented to religious institutions.

Mentoring of students by faculty is important, but fewer faculty are ordained and fewer have experience in pastoral ministry than in the past. It is important to recognize, though, that ordination is just one of the factors in mentoring. It is crucial that faculty affirm the school's mission, particularly to care for students.

A distinctive challenge named by the group dealt with the "vocational re-formation" of those students who had come to the school to pursue doctoral work but then decided against that path.

Financial Viability
The schools in this group are remarkably different from one another in their financial arrangements with their host universities. Some have a great deal of autonomy, while others are subject to financial decision-making that affects them but does not always include their input.

While all are well-resourced, at least compared to many schools in the Association, financial issues are a regular cause of concern. Some lament the levels of educational debt students bring from undergraduate studies and accrue during their graduate theological studies. Most of the schools are in urban areas with high costs of living, which exacerbates the problem. Even with strong financial support, including tuition remission and stipends, many students still go into debt to finance their theological education. Like other schools, they recognize that debt often most deeply affects students of color.

Students' expectation of robust financial assistance has led to something of an "arms race" between the schools who regularly compete for the same students.

Educational Principles
Theological research is crucial for the well-being of theological schools and for the preparation of religious leaders. While recognizing that not all theological schools should or can emphasize theological scholarship to the extent that these schools do, their work makes a necessary contribution to the community of schools. Theological research generates new knowledge, models intellectual vitality for students, pastors, and other religious leaders, and it informs the teaching of those who engage in it.

These schools provide the opportunity within the university setting of interaction and collaboration across the wide range of disciplines. In the midst of changes in theological education and theological schools, the value of the "broad humanistic education" possible in these institutions must not be lost.

Conversation across a remarkable range of diversities takes place in these institutions. This model of conversation is important for theological schools and the University Divinity Schools can provide leadership for the Association and society in providing models of fair and inclusive conversation.

The academic rigor and intellectual vitality characteristic of University Divinity Schools is an important model for schools across the Association.

Meetings with Other Peer Groups
As part of the April 2017 Peer Group Forum, individuals from the University Divinity School Peer Group met with representatives of a number of other Peer Groups.

Duration (Reduced Credit MDiv) Group
The schools in the MDiv duration group are doing things that may be interesting but not possible for university divinity schools. For example, the group discussed the "stackable" degree model which is built to allow students to earn certificates, add credits to earn an MA, and then with additional credits to earn an MDiv. It is not clear whether such an adjustment could work in the University context.

The schools in the duration peer group have all reduced the credit hours they require for the M.Div. Schools that pursued this path were not motivated primarily by the simple reduction of credit hours, but also by other initiatives such as curricular revision and establishing this stacking model for degrees. These projects led to the reduction of total credit hours for the M.Div.

DMin Identity Group
Three points of particular interest emerged from the conversation:

1. Direction and Student Support

Whether the program is directed by full-time director or part time faculty member has implications for the success of the program, especially as related to care for and support of students. As many as a quarter of DMin students will experience some sort of loss, such as a parent or spouse or job, during their enrollment in the program. Support by staff who can offer intense care/guidance for students helps enable them to finish the program.

Most students begin their DMin program with little to no experience with the social sciences. If a project-based system requires data collection, this has to be built into the curriculum.

Finally, retention and completion are difficult issues. Across ATS, 50% of DMin students don't *begin* writing the thesis, and of the 50% who begin, 50% *don't complete*. Thus, there is a 25% completion rate overall. Support for starting the project increases the capacity and likelihood of students to finish the project. Many schools need to strengthen their efforts in this area.

2. Why is the DMin "leading" institutional developments in some areas?

Generally, the DMin has a more diverse student population than in the residential student body, both in terms of racial/ethnic diversity and theological diversity. Community events on campus during DMin residencies can have a positive and enriching impact on both DMin students and those in other programs. Programs that use blended and online learning push institutions to explore those innovations. Faculty imagination is expanded by teaching students already serving in ministry settings and wrestling with particular ministry issues. Having regular faculty and administrators teaching in DMin programs emphasizes the school's investment in the program. DMin programs often utilize cohort models that enhance the educational and professional experiences of the students. Many of these innovations in DMin programs lead to similar changes in other areas.

3. Project vs. Thesis is an important conversation for University Divinity Schools.
Theses may be emphasized, but other models, such as portfolio models that focus on development of a project through the program, might strengthen retention and completion. The particular strength of University Divinity Schools to teach and interpret texts should be an area of focus in their DMin programs.

Global Partnerships Group
The global partnerships group named three particular problems emerging from their discussions:

1. Student formation across cultural contexts
The global partnerships group has identified a range of cultural challenges that must be addressed in such partnerships; language, orality vs. centrality of texts, differing student and faculty roles and attitudes, and ways of thinking (e.g., in some cultures critical thinking begins with the reality in front of you, not what is in a text).

2. Accreditation issues
The group noted assumptions that their partner schools have named, including the belief that North American standards are inherently higher. Many churches outside North America are growing, while many in North America are experiencing numerical decline. What impact does this have on understandings of accrediting standards? And who sets the standards?

3. What is "reciprocity" and how should it be framed, discussed, and processed?
The global partnerships group noted that despite best efforts, North American schools find it hard to avoid a paternalistic approach. The group wrestled with how to "take everything off the table," and start the conversation over on what constitutes just and effective global partnerships.

Competency Based Education
There are fundamental differences between CBE and the traditional patterns of theological education in University Divinity Schools. CBE is oriented first to context, and then turns back to academy, while the traditional model is first focused on the academy with contextual engagement along the way. At center of CBE is a focus on educational outcomes. Each competency contains a holistic set of concerns; intellectual, but also personal, spiritual, etc., and all dynamics of the competency have to be addressed. In addition, CBE relies heavily on online learning, in contrast to the residential focus of the University Divinity Schools.

Some in the University Divinity School group recognized a stronger bridge between academy and context, with, in fact, the context becoming more significantly connected to the academy than is often the case.

Mentorship is crucial to CBE. The model used by Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary, for example, utilizes three-person teams of mentors for each student, including a ministry mentor, a formation mentor, and a faculty mentor. Each mentor must affirm the student's mastery of each competency. It is up to the students to decide on their readiness to demonstrate mastery of competencies, and they complete the program when they demonstrate mastery of the all of the competencies.

Clearly, CBE could redefine the role of faculty. It is very labor intensive, with individual faculty members serving on numerous mentoring teams, and involves the work of reflecting on and analyzing the student's capacity in each competency, rather than only the more traditional faculty work of reading papers, evaluating class work, discussion, and exams. For schools adopting CBE, faculty development is crucial. The university divinity school group wondered if there are parallels between traditional marks for faculty evaluation in the university, "teaching, research, scholarship" and CBE.

Despite concerns, the university divinity school group recognized that many of their students "are crying out for the skills and capacities that these competencies offer." They wondered whether this approach could feature in co-curricular contexts, field education contexts, ministerial formation programs, and programs designed for training in particular skills.

The CBE group noted that one of the most important questions in the discussion is to be clear about what students need to know, be, do, etc., in order to work backward to develop the approach used in CBE.

The University Divinity School Group also met as a whole with two other groups.

Historically Black Theological Schools
The two groups explored how they might foster constructive partnerships with each other, given the institutional resources that University Divinity Schools bring to the table and the "natural resources" brought by historically Black schools. How can this relationship become more than a "hand down" relationship? Some possible resources and models include:

- possible sharing of "online" resources,
- development of consortia within which students can take courses across the membership,
- collaboration in programming grants, and
- sharing of insights about what constitutes "thriving" for black students.

Educational Values of Online Education
Those who affirm online education often point to the value of allowing students to remain within their context rather than moving to a campus. The University Divinity School group reflected that moving can, however, serve as a "rite of passage" shifting oneself (and, for some, one's family) to a residential context as *part* of one's theological education. Admittedly, the students at University Divinity Schools are often younger and more mobile and thus better able to relocate.

The groups discussed financial issues and wondered if there are data to confirm assumptions about cost savings for students. Are online students, for example, accruing similar amounts of educational debt as their residential peers?

It was noted that schools who do online education say they see positive results. ATS is gathering data from schools doing extensive online education and those data are important to this conversation. There also needs to be additional evidence about effectiveness of online education for ministry and how well students are prepared, for example, for denominational ordination interviews.

The group named another issue that could "slip through the cracks," the possibility of mental instability in a student that can be seen in person, but masked online. Can such students complete online programs and be ordained and in leadership, without anyone having a sense that this student's wellbeing is of some concern?

Remaining Questions and Issues

The University Divinity Schools group expressed the desire to find ways to continue their conversations. They found considerable value in gathering with peer schools that are at the same time distinctive within ATS, but that are also quite different in many ways from one another.

In some situations, for example, University structures can limit the theological school's work of innovation. Relationships of the divinity schools with their host universities vary, of course, and in a few cases disciplines such as homiletics, liturgics, and pastoral care do not translate well into university contexts. Schools in which this is the case have developed categories and classifications of faculty to work around this situation, "professors of the practice of . . . ," "clinical faculty," etc. This raises the danger of a two-tiered faculty, already complicated because of the distinction by some between the "classical" disciplines and "practical" fields. In other institutions, however, anything that smacks of a two-tiered system is vigorously resisted and a strong and well-recognized presence of the disciplines and faculty of "practical" theology have been developed over time.

With the disappearance of traditional feeder systems for the preparation and sending of students, questions remain about the recruitment and admission of students, especially in the denominationally-related schools.

Finally, in the face of sometimes debilitating student debt, the schools must address issues related to student financial health.

Overall, the University Divinity Schools, while in some ways strikingly different from one another, and taken together are somewhat distinctive within the Association, have a crucial place within the membership. They are uniquely situated to engage the broad context of the liberal arts as well as the social and natural sciences that can inform theological study. Their doctoral programs both equip many of those who will become faculty members of ATS schools, and enable interaction of master's level students with researchers, both faculty and doctoral students, and mentors who are leaders in theological scholarship.

The University Divinity Schools also play an important bridging role between the often separated realms of "academic" and "professional" preparation for religious leadership. More than others, these schools argue for the academic viability of theological discourse in higher education. In an increasing secular world this is a vital function on behalf of theological education in the public sphere.

The future of the Association of Theological Schools will be strengthened and enriched by the distinctive voice of the community of University Divinity Schools. And their work likewise can be enhanced by ongoing conversations with their ATS peers.

The Association of Theological Schools
expresses its appreciation to Lilly Endowment Inc.
for its generous support of this project.

The Association of Theological Schools
The Commission on Accrediting

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