Self-Study Report for continued accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools

Luther Seminary

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Luther Seminary

Self-Study Report

For continued accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools

Luther Seminary
February 2015
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I. Introduction

Luther Seminary exists to educate leaders for Christian communities called and sent by the Holy Spirit to witness to salvation in Jesus Christ and to serve in God’s world. While much has changed over the last ten years, this remains true.

We are confessional and missional—boldly confessing the Christian faith as expressed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessions even as we participate in the creative and reconciling work of God in the world today. We understand that theological education involves the whole person and is done in community. The Scriptures convey promises that witness to God’s faithful character. Those promises shape us in community and move us to engage a complex world. And, as we have been discovering over the past two years, those promises also equip us to respond when a complex world engages us.

In September 2012, Luther Seminary confidently entered into a fifth year of disciplined growth under the guidance of its dynamic, annually-adjusted and updated strategic plan. In the midst of denominational and economic troubles, we had steadily expanded our capacities to educate leaders for Christian communities. We had emerged from the Great Recession, not as a struggling graduate school, but as a center of learning on behalf of the church for the sake of the world. Our strong faculty, innovative programming, robust technical infrastructure, comprehensive support services, and new media experiments were widely praised and admired.

In October 2012, everything changed. Inside Higher Ed would later report, “It all came crashing down. Enrollments were dropping. The seminary found it was running multimillion-dollar deficits, spending down its endowment and relying on loans.” By December, our institutional Boards had appointed an interim CFO and President. Staff layoffs followed in early 2013. Voluntary faculty reductions began at the end of the academic year.

The shift in perspective was stunning. But the institution and its constituents quickly rallied to adapt to these new realities, to respond to the intrusion of a complex world. And now, in the fall of 2014, we celebrate the appointment of a new President and CFO, the launch of a new curriculum, and significant progress towards a new ideal of financial sustainability.

This self-study, while formally a review of the past ten years, is deeply and profoundly shaped by the demands of the last two years—understanding the immediate causes of our financial challenge and restoring equilibrium. This story will be engaged most specifically in conversation with ATS Standard 8.2 and HLC Criterion 5.A.5, but informs all the deliberations that follow.

Now, however, we are poised to move beyond recovery and chart a new course. We are at work on a new strategic alignment plan, an effort to more efficiently, effectively, and intelligently direct (and assess) our post-recovery work of educating leaders for Christian communities.

About Luther Seminary

Luther Seminary is one of eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and educates leaders for Christian communities through four distinct processes: Missional Pastors (MDiv), Academic and Professional Degrees (MA), Graduate Theological Education (MTh, DMin, PhD), and Lifelong Learning for Leadership (continuing studies).
These educational processes are influenced by common theological convictions, neatly summarized by our first-degree curricular strategy and its four interrelated movements: learning the Christian story, interpreting and confessing the story, leading in mission according to the story, and living the story.

Luther Seminary has a deep and faithful heritage and a compelling mission of “educating leaders for Christian communities, called and sent by the Holy Spirit to witness to salvation in Jesus Christ and to serve in God’s world.” We are blessed with excellent faculty, staff, and students. We are upheld, both in prayer and donor funding, by remarkably dedicated constituencies, including the ELCA and synods, congregations, alumni, and individual congregational members.

Both the church systems we serve and theological education in general are undergoing massive disruptive change due to wider cultural trends that shape how religious identity and community are formed in today’s world. Luther Seminary has been a leader in innovative responses to this changed environment over the past few decades, including curricula focused around missional leadership, expanded distributed learning programs, and enhanced lifelong learning.

Demographic summary
Luther Seminary currently enrolls 622 students. Of these, 57% are pursuing the MDiv, with 120 enrolled in the MDiv DL (Distributed Learning) program. Some 375 come from outside the upper Midwest region (Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois) in addition to 56 international students. In a yearly survey by ATS, entering students consistently rank quality of the faculty, academic reputation, and theological perspectives in the top five reasons to choose Luther Seminary. Luther awarded $2.8 million in scholarships in 2013-14 with 86% of new students receiving merit-based scholarships of some kind.

Luther Seminary has 29 faculty members, representing a diversity of faith traditions: Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Catholic, Pentecostal and Baptist. To date, current Luther Seminary faculty members have published more than a hundred books and contribute to numerous academic journals.

The seminary’s total income budget is $20.4M, with 41% coming from private gifts and grants, 18% from the endowment, 6% from auxiliary enterprises, 8% from our sponsoring denomination (ELCA), and 27% from tuition and fees. The endowment is $86.96M. Annual full-time MDiv tuition is $15,500. We have 3,451 alums in all 50 states and at least 46 countries.

Major changes since 2004
As mentioned above, institutional awakening to financial, leadership, and cultural challenges after October 2012 dominates the horizon of this self-study report. But by way of introduction to matters of importance at Luther Seminary from 2004-2014, here then is a summary timeline:

2004
- Establishment of Presidential Search Committee following retirement announcement of Dr. David Tiede
- Board authorizes Western Mission Cluster Task Force to develop plans for greater collaboration and shared planning between Luther Seminary and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA
• *Called and Sent* fundraising campaign is launched – first fully public campaign for Luther Seminary
• Annual report focuses on nascent distributed learning program in Children, Youth and Family and MSM (Masters in Sacred Music) degrees
• Enrollment: 758 students, 367 MDiv and the remainder MA, MSM, Mth, Phd, DMin and non-degree

2005
• Richard Bliese elected President
• Established process for development of next strategic plan, *Serving the Promise of Our Mission (SPOM)*
• Vice President for Administration and Finance, Donald Lewis, elected
• Northwestern Hall classrooms remodeled
• Luthernet online portal expanded and administrative computing enhanced with new Jenzabar software
• Enrollment : 804 students, 135 ecumenical students representing 34 denominations

2006
• Board identifies reduction of student debt as a key focus of new strategic plan (SPOM)
• Board authorizes planning for major remodeling of Olson Campus Center
• Enrollment:  836 students, 51% male, 49% female
• Faculty:  47 regular members

2007
• President Bliese and Academic Dean David Lose report on efforts to increase ties to Lilly Foundation granting process by increasing number and size of several grant requests – reference strategic plan
• Board expressed concern for adequacy of faculty compensation and authorized VP for Administration and Finance and Academic Dean to develop “comparison matrix” with comparable schools
• Major revisions to Faculty Handbook were begun
• Center for Lifelong Learning reports on growing array of conference, classroom and Luther Production (media arm of LLL program) products
• Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws revision process begun by Board Governance Committee
• Board approves moving forward on Campus Facilities Master Plan
• Faculty strongly affirm the effectiveness of the strategic planning process in regular meeting

2008
• Roland Martinson elected as new Academic Dean
• Dean Martinson reports that up to 8 new faculty members will be called in 2008-2009
• Reorganization of Center for Lifelong Learning intended to support gains already achieved
• Board Chairman Dovre expresses concern for declining enrollment, with too much dependence on gift income
• President Bliese discusses initiative to “grow” enrollment to 1,000 students by 2011-2012, including bolstering MDiv numbers as part of this growth
A Bold and Faithful Witness strategic plan rolled out
Academic Dean Martinson reports on results of personal conversations completed with all faculty in his first year
Bold and Faithful fundraising campaign launched – $125 M goal, largest ever

2009

Facilities update included progress on planning for Gullixson Hall/Library renovation, but 2008 recession slowed actual advances
Biblical Proficiency Exam requirement dropped for all degree programs
Budget balancing strategies unveiled, including reducing spending, discussion of elimination of certain programs, voluntary retirements and involuntary reductions in staff
Mid-Winter Convocation draws over 600 participants; First Celebration of Biblical Preaching draws 200
Admissions staffing realigned and enlarged
Luther Seminary awarded $1.6 M grant from Lilly Endowment for Vibrant Congregations Project
Enter theBible.org online Bible study tool launched, soon 6,500 hits per month
Enrollment: 848 students, 51 international students from 20 countries

2010

Moved by the Promise, Luther Seminary’s new public identity launched
WorkingPreacher.org, already highly successful in English formats, introduces Spanish language commentary
Luther Seminary enters into shared, contractual arrangement with Human Resources staff from Augsburg Fortress Publishers.
Sandy Middendorf named Vice President of Human Resources and Organizational Development as part of Cabinet reorganization. New titles of vice president applied to members.
Design work on Olson Campus Center remodeling, including new “living room” communal space on 2nd floor, commences.
Enrollment: 796 students

2011

Virginia-based Preaching Conference, Inc. purchased by Luther Seminary and placed within Center for Lifelong Learning
New Director of Library Services, Andrew Keck, called to position
Faculty Handbook revisions completed through work of Faculty Concerns Committee
VP for Administration and Finance Lewis reports on continuing concern over decreasing revenues of Luther Seminary Bookstore
Work begins on Program Re-Design and Curricular Revision (PRCR) and Rolf Jacobson named project director
Major revision of benefits package for all employees begins as part of budget balancing efforts
Remodeling work on Olson Campus Center completed and new coffee shop opened
Enrollment: 764 students

2012

First Distributed Learning (DL) cohort graduates
• New Campus Master Plan unveiled – financing secured for 10 year capital improvement plan for Gullixson, Bockman and Northwestern Halls.
• New Director of Marketing and Communications hired
• Masters in Sacred Music program reviewed and placed on suspension
• October/November Board meetings reveal troubling financial news: $15 M in debt, significant revenue losses for 3 years and pattern of funding shortfalls from loans and tapping endowment funds
• Vice President of Administration and Finance Lewis resigns
• William Frame elected Interim Chief Financial Officer
• President Bliese resigns
• Richard Foss elected Interim President

2013
• Phd program put on hiatus pending a financially viable plan for support
• Blue Ribbon Task Force on “right-sizing” faculty begins work
• Major staff reductions in March
• Faculty retirements and resignations increase
• Enrollment: 764 students

2014
• Refurbishment of Gullixson Hall completed, including installation of new elevator
• Celebration of completion of successful *Bold and Faithful* fundraising campaign
• New President Robin Steinke installed
• New location of Luther Seminary Bookstore opens on main floor of Olson Campus Center with new business model and greater visibility
• Enrollment: 696 students

**Accreditation history**
First accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in 1944, our most recent reaffirmation was in 2005 after a joint visit with the Higher Learning Commission in November 2004. The Commission voted to require reports on:

1. A plan for comprehensive, systematic assessment of student learning
2. Progress on the strategic plan to improve library capacity
3. Evaluation of the Master of Arts program
4. Clarification of current admission criteria to the Doctor of Philosophy

Reports were submitted and received regarding the assessment and library capacity, with admission criteria for the PhD appropriately clarified and procedures approved in 2006. The issue of MA degree nomenclature required further correspondence and consultation, but was ultimately resolved by June 2007. Subsequent accreditation actions regarded our expanding distance education program, the introduction of two new joint degree programs, the suspension of PhD admissions, and the discontinuance of our Masters of Sacred Music degree. Luther Seminary continues to be timely, honest, and complete in our relationship with the Association.
In addition to the official accrediting relationship, Luther Seminary continues to engage in projects and professional development opportunities with the ATS, including authoring articles for *Theological Education*, participation in accreditation teams, consultations with ATS staff, engaging with various projects (like CORE), and hosting a biennial meeting in Minnesota.

**Self-study design**

While an early planning timeline had suggested the beginning work of self-study in the Fall of 2012, the unexpected financial crisis and its immediate aftermath commanded complete institutional attention through the spring of 2013. During that time, we negotiated for later spring 2015 (rather than fall 2014) accreditation visits. At the departure of the proposed Director of the Self-study in early summer 2013, Luther identified new leadership for the Self-study and formally appointed the Self-study Team membership:

- Andrew Keck, Chair, Self-study Team; Director of Library Services; Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Carrie Carroll, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment/Dean of Students
- Craig Koester, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs/Academic Dean
- Bill Frame, Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration (through 7/2014)
- Jason Misselt, Editor, Self-study Team; Associate Director for Program Development
- Michael Morrow, Vice President for Finance and Administration (starting 10/2014)
- Bonnie Raquet, Chair, Foundation Board of Trustees and Member, Board of Directors
- Gerri Stepanek, Controller
- Andrew Yackel, Fourth-year student

Beginning our work in August 2013, the Self-study Team approved a formal charge and timeline for our work as well as a communications plan for the campus and external communities. Self-study Team members adopted one or more major standards and generated an initial draft, developing a system of workgroups (experts who wrote parts of the section) and respondents (a cross-section of faculty, staff, students, and board members who reviewed the whole section). In some cases, responsibilities for drafting responses to a specific component within a section were first assigned to relevant institutional experts, and then revised and integrated by the committee member prior to review by respondents. Once the draft was complete (or as specific issues arose), the Self-study Team as a whole would also read through and suggest revisions for each section. Throughout, we found and collected data and documents to support our work. In addition, two Self-study Team members (Andrew Keck and Carrie Carroll) attended an Association of Theological School workshop on accreditation in Fall 2013 and two Self-study Team members (Andrew Keck and Craig Koester) attended the HLC Annual Conference in Spring 2014.

An initial draft, organized by ATS standards but including some unique aspects of the HLC criteria, came together in early June 2014. From there, a second and separate full draft organized according to the HLC criteria was developed by mid-July 2014. Our new President, Robin Steinke, was then able to review both drafts and provide useful input. The Self-study Team released a draft of its report on September 15 for public review and comment through November 1. While all constituents were invited to submit questions via email or public forum, sections of the drafts were assigned for more careful review to select administrative, faculty, and board committees:

**Administrative and faculty committees**
In each case, the Self-study Team sought feedback related to the following prompts:

1. Does your assigned section of the draft accurately reflect what you know about this area?
2. Has the Self-study Team missed anything that would strengthen Luther’s response?
3. Identify the top 1 to 3 insights within your assigned sections that would be most important to highlight for our creditors

The feedback helped inform further edits and improvement to both documents. The multiple perspectives helped us to better tell our story, particularly the story of our recent financial crisis and recovery. The insights noted in the third question, along with other ongoing strategic work, helped us fully develop and state our overall conclusions. Updated final reports were publically posted on December 1, 2014 for board affirmation. The report reflects the breadth of perspectives engaged in the underlying self-study process, mostly undertaken between September 2013 and July 2014. Again, this effort was undertaken concurrently with a Presidential search, the development of a new first degree curriculum, and the leadership of an interim President, CFO, and Academic Dean.

Organization

Our 2014 Self-study Report intentionally follows the structure of the Standards/Criteria and, with it, some redundancy occurs as common realities are assessed from contrasting vantage points. We have tried to eliminate extraneous footnotes and other interruptions to the main text in favor of a brief list of further data and documents for each section. A separate complete list of these documents is also included in the study documents.
II. General standards (GS)
GS 1 – Purpose, planning, and evaluation

LUTHER SEMINARY EDUCATES LEADERS FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

+ called and sent by the Holy Spirit
+ to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ and
+ to serve in God’s world.

Purpose (1.1)
Related HLC criteria: 1.A and 1.B and 5.A

Luther Seminary formally adopted its statement of institutional purpose in 1995. The drafting process included all appropriate constituencies and continues to meaningfully articulate the school’s particular mission, identity, and values. While this is especially true for those who directly participated in the process, the statement has been formally reviewed and reaffirmed several times since then, most recently in the design, development, and adoption of a new first-degree curriculum in 2013 and in the current Strategic Alignment Proposal. The new curriculum self-identifies as an affirmation and extension of a twenty-five year educational strategy to “form evangelical public leaders.” Understood in the context of institutional documents and memory, this peculiar phrase effectively distills the 1995 purpose statement into these four words.

The new curriculum effectively builds upon “a tradition of faithful learning and adaptation” that had already cycled through four distinct iterations: 1) 1993 curricular revision, 2) 1995 mission statement, 3) 2000 strategic plan, and 4) 2007 strategic plan. The iterations are summarized as follows:

1. Curricular revision
   In 1993, the faculty adopted a curriculum that recognized the church’s need for leaders capable of purposeful action in service to evangelical mission. It is an incisive and innovative curricular strategy that leads from learning the Christian story to interpretation and confession and then to leading in mission to strengthen Christian discipleship. This curriculum continues to serve as the foundation for the seminary’s teaching and learning.

2. Mission statement
   In 1995, the seminary adopted a mission statement affirming the curricular strategy of the faculty by highlighting Luther Seminary’s primary calling to “educate leaders for Christian communities.” Through its Trinitarian shape, this statement also recognized and affirmed the centrality of witness to the gospel and service to God’s world. The mission statement continues to stand at the center of the seminary’s self-understanding.

3. Serving the promise of our mission
   In 2000, the seminary adopted a groundbreaking strategic plan that focused the resources of an entire institution on preparing leaders for apostolic mission in an age of many faiths and

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1 See the 2004 Self-study for additional context and details, especially pp. 8-10.
cultures. It outlined ambitious goals and standards and led to a number of significant and strategic initiatives that continue to shape decision-making at all levels.

4. A bold and faithful witness

The most recent strategic plan was adopted in 2007 and has been updated annually through 2012, with a new strategic alignment process emerging in the summer of 2014. According to our strategic plan, evangelical public leaders “provide leadership for Christian communities by giving voice to the gospel of Jesus Christ (the ‘evangel’), by teaching and confessing faith in the triune God, by entering into God’s mission and service in the world and leading others in that work, and by demonstrating the skills needed to gather a community around that mission.” In the strategic plan, our seminary also promises the church that our graduates “will be prepared to lead the church in apostolic mission.”

The new curriculum extends and deepens this tradition, again re-affirming the educational strategy summarized in our institutional purpose statement (i.e., forming evangelical public leaders for apostolic mission). Likewise, the Strategic Alignment Proposal affirms our mission and identity while serving as a significant bridge document to a new strategic planning cycle.

The financial and leadership challenges that came to light in late 2012 severely tested—but ultimately validated—the practical resonance of this tradition. Confronted by an unexpected crisis, Luther’s external constituents, institutional Boards, and interim administration quickly united behind this history of shared purpose, passionately and decisively acting to put the institution back on course. This referendum on Luther’s consistent institutional purpose also proved it to be effectively realistic, accurate, and resonant. In short, it helpfully guided action amidst great uncertainty.

1.1 Further Documents and Data:

2004SelfStudyReport.pdf
2007StrategicPlan.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

Planning and evaluation (1.2)


The practical utility of Luther’s institutional purpose is not surprising. The distinctive theological vision articulated here (i.e., forming evangelical public leaders for apostolic mission) has long invited an unusual attentiveness to audience and context, an uncommon rhetorical sensitivity.²

The resolve bore fruit. In 2007, we described progress toward this “culture of assessment” as follows:

Overall institutional evaluation has proceeded well along these lines. “Dashboards” for most areas of institutional operation (e.g., finances, budgets, facilities, recruitment, student body, development, etc.) have been created and used effectively for several years. The data is

² For linkages to planning and evaluation by way of engagement with the rhetorical tradition in the 1993 Curricular Revision, see To Teach, To Delight, and To Move: Theological Education in a Post-Christian World, pp. 281-296.
gathered by the Vice President of Administration and Finance, deliberated within the administrative cabinet and within the faculty administration, and used in decision-making about all operations.

We formally reaffirmed this commitment to assessment in a new strategic plan that same year (2007). Here we sought to both “teach and model adaptive leadership,” by “establishing and maintaining [a] continuous cycle of listening and response. The plan adopted five strategic institutional goals that would “set a clear direction for the seminary and provide useful criteria by which to evaluate any and all opportunities and decisions.”

1. Luther Seminary will produce graduates who will lead Christian communities in apostolic mission for the sake of God’s world
2. Luther Seminary will attract and support people with the character, capacity, and commitment to further the seminary’s mission
3. Luther Seminary’s facilities will be transformed to support the teaching, learning, and community that take place on campus and around the world
4. Luther Seminary will foster a culture that supports our common mission.
5. Luther Seminary will be a responsive learning organization supported by a culture of assessment and accountability

Critically, the fifth and final goal signaled “our unswerving commitment to listen, learn, adapt, and change in order to be faithful to the promise of our mission and in this way enable us to achieve the other four goals.”

The two core practices of Luther’s culture of assessment and accountability during this time period were integrated into the strategic plan itself, reviewed and updated annually, and linked to a “dashboard” or “institutional scorecard” that was reviewed and updated quarterly. Informed by a deep sense of institutional purpose, these two comprehensive planning and evaluation practices officially guided decision-making at Luther about programs, resources, and constituencies between 2007 and 2012.

Annually updated editions of the strategic plan detailed specific strategies and action steps for realizing each of the five institutional goals, as well as an overarching theme or emphasis for each year. Updated institutional scorecards were then linked directly to the updated strategic plan each year. Progress made toward institutional vitality goals (as measured by the scorecards) was then reported out at predetermined times throughout the year, usually in conjunction with a meeting of the Boards.

For example, the 2012-13 edition of the scorecard (located with the 2012 Strategic Plan Update) related the institution’s overarching mission of forming evangelical public leaders for apostolic witness to a unique focus for that year (i.e., the Eight Cylinder Strategy) and then to specific impact areas (e.g., Strong Financial Resources) derived from the strategic plan’s five goals (i.e., Goal 4). The scorecard then identified an institutional home or owner for each impact area (i.e., “Finance and Administration; Seminary Relations”) and a description of specific measures (e.g., “$ Revenues Received”) that would then be used to assess effectiveness relative to a predetermined benchmark or target (i.e., “$24M”). The status of these efforts was then reported quarterly in the manner of a traffic control signal with red, yellow, or green shaded circles under the heading “Actuals.”
Annual revisions to the plan and scorecard, Luther’s two-pronged approach to comprehensive institutional evaluation, were usually introduced at special kick-off gatherings for key constituencies (e.g., faculty, staff, etc.). It was common practice to gather these groups again following Board meetings to present status updates. Similar presentations occurred even more frequently during the Great Recession. Reports from the institution’s comprehensive evaluation process were widely shared and discussion was encouraged.

An introduction to the 2012-13 edition of the plan and scorecard released to seminary staff on 6/29/12 counseled:

> read these documents, ask questions, talk about their contents—we want these items to be useful tools that help us to fulfill our mission. Please look these over and turn to your department heads with any questions or concerns.

Luther Seminary continues to benefit from a long and resonant history of consistent institutional purpose. The particular nature of this purpose awakened us to the opportunity and threat of a changing cultural context and the necessity of deep listening—for ourselves, our graduates, and our constituencies—as early as 1993. We aspired to become a responsive learning organization and began to cultivate a culture of assessment and accountability; we aspired to rigorous evaluation and planning practices for the sake of institutional vitality and, ultimately, God’s world.

This was the state of the institution in the summer of 2012. However, the liquidity crisis that came to light in October of that year demanded an immediate shift in direction and, increasingly, a reappraisal of the culture of assessment and accountability we thought we had cultivated.

The details of this shift and ongoing reappraisal will be engaged throughout the self-study (esp. GS 2, 7, 8), but the story begins here:

In October 2012, the Board’s Finance and Administration Committee, working with the new controller and the seminary’s auditors, confirmed that accumulating operating losses had exhausted unrestricted cash reserves and precipitated, during FY12, a $4M additional withdrawal from our endowment to meet operating cash needs. Halfway through FY13, this borrowing from the endowment for operating purposes had reached $7 million. (GS 8.2)

This unforeseen financial crisis led to the departure of the Vice President for Finance and the President, and required the new interim leadership to engage in an intensive period of planning and evaluation. The interim leadership, along with our institutional boards, after developing a clear picture of Luther’s overall financial condition, developed a definition of financial sustainability:

> Be it Resolved on this 11th day of October, 2013 that Luther Seminary shall have achieved “financial sustainability” when it achieves unrestricted operating surpluses sufficient to maintain its programs and match its annual depreciation expense such that:

(1) The Seminary generates regular operating surpluses of $500,000 or 2.5% of gross revenues, whichever is higher; and

(2) Such surpluses shall be utilized and invested as may be determined with the advice and consent of the Boards of Directors and Trustees, and their Executive Committee, based on the
recommendations of the Finance & Administration Committee and/or the Investment Committee; and

(3) The Seminary extracts cash proceeds from the sale and/or development of capital assets between FY’14-’23 sufficient to reduce by 5% annually its deferred maintenance liability (currently estimated to be $10M), and reduce to 0 the balance of any amounts owed by the Seminary to its own endowment.

As learning leaders, we must reckon with the uncomfortable gap between the seemingly adequate—if not enviably robust—capacity for purposeful planning and evaluation that we thought we had and the descriptive reality of a financial crisis that increasingly looked more like a leadership/identity/culture crisis. While there is much to celebrate in our 2004-2012 planning and evaluation work, and while our immediate responses to the crisis revelations in 2013 and 2014 were appropriately decisive, we are now poised to enter a new phase in our institutional life.

Our new strategic planning cycle demands a posture of constructive curiosity—not as an end in itself, but as a means toward a more faithful future. This is true, not because we previously failed to attend to the demands of sustainable innovation, but precisely because we thought we had attended to them so deeply. The reality of work yet to be done does not negate the reality of work already undertaken or imagined. As mentioned above, we have, buoyed by our strong purpose, aggressively moved to respond to more proximate risks.

There is more to purpose, evaluation, and planning at Luther Seminary than responding well to crises. These dramatic responses were made possible by a foundation that remains strong. For example, work was well underway on our new curriculum before the events of October 2012. The new curriculum for MA and MDiv programs was implemented in Fall 2014 and integrated several new elements for educational effectiveness. This includes formal learning outcomes for each program, a system of portfolio-based reviews within an integrative course (Learning Leader), and the establishment of an Assessment Committee. In addition, “Assessment forums” including faculty, staff, and students for discussion of assessment data and processes were piloted in Spring 2014 and is now on the regular calendar at least twice each semester. Finally, the establishment of an Office of Institutional Effectiveness further institutionalizes assessment and planning efforts on campus.

Likewise, there are, and have been, a host of smaller planning and evaluation experiments simmering beneath the surface of our comprehensive framework. Taken together, they demonstrate a capacity and commitment that will, particularly when put in conversation with each other, serve us well as we imagine and implement a more credible approach to sustainable innovation. Examples of these early indicators, many of which are engaged elsewhere in this self-study, include the Library White Paper, Blue Ribbon Committee, Presidential Search Process, Peer Mentoring Initiative, Contextual Learning Performance Management, and the Bookstore Task Force. This last example is particularly notable insofar as it reversed course and transparently engaged an adaptive challenge while cultivating neglected lateral relationships.

With the appointment of Dr. Robin Steinke as President as of June 1, 2014, Luther Seminary’s budgeting and planning effort moved from crisis budgeting and interim planning to an intentional and long-term focused process. An Issues and Opportunities for Luther Seminary document, initially developed during
the fall of 2013, has become the basis for the Strategic Alignment Proposal that will bring together the goals of sustainability and mission into our budgeting process for the next fiscal year.

1.2 Further documents and data:
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2014AssessmentCommitteeMembershipandCharge.pdf
2014BookstoreRecommendations.pdf
2014DirectorInstEffectiveness.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

Summary recommendations
Questions going forward include: how we can multiply recent deliberative experiments such as the Blue Ribbon Commission, the Bookstore Task Force, etc., and continue to cultivate more credible “responsive learning organization” virtues and skills; and, particularly, how we can practice a vigorous humility along the way. As we enhance our planning and evaluation processes at Luther Seminary, we would identify a number of specific elements to be included:

• Continue use of Luther Seminary’s mission statement to shape priorities and planning throughout the institution. It informs the focus on leadership formation in the MA and MDiv programs, and in graduate theological education.

• Bring a greater coherence to our resource management and lay the groundwork for a more extensive strategic planning process. Luther Seminary’s planning and evaluation process, while establishing a strong vision for the future, was insufficiently attentive to some areas, particularly our finances. Subsequent attention to questions of sustainability and alignment throughout the Luther has led to the development of the Strategic Alignment Proposal.

• Enhance our planning and evaluation processes at Luther Seminary through creating systems of strategic planning and review at both the institutional and unit level. As we learned from the recent Bookstore Task Force, it can very helpful to use internal and external peers, benchmarking, and external consultants to engage in a strategic review and allow units the opportunity to develop a longer planning horizon. The Strategic Alignment Proposal signals the value of alignment of various units with one another and larger institutional goals.

Finally, looking to the near future, we anticipate implementation of a host of positive new purpose, planning, and evaluation practices along with the new curriculum. After much hard work over the past ten—but especially, the past two years— we now anticipate a bold leap forward in our effective competence as a responsive learning organization.
GS 2 – Institutional integrity
Luther Seminary demonstrates institutional integrity by making good on its public commitments to accrediting and governmental agencies, ecclesiastical bodies, students, employees, and other constituencies. These public commitments include formally adopted statements of purpose and strategic plans, academic catalogs, and promotional materials.

ECCLESIASTICAL BODIES
Luther Seminary is formally affiliated with two denominations: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the United Methodist Church (UMC). As the sole member of the corporation, the ELCA and its policies govern Luther Seminary. Luther trains and prepares students for ministry in the ELCA and coordinates with ELCA bodies in the endorsement, candidacy, and assignment processes.

The University Senate of the UMC reviews and approves theological schools for the education of persons preparing for United Methodist ordination. Luther was last approved in 2014.

Accrediting agencies (2.1)
Luther Seminary is accredited through the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Over the past several years, Luther Seminary has maintained timely and consistent communication with these two accrediting agencies with regard to data reporting, maintaining institutional standards, and communicating modifications in degree offerings and requirements or the suspension and discontinuation of degrees.

Luther faculty and administration have participated in numerous programs of these accrediting bodies such as the ATS School for New Deans, the Chief Academic Officers’ Society (CAOS) and newly appointed and midcareer faculty seminars. Luther completed the HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning in 2012.

The Academic Dean’s Office has been the main liaison with ATS for program changes, accreditation questions and follow-up for citations. We have recently created the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, which will serve as a key contact point between Luther Seminary and ATS.

2.1 Further documents and data:
2012HLCAssessmentAcademyImpactReport.pdf

Governmental agencies (2.2)
Luther Seminary complies with all US Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Education rules and regulations. As an institution that participates in Title IV federal student financial aid programs, Luther Seminary regularly submits such data to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that institutions that participate in federal student aid programs report data on enrollments, program completions, graduation rates, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, and student financial aid.

Luther also complies with the laws and regulations that govern post-secondary educational institutions in the state of Minnesota. In 1982, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary was established under the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 317. Its name was changed to Luther Seminary in 1994. The Luther Seminary Foundation Board of Trustees is organized under Minnesota
Statutes, Chapter 317A. Luther Seminary enrolls online students from thirty-six states and is in compliance or is in the process of obtaining compliance in all impacted states.

Luther Seminary is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization as a part of the ELCA. The Luther Seminary Foundation (with its Board of Trustees) is a separate 501(c)(3) organization.

As a non-profit educational organization, Luther follows federal, state and local laws in several broad categories:

- In relationship to students: Financial Aid, FERPA, ADA, MN state health laws
- Academics: textbook, copyright, many sections in Title IV
- Facilities: Inspections and licenses from local authorities (State of MN, City of St. Paul, Ramsey County) in relation to fire, health, safety and food handling
- Development and fundraising
- Tax-exempt status (federal and state of MN)

Observation and compliance with federal and state laws related to the operation of a 501(c)(3) organization are of critical importance. Other significant federal laws that apply to Luther Seminary are the Department of Education Title IV; employment and antidiscrimination legislation such as the American with Disabilities Act and the US Department of State authorization to sponsor international students and scholars. Compliance with such laws is shared among several departments.

LEGAL AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Original documents in support of all public commitments exist physically in a locked safe inside the vault of the institutional archives, with copies of the documents in the President’s office and digitally in Laserfiche. Additionally, a full set of all such documents required by the State of Minnesota for 501(c)(3) non-profit status are on file with the Minnesota Secretary of State’s office in St. Paul, MN.

2.2 Further documents and data:
1994ArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf
1996FoundationArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf

Fair and honest public communication (2.3)

*Related HLC criteria: 1.B.1 and 2.B*

Luther revised its brand and brand positioning in the mid-2000s, developing a tag line to describe the community, and crafting new admissions collateral, including the website. The “Moved by the Promise” tagline was launched and “faithful, engaging, innovative, missional and expansive” were the attributes used to describe Luther as it was then and as it hoped to be in the future.

When the financial challenges surfaced in 2012, we reevaluated our brand and our image with both internal and external audiences. For example, the word “expansive” was deemed inappropriate as an attribute, given we were reducing the size of both staff and faculty. Over the past year, the Marketing and Communications Department has been working, in consultation with faculty, staff and students, on new language to describe Luther Seminary. The new descriptives are “transformative education,” “Gospel centered identity,” “meaningful connections,” “stellar faculty,” “flexible options,” and “faithful future.”
Luther Seminary provides a variety of information to its many constituents throughout the year. We actively publish information both electronically and in print. We use an extensive review process to ensure the information is accurate and appropriate. This process ensures that experts in content, as well as experts in the Office of Marketing and Communications, give their approval prior to the release of the information.

All charges, fees and refund policies are clearly disclosed in the Luther Seminary academic catalog http://www.luthersem.edu/catalog/ as well as other appropriate locations on our website:

http://www.luthersem.edu/admissions/degrees/
http://www.luthersem.edu/admissions/apply_process/
http://www.luthersem.edu/finaid/tuition_costs.aspx

Luther Seminary advertises in a small number of publications, ranging from Christian magazines and online websites to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.-specific publications. We are very careful to portray the institution fairly and honestly to the public, as well to use gender-inclusive language in all our public materials.

We recognize that any Luther Seminary representative can create a liability for Luther Seminary and threaten Luther Seminary federal funding by making oral or written statements that are “likely to confuse or deceive” others regarding (1) the nature of Luther’s education program, (2) its financial charges, or (3) the employability of our graduates.

Several offices of Luther Seminary are responsible for knowing and complying with the misrepresentation regulations enacted by the US Department of Education. These offices include Seminary Relations, Admissions, the Business Office, Financial Aid, the Student Resource Center, and Marketing and Communications. Official complaints regarding misrepresentation are to be filed with the Dean of Students/Vice President of Enrollment’s office.

All employees in the specified offices are required to review and understand the law. It is the expectation of the administration that all employees must be as clear and accurate as possible in all written/oral communication about the nature of Luther Seminary’s educational program, financial costs and employability of Luther Seminary graduates. All information provided in written materials and online is vetted for validity and transparency prior to publication. Training regarding oral communication is provided each year so that only updated and accurate information is shared.

2.3 Further documents and data
2014PublicationsandFacebookPages.pdf
2014SocialMediaPolicy.pdf
2014SocialMediaGuidelines.pdf
Samples of ads (in Document Room)
Samples of printed materials (in Document Room)

Ethical treatment of people—governing values and policies (2.4)
Related HLC criteria: 2.A

Luther Seminary strives to treat students, faculty, administrators, employees and the publics it serves in ethical ways. The updated faculty handbook and the revised staff and student handbooks all contain
policies that address the importance of ethical behavior. Specific reference is made to creating a “Climate of Mutual Respect and Responsibility” in which the following governing values are reflected:

1) be collegial rather than competitive
2) foster a spirit of freedom rather than fear
3) promote a spirit of excellence and inquiry
4) promote and encourage equality and access
5) engender a spirit of forgiveness and love

Some examples of our use of these governing values include:

FOR STUDENTS
The Climate of Mutual Respect and Responsibility is introduced during orientation to all new students. Students are asked to describe behaviors that would support these values. These values were identified by students up during an internal “expansive language conversation” in 2011 and 2012, and again by the student government during a recent deliberation of a student-sponsored petition.

The academic catalog addresses the ethical practice of student tuition refunds. On July 1, 2000, Luther Seminary adopted a new refund policy that conforms to the updated version (Section 668.22) of the Higher Education Amendments Act of 1998. Withdrawing students with Title IV funds are subject to both Federal policy regarding the possible return of Title IV funds and Luther Seminary’s refund policy as outlined in the Academic Catalog.

FOR STAFF
These principles were central to our planning for the layoffs that occurred on March 19, 2013. The communication plan around these layoffs is an example of the intentionality of tending to our community.

FOR FACULTY
The Faculty Concerns Committee is changing patterns of faculty life. This past Spring, they piloted a new meeting schedule for Wednesday afternoons, a time that no classes are held. It is now formalized for the 2014-15 academic year. Previously, legislative issues have dominated faculty time but the new model integrates regular conversations focused on pedagogy, enables faculty to share their scholarship, and engage in assessment events with the whole community.

With respect to nondiscriminatory practices in employment of faculty, administrators and employees, a consistent procedure has been developed for recruitment. Open positions are posted in private and public educational institutions with various degree offerings, in key higher education or discipline-specific journals or professional associations, and with our key job-posting agent, jobsinminneapolis.com. Through jobsinminneapolis.com, our postings are pushed strategically to minority and advocacy groups representing many ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well as persons with disabilities. Additionally, Human Resources provide all hiring supervisors support and guidance on fair selection practices. The Vice President for Human Resources and Organizational Development works with faculty search chairs and committees by providing administrative support and hiring guidance on all faculty searches.

To ensure fairness in student employment practices on campus, a consistent procedure for all job postings has been developed. Every posting is open to all interested students on an internal job
opportunity webpage for a minimum of two weeks before selection, giving all qualified candidates an equal opportunity to apply and be considered for a student position. Additionally, all student employment supervisors have been trained in fair selection practices before they begin their recruitment process.

The updated faculty handbook and the revised staff and student handbooks also outline a clearly defined process for addressing grievances. In the faculty handbook this is covered in Section VI. *Guidelines for Resolution of conflicts, Section XI*, In the student handbook this is covered in the *Grievance Procedure Process*. In the staff handbook this is covered in the *Conflict Resolution Policy*.

**ETHICAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Starting in 2013, departmental budget managers have electronic access to current expenses. The Administrative leaders receives monthly financial updates that outline cash flow, revenues and expenditures. The Administration and Finance Committee of the Board has been meeting monthly to review the financial documents. The financial picture is shared openly and honestly across the community and to the larger public through Luther’s Annual Report (http://www.luthersem.edu/gifts/annual_reports.aspx).

2.4 Documents and data:  
2013TransitionPeriodCommunications.pdf  
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf  
2014StudentHandbook.pdf  
2014StaffHandbook.pdf  
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf  
2014StudentPetition.pdf

**Diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture (2.5)**

*Related HLC criteria: 1.C.1 and 1.C.2*

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Luther Seminary addresses its role in a multicultural society through encouraging diversity in student recruitment and employment of faculty and staff. The student body, mirroring our supporting congregations, continues to be predominantly white. Our faculty now includes 20 men and 10 women, with two who are Hispanic, one who is Middle Eastern, and one who is Asian-American. Our staff includes 41 men and 57 women, with five who have racially diverse backgrounds.
Many conversations around the topic of diversity have occurred since the last self-study. In April of 2008, a small group of faculty held a discussion around the topic of “The Dimensions of Diversity: Identifying and Refining the Issues.” This conversation led to faculty crafting three recommendations to take up issues of racial diversity, as well as ecumenical and theological diversity. In 2009, Dr. Frances E. Kendall shared her recommendations for Luther based on the campus climate survey she conducted. Some of the faculty completed the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) during this time.

The conversation strengthened as Luther was given the opportunity to participate in the ATS CORE (Association of Theological Schools Committee on Race and Ethnicity) project “Preparing for 2040.” The two original goals of the CORE project were to “expand and foster awareness, engagement, and integration of multicultural voices in the classroom” and to “increase multicultural presence in administrative leadership and faculty hires.” Because of our need for significant reduction in the size of both the faculty and staff, we have not been able to increase our diversity through hiring. As opportunities to hire new faculty arise, it will be a priority to consider strong candidates of diverse backgrounds. With changes in the administrative leadership and the revamping of the curriculum, we have focused our efforts on a core group of faculty and administrators already committed to this work.

Our clearest success involved the convening of a group of faculty and the Dean of Students/VP of Enrollment, who meet monthly to discuss the latest scholarship around issues of race, ethnicity, and theology, how such research impinges upon our work as theological educators and scholars, and how we might align the institution’s mission and efforts with a diverse world. That group has met for more than a year now and the common language and vision developed there has found its way into a number of critical conversations about the future of Luther Seminary.

Also, Luther has initiated important community-wide conversations. We recently hosted a well-attended celebration of MLK Day with leaders of the church, both local and national. In April 2014, the faculty gathered in a seminar around the theological dimensions of welcoming difference, included a discussion of a study done of faculty syllabi in light of our commitments to diversity.

Luther Seminary is celebrating its 25th anniversary of the Race, Church and Change Award, which “recognizes leaders and communities who have significantly impacted society through ministries of racial justice and reconciliation.” This award has helped connect the seminary to exemplary leaders in our community.

**CURRICULAR DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) was a key initiative noted in the 2004 self-study as a tool for preparing students in their cross-cultural experiences. While we found this to be effective for the students that took the IDI and received their individual feedback, it was not integrated into the full curriculum. We are also considering a more integrative approach through using the IDI with incoming students to assess their intercultural development at the point of entry, and then again prior to graduation, to assess if growth occurred on the intercultural development continuum.

As reflected in our academic catalog, intercultural competencies are no longer housed in a single course, but rather, deeply imbedded in the outcomes of the new curriculum. Cross-cultural education places the student in an unfamiliar context through various educational settings including academic and theological course work, independent study, immersion encounters, and prior life experience. Scholarly and theological pursuit of cross-cultural competencies is a critical aspect of a cross-cultural education, but so
too is real-world encounter with diverse cultural locations and the people who live, work and worship there. Students will demonstrate their acquisition and continued integration of cross-cultural competencies, such as the knowledge, skills, attitudes and self-awareness that contribute to becoming effective cross-cultural Christian public leaders. Students may achieve cross-cultural competencies through:

- Participation in tagged Luther Seminary course work. In the distributed model curriculum, tagged course work fulfills the 0.5 credit CCE requirement. In the portfolio model curriculum, tagged course work can be used to build cross-cultural competencies and aid students in demonstrating those competencies in their portfolios
- Participation in reciprocal ELCA seminary programs and coursework
- Development of an independent study or immersion experience

### 2.5 Further documents and data:
- 2008DimensionsOfDiversity.pdf
- 2008DiversityNextSteps.pdf
- 2012DiversityCOREStatement.pdf
- 2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
- 2014EmploymentStatistics.pdf
- 2014StudentRaceEthnicity.pdf
- 2014DiversityCOREReport.pdf

### Participation and leadership of women (2.6)

#### Related HLC criteria: 1.C.1 and 1.C.2

As a seminary of the ELCA, Luther Seminary is called to promote, encourage and support women in ministry and leadership. At the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August 2013, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was elected the first female Presiding Bishop. As the greater church continues to become more gender inclusive—especially in leadership roles—it is imperative that the seminaries of the ELCA reflect God’s diverse work in the world.

Within the past 10 years, Luther Seminary has continued to strive to offer a gender-inclusive academic setting for all of our students. Our current student body is 48.5% female. This number represents all programs, both residential and distributed. A number of courses represented at Luther Seminary address women in ministry, women in the Bible, feminist theology and women and preaching.

Currently there are 26 full-time teaching faculty (using the ATS definition). Nine of the 26 are women faculty, representing many disciplines and all divisions. Seven of these nine women are tenured faculty. During any given semester, the institution invites female adjunct faculty, emeritus faculty, and staff to assist in teaching courses. The number of women faculty does not necessarily reflect Luther Seminary’s commitment to women in leadership (with women representing less than 35% of the faculty), there is always room for growth and improvement. Within the past couple of years, several women faculty members selected other calls and other higher education faculty positions. Therefore, it is a priority to consider strong female candidates in future faculty searches.
Of the current staff and administration, there are 67 women holding positions. Within the last year, Luther Seminary has made great strides in calling and electing women to leadership in the community. In spring 2013, Luther Seminary called its first full-time woman pastor to the seminary, the Reverend Doctor Laura Thelander. In March 2014, the Luther Seminary Board recommended and unanimously voted to call Reverend Doctor Robin Steinke as the next President of the seminary. This is the first female President for Luther Seminary and the second woman President at an ELCA seminary. With the new call of a female President, the senior administration is comprised of three men and three women.

The administration, as well as the student body, represents the mission of gender equality among our community. One major goal for the future will be to hire and call women faculty as well as promote current women faculty to tenured positions. Luther Seminary is committed to providing a safe and encouraging place for our future leaders to explore the role of women in higher education and the ministry.

2.6 Further documents and data:
2013ATS_IPPR.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014EmploymentStatistics.pdf

Financial aid (2.7)
Each year, the Office of Financial Aid is audited. Until 2013, the accounting firm of Clifton Larson Allen LLP performed the audit. In 2014, we hired a new auditor, Baker Tilly. This audit is done under the requirements of OMB Circular AT133. Results are forwarded to the US Department of Education (DOE). Deficiencies are addressed and responses (along with corrective action or payment of penalty) are forwarded with our submission to DOE. Luther Seminary has not at any time had federal default rates that have exceeded DOE maximum thresholds.

Luther Seminary does not currently have any outstanding issues from the most recent audit for year ending June 30, 2014.

2.7 Further documents and data:
2011AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2012AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2013AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2014AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf

Transfer credit (2.9)
The academic catalog (p. 71) details our policy on transfer credits:

Credits earned at other accredited graduate institutions with a grade of C (or equivalent) or above may be considered for transfer to Luther Seminary upon evaluation by the Registrar and in consultation with Academic Dean, Division Chairs and faculty point people.

Luther Seminary will accept a maximum of one half (1/2) of the academic master of arts degree (Old Testament, New Testament, History of Christianity, Systematic Theology) and master of divinity degree program requirements and one third (1/3) of the professional master of arts (Children, Youth and Family Ministry, Congregational Mission and Leadership, Congregational
and Community Care) degree program requirements through transfer credits that have been completed within the 10 years prior to matriculation at Luther Seminary.

Transfer credits are accepted from the following types of schools:

1. All regionally accredited institutions;
2. All ATS (Association of Theological Schools) institutions;
3. International institutions whose accreditation is equivalent to those noted above.

2.9 Further documents and data:
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf

Electronic communication (2.10)
Related HLC criteria: 2.E.2

Luther Seminary is committed to providing an environment that encourages the use of computers and electronic communications as essential tools to support operations. This policy outlines the acceptable, appropriate and legal use of Information Technology equipment, communication equipment and computer systems at Luther Seminary. It is the responsibility of each employee or student to ensure that this technology is used for proper and lawful purposes and in a manner that (1) is responsible, professional, and legal; (2) does not compromise the confidentiality of proprietary or other sensitive information; (3) does not compromise the security of the Luther’s computer resources, reputation, policies or mission; and (4) is consistent with good stewardship and the mission of Luther Seminary.

For the complete policy, please see the Electronic Communications Policy in the Student Handbook and Acquisition and Use of Computer Resources in the Employee Handbook. Both handbooks were revised by the staff and then approved by our attorneys in the winter of 2014. While a copyright policy was previously in place in the library, an institution-wide copyright policy was adopted in October 2014.

2.10 Further documents and data:
2014StudentHandbook.pdf
2014StaffHandbook.pdf
2014CopyrightPolicy.pdf

Summary recommendations
Luther Seminary will continue our strength in institutional integrity and improve diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture in hiring and enrollment. While Luther Seminary enjoys a strong international student presence and has done some significant work in creating conversations around diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture, we still have room for improvement.
GS 3 – The theological curriculum

Our curriculum, as with our planning and evaluation procedures more generally, is shaped by our mission statement: “Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities called and sent by the Holy Spirit to witness to salvation in Jesus Christ and to serve in God’s world.” All programs are oriented toward leadership formation for various Christian communities. Learning is done in service to the church and its witness.

Since our last accreditation visit, most of the MA and MDiv education was done through the curriculum that was implemented in 1994. These degrees fit the seminary’s purpose by providing education that included three interrelated dimensions: being biblical, confessional, and missional. Through a process of assessment, we saw the need to revise our first-degree programs in order to keep our educational commitments in light of the changing needs of the church.

In the fall of 2014, we implemented a new MDiv curriculum that retains the hallmarks of the previous one, but is shorter and is more flexible. The new MA curricula are a similar length as before, but also are more flexible. Both degree programs are designed to engage students in critical reflection on Scripture, our theological heritage, and the contexts of ministry, while allowing them greater agency to shape their programs to meet their particular vocational goals. The learning process includes more focused attention on the assessment of student learning in relation to the stated program outcomes, and an emphasis on preparing students to be lifelong learners.

Our DMin program in Congregational Mission and Leadership has continued since 2002. It prepares leadership for the contemporary missional church that is theologically grounded and informed by the social sciences. Graduates are prepared for mission development, redevelopment, and congregational revitalization. In 2004, we began a DMin program in Biblical Preaching to equip and train leaders who can bear compelling witness to Christ through sermons whose conception, design, and delivery all stem from their engagement with the biblical witness.

Our MTh program continues to provide a means for continuing study in a chosen discipline. The program may serve as a step toward doctoral study, while others use it to develop greater theological competency that will enhance their effectiveness in ministry, teaching, and writing.

Our PhD program began in 1987 to develop scholarly leadership for Christian churches. It serves students both nationally and globally. The program is deliberately theological and confessional without compromising its commitment to academic excellence and accountability. In 2013, we stopped admitting new students while undertaking a review of the program in order to determine its long-term sustainability.

Goals of the curriculum (3.1)

*Related HLC criteria: 3.A.1 and 4.B.1*

The goal of our curriculum as a whole is the formation of leaders for Christian communities. The documents created for the redesign of our first-degree programs referred to “the vocational formation of evangelical public leaders.” The term “evangelical” means that their education will center them in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The term “public” indicates that they serve in a public way in communities that witness to Christ and serve in the world. The focus on leadership emphasizes that their theological studies go beyond personal enrichment and is directed toward the service of others. Such leaders
include pastors and lay leaders of congregations, as well as those who serve in ministries in other settings.

We approach the emphasis on formation from the standpoint of three theological convictions. These convictions are both deeply Lutheran and widely ecumenical. They are:

1. God’s promises bear God’s own faithful character, which we receive as new creation in the midst of the old
2. Community around Word and Sacrament embodies God’s promises for us
3. The world of neighbors, in all its dynamic complexity, engages us in God’s continually creative and good activity

The concepts of promise, community, and the neighbor are strategic theological commitments for embodying the formation of persons in apostolic leadership within communities of learning. These theological convictions, along with the commitments of the previous curriculum, define our institutional identity. As a learning community, Luther Seminary is dedicated to a theology of faith active in love. We teach towards the truth that God makes promises to the world that gather and form Christian communities under God's judgment and mercy within a world of neighbors both familiar and strange.

THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING (3.1.1)

Outcomes for our MDiv program are stated under the Degree Program Standards (A.1.2) section of the Self-Study Report. In keeping with Luther Seminary’s mission, the outcomes link learning to service. Students prepare to form and lead Christian communities, gathered around Word and Sacrament, for participation in God’s mission. Students not only become faithful readers of Scripture, but also learn to engage others in faithful reading of Scripture. They confess the character, identity, and work of the Triune God, and prepare to help others do so as well. Theological education involves the vocational formation of the leaders, who in turn help others live out their callings in the world.

Our professional MA programs include Children, Youth, and Family (CYF), Congregational Mission and Leadership (CML), and Congregational and Community Care (CCC). Our Program Redesign and Curricular Revision (PRCR) materials elaborate each outcome to define what it means for the students and for those they will serve. Such elaboration shows that the goals of the programs reach beyond the completion of coursework into the actual practices of ministry.

Outcomes for our academic MA programs are stated under Degree Program Standard D for Old and New Testaments, where there are outcomes that take ancient contexts into account, as well as the role of communities of interpretation and the relationship of interpretation to contemporary life. For the History of Christianity and Christian Theology, the outcomes include a solid understanding of movements and ideas from the past, as well as their significance for understanding and engaging the diversity of the contemporary world.

Our DMin programs serve those who are already engaged in ministry settings. The outcomes for the tracks in Biblical Preaching and Congregational Mission and Leadership are stated under Degree Program Standard E.

For all programs, there is study across the various disciplines, with particular attention to the biblical, theological, and contextual dimensions described above. Each program has a special focus, but all require engagement with the various aspects of the Christian tradition and its significance for
contemporary life. These processes unfold in the context of faith communities. The engagement with those communities plays a role in shaping the education.

FORMATION (3.1.2)
Our past curricula emphasized three interrelated dimensions of theological understanding: being biblical, confessional, and missional. Over time, attention was also given to the question of living out one’s calling. The introduction to our new curriculum states that vocational formation encompasses four dimensions: theological formation, faith formation, character formation, and interpersonal formation. Formation is done for the sake of leadership, occurs in community, and is integrative. The rationale for vocational formation centers in three theological commitments regarding God’s promises that are embodied in a community around Word and Sacrament within a world of neighbors.

Our previous MDiv curriculum was also highly structured. Efforts were made to have students take courses in a particular sequence and, where possible, to align courses to strengthen cross- and interdisciplinary learning. For instance, both Pentateuch and Creation and the Triune God were sequenced in the first year of the MDiv program. The Pauline Epistles and Lutheran Confessional Writings were to be taken in the second year.

Our new curriculum is more flexible. The structure of the MA and MDiv programs is described under the program standards. All first-degree students take the Signature courses. These six credits engage students in the study of Scripture, history, theology, and contemporary contexts. The MDiv Core and MA Concentration courses focus on preparation for specific vocations. The expanded number of electives allows students to give more specific shape to their programs.

The new structure is centered but not closely sequenced. Students can gauge their readiness and need for particular courses through the process of portfolio assessment, which involves faculty members.

Recommendation
The faculty and staff will need to assess whether this greater flexibility in structure serves student learning well, or whether other features need to be incorporated into the process.

3.1 Further documents and data:
2013CurriculumPRCforMDIVMA.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf

Learning, teaching, and research (3.2)

Since our last accreditation visit in 2004, several developments have enabled us consider our work in helpful ways. One is focusing more clearly on the question of how students learn, not only on how faculty members teach. That reframing of the conversation has been a helpful way to consider how the many facets of theological education play a role in formation of Christian public leaders.

A second aspect is the importance of student agency in shaping the program of education. The flexibility in the new curricula for MDiv and MA emphasizes that students must make informed choices about courses that will best meet their learning needs and goals.

2015 ATS Self-Study Report for Luther Seminary
Recommendation

As we make this shift, it will be important that students receive thoughtful input from faculty and staff so that their work meets the program outcomes.

A third aspect is the expansion of the cohort model. Placing students in cohorts has helped revitalize our DMin program. Since these students were engaged in ministry and were not resident on campus, the cohorts helped students move through the program together. As they did so, the engagement deepened. There was better support and more constructive criticism. We extended the cohort model to our Distributed Learning Program, where it had a similarly positive effect. Students who only met face-to-face twice a year, and were also involved in online courses, found that the cohorts provided both support and depth. Beginning in the fall of 2014, all MA and MDiv students are placed in cohorts, which will be the contexts for integration, faith and vocational formation, and assessment of learning.

Learning (3.2.1)

(3.2.1.1) Learning at Luther Seminary is appropriate to post-baccalaureate theological education. All MDiv students take both Hebrew and Greek (with an option for modern Spanish), and MA students in biblical studies take one language or the other. Study is grounded in primary theological texts. Students also engage methods borrowed from the social sciences to better understand the contexts in which their ministry will take place. For MA students, a capstone project is required. Graduate students write a thesis.

(3.2.1.2) Our new curriculum is inquiry-driven, contextually-intensified, outcomes-based, cohort-travelled, and portfolio-assessed. It includes multiple strategies and practices to enhance collaborative, integrative learning and teaching.

   1. Faculty members teaching Signature courses each semester will gather periodically to discuss pedagogical issues, challenges, opportunities, and approaches for the Signature area.
   2. Periodically during the year, all faculty members will meet together to discuss aspects of pedagogy and student learning. A group of faculty, staff, and students is also involved in planning events around assessment, which involve the whole community. Data is presented that engages faculty, staff, and students in conversation around key aspects of theological education.
   3. The process by which students create and assess portfolios of material will engage both the students and faculty and staff. The review of portfolios each semester enables students to assess their learning and faculty to become more aware of the way in which our entire program is or is not serving students well.
   4. Concentrations have enabled MA students to deepen their work in certain areas. Under the new curriculum, MDiv students may develop concentrations if they so choose. Concentrations introduce students into a focused and disciplined scholarly conversation and discourse in a chosen field with other similarly inclined students as one way to practice collaborative learning. Concentrations also draw upon and draw together various faculty gifts in fruitful and often cross-disciplinary ways.

(3.2.1.3) ATS graduating student questionnaires (GSQ) show that our graduates report satisfactory growth in reflection on tradition and the integration and maturity needed for ministry. The highest levels of satisfaction were noted in learning to think theologically (4.7 out of 5). Other areas of strength were interpreting Scripture, leading worship, and preaching (GSQ #15). The questions related to
personal development showed that their seminary studies contributed most to self-confidence, self-knowledge, trust in God, and enthusiasm for learning (GSQ #14). All areas indicated that students understood themselves to be making good progress toward their vocational goals. Nearly all the scores reported by our students were similar to those of ATS schools as a whole, as well as those of other ELCA seminaries.

ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS – PAST AND PRESENT

(3.2.1.4) Two factors are especially pertinent to address in this standard: a) the history of conviction about, commitment to, and implementation of a culture of assessment along with a system and responsible personnel for assessment; and b) the 2014 Curriculum’s portfolio process for formative and summative student learning that also feeds into a culture and process of institutional assessment.

As referenced in the GS 1 institutional vitality planning and evaluation discussion, our 2007 strategic plan reiterated, “Luther Seminary will be a responsive learning organization supported by a culture of assessment and accountability” which further “names our unswerving commitment to listen, learn, adapt, and change in order to be faithful to the promise of our mission and in this way enable us to achieve the other four goals.” Our strategic plan continues:

assessment will inevitably mean specific evaluation, using graphs and numbers, percentages and demographics; we will employ the best tools available to enter into this process completely and well; assessment is finally not primarily about numbers, since the things we regard as most important (mission, gospel, faith, service) are not quantifiable; thus, for a seminary, assessment requires honest mutual conversation and public accountability, transparent to one another and open to the Spirit; we will join this conversation fully, humbly, and expectantly.

Our plan then named four action steps to achieve this critical institutional goal. By June 2008, attempts were initiated toward growing our culture of assessment, enhancing our system for assessment, and searching for appropriate personnel. In 2011, Luther Seminary called a full-time associate dean for first theological degree programs charged, in large part, with helping to make the case for enculturating and systematizing our educational effectiveness ambitions. Between 2011 and 2013, significant progress was made toward these ends. With the departure of the associate dean for first theological degree programs, this work shifted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, a new Assessment Committee, and Learning Leader.

Most significantly, the new curriculum now embeds a portfolio assessment process within a brand new Signature course: Learning Leader. Learning Leader initiates and embodies the new curriculum’s primary goal of the vocational formation of Christian public leaders. Learning Leader attends to this goal by bringing students into a dynamic, communal conversation around Christian public leadership and by developing a reflective process for formative and summative assessment that accompanies students in achieving their degree program outcomes and competencies. Cohorts and portfolios are critical aspects of Learning Leader.

Learning Leader is divided into two parts: Learning Leader I introduces students to the curriculum, launches them into their program with its specific outcomes and competencies, and places them in a cohort in which the portfolio assessment process will be lodged. It takes place in a student’s first semester on campus. Learning Leader II is the process that accompanies students throughout their
program. Cohorts provide the structure for reflection on a student’s formation toward their program outcomes and competencies. Learning Leader II culminates with the completion of a student’s portfolio.

The portfolio process provides the potential bulk of raw data for an institution-wide process to assess how effective we are in accomplishing our various degree-program outcomes and competencies. We continue to develop both our culture of assessment and our practical ways of doing assessment.

Teaching (3.2.2)
The 2014 Curriculum continues the commitments to (and assumes the long-standing practices of) our collaborative learning environments. It also continues to affirm diverse instructional methods, careful integration of technology, and best practices for course review.

The library staff has always played an essential role in these environments. The library staff has met, and even exceeded, the increasing use of digital technology embodied in MyLutherNet. Increasingly, professors have placed required texts and readings on E-reserve and have used the resources of MyLutherNet for dialogical pedagogies not only in online and hybrid courses, but also in on-campus course offerings.

Student affairs staff has increasingly become significant in our collaborative learning environments. The 2014 Curriculum continues, and in some ways increases, this staff engagement in our mutual learning environment.

DIVERSE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND CAREFULLY INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY (3.2.2.2)
Our 1993 and 2014 Curricula address this standard in three primary ways: a) contextual learning requirements and frameworks, b) faculty pedagogy discussion groups and the “New Wednesdays” pilot, and c) technology workshops.

A) CONTEXTUAL LEARNING REQUIREMENTS AND FRAMEWORKS
A significant way that the 1993 Curriculum addressed this standard for the MDiv program is through a required, non-credited, full-year (or its equivalent) supervised internship in a faith community under the leadership of our Director of Contextual Learning. We have regularly researched and assessed the effectiveness of internship and it has consistently scored very high in effectiveness relative to our overall goal of educating evangelical public leaders.

The 2014 Curriculum continues to require a full-year (or its equivalent) supervised internship for MDiv students, for which they receive two credits. Internship may now include particular additional course work as an opportunity to fulfill certain courses, which benefit from intensive contextual engagement. For instance, one Signature course well-suited for internship is Leading Christian Communities in Mission.

A second way that the 1993 Curriculum addressed this standard in the MDiv program was to place students at the beginning of their program in a designated Teaching Congregation in order to provide a congregational context for achieving classroom requirements for particular courses. For instance, this happened in Reading the Audiences and in Introduction to Christian Education. Such placements also provided contextual mentoring by congregational leadership. During 2010-2012, the Academic Dean and the Director of Contextual Learning led a significant evaluation of the effectiveness of the Teaching Congregation contextual requirement. That program, which made use of various (mostly local) faith communities, was then put on hiatus.
until the 2014 Curriculum was designed and implemented. In 2013, a new Director of Contextual Learning was appointed and, after one year, moved on to a new position at another institution.

Both the 1993 and the 2014 Curricula addressed this standard in a third way through our program in Children, Youth and Family, which incorporated a robust contextual component with regular engagement in a faith community. Evaluations of this embedded contextual component have consistently shown its effectiveness.

A fourth way that the 1993 Curriculum addressed this standard was through the Distributed Learning program, which generally included highly contextualized assignments. The 2014 Curriculum continues this intensified contextualization of course requirements for those in the MDiv Distributed Learning pathway.

A fifth way that Luther Seminary has addressed this standard for more than a decade is through a vigorous partnership with Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program. TEEM is a non-degree program that prepares students, who remain in their local communities throughout the program, to enter into ordained ministry within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. TEEM creates a dynamic learning environment between students’ pastoral/congregational contexts and theological study and reflection on and for ministry. TEEM offers three program specializations for rural, urban, and culturally-/ethnically-specific contexts.

In addition to the above ways of addressing this standard, the 2014 Curriculum introduces three new ways to address this standard. First, as mentioned above, faculty who teach in the Signature area of courses during a semester meet monthly in a cohort. Second, the “New Wednesdays” pilot designates time for sharing and discussing faculty scholarship, which often engages burning contextual issues. Third, at certain summative points, the portfolio process invites contextual learning supervisors/collaborators to participate in student summative assessment.

**B) FACULTY PEDAGOGY DISCUSSION GROUPS AND THE “NEW WEDNESDAYS” PILOT**

During the years of the 1993 Curriculum, several robust, voluntary faculty discussion groups emerged, lasting generally for one to three years, in which pedagogical matters were the focus of discussion (see also GS 5.2.3). The “New Wednesdays” pilot in the 2014 Curriculum explores how the discussion of pedagogical matters can become embedded in a faculty culture or faculty/student/staff culture of shared learning and development. A reorganized Student Resource Center has provided increasing opportunities for various staff to become more involved in assessing student learning capacities and hindrances, and in providing counsel to faculty and students.

**C) TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOPS**

There is a dedicated Learning Designer & Technologist within the Office of Technology that regularly offers technology-specific workshops, training, and counsel to faculty for the development and use of information technologies in teaching and research.
COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW (3.2.2.3)
In addition to what has been said under 3.2.2.2, the Faculty Divisions have addressed this standard in various ways (e.g., through the review and assessment of meeting course objectives, and through the discussion of the value and effectiveness of course sequencing). The 2011-2013 Program Redesign and Curricular Revision process undertook a significant faculty-wide, student-wide, staff-wide, and administrative-wide engagement with the design of new programs and courses within a newly designed curricular strategy. Significant effort went into a comprehensive theological rationale that would root the curricular design in Luther Seminary’s basic theological convictions.

As mentioned in 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.2.2 above, the “New Wednesdays” pilot practice will allow us to more regularly discuss pedagogical matters across the institution.

ENSURING QUALITY TEACHING (3.2.2.4)
There are a variety of ways in which Luther Seminary seeks to ensure the quality of teaching centered in its mission statement and other commitments, and in responsiveness to its constituencies. On a structural level, the primary responsibility delegated from the Board of Directors for these issues rests with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Academic Dean. This position holds supervisory authority over both formative and summative processes of faculty evaluation. In conjunction with the other vice presidents who serve on Luther Seminary’s Cabinet, this person also coordinates with student affairs, financial aid, admissions, the library and development—all of whom relate in various ways to Luther Seminary’s diverse and multiple constituencies. As noted in 5.2.5 below, primary evaluation procedures of teaching in the 1993 Curriculum rested in end-of-term student evaluations. With the advent of the 2014 Curriculum, we believe the portfolio process will offer significant data, as well as a structural process, by which learning, and thus by implication, teaching, will be evaluated.

A second way in which we work on issues of teaching quality is through the Faculty Concerns Committee’s responsibility for the professional development of the faculty. This includes responsibility for the annual faculty retreat, regular faculty seminars, preparation of faculty theological responses, and recognition of faculty achievements.

A third way in which we asks about, and thus are able to demonstrate, the effectiveness of teaching has been through intermittent surveys and other research. For instance, there was sustained attention paid to the effectiveness of our students’ learning by hiring a group of senior pastoral leaders to look closely at MDiv internship reports, and ask whether and in what ways they demonstrated our students were learning what was necessary. We also surveyed three-year-out graduates and their congregations about the extent to which these graduates were prepared for their first calls.

3.2 Further documents and data:
2007StrategicPlan.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ_AllSchools.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ_ELCA.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCforMDIVMA.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014CourseEvaluationForm.pdf
2014PortfolioInfographic.pdf
Characteristics of theological scholarship (3.3)

Related HLC criteria: 2.D and 2.E.1 and 2.E.3 and 3.B.5

Scholarly collaboration (3.3.1)

While the “activities of theological scholarship. . .are collaborative efforts among faulty,” one of the challenging realities of faculty life is finding time beyond one’s own workload of teaching, advising, and traditional professional research to make time for collaborative work that engages colleagues, students, and wider constituencies in one’s scholarly pursuits. Much theological scholarship—the researching, writing, and production of monographs and journal articles, for instance—is a somewhat private activity, highly valued by the academy, and time intensive. Certainly the fruits of such research enter into classroom teaching and inform engagement with other colleagues (particularly via scholarly conferences and similar activities). Such work will continue to have a high value in both church and academy as it contributes to the accumulation of knowledge and expertise in various content disciplines. At this same time, this kind of scholarly work is still not the same as entering into collaborative research in the broadest sense.

To make scholarship more intentionally collaborative, we will be well served by recent developments in the seminary and larger church. In particular, one of the shifts in the curriculum proposal recently adopted at Luther Seminary is tacit recognition that typical patterns of church life, and the processes and institutions that once supported such patterns, have withered. The “catechetical infrastructure,” if you will, of the mainline churches has not survived the pluralistic impulse of the larger culture, where church participation is no longer privileged activity, but rather, is just one among many options by which one may occupy one’s time, seek meaning, or craft identity.

This shift invites faculty to reconsider two elements that bear on the challenge at hand. First, it invites us to look at expertise differently. While we will undoubtedly still value the distinct and discipline-specific expertise that arises from focused study in a particular discipline (New Testament or Reformation studies, for instance), we recognize that when it comes to “being the church” or “doing church” in this new environment, none of us are experts. What is most needed in this context is careful and deep listening and openness to having traditional assumptions challenged and privileged practices re-examined. This shift values an awareness of the limits of expertise and knowledge and an eagerness to move beyond traditional boundaries. It invites faculty to engage in research that is cross-disciplinary and collaborative by nature, as it is only by reaching out to other disciplines and colleagues that we can hope to embrace the mystery of the new and larger context in which we work.

Second, faculty have an opportunity to rethink relationships with students and external constituencies. Students go beyond being disciples sitting at the feet of learned masters; rather they become co-learners and participants in understanding the parameters and possibilities of the current age. While students will continue to benefit from the discipline-specific content expertise and experience of their teachers, they will also contribute from their own experience in the world and church. Teacher and student, from this vantage point, are co-learners and co-explorers mapping out the new terrain of a changed and changing world.
Similarly, traditional constituencies like local congregations, parachurch organizations, and denominational entities are no longer simply the recipients of the fruits of our labors—whether in the form of receiving students, reading books we’ve written, or participating in curriculum we’ve designed—but are themselves living laboratories in which we are working together to understand the demands and opportunities of the present age. Further, no one is in a better position to help us discern how best to train leaders for this world than those who are living in it through their multiple vocations in and beyond the church.

In recent years, Luther Seminary has established a growing record of harnessing the two opportunities of 1) cultivating the expertise of being an engaged and critical learner, and 2) seeing students and traditional constituencies as partners in exploring the changed and changing world in which we live as Christians. We have invited students, recent graduates, colleagues at other institutions, and members of a diverse collection of congregations to be our partners in surveying, mapping, and navigating the major contextual changes in North American (and to some degree, global) culture.

We have done this through three grant projects: 1) Christians Callings’ in the World, which has worked with four other seminaries to understand more fully the culture in which Christians live out their baptismal vocations in order to better prepare graduates to equip their parishioners to claim their baptismal vocation and identity; 2) Vibrant Congregations Project, which engaged two-thirds of the faculty in work with thirty-eight congregations from six denominations around North America to understand better the practices of congregation life that support more vibrant faith; and 3) Learning Pastoral Imagination, a longitudinal study of how pastors form ministerial identity over the course of their practice as pastors over time.

Work in these projects has changed the teaching and learning environment in the classrooms of participating faculty, as students are actively engaged in learning with their professors how best to be a public Christian leader in a changed environment. Students have not only benefited by the research completed as part of these projects, but have increasingly been active participants in it, both working directly in the research project as well as giving feedback on the ongoing process and findings. The collaboration with faculty in other disciplines and at other institutions that these and similar projects have nurtured has resulted in several monographs, edited collections, and various scholarly articles and presentations. We expect that an on-going commitment both a) to the principles named above that are critical for understanding our new context and b) to working with colleagues, students, and constituencies across the church and world will continue to enhance our ability to conduct collaborative and productive scholarly research. The overall goal is to broaden the culture of scholarship at Luther Seminary to value more highly the activity and fruits of scholarly collaboration.

Freedom of inquiry (3.3.2)
Luther Seminary makes a clear statement about the role of confessional commitment and the importance of academic freedom, affirming the confessional commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. At the same time, the policy states that Luther Seminary seeks and welcomes the presence of diverse expressions of the Christian faith in this community of learning. All faculty members are expected to affirm the same central commitment to the word of God as witnessed to in Scripture and the ecumenical creeds, to respect the confessional traditions and commitments of Luther Seminary, and to practice mutual regard for one another’s traditions (Faculty Handbook, part I, section III).
Part I, section IV of the Faculty Handbook also states that Luther Seminary faculty subscribes to the Association of Theological Schools Statements on Academic Freedom and Professional Ethics. Those statements are included in Appendix I of the handbook. They call attention to the importance of preserving this as a place for freedom of inquiry within the confession of the Christian faith.

Involvement with diverse publics (3.3.3)
For many years, Luther Seminary has engaged its faculty in conversation with diverse publics through participation in programs like the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, the Hispanic Theological Initiative, and various globalization trips and seminars. Through these means, faculty (and often staff and students) are drawn into conversation with colleagues from a variety of backgrounds, ethnicities, and theological traditions from around the country and globe.

As described above in 3.3.1, in recent years, Luther Seminary has also engaged in significant grant-funded research that has brought it into conversation with a broader variety of distinct and diverse publics. In particular, two groups have been particularly helpful.

The first are the faculty colleagues that participated in the grant project The Christians’ Callings in the World and who hailed from four graduate-theological institutions representing four distinct Christian traditions; Catholic Theological Union (Roman Catholic), Duke Divinity School (Methodist), Fuller Theological Seminary (Evangelical Protestant), and Princeton Seminary (Reformed). More than twenty colleagues from these institutions, including both scholars and practitioners, gathered annually with seven faculty from Luther Seminary over a five-year period to discuss their work and to think together about the implications of both school-specific and shared projects for the practice of theological education. This group has been diverse not only in terms of ecumenical representation, but also in terms of ethnicity, global representation, and experience in and with the larger church.

The second group is made up of the thirty-eight congregations that participated in the Vibrant Congregations Project. These congregations represented six different denominational traditions, were located across the United States and Canada, and varied in terms of setting (rural, urban, suburban), size, and (to a lesser degree) ethnicity. A major component of the project included the use of surveys and interviews. More than 4,000 members of these congregations were involved in this portion of the project and the diversity of their experiences and backgrounds contributed significantly to the findings this research yielded.

In addition to these discreet projects, several degree programs and cross-disciplinary elements regularly bring our faculty and students into contact with diverse publics. These include particularly those faculty, staff, and students involved in the area of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry; Biblical Preaching; and Congregational Mission and Leadership. Faculty, staff, and students in all of these areas have conducted congregational research across denominations and sponsored and/or participated in ecumenical conferences and events. Several faculty have been involved in projects related to the use of new media in congregations and higher education, some on an individual basis and others connected with shared ventures with other schools or initiatives. An increasing number of faculty members have written for major news and/or social media outlets that interact with a broad sector of the public.

Several of Luther Seminary’s lifelong learning offerings have engaged a broader dimension of the larger church and public. These include conferences like The Festival of Homiletics (drawing between 1,500-2,000 preachers across denominations annually), websites like WorkingPreacher.org and
EntertheBible.org (which receive more than 2.8 million visits per year), and the e-book Renew52 (which includes the work of 54 authors from across traditions and has been downloaded 10,000 times). These and similar offerings have taken advantage of new media to draw Luther Seminary faculty, staff, and students into conversation with a variety of ecumenical and global partners from numerous and diverse publics.

All of these ventures have greatly expanded our sense of the church, both nationally and internationally, and have positioned our faculty to both learn from and participate in scholarly conversations and research on religion and its role in higher education, the church, and the larger world.

**Recommendation**

To date, much of this work, while extensive, is also admittedly ad hoc. To continue to promote collaborative scholarship and engagement with diverse publics, we need to state this expectation and allow it to inform faculty selection, development, and promotion. We need to renew our commitment to cross-cultural education and find ways to acknowledge the value of congregational research across diverse publics and with a variety of partnerships as scholarly research.

**Global awareness and engagement (3.3.4)**

Luther Seminary has historically had a commitment to global awareness and engagement. That commitment continues today, though it will take a different form in the new 2014 Curriculum.

The most influential component of Luther’s global engagement continues to be our international students, who currently comprise 7% of the student body. In 2012-13, Luther had 71 international students. In 2013-14, the number decreased to 58, due in part to the suspension of admissions to the PhD program. These numbers do not include international students who are naturalized citizens or the families of international students, who are part of our campus community. The international community is involved in many parts of campus life, including attendance at and leadership of daily chapel services, student government, and student employment. Some international students in the PhD programs also serve as teaching assistants and instructors for MDiv and courses.

Our faculty in 2014-15 includes three members who come from outside of the United States. We also host international scholars who come to Luther for a semester for purposes of research and writing. Since 2005, six such scholars have visited as Schiotz Professors (supported through a Luther Seminary endowment) and another seven have come through the auspices of the ELCA or their home churches. These scholars do not teach classes, though they will often offer guest lectures or presentations to the Luther community.

Luther students and faculty have taken advantage of some opportunities for teaching and learning in global contexts. Some faculty members are involved in the work of the Lutheran World Federation and attend various global conferences. One faculty member spent the whole 2012-2013 academic year teaching at a seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Another has strong connections with a seminary in South Africa and visits there regularly. Typically, one or two students a year will spend their internship year at an international site.

Global awareness and engagement at Luther is enhanced by the work of the Global Mission Institute (GMI). For several decades, the GMI has functioned as an institute within the seminary, sometimes with
a faculty member as director. In this past year, the GMI’s role in fostering global awareness has been more thoroughly imbedded into Luther’s regular work. Two faculty members serve as advisers and most functions now take place through the office for International Student and Scholar Affairs (ISSA). The ISSA works with logistics for travel to and study at Luther Seminary, provides hospitality for international visitors, global forums, and other opportunities to increase global awareness.

Luther partners with synods and congregations in the ELCA in the Agora program, which provides leadership training for immigrant communities in Minnesota. These communities include many people of Latin American, Southeast Asian, and African origin. Agora currently has 25 students enrolled, and Luther faculty teach these classes.

Under the previous curriculum, every MDiv student was required to complete a half-course Cross-cultural Mission Experience. These classes ranged from international travel courses (to Israel/Palestine, Guatemala, Germany, South Africa, etc.) to domestic immersion experiences (urban or rural settings, Native American reservations, immigrant communities, etc.). In the new curriculum, the outcomes for cross-cultural and global awareness have been imbedded in a variety of courses. To ensure that students achieve such awareness as part of their programs, faculty members are engaged in identifying specific competencies that might be met through various courses.

**Recommendation**

The Academic Dean will work with the Education Leadership Committee to develop a work group on “the global dimensions of theological education” that will 1) identify and communicate what we are already doing in global education, 2) consider ways in which we could most easily enhance this aspect of our work in the near future, and 3) develop ways to enhance this work over the next couple of years. There is potential for strong global awareness and engagement in the new curriculum, though intentional action will be needed to realize that potential. Luther must build on its historical commitment to such engagement to train its students to minister in an increasingly global, multi-cultural world.

**Ethics of scholarship (3.3.5)**

Luther Seminary has a clear policy regarding Academic Honesty, which is included in the student handbook. The policy defines plagiarism and procedures by which instances of plagiarism will be addressed. We have adopted a syllabus template that includes expectations concerning Academic Honesty as a standard element in the syllabi used for all courses.

Luther Seminary has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that reviews all research conducted by seminary students, faculty, and staff involving human subjects. The purpose of this review is to insure that research subjects are treated ethically with respect to such matters as level of risk, confidentiality, and consent. The IRB reviews twenty-five applications per year on average. Three-fourths of these applications are from students seeking review of research to be conducted in connection with their capstone thesis projects, while the remainder are related to research undertaken by faculty and staff. Our website (http://www.luthersem.edu/irb/) provides ready access to the rules and procedures governing the IRB approval process as well as to forms and other content intended to facilitate IRB review.
Summary recommendations
Luther Seminary has done some innovative work with our MDiv and MA theological curriculum, particularly around assessment and student agency through program outcomes, that we are just starting to implement. As a result, the seminary must be attentive to undertake the following:

- Continuing the innovative and creative work in implementing and improving the new MA and MDiv Curriculum. The redesign offers programs that are both centered and flexible, and suitable for both residential and distributed learning programs. The development of portfolios and cohorts of learners holds considerable promise for the future.
- Leveraging the clearer means of assessment being implemented in our new curriculum. The Assessment Committee and Learning Leader Team will help integrate co-curricular activities and continue to monitor our work in this area.
- Effectively coordinating efforts in study abroad, student/faculty exchanges, and global partnerships, in order to build upon our excellent track record with global engagement. A Global Dimensions of Theological Education Working Group has been tasked to study this.
GS 4 – Library and information resources

Library collections (4.1)

(4.1.1) The Library’s 300,000 volume collection includes about 210,000 monographic volumes, 40,000 completed periodical volumes, 45,000 microforms, 2,500 linear feet of archival materials, 7,000 miscellaneous items such as phonorecords, DVDs, CDs, videos, and a growing collection of digital resources. While the library maintains active subscriptions to 340 periodicals, access to over 30,000 periodical titles is available through our suite of databases. As the largest theological library among ELCA seminaries and a major research collection in the upper midwest, the Luther Seminary Library is committed to collecting and preserving the textual tradition of the church, particularly the Lutheran tradition.

(4.1.2) The Collection Development Policy was revised by library staff during 2013 and went through a faculty review process, culminating in formal approval in May 2014. A Library White Paper written over the spring of 2012 informed many of the policy changes around the collection of digital materials and deselection of print materials by setting out a plan for future collections, space, and staffing. The emergence of digitized collections like Internet Archive and Google books, particularly for pre-1923 materials, allows us to think differently about what materials need to be maintained in our print collection.

We continue to collect a diverse collection of scholarship in religion and theology as well as materials related to the practice of ministry. The revised collection development policy recalibrates collecting levels to match current programs (such as growth in missional leadership programs and the elimination of Islamic Studies). The library continues to collect broadly, selecting some materials from cognate disciplines and other religious traditions, particularly in our digital subscriptions. Fuller Theological Seminary completed and shared the results of a comparative collection analysis with 14 other peer seminary libraries that, along with other circulation and collection data, further reinforce Luther’s comparative strengths. The collection development policy directly informs the approval plan established with our primary book vendor that is used by the Director and other library staff in making new selections for the collection. In addition, the library regularly solicits and receives other recommendations from the Luther community.

Engaging with the global church is a major challenge for our collecting. Our conversation partners in the church are less and less likely to be from the United States and Europe. With many of our international graduates returning to their home countries, Luther Seminary has a unique opportunity to pursue international strategic partnerships through supporting scholarly publishing that grows out of the global church as well as making our scholarship more available to the global church.

Recommendation

Continue to build the library’s collections through systematic and regular engagement with faculty and students, including the use of interlibrary loan data to inform purchasing.

(4.1.3) Luther Seminary is known for its collections in Reformation and Lutheran studies as well overall strength within other classic theological disciplines. We have four special collections (Pre-1800 books, the Reformation Research Library, the Carl Doving Hymn Collection, and the Jacob Tanner Catechism Collection) as well the archives of Luther Seminary and Region III of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In addition, we maintain a collection of over 1,800 individual works of art in all format types.
Many of the pieces are grouped within large discrete collections, including the Prodigal Son Collection, the John August Swanson Collection, the Cephas Wong Collection and the Edward Sovik Church Architecture Collection.

(4.1.4) The Library has carefully expanded our digital holdings, which is reflected in several substantive changes in the Collection Development Policy. Digital access is now the preferred format for periodicals and we have transitioned at least 50 titles to digital over the last two years. As the curricular and faculty commitments of Luther Seminary change over time, a regular and careful review of periodicals and standing orders is part of responsive and dynamic collection development. We have strategically used some savings from reductions in these areas to purchase additional databases such as MinistryMatters, JSTOR, Chicago Manual of Style, and ACLS Humanities e-books. While aware of limitations of use by our community and consortium users, the library has begun licensing some e-book titles. Some have been licensed in packages (ACLS Humanities E-Books), some collectively within our library consortium (Palgrave), and other titles selected individually. The library prefers the least restrictive licensing terms and Digital Rights Management policies for e-books and selects e-book versions for course-readings, reference works, commentaries, or collections of essays. We continue to have concerns about what to keep in print, ensuring long-term access to digital materials, and understanding how our patrons discover, access, use, and manage digital information.

(4.1.5) Some collection development is coordinated with our other Minnesota Theological Library Association colleagues and the nearby University of Minnesota. For example, texts in Catholicism are well represented in two of our consortium members and added depth in many cognate disciplines (like philosophy) is well maintained at the University of Minnesota. With digital catalogs and ordering processes, we have a better vantage point to see the ordering patterns of our colleagues. Karen Alexander, our Access Services Librarian, works with both a local courier service as well as national document delivery system to regularly exchange loans with other libraries.

4.1 Further documents and data:
2012Library_WhitePaper.pdf
2013LibraryCollectionAnalysis.xls
2014LibraryCollectionDevelopmentPolicy.pdf

Contribution to learning, teaching, and research (4.2)

(4.2.1) Library staff promote learning, research, and teaching through providing Reference services in person and by phone, email, and chat. A significant challenge is the delivery and evaluation of library services for commuter, part-time, and distributed learning (DL) students. To boost responsiveness, the library implemented LibAnswers in fall 2012. This 24x7 virtual reference and online chat program contains a “knowledge base” that provides reference help. The chat function allows librarians to interact in real time during weekday, daytime hours and by email in the evening and on weekends. LibAnswers tracks questions and reports statistics. In our first year of use, the number of reference transactions doubled from 312 (FY12) to 653 (FY13). We have also created online reference guides targeted to specific subjects, courses, or issues. When used in conjunction with in-class instructional sessions, LibGuides offer students the opportunity to review content at their convenience. In 2013, Writing & Style was our most frequently viewed guide (over 7,000 times).
Library staff also promotes theological learning through our instruction programs. We have reached a high percentage of graduate students through the PhD practicum (required) and sessions with DMin students (about 75%). We held training sessions for over 450 students (2013). We make use of a student evaluation survey: questions about library instruction and services as well as a Teaching & Presentation Log used to track sessions and student populations served. In 2013, over 450 students were served in a student body of 525 FTE. Instructional opportunities include the following: library orientations for all new students; “Library Skills” sessions for 1st degree program students, coordinated with a Synoptic Gospels core course (in the old curriculum); participation in the thesis writing course for MA students; the Library Research Practicum course for Year 1 PhD students; the “Writing a Literature Review” session for Year 2 DMin in Biblical Preaching students; individual and small group interaction/instruction with students via training/help for specific tools; Tech Talks (short information sessions on new or useful technology); thesis templates training/coaching; and fine arts exhibits and talks.

Over the past 10 years, the library staff has worked with only 13% of the Distributed Learning sections, compared with 68% of the residential sections. With a new curriculum offering students flexible paths to graduation through on-campus, hybrid and distributed learning course formats, all classes (required and elective) are being redesigned to fit new curricular objectives. As part of the library's efforts to improve students' research and information-seeking skills, we are partnering with faculty in both Distributed Learning and residential sections of the new curriculum, to present instructional sessions and/or create LibGuides for specific courses and topics. In April 2014, the Luther Seminary library began participation in the Association of College & Research Libraries' (ACRL) Assessment in Action program, where we will be in a cohort with 72 other academic libraries for a two-year program.

**Recommendation**

*Create, in partnership with faculty, sessions and tools that address student information literacy skills, highlight library collections and promote lifelong learning.***

Library staff promote learning, research, and teaching through collection development and information technology to support our degree programs and lifelong learning opportunities. The migration to OCLC’s WorldShare Management System (WMS) and use of WorldCat Local as the library’s public catalog integrates print and digital resources, enabling e-resources to be more easily discovered and used. The catalog allows our patrons to easily find and request book resources held by other Minnesota theological library consortium members. Enhanced reporting features in WMS will help us to evaluate the resources our patrons are finding or requesting. Appropriate technology to access materials in digital formats: computers, a new microfilm scanner (2013), printing, technology support through partnership with Office of Technology and the library. We record and monitor resource usage statistics for journals, digital resources (databases, etc.), circulation, and interlibrary loan.

**Recommendation**

*Develop a comprehensive methodology to evaluate our patrons’ technical and information literacy skills, knowledge of collections, and ability to access resources. Compile statistics on resource use and library services, gather liaison reports from library staff, monitor user experience. We can then use these inputs to evaluate resources and implement better access methods for all patron groups.***

2015 ATS Self-Study Report for Luther Seminary
(4.2.4) The library provides a hospitable, comfortable physical setting with study and meeting spaces with attention to access for patrons using the website and/or library building. In addition to students, we serve faculty and staff, metro-area clergy, students from other seminaries, and other walk-in patrons. Even when formal borrowing privileges are not arranged, we welcome all to use our collections, physical space, and services.

Partnership in curriculum development (4.3)
(4.3.1) The Director of Library Services participates directly in curricular development through membership among the faculty and service in the Educational Leadership Committee. Coordinating library collection and services with curriculum development is a complex and iterative process. Curriculum shifts with the changing needs of students, individual faculty teaching, and overall programs outcomes. Collection development and library services can be responsive to these changing needs, but also attempt to build a library collections and services that can support the anticipated needs of faculty, students, and curricula in the future.

(4.3.2) A recent comprehensive curricular revision also included additional library staff members. Library staff are also regular curricular partners with the teaching faculty through promoting information literacy, providing library instruction, assisting student research, and supporting courses through electronic and physical reserves. As the curriculum supports growing cohorts of distributed students, library staff have expanded our digital collections, provided additional document delivery (books and scanned articles), created new online guides and tutorials, and engaged with an online reference chat system. As curricular initiatives are expanded (e.g., the MA in Children, Youth, and Family) or ended (e.g., Islamic Studies), the library responsively adjusts collection priorities and services to accommodate those changes.

Recommendation
While perhaps more appropriate to Standard 3, we may need to reconsider the course approval process to include more information about anticipated resources and research assignments. The greater lead time for the library provides opportunities for conversation so the library can better anticipate curricular needs in developing our collections and services.

Library administration and leadership (4.4)
(4.4.1) After a former library director accepted a new position and a 2.5-year interim shared by a faculty member and director of archives, a new Director of Library Services, Andrew Keck, began work July 1, 2012. Rev. Keck is an ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church and possesses graduate degrees in library science and theological studies. The Director of Library Services at Luther Seminary “provides leadership in bringing library resources and services to support the educational processes and overall strategic plan of the seminary” and thus has responsibilities for collaboration with key constituents, gathering and utilizing assessment data, providing leadership for the library staff, developing and managing the library collections, and providing overall administrative oversight of the library. Within Luther Seminary governance, the Director of Library Services is considered administrative faculty with full vote and voice among faculty, but no expected teaching load. The Director reports to the Academic Dean and sits on the Educational Leadership Committee, the Program and Curricular Coordinating Committee, and an informal group of staff directors.
Even prior to the first year of employment, the Director of Library Services was engaged with the faculty in their curriculum revision work that was already underway and with a task force developing a library “white paper” that developed a vision for library services in the year 2020. The task force directly involved faculty and staff and used focus groups and surveys in an effort to engage best practices in current library development. As the financial crisis unfolded, the Director was quickly involved with financial planning that resulted in staff reductions, delays in book purchases and binding, reductions of library standing orders, the selection of a new (and cheaper) automated library system, strategic use of an existing library endowment fund, and engagement with a potential library donor. Within both the Educational Leadership Committee and Faculty, the Director has been involved with decisions on education programs (such as the PhD and MSM), educational policies (such as transfer requirements and academic probation protocols).

In the history of Luther Seminary, we have had various kinds of standing library committees, but have moved to requesting faculty input on specific resources or projects (cutting journal subscriptions or adding new databases), gathering faculty by subject or division, meeting with individual faculty, or bringing library policy questions directly to Educational Leadership Committee or other established groups.

(4.4.3) One of the first projects of the Director of Library Services was to evaluate the collection to reset the library’s profile with a major book vendor and streamline the effort of book selection. This work included reviewing use patterns and previous collection efforts in various subjects, inquiry among other local libraries, comparisons with other peer libraries, and shaping the “funnel” of potential books appropriately in all subject areas. This work also became the core of the revised Collection Development Policy.

Especially in the light of the library staff reductions and the greater move to distributed learning, the Director has led the library staff in careful review of library services. We now offer an online reference service, more intentionally relate librarians to different student/user groups, have new policies for borrowing privileges, a new microfilm reader/printer, a new model for copying/scanning, and have redistributed library tasks. Outside of the process leading to staff reductions, all library personnel have had formal reviews and updated job descriptions. Two staff members with professional credentials and doing professional work were officially promoted to professional librarian status in 2014.

The main challenges in this area come from subsection 4.4.3: “regular and ongoing evaluation of the collection, the patterns of use, services provided by the library, and library personnel.” While “regular and ongoing” can be its own challenge, the main challenge is measuring the right things and making the right interpretative judgments. For example, the number of volumes used to be considered the best evaluative marker for a collection, but now we also pay attention to checkout patterns, interlibrary loan patterns, database searching patterns, citation patterns, comparisons with other theological libraries, etc. The challenge is not only to systematically collect, but more importantly, to make sense of the data that may suggest improvements for the collection or services.

**Recommendation**

We could add additional questions to the ESQ/GSQ, or other survey instruments that would more systematically track evaluation data for library collection, use, and services.
(4.4.4) Professional development has included local involvement in the Minnesota Theological Library Association as well as taking advantage of other local opportunities in the Twin Cities. Nationally, a number of us have been engaged with the American Theological Library Association through attending the annual conference, presenting programs, writing for Theological Librarianship, and serving on various committees. Bruce Eldevik has been engaged with the Rare Book School of the University of Virginia and Paul Daniels has been active in the leadership of the Society of American Archivists.

4.4 Further documents and data:
2014LibraryCollectionDevelopmentPolicy.pdf
2012Library_WhitePaper.pdf

Library resources (4.5)
Related HLC criteria: 3.D.4 and 5.A.4

(4.5.1 & 4.5.2) The strength of the Luther Seminary Library is in the individual and collective work of the library staff. Individual staff members have a variety of areas of expertise and knowledge that affords faculty, staff, students, and visitors a wonderful resource as they find, consume, and create knowledge. In the past couple years, we have worked through staff reductions (1.75 FTE through retirement and layoffs), performance reviews, a redistribution of library efforts, library strategic planning that led us a renewed focus on user communities, and revised job descriptions/titles incorporating all of the above. As a result of the reorganization, we had added two former paraprofessionals to the rank of professional librarians as we continue to leverage our well-qualified staff. To increase their skills and contribute to the profession, library staff members are supported financially in professional development opportunities both locally and nationally, with appropriate freedom of inquiry.

Institutional financial resources are limited, while library expenses continue to rise. Both for collection and services, there are considerable personnel resources needed to maintain both digital and physical collections as well as to support both residential and distributed learners. Within scholarly publishing and communication, commercial publishing has become more concentrated in the hands of a few large companies which continue to drive prices upward unsustainably while publishing a growing number of titles. In 1991, there were 958 new book titles in religion (an admittedly low year) but output grew dramatically over the last 20 years to 8,871 new titles in 2011. Prices too have climbed at nearly twice the rate of inflation from the average hardcover in religion costing $32.33 in 1991 to the 2011 average of $112.89.³ Although digital materials may not have costs related to shipping, physical processing, and binding, some publishers regularly charge libraries up to three times as much for an e-book versus the print volume.

Digital publishing includes materials that are digitized, digital materials that we license, and digital materials that we produce ourselves. Of course, faculty members either provide this content for free (for most journals) or receive only modest royalties (for most books). The absurdity of buying back what we have collectively given away for free has prompted several libraries to become more directly active in supporting institutional repositories and digital publishing.

Recommendation

Investigate the establishment of an institutional repository and support digital publishing efforts with the goal of addressing the questions above.

(4.5.3) Graduate Student Questionnaire (2013/14) shows high satisfaction (4.4 out of 5.0 on average) for “adequacy of library collections,” sharing the highest rank with “Accessibility of faculty” and “Accessibility of administrative/staff support.” Within available prior Graduate Student Questionnaires, “adequacy of the library collections” is consistently among the most highly ranked academic resources.

According to our latest IPRR, library and academic support as a percent of total expenditures has varied between 4-5%. Our most recent determination of peers puts Luther Seminary in the lower tier (above low, but below median). To Luther’s credit, our low numbers can be attributed to interims without a library director’s salary, not fully reflecting the cost of benefits, and not including Arts and Archives in the library operations. On the collections side, however, the materials budget have taken a measurable hit—moving from around $190,000 in the 2003 and 2008 reporting periods to just $130,000 in the 2013 reporting period (which includes $20,000 delayed until the following fiscal year). With the runaway inflation in serials and monographs mentioned above and reductions in collection budgets, the library has lost half of its collection purchasing power in the last decade.

The recent revision of the collection development policy tried to incorporate both program and budget realities: the Luther Seminary Library no longer needs to support a program in Islamic Studies, we can reduce the number of our research collections, we can coordinate more deeply with neighboring libraries to reduce duplication, and we can be more selective in book purchasing and journal subscriptions. Having not yet lived a year with the revised collection development policy, it is too soon to know precisely whether the library budget is adequate to meet its objectives.

Recommendation

Upon a revised determination of our peers, we should track and work toward a target percentage of the overall budget to support the library.

(4.5.4) The previous accreditation report (2004/05) noted an inadequacy of library physical spaces, with specific mention of inadequate stack space, user spaces, and overall accessibility. Stack space has become less of an issue thanks to a deaccession of duplicates created through the merger of predecessor libraries, mass-digitization efforts which reduce our need to maintain all existing print volumes, and increasing digital materials (especially journals, but some books) that reduce the number of physical volumes added (see the Library White Paper and CDP). In fact, recent annual reports have indicated a net loss of volumes in the library and as deaccessing efforts and digital purchasing continue over the next decade, we expect the growth rate of our print collection to be very low. The library collection is protected by climate control and controlled access.

User spaces include 80 individual carrels (of which 62 seats or 78% are assigned), 75 seats in Reference and Catalog rooms, 17 computer stations, and a group study room. Even during peak weeks around midterms and finals, library seats only reach 60% of capacity. This is due to our diminishing residential population as well as alternative spaces, like the Olson Campus Center’s new coffee shop, which provide space for study on campus. We will continue to monitor and survey library usage in terms of gate count, persons in seats, etc. In addition, we have enhanced WiFi and outlets in reader spaces, as well as copiers, scanners, and a new microfilm reader/scanner.
Overall accessibility has been greatly enhanced through the addition of a building elevator that transports patrons from building entry to all floors of the building—and especially the 2nd floor, where the library is located. The elevator project has also enabled other modifications to doors and restrooms such that the building is more hospitable to those with accessibility needs. Our collection can be digitally browsed through our library catalog and staff members can assist in retrieval of books and other items that may be out of reach.

(4.5.6) The library collections continue to prove adequate to the demands and needs of Luther Seminary. Recommended titles are routinely purchased, we solicit feedback in the purchase of expensive works or electronic resources, and faculty are similarly queried in the cancellation of journal or monographic series subscriptions. Our collaborative arrangements in collecting with the University of Minnesota and Minnesota Theological Library Association allows us to limit our need to invest deeply in some areas (e.g., the classics with the University of Minnesota or Catholic Studies with St. Paul Seminary and St. John’s University).

4.5 Further documents and data:
2012LibraryWhitePaper.pdf
2013ATS_ELCA_IPPR.pdf
2013ATS_ESQ.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013ATS_IPPR.pdf
2013ATS_Peer_IPPR.pdf
2014LibraryCollectionDevelopmentPolicy.pdf

Summary recommendations
Luther Seminary Library needs to continue work in developing capacity for information literacy and lifelong learning among our students through engagement with the curriculum, faculty within individual courses, and responsiveness to individual students. On the collections side, the library need to create processes and platforms to better capture and promote Luther Seminary’s own intellectual output through an institutional repository as well as continue to further benchmark our spending on collections.
### GS 5—Faculty

Faculty qualifications, responsibilities, development, and employment (5.1)

Related HLC criteria: 2.D and 3.C.1 and 3.C.2 and 5.A.1 and 5.A.4

Faculty members by discipline (as anticipated for July 1, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIBLE</th>
<th>HISTORY/THEOLOGY</th>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Old Testament</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Congregational Mission &amp; Leadership</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Throntveit</td>
<td>Mary Jane Haemig</td>
<td>Dwight Zscheile</td>
<td>Robin Steinke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolf Jacobson</td>
<td>Lois Farag</td>
<td>TBA in Stewardship</td>
<td>Academic Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathryn Schifferdecker</td>
<td>Mark Granquist</td>
<td>Homiletics</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron Howard</td>
<td>Systematic Theology</td>
<td>Karoline Lewis</td>
<td>Associate Dean(s)</td>
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<td>Michael Chan</td>
<td>Patrick Keifert (CML)</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Testament</td>
<td>Gary Simpson (CML)</td>
<td>Mary Hess</td>
<td>Director of Library Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Koester</td>
<td>Steven Paulson</td>
<td>TBA in Contextual Learning</td>
<td>Andrew Keck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Fredrickson</td>
<td>Lois Malcolm</td>
<td>Children, Youth, and Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Skinner</td>
<td>Alan Padgett</td>
<td>Andy Root</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Barreto</td>
<td>Amy Marga</td>
<td>Rural Ministry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Global Christianity</td>
<td>Alvin Luedke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dirk Lange</td>
<td>Congregational and Community Care</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5.1.1) In 2014-2015, the 25 full-time teaching faculty members all have research doctorates, as do the President, Academic Dean, and Director of Graduate Studies. In the current academic year, one visiting professor has the same qualifications. All the part-time faculty members also have research doctorates and experience, either as pastors or lay leaders in the church. Many Luther Seminary’s emeriti
professors and several are Lutheran PhD graduates. On occasion, we employ other part-time instructors who have comparable qualifications.

(5.1.2) Luther Seminary has clear policies regarding the respective roles of confessional commitments and academic freedom. These are included in the Faculty Handbook, Part I, sections III and IV. We subscribe to the ATS Statements on Academic Freedom and Professional Ethics, which are included as Appendix I of our Handbook.

(5.1.3) Luther faculty members have done graduate study in all the fields in which we offer instruction: Old and New Testaments; Christian History; Theology; Worship; Homiletics; Education; Rural Ministry; Congregational Mission and Leadership; and Children, Youth, and Family Ministry. They received doctorates from a variety of schools: Boston College, Catholic University of America, Christ Seminary-Seminex, Emory University, Harvard Divinity School, Luther Seminary, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Princeton Theological Seminary, Texas A & M University, Union Theological Seminary in New York, Union Theological Seminary Richmond, University of Chicago, University of Oxford, and Yale University.

Luther Seminary is centered in the Lutheran theological tradition, while preparing leaders to serve in various types of Christian communities. In keeping with that purpose, our faculty in 2014-15 includes 21 who are Lutheran and others who are Baptist, Coptic, Episcopal, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Methodist, and Roman Catholic. Their experiences in church leadership fit our educational mission. Twenty are ordained with thirteen in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, two in the United Methodist Church, one in the Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida of Argentina-Uruguay, one in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, one in the Episcopal Church, and one in the Presbyterian Church in the USA.

Over the past two years, we have reduced the size of our faculty by 35% helping to place the seminary on a more sustainable financial footing. The reductions have taken place through retirements and faculty members taking other positions. To work through these changes effectively, faculty members have shown flexibility in their teaching and a willingness to vary their course offerings to meet the student’s instructional needs. Where reductions have required additional hiring, we have used flexible arrangements, such as courses offered by our emeriti and a visiting professor in pastoral care. Our goal is to ensure that we have qualified faculty members in all key disciplines, while making wider use of contractual arrangements to allow for changes in the size and composition of the faculty as needed to meet the changing educational needs of the church and our goal of financial sustainability.

The 2011-12 update to our strategic plan affirmed our commitment to developing a faculty that includes women and men from a variety of theological and ethnic backgrounds. Our faculty now includes 20 men and 10 women. Members of our faculty have participated in the ATS Committee on Race and Ethnicity. In an ATS webinar on March 12, 2014, we reaffirmed our commitment to addressing issues of racial and ethnic diversity, while recognizing that we would be hiring very few faculty members in the near future. At the same time, we continue to address questions of race and ethnicity internally, through workshops and events that enable faculty members to engage ways in which we deal with the questions in our teaching and life together.
New curriculum (5.1.4)

Faculty members had the leading roles in developing our new curriculum (see 3.1). We undertook three years of informal consultations and community forums that considered broadly the religious environment in North America, and then initiated a process entitled “Program Redesign and Curricular Revision” (PRCR), which focused on the MDiv and MA degrees. The PRCR process lasted 2 years.

During Phase 1 (May – December 2011), a committee of faculty, administration, staff and students guided the evaluation of our first master’s degree programs. Professor Rolf Jacobson was the director. As a result, the faculty decided to proceed with redesigning the programs and curricula.

During Phase 2 (2012), six task forces did the groundwork, each chaired by a faculty member, with representation from every faculty division, and staff and student representatives. The task forces were (1) Program Theological Commitments (Prof. Karoline Lewis, chair); (2) Models, Curricular Strategies & Educational Pedagogy (Prof. Mary Shore*, chair); (3) Assessment (Assoc. Dean Michael DeLashmutt*, chair); (4) External Judicatory and Partner Relationships (Contextual Leadership Director Rick Foss*, chair); (5) Congregational Relationships (Prof. Theresa Latini*, chair); and (6) Financial Models (Vice President for Advancement Tom Jolivette, chair).

* No longer affiliated with Luther Seminary.

During Phase 3 (January – May 2013), six faculty members drafted a 12-section omnibus document that the faculty revised during the spring of 2013 and then formally adopted by faculty vote. A “conversation group” of 20+ faculty developed the theological and curricular rationale. Several subcommittees composed of faculty, staff, and students wrote course descriptions and outcomes for various courses. Given the need to develop new ideas and reach compromises, the sustained involvement of the faculty throughout the process was crucial to its success.

During Phase 4 (June 2013 – August 2014) the implementation took place under the auspices of the Educational Leadership Committee and the Office of the Academic Dean. A number of faculty members who had been leaders during the development phase went on sabbatical, retired, or took other positions by the end of the 2012-13 academic year. During the implementation phase, many continued their efforts and others assumed new responsibilities to ensure that the transition was done well. Work groups of faculty, staff, and students worked through the remaining policy issues. An additional work group developed the new Learning Leader course, which introduces students to the process of creating and assessing portfolios, and developed the structure of the cohorts that will support student learning throughout their degree programs. The faculty will have an ongoing role in monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum through our assessment practices. The faculty has also committed itself to a more comprehensive review of the new curriculum in 2016-17.

Policies—freedom of inquiry, retention, workload (5.1.5-8)

(5.1.5 and 5.1.6) Part I of our Faculty Handbook articulates policies and Part II details procedures for implementing the policies. There are clear statements concerning faculty rights and responsibilities (Handbook Part I Section XI.A), which are monitored through the Office of the Academic Dean and the
regular review processes. Freedom of inquiry is affirmed (Faculty Handbook, Part I Section IV) and is seen in the list of faculty publications under section 5.5.4 below.

We state our policies regarding appointment, tenure, promotion, and dismissal in the Faculty Handbook, Part I Section XI.D and H, and in Part II Section II. Procedures for evaluation appear in Part II Section III. The adherence to the policy has been straightforward in most years. Our Office of Human Resources collects the portfolios of material used for personnel decisions, the appropriate committee evaluates the material, and issues a report with the recommendation, using the standard criteria for teaching, scholarship, and service. The committee and faculty vote by written ballot on the recommendation. If approved, the President reviews the recommendation and, if the President gives approval, the recommendation is forward to the board for final approval. In 2014-15, we have 2 faculty members at the rank of assistant professor, 14 associates, and 12 full professors. One administrative faculty member, the Director of Library Services, is not currently assigned rank.

When major financial issues came to light in the fall of 2012, 68% of the faculty were tenured and another 20% were on a tenure-track. In a largely tenured faculty, it is difficult to reduce the number of positions in response to major changes in revenue and expenses, or to change the composition of the faculty in order to meet changing instructional needs. Processes for tenure and promotion were suspended by one year to allow time to determine the sustainable size of faculty for Luther Seminary. To accommodate the delays in the process, the Academic Dean made use of the Handbook provision to extend the appointments of affected faculty members by a year through administrative appointment (Faculty Handbook, Part II Section II.A.5).

When enough faculty members retired or took other positions, the tenure review processes for two faculty members resumed in the 2013-14 academic year, and both were approved for tenure in May 2014. A third faculty member was reappointed for a three-year tenure-eligible term, and a fourth resumed the tenure review process in the fall of 2014. The three faculty members eligible for promotion in 2012-13 or 2013-14 were all approved for promotion.

To ensure sustainable faculty development in the future, the Board of Directors called for a Blue Ribbon Task Force to review our tenure policies and practices. The Task Force included the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, one Board member, and five faculty members elected by the faculty. The report of the Task Force was submitted to the faculty and Executive Committee of the Board of Directors in December 2013 and to the full Board of Directors in February 2014. The Task Force recommended that the practice of granting tenure to some faculty members should continue. It also recommends that the seminary consider hiring some faculty members through renewable contracts that would not lead to tenure, but would give the faculty member fair compensation and considerable stability in employment.

When implemented, such arrangements will help Luther support a strong faculty while providing some flexibility to change the size or composition of the faculty to meet the changing needs of theological education. Our policies on sabbaticals and research leaves are stated in the Faculty Handbook Part I Section XI.E and Part II Section IV.

**Recommendation**

Take great care to ensure that both tenured and contingent faculty members have the necessary competencies and are fully valued for their contributions.
(5.1.7) Policies on faculty compensation are stated in the Faculty Handbook sections Part I Section XI.F. The salaries at Luther Seminary are higher than the average and median salaries of ATS schools as a whole, and above those of other ELCA seminaries. When compared with seminaries of comparable size and degree programs, our salaries are slightly below average, according to our most recent ATS Institutional Peer Profile Reports.

All faculty members have office space on campus. Our support services include staff who help with computers, set up and manage websites for courses, provide library services and E-reserves, assist with the preparation of manuscripts for publication, and help with clerical work such as mailing, scanning, and duplicating materials.

(5.1.8) The normal workload is five semester-length courses per year. That is an increase from 4.5 courses per year, which enables Luther Seminary to provide more instruction with a smaller faculty. Faculty members with heavy administrative responsibilities, like those who chair divisions and the Faculty Concerns Committee, have reduced workloads.

5.1 Further documents and data:
2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf
2013ATS_IPPR.pdf
2013ATS_ELCA_IPPR.pdf
2013ATS_Peer_IPPR.pdf
2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
2014DiversityCOREReport.pdf
2014FacultyDevelopment.pdf
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
Faculty CVs (in Document Room)

Faculty role in teaching (5.2)
Related HLC criteria: 3.C.4

(5.2.1) Faculty members have a large amount of freedom to design and conduct courses, as long as the courses work toward the outcomes of our degree programs. Faculty members are called to teach in the disciplines in which they have special expertise, and are expected to draw on that expertise in the classroom. Faculty members are grounded in certain fields while conversant in others, since we are preparing graduates who will usually not be specialists, but will need to integrate various perspectives in their ministries. Discerning how best to honor fields of specialization while working toward integration remains an ongoing task. To help with this process, the faculty has set times each month (the “New Wednesday’s project) for shared discussion about pedagogy, assessment, and scholarship.

(5.2.2) Prior to 2014, integration in the curriculum was supported by courses in the area known as Interpreting and Confessing, which were team-taught by faculty members from two different disciplines. The courses explored questions of what it means to be a Christian public leader who can interrelate tradition, context, and experience. Integration was also supported through discipleship small groups, which met for discussion of faith and vocation. For Distributed Learning students, cohorts provided a context for integrating learning.
The new curriculum identifies student formation in four areas: theology, faith, character, and interpersonal relationships. It embeds the four aspects of formation in a portfolio process that will be cohort-traveled and includes both formative and summative means of evaluating student progress in integration. Individual faculty are urged to offer at least one assignment in each of their courses that will be explicitly aimed at supporting the portfolio process. Moreover, all faculty members will eventually be involved in the formative and summative elements of the portfolio processes.

(5.2.3) Over the past decade, teaching has come to include a greater proportion of online and intensive learning options. Some faculty members are well prepared to teach in these venues, while others would welcome more support.

When online courses were first developed, a few faculty members attended workshops that helped with online teaching, and they shared their insights with others. As we developed the MDiv Distributed Learning program (DL), Prof. Richard Nysse gathered regular and adjunct faculty to share experiences from online teaching. In June 2009, Luther Seminary hosted a three-day workshop on DL instruction. About 30 people attended, including faculty from Luther and other institutions. In 2010, there were two workshops devoted to online instruction and intensive courses.

In recent years, most support for course design has been done on an individual basis through the office of Learning Design. Staff members help the faculty broaden the use of educational technology. They provide input on ways to use the course website, to use shared calendars for courses and groups, to set up Google Hangout chat sessions or live "on air" sessions, and to weave audio and video clips into their courses. The Learning Design staff regularly hosts lunchtime sessions called “Tech Talks,” which are open to faculty, staff, and students. These presentations cover a range of topics that relate to the use of technology in education and ministry settings.

About a third of our faculty members have taken advantage of Wabash workshops for pre-tenure or mid-career faculty. These workshops have offered a stimulating environment in which to explore approaches to teaching and learning with faculty members at other schools. These workshops provide focused time away from the usual responsibilities and opportunity to learn from peers about innovative ways to teach. A number of faculty members have been involved in small groups that discuss teaching and learning. One group was comprised of pre-tenure faculty members, who could learn from each other as they developed their approaches to theological education. Another group consisted of tenured faculty members, who could exchange ideas based on their years of teaching.

The only part-time faculty members are those who teach on an adjunct basis. Most of these are Luther Seminary emeriti professors, who usually teach the kinds of courses they taught before retiring, and teach online only if they did so before retirement. For adjunct instructors who have not previously been connected to Luther, we ask our Learning Design staff to work with them in the use of technology for their particular course.

**Recommendation**

Continue to develop various types of learning experience to suit the needs residential, commuter, and distributed learners. Changes in technology present new opportunities and learning challenges for educators to discern what kinds of training opportunities are genuinely helpful for faculty members in this changing context.
(5.2.4) We have ample amounts of space for learning with seven classrooms accommodating groups of 35 or more, four rooms accommodating smaller groups of 25 or less, two rooms accommodating large groups of 50 or more, and an auditorium seating 120. We also have ample space for each faculty member to have an office.

Our library staff provides excellent support for learning. They have created a system of E-reserves that makes materials readily accessible to both residential and distributed students. The library staff can create a library guide for a subject area or class, highlighting databases, (electronic and print) books, and texts. They can also partner with faculty members to present sessions on searching the catalog and databases, as well as helping students locate research materials for papers and projects.

The campus classrooms with more cumbersome furniture are being updated with tables and chairs that can be rearranged to meet different needs, whether large group presentation or small group discussion. All classrooms are equipped with audio-visual equipment and wireless access to the internet. The most recent upgrades took place in the Northwestern classrooms, which were given additional soundproofing and new furniture. The technology in the auditorium received a major upgrade in 2012, so that it now has new projectors, dual screens, and other features that serve instruction well. In the past, the offices in Gullixson Hall have not been ADA accessible, but this has been addressed through a new elevator, which was installed in the summer of 2014.

**Recommendation**

*We will need to ensure that regular maintenance and upgrading of facilities is undertaken on a regular basis.*

(5.2.5) The Faculty Handbook Part II Section III outlines our procedures for faculty evaluation. Categories of each review include teaching, scholarship, and community participation.

Formative evaluation is done primarily through a faculty member’s written self-evaluation and conversation with the Academic Dean. The Faculty Concerns Committee has also developed (and the Faculty approved) a process for regular five-year reviews of tenured faculty members. These reviews will include student evaluations and faculty reviews of the person’s scholarship and community service. The evaluation itself involves other faculty members along with the Academic Dean.

Summative evaluations are done in connection with reappointment, the tenure decision, and promotion. These procedures include evaluations of teaching from students and two faculty members. Internal and external reviews cover scholarship and service to Luther Seminary, the church, and the academy. A faculty committee then reviews the material and meets with the person for an interview.

**5.2 Further documents and data:**

- 2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
- 2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
- 2014TechTalks.pdf

**Faculty role in student learning (5.3)**

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT (5.3.1)

Following its re-accreditation in 2004-5, Luther Seminary took steps to develop and implement a systematic assessment plan at the institutional, program, and course levels. There were several pilot programs, including the 2005 READS-2 Work Group, the 2007 Assessment Task Force, and the 2008 Learning Design Task Force. In consultation with ATS and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), we enrolled in the HLC Assessment Academy in 2008. The results of that work are described in the HLC “Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning Impact Report.”

Luther developed a “Comprehensive Academic Assessment Plan,” which would involve correlated course and program learning outcomes, the development of systems for measuring student learning against stated outcomes, and developing practices for analysis, distribution and application of data. The process made clear that there were a number of key issues in contemporary theological education that challenged the fitness of the seminary’s current curricular models and program design.

Therefore, in 2010-11 the seminary engaged in a yearlong discussion of “New Horizons—Big Questions / Big Ideas.” Dan Aleshire of ATS came twice to participate. The conversation focused on challenges facing seminaries and church leadership in the 21st century, and was organized around shifts occurring within our subject-accreditation agency, as well. The assessment data, combined with other data that was arriving from a number of other seminary-related research projects, made a convincing case to the faculty for a now-completed Program Redesign and Curriculum Revision (PRCR) process, which resulted in a new curriculum.

The curriculum implemented in the fall of 2014 includes an approved set of program outcomes and mediating competencies, as well as course-level learning outcomes. The PRCR documents form the basis for the portfolio process with which students, staff, faculty and contextual collaborators will engage and evaluate student progress. As part of the new curriculum implementation, Luther is embedding a new assessment model within the curriculum and the regular work of all programs which is connected to broader institutional assessment.

The new assessment plan will use three instruments to gather data on teaching effectiveness and student learning. All of these instruments will be used in all of our First Degrees Programs, and the first two will be used in all of our programs (First Degrees and Graduate School). The three instruments are (1) the Student Perceptions and Experience Surveys provided by the ATS, (2) Course Evaluations, and (3) Electronic Portfolios that are part of an integration course that students will begin in the first semester of study and complete at the end of their degree program. Students and faculty will engage with the Electronic Portfolio at key milestones throughout their program of study. Our Assessment Committee will lead engagement with the data from the three instruments and will conduct regular program reviews.

To ensure the quality of overall assessment, we have:

1. Created an Office of Institutional Effectiveness, lead by the Director of Library Services, Andrew Keck. His service in this role grows out of his leadership in the self-study processes and reporting for accreditation for both ATS and HLC.
2. Established an Assessment Committee to oversee the various dimensions of assessment. The committee is comprised of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the Academic Dean, four faculty members, and two staff members.
3. Instituted twice-a-semester gatherings of faculty, staff, and students to reflect on assessment data, helping to make assessment an integral part of the work we do.

LEARNING RESOURCES (5.3.2)
By 2011, it became clear that the rising costs of publications required that we review our current journal subscriptions. At the same time, patterns of usage had changed, as faculty and students relied increasingly on digital versions of many publications when available. While the library had interim leadership, members of our faculty worked with the library staff to identify ways of reducing the number of our subscriptions and ensuring that we had access to what was most relevant to our scholarship and teaching.

In 2013, with a new Director of Library Services, the library staff reviewed and reduced the number of standing orders for monograph series. Again, faculty members were consulted about titles in their disciplines, so the resulting list of subscriptions was more economical and yet in keeping with our commitments to research and learning. Library staff members continue to consult with faculty members about new databases, often providing opportunities for faculty members to test the database before decisions are made about licensing it. An updated Collection Development Policy was approved in May 2014.

Staff from Learning Design and the Office of Technology, with input from all interested faculty members, led the redesign of our auditorium in 2012. In addition, faculty and staff were involved in preliminary user tests, as plans were developed and implemented.

LEARNING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES (5.3.3)
Advising students involves several roles: (1) academic advising, (2) faith and vocational formation, and (3) participating in denominational processes for review of candidates for ordained or rostered lay ministries. Until the fall of 2013, the practice was that each faculty member had a number of advisees, including both residential and distributed students. Academic advising took place as needed. Faith and vocation were the focus of small groups that met about once per week for reflection, devotional reading of Scripture, prayer, and mutual support. Participation in the ELCA candidacy process involved meeting with MDiv students once in their second full year of study for endorsement and again in their final year to recommend approval for ordination or rostered lay service.

The Registrar, Student Resource Center, or faculty point people for various programs historically handled advising. The increasing diversity of student schedules and growth of the Distributed Learning program made it difficult for small groups to meet regularly. Moreover, some students were unsure how much to share about their own discernment process, because their advisors also met with candidacy committees to make decisions about readiness for ministry.

In 2013-14, we adopted an interim separation of the three roles. Academic advising was done primarily by the Student Resource Center and Registrar’s Office. Spiritual formation groups were formed, which involved faculty, staff, and students as they had time and interest. Faculty members continued to work with students in the ELCA candidacy process as before.

A new pattern began in the Fall 2014, working with the cohort model. All incoming MDiv and MA students, and current students who shift to the new curriculum, are assigned to cohorts of about 10 students each.
1) Each cohort has a faculty cohort mentor, who oversees the review of student portfolios and helps students shape their program to meet its stated outcomes. The cohort mentor meets with the cohort periodically for activities that support vocational and spiritual formation.

2) Candidacy mentors accompany ELCA students through the candidacy process. The candidacy mentor may be the student’s cohort mentor, or another agreed upon faculty member.

**LEARNING INTEGRATION (5.3.4)**

The new curriculum structures integrate directly into the program outcomes through the portfolio process. Specific learning outcomes are assessed in courses and through a program outcome reflection process. It requires students to do “meta reflection” on their learning based on actual evidence.

Perhaps the single most important course structure in this shift are the signature courses, in which students from all degree programs participate. These courses will form a tangible frame within which diverse learning objectives can be embedded, leading to coherence and significant alignment with the overall goal of forming “evangelical public leaders.”

**5.3 Further documents and data:**

2012ComprehensiveAssessmentPlan.pdf
2012HLCAssessmentAcademyImpactReport.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCForMDIVMA.pdf
2014AssessmentCommitteeMembershipandCharge.pdf
2014AssessmentCoordinator.pdf
2014LibraryCollectionDevelopmentPolicy.pdf
2014DirectionInstEffectiveness.pdf
2014PortfolioInfographic.pdf

**Faculty role in theological research (5.4)**

Related HLC criteria: 3.B.5 and 3.C.3 and 3.C.4

(5.4.1) Part I Section XI.A of the Faculty Handbook states, “As public scholars responsible for shaping and interpreting the changing contours of Christian leadership in the church and the world, members of the faculty are expected to be active participants in the scholarly discourse of their respective disciplines. Research, publication, and contributions to academic societies are essential elements of the faculty’s commitment to pedagogical excellence, service to the church, and influencing the future of theological scholarship.”

Scholarship plays an integral role in the review processes associated with reappointment, tenure, and promotion (Faculty Handbook Part II Section III). As part of the review process, a faculty member is expected to submit a sampling of publications, papers at professional societies, public lectures, and other forms of research and scholarship. In addition, we ask for a narrative review of scholarship from both internal and external colleagues.

(5.4.2) Luther has a clearly outlined sabbatical program (Faculty Handbook Part II Section IV). In the spring of 2014, the faculty adopted an updated policy for applying for sabbaticals and reporting on the way the time has been used. The updated policy also calls for a clear plan for disseminating the work done on sabbatical. In 2006, the faculty established a policy for granting pre-tenure writing leaves of one semester. In the years that followed, many of our pre-tenured faculty members were able to take...
advantage of this opportunity. Because of the need to reduce our faculty size in 2013, we have not been able to continue this policy. Pre-tenure faculty members may explore the possibility of reduced teaching loads or a semester without teaching if the person can obtain a research grant to support the work.

Faculty members have had opportunity to share their research through colloquia and seminars. In the past, some of these have been organized according to various disciplines, and others have involved the whole faculty. In 2014, we established the “New Wednesdays” project, making monthly discussions of faculty scholarship, assessment, and pedagogy. The modes of presentation vary. Sometimes several faculty members present their work in different sessions, allowing colleagues to choose which one to attend, and sometimes there is one presentation for the entire faculty.

(5.4.3-5.4.4) As noted above, the freedom of inquiry stated in the ATS Statements on Academic Freedom and Professional Ethics is affirmed in the Faculty Handbook (Part I Section IV). Luther Seminary faculty are active in formal research and publication, leadership and presentations at scholarly societies, and engagement with ecclesial bodies and other diverse publics. Some of the links below detail recent faculty output.

5.4 Further documents and data:
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2014FacultyArticlesEssaysSince2012.pdf
2014FacultyBooksCumulative.pdf
2014FacultyElectronicResourcesSince2012.pdf
2014FacultyPapersPresentationsSince2012.pdf
Faculty CVs (in Resource Room)
Select Faculty Publications (in Resource Room)

Summary recommendations
With a new commitment to diversifying models of faculty through use of both tenure and contract faculty, we will reform our culture and continue to update our faculty policies, and hiring procedures. New faculty positions for faculty in contextual learning and stewardship will be on a contract basis while our position in congregational and community care will be tenure-eligible. We further will cultivate faculty strength and flexibility through implementing 5-year faculty reviews in addition to the various tenure and promotion reviews. Finally, with a new curriculum for MA and MDiv degrees, faculty will continue to develop their engagement with learning outcomes and assessment.
GS 6 – Student recruitment, admissions, services, and placement

Recruitment (6.1)
Related HLC criteria: 1.A.2

Luther Seminary’s mission to educate leaders for Christian communities called and sent by the Holy Spirit to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ and to serve in God's world is at the heart of our recruitment practices and policies. We exist to educate Christian public leaders. We intend to be confessional and missional—boldly confessing the classical Christian faith as expressed in the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran confessions as we participate in the creative work and the reconciling mission of God in Jesus Christ. Luther Seminary designated four educational processes through which to accomplish its vision and goals:

- Master of Divinity—Missional Pastors
- Master of Arts and Graduate Certificates—Academic and Professional Degrees
- Master of Theology, Doctorate of Ministry and Doctor of Philosophy—Graduate Theological Education
- Lifelong Learning for Leadership

More recently, our previous Academic Dean, seeking to account for the innovation that had occurred over the last decade, described the institution as “a center of learning on behalf of the church for the sake of the world.” As a seminary of the ELCA, recruitment efforts are focused on Christian students wanting to serve in Christian communities. Courses in denominational theology and polity required for a student’s ordination are available at Luther, through our consortium offerings, or through independent study.

(6.1.2) Luther Seminary’s mission statement is the cornerstone of recruitment publications and official seminary documents. The mission statement is known and understood by the community.

Over the past year, the Office of Marketing and Communications has been working, in consultation with faculty, staff and students, on new language to describe Luther Seminary. The new language includes the phrases: “transformative education,” “Gospel-centered identity,” “meaningful connections,” “stellar faculty,” “flexible options,” and “faithful future.” Students and faculty are sharing their stories that reflect these commitments.

We accurately represent ourselves in our publications by sharing real stories of real people. In all of our most recent marketing efforts, we have focused on current student stories to tell the story of Luther. We currently have three student videos that depict their experience and are working on an additional three. We are intentional about the students that we have selected for the videos, pictures and stories on our website and in our publications to assure they are representative of the diversity of our programs and communities. We are cognizant of the age, denominational, degree program, and gender, ethnic and cultural diversity of our student population in the selection of students who highlighted in our publications.

We have also been reviewing our website with plans to complete a major overhaul in the year ahead. We have a “101 Uses for a Theological Degree” poster that is based on the actual employment of our students after graduation.
Admission (6.2)

(6.2.1) Luther Seminary is committed to a holistic approach to reviewing an applicant’s readiness for study. Luther’s admissions criteria are outlined in the catalog and demonstrate the attention that is given to the applicants’ qualifications. These criteria include:

**Prerequisites (academic)**
A bachelor’s degree, or its equivalent, from a regionally accredited college or university, is required. Students without a bachelor’s degree may be considered for admission if they have significant leadership or ministry experience, possess the equivalent of an Associate Arts degree or more, and apply to the MDiv or a professional MA degree program. Applicants are typically required to have a cumulative grade point average in college of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale (B average). However, factors other than the academic record are taken into consideration when making admissions decisions; these may include other graduate study/degrees, occupational experience, church and community leadership, and an applicant’s maturity. Applicants with undergraduate GPAs below 3.0 are requested to submit a statement detailing readiness for graduate school. A preadmissions interview may also be required.

**Personal qualifications (personal and spiritual)**
Luther Seminary recognizes that the Spirit of God calls people with many different gifts to serve and lead the church. The following constellation of commitments, character traits and competencies signal an individual’s readiness for theological studies:

- A commitment to Christ, the church, and the ministry of God’s word
- The academic ability to read and learn with discernment
- The ability to communicate and write with clarity and precision
- Leadership qualities and experience evidenced by personal and relational health, integrity, and consideration of others
- The potential to lead, to inspire, and to relate positively with people

Students complete the application for admission, send all postsecondary transcripts, submit three recommendations (one from a pastor, one from a teacher and one from another of their choice) and write an autobiography/faith statement.

Starting in 2011, the Admissions Committee began reviewing the complete application for admission for all applicants, regardless of their cumulative grade point average (GPA). Prior to 2011, the GPA was the dominant factor in the admission decision. If the applicant met the GPA expectation, the committee put their file on a consent agenda for approval. Since 2011, every application is thoroughly reviewed and then voted on by the Admissions Committee that consists of the Academic Dean (or a designate), a faculty representative from each division, the Vice President of Enrollment and Dean of Students, the Associate Dean of Student Resources and Candidacy, the Director of Admissions and the Associate Director of Admissions.
For our Graduate Theological Degrees, the academic and admission requirements vary for each program, but generally require a first degree in theology, such as a MA, MDiv, or BD (or equivalent) from an accredited theological school.

Applications for admission to the master of theology program are made to the Associate Dean of Graduate Theological Education at Luther Seminary. Admission requirements include a first degree in theology, an acceptable grade point average of at least 3.00 on a 4.00 scale for the first degree(s) in theology, and supportive references indicating potential for success in a Master of Theology or Doctoral Degree Program. For the Doctor of Ministry Program, we require a minimum of three years in some form of professional ministry subsequent to the receipt of a first graduate theological degree.

**Recommendation:**

*Given the intentional work that has been done in MA/MDiv admissions, we need to further evaluate and integrate our efforts in admissions for other degree programs.*

(6.2.2) As stated in 6.2.1, we have clearly stated in the annual academic catalog the admissions policies for entry into the seminary. A policy regarding non-BA applicants was created in 2012. Our GPA requirement ensures that students have a solid academic foundation for graduate work while the essay required for admission assists the Admissions Committee in evaluating the writing ability. Additionally, we require Biblical languages for MDiv degrees.

The Admissions Committee can admit a student with the condition of a “Student Resource Center (SRC) Hold.” In these cases, students must meet with an advisor in the SRC prior to registration. They must also meet with an advisor on a regular basis during their first term. The purposes of the conditional admit is to assist students in adjusting to graduate-level work. Advisors recommend appropriate courses and student support such as the writing center, time management, study skills and disability services (when applicable).

In 2011, we reviewed the TOEFL score minimum to ensure consistency with comparable graduate-level work. We adjusted our expectations for the TOEFL by raising the minimum score and have adhered to these new expectations. We were finding that several of our incoming international students were struggling with Western-style writing and documentation, regardless of the TOEFL score. Therefore, in 2012, we added a two-week intensive English and writing workshop that is offered in August each year for incoming international students. Since the implementation of this workshop, we have seen incidents of plagiarism decrease significantly and an increased use of the writing center as a trusted partner for our international students.

We have also recently started tracking our graduates and are finding that those that are interested in pursuing PhD-level work are getting accepted into programs across the country, further validating students’ preparedness for further graduate work. With the introduction of the new curriculum, the required portfolio will provide us an assessment tool for this evaluation.

(6.2.3) In 2011, Luther Seminary hired Applied Policy Research to serve as consultants on net tuition strategy and to track incoming student quality as determined by the admissions rubric and the scholarship program rubric. Collecting this data each year allows us to compare the qualifications of the incoming class from year to year, determining trends and then addressing opportunities through the use of net tuition revenue. We have competition from our sister ELCA institutions, as well as other
seminaries, for top students. Many of our competitors simply offer full tuition scholarships to the largest number of students possible, leaving all other students without any scholarship support. We previously used this same strategy, creating a large divide between the “haves” and the “have-nots.” Since 2011, we have been strategic in our approach of offering scholarships and trying to leverage a variety of scholarship levels to yield the highest number of students, from the top-ranked to the solid middle candidates.

(6.2.4) The Luther Admissions Staff travels throughout the country, encouraging student representation from a wide range of states. Although the majority of our students do come from the upper Midwest states, Washington and Texas are in the top 5 states of origin for our students. Our 71 international students (10 percent of the student body) represent 28 countries. Thirty-one percent of our students represent 41 denominations and faiths other than ELCA. Luther has engaged in improving the recruitment of ecumenical students by building relationships with a variety of Christian denominations. One example is our work with the United Methodist Church and the start of the Methodist House of Studies, a supportive community that encourages students as they prepare for Methodist ministry at Luther Seminary.

We recognize the importance of a diverse student body, and engage in efforts to support students of color in our campus visit events and when visiting undergraduate institutions. The Wallace Scholarship is a scholarship for students of color or students from new immigrant communities of faith in the MA or MDiv programs, and is one way we support and encourage students of color as they discern a call to Christian Public Ministry.

(6.2.5) Luther states in our catalog the ATS recommendation regarding the subjects to be included in prior college coursework:

- English language and literature; history, including nonwestern cultures as well as European and American; philosophy, particularly its history and its methods; natural sciences, both the physical and the life sciences; social sciences, where psychology, sociology and anthropology are particularly appropriate; the fine arts and music, especially for their creative and symbolic values; biblical and modern languages; religion, both in the Judeo-Christian and in the Near and Far Eastern traditions.

Based on these guidelines, we strongly recommend these minimums for undergraduate study:

- Biblical Studies—one year
- English—two years
- Philosophy—one year
- History of Western Civilization—one year
- Speech—one course
- Foreign language—intermediate level of proficiency

In the application review process, we evaluate the undergraduate transcript with an eye for the academic challenge and diversity of undergraduate coursework, noting preparedness for post-baccalaureate theological study.
6.2 Further documents and data:
2012AdmissionsPoliciesForNon-BA.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014AdmissionRubricGuidelines.pdf
2014AdmissionRubricMA.pdf
2014AdmissionRubricMDiv.pdf
2014StudentAdmissionsKeyMetrics.pdf
2014StudentDiscountAndNetTuitionRevenue.pdf
2014StudentRetentionGridMDivMA.pdf

Student services (6.3)
Related HLC criteria: 1.A.2 and 3.C.6 and 3.D.1

(6.3.1) Luther Seminary publishes information regarding students’ rights and responsibilities through the Academic Catalog, which is available online, with links sent via email to all students each summer when it is completed. Print copies are available in offices across campus including the Student Affairs Office. Students also receive a copy of the Student Handbook that contains Luther’s policies regarding student behavior. The goal is to have students receive this document in the term in which they start school, at the beginning of each academic year, and as policy changes are made. The Student Handbook and Academic Catalog are updated annually.

(6.3.2) Luther is committed to providing robust student services for all enrolled students. We are fortunate to have a staff that assist students in a variety of ways including advising, the writing center, contextual learning, disability services, community and residential life, student groups and activities, pastoral care, and the parish nurse.

In the last three years, the Student Affairs team has undergone major realignment in staff structures and areas of focus to streamline services and clarify of roles (for both staff and students). The four main areas are Housing and Residential Life, Financial Aid, International Student and Scholar Affairs, and the Student Resource Center, all of which are led by the Vice President of Enrollment and Dean of Students. We now work more collaboratively across departments, striving to give a holistic experience to all students. An example of this collaboration is the Care Team, which meets weekly, and consists of the Dean of Students, Parish Nurse, Seminary Pastor, Director of Community and Residential Life, and the Director of Student Resources and Candidacy. The Care Team reviews the needs of individual students and of the collective community. They create a care plan for individual students and programming for the community.

We survey students about particular events and experiences including First Week orientation, intensives for distributed students, and guest housing. These survey responses have helped us shape future events. We also encourage our students to participate in the following ATS surveys: Entering Student Questionnaire, Graduating Student Questionnaire, and the Alumni Questionnaire.

(6.3.3) Luther is striving to increase the accessibility of our student services and co-curricular offerings so that all students, regardless of ability and degree pathway, have access to programming and learning opportunities. The growth of our distributed learning program has challenged us to consider how we are
making programs and resources available to all students regardless of when or how they take their courses.

For example, many on-campus events, including outside speakers and learning events, are now broadcast via Adobe Connect so that anyone with a Luther Seminary log-in can view the program and send questions/comments via live chat. The Writing Center has upgraded their resources so they are able to work with students remotely. Orientation programming now occurs twice a year—in the fall (primarily for residential new students) and in January (when the distributed students are first on campus). As we continue to evaluate our present offerings, we are challenged to be mindful of students who study in many different modalities.

Additionally, Luther has developed more extensive resources for working with students with disabilities. Our disability policy is shared with students through the Student Handbook and administered through the Student Resource Center. Budgets have been expanded to include resource money for students with documented disabilities, with further staff training a goal for the next few years.

(6.3.4) At Luther Seminary, a student’s admissions file (which contains the application, previous transcripts, references, autobiography/faith statement) is transferred from the Office of Admission to the Office of the Registrar prior to the beginning of the registration period of the term in which the student intends to enroll. The files of students who do not enroll are returned to the Office of Admission.

The files of students who enroll at Luther Seminary are maintained in the Office of the Registrar, which converts them to the students’ academic file. Various copies of student correspondence are added to the student academic file during the duration of the student’s enrollment. Student academic records contain course work attempted and earned. These records are retained permanently. Student files and records are secured in locked, fire-proofed file cabinets within an enclosed and locked room that is not accessible to the public.

Prior to 1995, permanent student records were retained in paper form and secured in the file cabinets located in the Office of the Registrar. In addition, these records were scanned and are also stored as a backup in an onsite digital repository, Laserfiche, that is backed up hourly.

Electronic student records are stored in the Jenzabar system, and are secured with permissions to access student information and accessed only through login and password. Electronic student records are backed up every 15 minutes.

(6.3.5) Degree programs are regularly evaluated to ensure that the program requirements meet the stated program outcomes and mission of Luther Seminary. Degree program changes are submitted for approval to the appropriate faculty committee and to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors also approves the tuition and fees on an annual basis, typically at the May Board meeting.

The Vice President of Enrollment and the Vice President of Finance and Administration craft a pricing recommendation in consultation with our financial aid strategist, Applied Policy Research, our Controller and current market research. In 2013, Learning Road was hired to complete market research, which included an analysis of our pricing.
Tuition and fees for all programs are found in the Academic Catalog and online at www.luthersem.edu. Tuition for MDiv and programs are charged at the same rate based on a full course or a half course. The DMin programs have a separate tuition and fee structure. Financial Aid is available to all students admitted to a degree program who are currently in good standing, and who meet the minimum course requirements. Luther Seminary facilitates housing for students and their families.

(6.3.6) Degree requirements (courses and non-credit requirements), grading and academic policies are published in the Academic Catalog, which is available online, with every student notified by email. Print copies are also available in offices across campus. Academic policies are also outlined in the Student Handbook.

(6.3.7) We distribute aid according to the guidelines as outlined in the Academic Catalog. To receive financial aid (need-based aid, grants/loans) at Luther Seminary, a student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form along with our own required Luther Application for Financial Aid form. The FAFSA form determines need, while the Luther Application advises of outside financial resources and a student’s intended enrollment status. Scholarships are awarded based on merit at the time of admission.

These two data sources are used to determine a student’s need, along with a budget/cost of attendance for the upcoming year. Need-based aid that has limited funding (i.e., Perkins loans) is distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. That is, in order of receipt, those students that submit both completed documents will receive the aid until the pool of funds has been exhausted. After need has been determined, and based on the course enrollment information provided by the student, an electronic award letter is provided to the student. It includes the budget (tuition, housing, books/fees, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses) on which aid is based. Before loans are processed, a student must electronically return an accepted award letter. Loans will not be processed without their acceptance.

After review for any necessary changes, the same process above is repeated each year. All financial aid topics, from eligibility to applying, to allocated aid available, to our processes are located on our financial aid web page at www.lutherseminary.edu/finaid.

(6.3.8) We have not had a formalized process in regards to this standard and have no knowledge of any complaints. In preparing for this report, we determined that all complaints related to the accrediting standards of the Commission will be lodged with the Vice President for Enrollment/Dean of Students. Once received, they will be reviewed and then shared with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the primary liaison to ATS. Both the Vice President for Enrollment/Dean of Students and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will maintain a record of the formal complaints for review by the Board. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness will maintain the outcomes of any review completed by the Board. This policy will be added to the Student Handbook and will be made available on the Institutional Effectiveness webpage on the Luther Seminary website.

6.3 Further documents and data:
2013ATS_ESQ.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
Student borrowing (6.4)

(6.4.1) The Director of Financial Aid prepares an analysis of student loan indebtedness, which includes comparing current and past statistics to establish trends. This report is shared with the Administrative Cabinet. In addition, the report is shared with the Office of Seminary Relations in order to strengthen their efforts to raise more scholarship dollars to reduce debt. Finally, the Director of Financial Aid formally presents this data to the Boards and makes it available to concerned constituencies.

(6.4.2) During the application process, a representative from either the admissions or financial aid staff meets with a prospective student to discuss financial resources available to students. These include assistance from their home congregation, their synod/national church organizations, outside scholarships, scholarships from Luther, and finally, the loans that are available to students. We participate in the Federal Perkins program, the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan Program, the Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan Program, and an institutional loan program. All funding options, including student loans, are presented to potential students at this introductory stage. Luther has a private, institutional loan with limited funding allowances per year that is offered to full-time students in both the MA and MDiv degree programs. This loan is modeled after the Federal Perkins loan, having a 5% interest rate and 9-month grace period, and being interest-free until monthly payments begin. The loan has a cancellation feature in that for the first five years that a graduate is employed in the ministry, 10% of the balance may be canceled per year.

All incoming students to Luther that borrow student loans must complete entrance counseling. For federal loans, we use online counseling through the Dept. of Education at www.studentloans.gov. Entrance counseling for the Perkins loan is required each year received and is completed online at University Accounting Services (UAS), the loan servicer. UAS is also services Luther’s institutional loan.

In an effort to hold stable a student’s indebtedness, when an award letter is issued to a student, it outlines any institutional awards along with Perkins & institutional loans, if applicable, and lastly, only the unsubsidized loan. Although a student may be eligible for a Graduate PLUS loan, it is not included on the award letter. If additional funding in this category is requested, we will communicate with the student regarding the necessity of the loan. Likewise, if we receive notification from an outside source that a student is seeking a private loan, we will communicate with them regarding the pros and cons of a federal versus private loan.

Starting in the spring of 2014, with the support of the Lilly grant, we have developed a pilot counseling plan that will begin small and expand over the next few years. We are targeting our incoming students with existing debt to encourage wise borrowing, provide debt & budget counseling, and provide tools available to them to better understand limited borrowing. We will then put in place a variety of follow-up measures. Another phase will be to identify a group of current students that may be at risk based on their overall indebtedness and utilize the Department of Education’s Financial Awareness Counseling module, found online at www.studentloans.gov.

Within the Financial Aid website, we have a page dedicated to Financial Planning Tools. These tools include: links to loan repayment calculators and budgeting worksheets with categories, tips on living frugally, and Financial Coaches. The Financial Coaches program at Luther has been extremely successful.
Our students have confidants that assist them in developing and maintaining a personal budget, reviewing their long-term debt, and understanding stewardship on a personal and professional level. Financial coaches are not required, but are available to all students to assist with their financial budget, both while in school and looking ahead to after graduation. Efforts are in place to reach out specifically to first-year students. Online and/or in-person exit counseling is held as a student nears graduation.

While we have not been overly aggressive with counseling to this point, we have been conservative in our approach to awarding loans. The default rate of Luther Seminary as compiled by the Department of Education for the last 5 years of availability is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate (2 yr.) in %</th>
<th>Rate (3 yr.) in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>.99%</strong></td>
<td><strong>.85%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Computation of 3-year default rates commenced with the 2009 AY.

6.4 Further documents and data:
2014StudentLoanStatistics.xlsx
Financial Coaching [http://www.luthersem.edu/student_services/coach.aspx](http://www.luthersem.edu/student_services/coach.aspx)

Placement (6.5)
Related HLC criteria: 4.A.6 and 4.C.1 and 4.C.4

(6.5.1) The Student Resource Center (SRC) has developed broader resources for students exploring their career and leadership development to prepare for their vocations after seminary. We focus on all areas of career development and planning: self-assessment, occupational research and decision-making, gaining experience and credentials, job search skills and processes, and overall career management. We do not do this work alone, but connect students with resources from campus to help students meet their vocational goals. We have amassed a library of resources (in print and online at [www.luthersem.edu/placement](http://www.luthersem.edu/placement)) for vocational discernment, resume and cover letter writing, job search resources and support, and opportunities for leadership learning and growth.

We work with students individually and lead a number of group learning sessions for students to engage their discernment and help them prepare for the world of work. We provide Strengths Finder assessments and feedback, connect students to contextual learning opportunities, undertake mock interviews, facilitate sessions on networking, negotiating salaries, and human resources in congregational ministry, and celebrate as a community certain milestones met by students. These
offerings change from year to year based on student feedback and requests for resources. It also works to encourage students to engage in lifelong learning and vocational enhancement.

A majority of Luther’s ELCA MDiv graduates are placed for first call through an ELCA assignment to one of the ELCA’s 9 regions, where they seek to be called into congregational ministry. The Student Resource Center helps students navigate this process by providing support and guidance regarding how the process works, answering questions, and giving feedback on necessary paperwork and deadlines. Luther also provides a consultant who attends the ELCA assignment process advocating for our students. The Student Resource Center assists with annual visits by ELCA bishops which allows students to interact and form relationships with various bishops.

We host on the placement website a place for churches and nonprofits to post open positions to which both current students and alumni have access to as they engage in job search processes (http://www.luthersem.edu/placement/job_postings.aspx). In keeping with ELCA mobility expectations, we encourage congregations posting ordained clergy positions to work with their local synods to find appropriate leadership. But other congregational positions, along with an increasing number of nonprofit positions, employ this listing and give opportunity for our students and alumni to access potential jobs. The SRC is therefore a point of contact for recruiters from various organizations looking to hire Luther Seminary students and graduate and provides assistance in planning and promoting their visits.

While the SRC has a wealth of resources to share with students, we are working to increase student participation at a time when it can most influence their career decisions. The hope is that with the new curriculum there will be opportunities to integrate contextual and co-curricular experiences to accompany students in strengthening their vocational skills and job searching.

(6.5.2) The Associate Dean of Student Resources and Candidacy sits as a voting member of the admissions committee and is active in assuring that students are moving forward with denominational requirements as they go through the admissions process. We discuss student’s vocational goals as they are expressed in their application and seeks to discern if their goals are consistent with our institutional and degree goals.

Students find their way to seminary for a MA or MDIV through a variety of vocational reasons which could be categorized in these 4 ways: career change, preparation for a PhD program, enhancing their current role, or personal edification. It is deemed a success when students fulfill any of these vocational goals for their education.

The Student Resource Center tracks placement rates for MA and MDIV graduates while the Graduate Studies office tracks PhD, MTh and DMin graduates. We utilize personal contacts and accompaniment in the job search process, the Graduating Student Questionnaire, and follow up with graduates individually following graduation. Through ELCA denominational resources and contacts, it is easy to track and accompany graduates seeking ordination in the ELCA. Normally, over 90% of students who participate in the ELCA first-call assignment process are normally able to find congregational calls within six months of graduation. MDiv students who are preparing for ordination in denominations other than the ELCA work directly with their denominational leaders and structures to find calls after seminary.
MDiv students not preparing for ordination and MA students tend to present greater challenges in planning for their vocational goals, as there is not a predictable path to employment. Each year the seminary seeks to build relationships, particularly MA students as they pursue their vocational goals. It is a continuing goal to find ways to accompany these students following graduation to offer assistance and better understand their employment patterns. The seminary tracks this information, not only to know that its students are finding gainful employment, but also to expand its list of the kinds of ways that our graduates are engaging work in the church and the world. As a result, its list of “101 Uses for a Theological Education” is a continually updated document that it uses as a recruiting tool.

PhD and MTh students most often are international students who plan to return to their home countries to seek leadership in the church or teaching positions. American students are usually seeking teaching positions at colleges, universities or seminaries. Some MTh students plan to pursue a PhD. The majority of DMin students are already employed in congregational ministry and continue to do so following graduation.

(6.5.3) We seek to advocate for all our students to fulfill their vocational goals. This advocacy is most easily done for students seeking to be in ministry in the ELCA where we have contacts and resources to accompany and advocate. We seek to leverage our contacts in the ELCA to raise awareness of trends and characteristics of upcoming graduates. Through the ELCA assignment process, we are often helping bishops and other leaders understand our students’ gifts that would be of use in the church. We find we most often have to make extra effort on behalf of students who represent ethnic minorities or who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. The Student Resource Center works with a high ratio of diverse students (racial, ethnic, religion, gender or disability) to provide individual job search, resume and cover letter assistance and guidance. We are constantly working to build intercultural competence among our staff to address needs of particular students.

6.5 Further documents and data:
2013ATS_AQ(ClassOf2004).pdf
2013ATS_AQ(ClassOf2008).pdf
2014_101UsesForTheoDegree.pdf

Summary recommendations
Fully integrate admissions for Graduate Theological Education (MTh, DMin, and PhD) into overall enrollment strategy. Develop an overall enrollment strategy that identifies new markets for existing programs and marketing tactics with plan for moderate enrollment growth. Identify housing options and opportunities for our various student needs (full-time residential, international students, and distributive learning students).
Authority (7.1)
Related HLC criteria: 1.D.1 and 1.D.2

Formal authority is vested in Luther Seminary’s Board of Directors under the Articles of Incorporation filed in the state of Minnesota. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is identified as its sole corporate member. Section 2 of the Articles states that the Corporation is authorized “to establish and conduct a Lutheran theological seminary... [to] provide theological education for those who are preparing for service as pastors, missionaries, teachers, and for other forms of lay or ordained ministry... [as well as] the continuing education of laity and clergy.” Article 6 states, “The management and direction of the business of this Corporation shall be vested in the Board of Directors.”

The ELCA is involved in the governance of the institution through several processes:

- They are represented by a member of the ELCA administration on the Board of Directors
- The Church Council appoints and the supporting synods elect the members of the Board of Directors
- The Church Council oversees the operations of the Board via its approval power of the Bylaws of the Board of Directors
- The ELCA administration maintains informal communications concerning the operations of the Seminary
- The ELCA and the supporting synods approve graduates for ordination and placement in the denomination

The responsibilities and authorities for the Board of Directors are set forth in the Bylaws of Luther Seminary in Article VI. Article X of the Bylaws sets out those authorities delegated to the President, as well as the additional authorities and responsibilities of the Vice President for Administration and Finance and other officers. They act under the direction and supervision of the President, and with the support of the staff in each area carry out those responsibilities. The Employee Handbook governs the performance of staff.

Bylaws Article XII states the authorities delegated to the Faculty, which are primarily to develop the curriculum and be responsible for the instruction and guidance of the students, and adopt rules and regulations for their admission, promotion and graduation. In addition, the Faculty is also responsible for the Faculty Handbook, which upon approval by the Board of Directors, governs all aspects of faculty selection, appointment, retention, promotion, and performance of duties.

The Bylaws, including the delegation of authorities, are reviewed regularly by the Governance Committee, and amended periodically, as activities of the Board or legal and governance requirements change. This was most recently undertaken in 2013, to bring the Bylaws into alignment with the vision, mission and strategic plan of the seminary. The amendments were provided to the ELCA Church Council for their approval, and they responded with additional amendments. Those amendments were reviewed with the ELCA Church Council and several additional amendments were negotiated. Final approval of the Church Council was granted in March 2014, and the final approval by the Board occurred in May 2014.

The Board of Directors also oversees the work of Luther Seminary as the sole corporate member of The Luther Seminary Foundation, which is also incorporated in the state of Minnesota. The Luther Seminary
Foundation is governed by a Board of Trustees, and in accordance with their Articles of Incorporation, the Trustees only have authority for fundraising, managing and growing the endowments of the Foundation and, as and when directed by the Board of Directors, to act as the trustee of any split interest charitable trusts where the Foundation or Luther Seminary is a beneficiary. All other operational authority remains with the Board of Directors.

Likewise, the Administration’s Office of Student Affairs is responsible for compiling the Student Handbook in conformance with federal and state laws, and it contains the policies approved by the Board of Directors to govern student life.

7.1 Further documents and data:
- 1994ArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf
- 1996FoundationArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf
- 2014LutherSeminaryBylaws.pdf
- 2014BoardsGovernanceHandbook.pdf
- 2014StaffHandbook.pdf
- 2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
- 2014StudentHandbook.pdf

Governance (7.2)
Related HLC criteria: 5.B.2 and 5.B.3

The purpose of governance at Luther Seminary is to:

- Assure the mission, vision and strategic plan of the institution are aligned and implemented
- Assure academic integrity and quality
- Maintain financial integrity of the institution

With formal authority vested in the Board of Directors, the Board is committed to being clear and concise in its vesting of that authority, allocating authority for:

- Fundraising, managing and growing the endowments to the Foundation and to the Board of Trustees
- Operations to the President and Administration
- Pedagogy, curriculum and academics to the Faculty
- Student activities to the Administration and through the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment, further delegation of certain governance to the Student Council

The Handbooks setting forth the policies and processes on the exercise of those authorities govern each of those authorities. Further, each of the Committees of the Board has oversight of important aspects of the exercise of those authorities, and members of the faculty, administration and student body participate in meetings and the work of those committees and of the Board as a whole.

In response to the strategic challenges outlined in the discussion under GS 1 and GS 8, the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees re-evaluated the actions, processes, policies and performance of the Boards. Several steps were taken during the 2012-2014 fiscal years:
The Articles of Incorporation were reviewed to determine that the authorities granted remain appropriate.

The Bylaws of both Boards were thoroughly reviewed and significantly revised.

The majority of changes in the Bylaws were not substantive, but were done to bring the Bylaws up-to-date and organize them more effectively.

- Some of the changes brought the Bylaws into alignment with ELCA requirements.
- Some of the changes improved the oversight of financial issues as well as the Luther Seminary and Foundation endowments.

The Committees were reviewed, some re-organization was accomplished and emphases of some Committee Charters have changed.

- The Investment Committee was promoted to its current status as a full standing committee of the Board.

The Employee and Student Handbooks were thoroughly reviewed and revised.

In addition, competencies of the Board members are in the process of being evaluated and work is underway to improve recruitment, orientation, development and evaluation of the Boards’ members under the direction of the Board of Directors’ Governance Committee.

**7.2 Further documents and data:**

- 1994 ArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf
- 1996 FoundationArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf
- 2013 FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf
- 2014 LutherSeminaryBylaws.pdf
- 2014 BoardsGovernanceHandbook.pdf
- 2014 StaffHandbook.pdf
- 2014 FacultyHandbook.pdf
- 2014 StudentHandbook.pdf

**Governance process (7.3)**

Related HLC criteria: 2.C and 5.B

**Governing board (7.3.1)**

The Board of Directors and the Foundation Board of Trustees are successfully participating in shared governance, bringing both Boards together in leadership of Luther Seminary. The Boards meet concurrently three times per year in person, and as often as needed at other times by telephone conference. Since the events described in GS 1 and 8, Board discussions have become increasingly detailed, frank, and open, with greater acceptance of challenging questions and willingness to express conflicting ideas and concepts. As a result, the Boards have proven to be flexible and responsive to issues as they arise.

All members of both Boards participate in the work of the Boards’ Committees together, with equal voice and vote. The Committees bring forward proposals, initiatives and actions for the Boards as appropriate. Each Board meets in the presence of the other, where items for decision are raised and openly discussed. Votes are taken separately on necessary items that deal with business and issues specific to each Board’s area of responsibility. While there is interest in achieving consensus in those votes, most votes require only a majority of the quorum present at each meeting.
Most of the meeting time is spent with both Boards in plenary session, engaging in discussion and providing counsel to the President and members of the Administration regarding key strategic issues facing Luther Seminary.

Further collaboration occurs as representatives of the Luther’s constituencies are present at the joint meeting of the Boards and the Board Committees. In addition to a representative from the ELCA, the following other representatives are present and able to engage, both formally and informally, at all meetings of the Boards:

- Members of the administration are present in all plenary sessions of the Board, and are present and participative in meetings of the Board’s Executive Committee
- At least one member of the administration is assigned to each of the Board Committees and works closely with the Chair of those committees to set agendas and assure the work of the committee is accomplished
- A representative from the staff, appointed by the administration, is present in all plenary sessions of the Board
- The Chair of the Faculty Concerns Committee, and one at-large representative, both elected by the faculty, are present in all plenary sessions of the Board
- Student Representatives from the Student Council (two members of the Council and the Student Council President) are present in all plenary sessions of the Board
- An Alumni Council representative and a representative of the Friends of Luther Seminary are present in all plenary sessions of the Boards

The faculty, staff, student, alumni and Friends representatives attend committee meetings of their choosing, where they have a voice in the discussions, and have the opportunity to propose special initiatives. Representatives are not appointed or elected members of the Boards, so they do not vote, but otherwise are able to be fully engaged in the work of the committees.

The membership of the Board of Directors is established through requirements of the ELCA which are reflected in the Bylaws of Luther Seminary. Each supporting Synod of the ELCA elects a member through their convention process. The ELCA Church Council elects twenty percent of the members and two Bishops are elected, one each by the supporting regions of the ELCA. The nominees in each case are identified through careful consultation with the President to help ensure the needed competencies are brought to the work of the Board.

As of January 2014, the Board is 22 members, with about 15 non-member representatives usually present for Board meetings. The ELCA, as the sole corporate member, aspires to assure that the Board of Directors has a diverse membership, with a balance of male and female members (as of January 2014, the combined Boards have 19 men and 13 women), and a combination of clergy and lay members (with six of the Board of Directors being clergy). As of January 2014, there is only one person of color on the Board.

Achieving ethnic diversity continues to be a challenge, and one that is at the forefront in consultations with the Synods, the ELCA and the supporting Regions regarding nominations. While it is important that the Board reflects the congregations, Synods and the ELCA as a whole, as these institutions lead and support Luther Seminary, it is also important that Luther strive to represent the future diversity of its constituencies. Because the Board of Directors is made up only of members elected or appointed by the
ELCA Synods and the ELCA Church Council, the Board cannot directly recruit its own members, or exercise control over the selection of members for the Board. As the Synods and Church Council recognize the necessity of ethnic diversity to the future of the Church, we continue to discuss with them options for finding diverse new members.

Due to the process described above by which Directors are elected, efforts toward diversity on the Board of Directors prove more difficult than if the Board itself had control over the election of its members. Therefore, the work of the Governance Committee in identifying the Board’s diversity goals, and the work of the Board Chair and the President in communicating those goals and needs to the supporting Synods, Regions and the ELCA Church Council, need to be specific and intentional. It is imperative for the future of both Luther Seminary and the church at large that the Board contains a more realistic representation of ethnic diversity. The Board and the Governance Committee must determine the diversity, resources and competencies that currently exist on the Board and those that are needed in the specific light of the missional needs of Luther Seminary. That knowledge then informs the effective case that enables the Synods and the Church Council to be similarly intentional in their appointment of Board members, so that the Board represents not only the current constituencies, but those of the near future as well.

The Board of Directors, following nomination by the Trustees, elects the members of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees are significant financial supporters of Luther Seminary and are also nominated on the basis of the skills and abilities they bring to governance. As of January 2014, there are 11 Trustees.

New Directors and Trustees are each assigned an experienced Director or Trustee as a mentor who works with them throughout their first year to assure they can be effective. New members also meet in two extended sessions with the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and senior members of the administration. Those sessions occur after the new member has had an opportunity to experience at least one full Board meeting.

The Directors and Trustees are eligible to serve for three, four-year terms. When a term is ending, and if the member is standing for re-election, the Governance Committee undertakes a performance evaluation of the member, which includes an extensive self-evaluation. The evaluation helps the Board member to prayerfully consider whether or not to continue their Board service for another term, and in doing so, how they might improve their performance in that role. Also, the feedback is reviewed by the Governance Committee to determine how to improve the overall performance of the Board, to identify issues that are pending with Directors and Trustees, and steps to take to improve Board meetings and Trustee and Director engagement. For example, the change in the committee structure resulted in part from this feedback. The Boards also changed meeting agendas to include more specific and focused plenary sessions, more opportunities to engage with students and time for unstructured conversations in the Boards’ meeting agendas.

The Boards’ duties are set forth in their Bylaws, and begin with establishing and maintaining the purpose, vision, mission and strategic plan of Luther Seminary. In consultation with the President, members of the administration, faculty and students, they support Luther in accomplishing the strategic goals and fulfilling the mission.

Most of the work of the Boards is conducted through the Committees of the Board of Directors:
• Academic Affairs oversees the academic life of the seminary, and the Academic Dean supports the work of this committee
• Finance and Administration oversees the finances, capital management and administration of the seminary, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance supports the work of this committee
• Investment oversees the endowment assets and the investment of those assets for the Foundation and the seminary, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance as well as the Controller supports the work of this committee
• Presidential Support assists the President in performance of her duties and works directly with the President
• Seminary Relations oversees the development, public relations and fundraising programs of the seminary, and the Vice President for Seminary Relations supports the work of this committee
• Student Affairs and Enrollment oversees admissions, retention, student life, and delivery of student services of the seminary and the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs supports the work of this committee

There are also an Executive Committee and Governance Committee of the Board who are responsible for proper operations for both Boards.

Each of the Committees provides the opportunity for:
• Exercise of the Board’s authority and governance
• Oversight of each area’s implementation of the strategic plan and mission
• Monitoring performance
• Raising initiatives

During 2013, the committees were restructured and, as a result, they improved their performance under newly adopted charters, setting forth their purpose and responsibilities. In that effort, they substantially improved the committees’ effectiveness and functionality. For example:

• The Student Affairs Committee now receives more detailed information and comparative metrics, and there is open dialogue with Board members, students, staff, faculty, and the Campus Pastor all present.
• The Investment Committee, which had been only a subcommittee of Finance and Administration, was established as a standing committee of the Board of Directors. Its purview was expanded from simply overseeing the investment managers to being responsible for overseeing the inflows, investment and outflows from the endowments. As a result, there is now clear understanding and care for the goal of preserving generational equity in the endowments.
• In Finance & Administration, especially in reaction to the situation described in GS 1 & 8, the Committee has moved from standard meetings to meeting on an as-needed basis, which means meeting much more frequently, reviewing draft proposals repeatedly to arrive at the “financial sustainability” plan, and to report much more frequently to the Boards. For example, early in addressing the institution’s financial crisis, the Committee brought to the Boards a proposal to commit to achieving financial sustainability, which the Boards jointly adopted. Taking that step required openness and candor about the then-current situation, a thorough discussion and
understanding of the situation by the Boards, and a commitment to financial integrity. With that Resolution, the parameters were established that allowed financial planning to move forward at a higher level of professionalism, consistency and commitment.

- In all of the committees, there has been a greater focus on the strategic direction of the committee work, and a greater attention to assuring that the administrative departments are contributing to achieving the vision and mission of Luther Seminary.

The Board, under the Governance Committee’s leadership, is continuing to work on the best ways to establish Board performance metrics and evaluations. Currently, the Governance Committee provides a post-meeting evaluation for the Boards’ members to complete after each in-person meeting. That feedback is used to improve the processes for the meetings. In addition, every person who is eligible to stand for re-election completes a thorough evaluation of their own performance as a Director or Trustee and provides their perspective of the overall performance of the Boards. That evaluation is accompanied by a conversation with a member of the Governance Committee. All of the feedback each year is reviewed by the Committee and is used in the Boards’ performance improvement.

As required in their Bylaws, the Boards undertake an annual Conflict of Interest review via a questionnaire to each member. Any conflicts identified are evaluated and dealt with by the governance committee.

Administration (7.3.2)

The Board of Directors has established a Presidential Support Committee, made up of the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and two appointed additional members from the Directors and Trustees. The purpose of this committee is to assist and support the President in performance of their duties and conduct an annual review of the President’s performance, focusing on their responsibility for the mission and purpose of this seminary. The committee also determines the President’s compensation and conditions of employment and acts as the Compensation Committee of the Board of Directors to review and recommend for approval by the Board the compensation levels and conditions of employment for officers and certain key employees of Luther Seminary.

In carrying out this purpose, the committee meets regularly with the President to assist the President in implementing Luther’s strategic direction, and serve as a sounding board for the President. They also compile and review the annual review of the President’s performance and assist in developing the performance goals for the coming year and the plan for achieving those goals. In addition, they work with the President in their appraisal of the performance of the senior leadership team and their own succession planning. Finally, they attend to compensation for the President using market data comparisons to support and inform decisions concerning the President's compensation and conditions of employment as well as the compensation levels and conditions of employment for officers and certain key employees of the University.

As the discussion in GS 1 and GS 8 reflects, the Board has demonstrated its capacity for dealing with situations where the leaders demonstrated their inability to deal with challenges. In that context, following the resignation of the President and Chief Financial Officer, the Board and Administration intentionally and actively increased the transparency of communication, while attending to appropriate levels of privacy and discretion. One of the important steps the Administration took with the support and encouragement of the Board was to utilize the talents of the staff communications professionals as
a key part of the team, providing support and guidance for consistency and care in communications with all constituencies.

**Faculty (7.3.3)**

The Board of Directors has delegated to the faculty responsibility for pedagogy, curriculum, instruction and learning outcomes for the students under the Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission, and the Charter for the Academic Affairs Committee. The discussion under GS 5 sets forth the faculty’s structures and processes by which they carry out these authorities.

There is significant collaboration and cooperation between the faculty and the Board of Directors, as evidenced by the involvement of Faculty representatives at all Board meetings, joint representation on the recent President Search Committee, the work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, and informal interactions and discussions during and around meetings of the Board.

The regular collaboration of the faculty and the Boards rests primarily on the election of two representatives from and by the faculty to leadership roles that require regular interaction with the Boards. The first is the chair of the Faculty Concerns Committee (FCC), and the second is an at-large representative (Faculty Handbook, Part II: Procedures, I, C, 4). The chair of FCC convenes the committee to address questions about the life, ethos, and function of the faculty. Both the FCC chair and the at-large representative are members of the FCC and attend Board meetings. At Board meetings, both of these faculty members present reports from the Faculty, attend various Board Committee meetings, and provide a voice to faculty perspectives and concerns.

Alongside these regular duties, the faculty and members of the Boards have also collaborated in important work resulting from the seminary’s recent financial and leadership issues as described in GS 1, 2, 8. The work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force is a particularly helpful exemplar for collaboration between faculty and the Boards on critical matters that involve investment from both bodies. The work of the Task Force was properly housed within the authority granted to the faculty by the Board of Directors. After all, the matters being discussed were critical to the composition and development of a sustainable and excellent faculty. The research and thinking that resulted in the report was largely a product of the faculty members on the Task Force, but supplemented by the voice and participation of a Director. That is, this process was a helpful model of *shared* governance, wherein the authority for recommendations rested with the faculty process even as the Directors tended and helped aid the process.

Both the regular and more *ad hoc* approaches work well, though questions remain. For one, with retirements and other departures, the shape of the faculty has shifted in significant ways over the last year. As a result, new relationships and ties between faculty and the Boards will need to be developed. In addition, some in the faculty hope for a more active advisory role in the decision-making of the Boards. In light of such hopes, the academic leadership of Luther Seminary has already planned and conducted conversations between faculty and Board members. For instance, a conversation was held between the Board Member leading the governance discussion in this document and the faculty during the composition of this Self-study.

Overall, communication and collaboration between the Boards and faculty have improved in the months since the issues described in GS 1, 2, 8. The Boards and the faculty need to continue this communication and collaboration and develop it further with new presidential leadership and as Luther moves onto more stable financial and missional footing.
Students (7.3.4)

Students at Luther Seminary are tasked with learning in the classroom, but also beyond the classroom. Students’ governance work while at Luther comes through participation in and leadership of student organizations. Through the Board of Directors’ delegation of governance authority to the administration of Luther Seminary, certain governance authority has been delegated to the Student Council. The Council itself stands for election annually and is governed by the Student Body Constitution and Student Handbook. The Student Council and the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment, as well as other offices of the administration, collaborate in governance of the student body. In that role, the Council is tasked with overseeing a budget set by the administration, creation and governance of student groups, and direction for certain campus-wide events.

Student representatives are also elected by the Student Council to attend meetings of Boards, where they participate actively in the Student Affairs Committee, and where they have a voice in all deliberations. In every Board meeting there is also a formal opportunity to present a report from the student body for the Boards’ consideration. They have the same opportunity to interact at faculty meetings. The entire student body is invited into informal conversations with Board members each time this group is on campus for a Board meeting.

This governance experience also prepares students for leadership in congregations and organizations in their ministry after they complete their seminary studies.

7.3 Further documents and data:

2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf
2014BoardCommitteeRoster.pdf
2014BoardRoster.pdf
2014StaffHandbook.pdf
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2014LutherSeminaryBylaws.pdf
2014StudentCouncilConstitution.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf

Conflict of Interest reports (in Document Room)
Board member evaluation tools and evaluation reports (in Document Room)
Minutes of Board and Board Committee meetings (in Document Room)
Minutes of Faculty and Faculty Committee meetings (in Document Room)
Minutes of Student Council (in Document Room)

Summary recommendations

The Board of Directors and the Foundation Board of Trustees are successfully participating in shared governance, with improved processes and systems for the work of individual committees and that of the Boards as a whole. At the same time, there has developed enhanced communication and collaboration between the Boards and the faculty, especially in the involvement of faculty representatives at Board meetings. For example, work between the Boards and the faculty has resulted in mutual agreement around greater rigor in the sabbatical program and plans for more robust and regular reviews for
tenured faculty. Members of the Boards also worked closely with the faculty on much of the work that has become the basis for the Strategic Alignment Plan.

The Boards continue to work toward achieving diversity on the Board, and gender diversity has improved significantly in recent years. The Boards have begun a formal process to assess the diversity of capabilities and experience that will assure the Boards are competent to fulfill their fiduciary and strategic responsibilities. Achieving ethnic diversity, however, continues to be a significant challenge, and we are striving to find ways in working with the ELCA and its authorities who appoint the directors to represent the future vision of the church and its constituencies we will be serving.

The Board has established a Presidential Support Committee, dedicated to working with the President to provide assistance and support in her leadership, to annually review the President’s performance and establish goals for the coming year, and finally, to undertake performance appraisal, compensation planning and succession planning for the senior leadership team.
GS 8 – Institutional resources
Personnel (8.1)
Related HLC criteria: 2.A. and 3.C.6 and 5.A.1 and 5.A.4

(8.1.1) In consonance with Luther Seminary’s continuing reliance on Martin Luther’s idea of Vocation (the purpose of “educating leaders for Christian communities who are called and sent...”), we established a Human Resources department in June 2010 by a sharing arrangement with Augsburg Fortress Publishers for the half-time services of its three-person HR staff. A principal purpose of this reform was to remain current with regulatory requirements and develop consistent procedures and processes for the recruitment and development of employees. Increasingly, our handbooks and policies are moving us toward the hiring, development, and evaluative practices of a learning community that:

1) Is collaborative rather than competitive
2) Is dedicated to the sustainability of our educational mission and of the seminary itself
3) Identifies both academic and work excellence as the fruit of civic deliberation
4) Promotes love of neighbor and a spirit of forgiveness as operating principles of the community

In place of a decentralized hiring process that regularly produced anomalies in intra-institutional compensation and performance expectation, the HR office instituted a consistent hiring process for faculty, staff and students. Market compensation surveys are used for new hires to determine the compensation range. The HR office has developed an onboarding and orientation program to engender institutional rather than constituent-based or individualistic thinking among staff. This initiative provides new staff employees with peer mentors who help them work out a training and experiential trajectory guided by vocational-discernment exercises. The HR office also provides training to student employment supervisors on interviewing, selecting, and orienting new student employees.

(8.1.2) Policies designed to promote fairness and eliminate discrimination and sexual harassment are included in our student and staff handbooks.

(8.1.3) Luther Seminary employs sufficient human resources to conduct our academic programs. We currently employ 163 faculty, staff and temporary positions with a full-time equivalent (FTE) of 129.65. This includes 25 regular full-time teaching faculty made up of 16 men and 9 women. Luther Seminary has 98 regular full-time and regular part-time staff with the remainder being temporary employees, adjunct faculty, and flexible part-time employees.

Luther Seminary’s “compensation and benefits” expenses unexpectedly rose by a total of $2.3M over FY12 and FY13. One potential explanation for this dramatic increase is that, during the last decade, Luther Seminary enjoyed visionary leadership and successfully attracted initiating grants from foundations and launching gifts from donors (the new curriculum adopted in the spring of 2013 being fueled by several of these initiatives). We sometimes shifted the expenses of these undertakings, most of which were in personnel costs, into the operating budget when the originating funds ran out. These practices, coupled with the previous decentralized approach to hiring and compensation, seem to have at least contributed to our dramatic rise in personnel expenses during this period.

To start Luther Seminary toward recovery from the liquidity crisis to which these practices contributed, we reduced our staff by 15% (initially by way of a modest reduction in force in March 2013, by which we reduced our staff by 18 FTE positions). The net staff reductions occurred primarily in support services.
such as our own daycare facility, and our offices of technology, physical plant, and dining services. The seminary continues to shuffle job assignments in search of productivity increases and better vocational alignment as attrition occurs, and have found that our ingenuity and esprit de corps is recovering, even as our employment base continues to shrink.

Over the past two years, we have also reduced the size of our faculty by thirty-five percent through retirements and faculty members taking other positions. To make these changes effectively, faculty members have shown flexibility in their teaching and a willingness to vary their course offerings to meet our instructional needs. Where reductions have required additional hiring, we have used flexible arrangements, such as courses offered by our emeriti and a visiting professor in pastoral care. Our goal is to ensure that we have qualified faculty members in all key disciplines, while making wider use of contractual arrangements to allow for changes in the size and composition of the faculty as needed to meet the changing educational needs of the church and our goal of financial sustainability. The coincident reduction of faculty and the formation of the new curriculum also precipitated a welcome collaboration among the divisions of academic affairs and finance—to reconcile our projected course load, class size, and course offering schedule with our long-term financial planning. The first fruit of this collaboration is registered in a “The Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on a Right Sized, Right Fit Faculty for Luther Seminary.”

Student, employee, and faculty handbooks continue to be revised as we synchronize policies across the institution while attending to emerging legal requirements and best practices. In addition to commissioning our legal counsel to ensure that our faculty, staff, and student handbooks and policies conform to local, state and federal requirements, we have drawn the Directors and Trustees on our Governance Committee into the revisions so that they can assure compliance with their own by-laws as the Boards review and approve those personnel decisions which come before them.

The distinctive provisions of the new staff handbook are: 1) a rationale for a job- performance evaluation system; 2) policy and process for progressive discipline, including termination; 3) policy against harassment, unlawful discrimination and hostility; 4) grievance policy and procedures; 5) whistleblower policy; 6) equal employment opportunity policy; and 7) compensation/payroll practices.

The Faculty Handbook includes procedures for faculty evaluation, policy guidelines for resolution of conflicts, policy against harassment, unlawful discrimination and hostility, and policy on cessation of faculty status. It stipulates guidelines concerning the purpose and role of faculty of Luther Seminary in respect to their civic responsibilities as well as their teaching, scholarship, and community participation. On May 14, 2014, the faculty adopted a thorough and regular process through which all tenured faculty members will receive a comprehensive review every five years. Tenured faculty members annually produce a written self-evaluation and meet with the academic dean for ongoing formative evaluation. At the discretion of the dean, and in consultation with the faculty member and appropriate division chair, courses may be evaluated, peer reviews may be initiated, or other evaluative processes tailored to individual cases.

The Student Handbook includes the following: a student disability accommodation policy; Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); policy against harassment, unlawful discrimination and hostility; nondiscrimination policy; the Luther Seminary Code of Conduct; and a code of conduct violation process.
The HR office initiated the development of a comprehensive job classification system for Luther Seminary in 2011. All staff and student employees at that time drafted electronic job descriptions for their positions according to a standardized template. The reviewed and approved descriptions are now available upon request in the HR office to employees and supervisors. They are being further reviewed to define consistent titles, responsibilities, pay grades, etc. across the seminary. Professional development support and performance evaluation continue to be decentralized at the department level, recognizing the diversity of work and training needs across Luther. Library privileges, on-campus Lifelong Learning events and the opportunity to audit Luther Seminary courses are freely available for all employees. Employees can also take Luther Seminary courses for credit at a discount.

8.1 Further documents and data:
2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2014EmploymentStatistics.pdf
2014HirePayrollFlowchart.pdf
2014JobDescriptionTemplate.pdf
2014orgCharts.pdf
2014StaffHandbook.pdf
2014StaffingandRecruitment.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf

Financial resources (8.2)
Related HLC criteria: 5.A and 5.C.3

Crisis of 2012
In October 2012, the Board’s Finance and Administration Committee, working with the new controller and the seminary’s auditors, confirmed that accumulating operating losses had exhausted unrestricted cash reserves and precipitated, during FY12, a $4M additional withdrawal from our endowment to meet operating cash needs. Halfway through FY13, this borrowing from the endowment for operating purposes had reached $7 million. Using endowment funds to meet working capital needs symptomized Luther’s failure to maintain its economic equilibrium for at least the fiscal years of FY09-FY12. The seminary had for several years been acquiring working-capital liquidity from time to time by delaying the transfer of funds due to the endowment, but such delay was done in a manner not evident to the Boards or Luther Seminary at large. By 2012, however, the balance reached a point where it became noticeable and was flagged as an “above policy” draw from the endowment.

The Boards responded quickly upon realizing the gravity of the situation. The $7M overdraft was “capped” and our working capital temporarily stabilized through decisive action by interim management and the generous philanthropic supporters of the seminary. The seminary has formally committed to repaying the endowment plus interest, and in November 2014, did repay the endowment $6M on the outstanding note. Also critical to increasing our liquidity was successful renegotiation of credit arrangements with two financial institutions. By February 2013, Luther had produced a Turnaround Plan that pledged the removal of a $5.7M structural deficit (annual gap between revenue and expenses) in unrestricted operations in 42 months—a recovery span that allowed us to bring to maturity the curricular, cultural and pedagogical reforms that had been flagged before the crisis as necessary to the institution’s sustainable pursuit of its mission.
The liquidity crisis and the contributing operating losses also triggered an immediate revision of the budgeting processes of the seminary with strong Board oversight. In FY13 we instituted a bottoms-up budgeting process for FY14, and in October 2013, launched its successor for FY15. The annual budgets are now built from zero but made to comply with the approaching year as. Moreover, both the budgeting process and reports of our financial performance now include depreciation and other non-cash charges. National searches resulted in the hiring of a new president in June 2014 and a new VP of Finance and Administration in October 2014, both with significant financial acumen and a commitment to more carefully linking budget with assessment and planning efforts.

Concurrent with the financial story above were significant changes in Luther’s leadership and Board governance. In addition to the new controller (noted above) who was able to help the seminary confirm the institution’s cash position, the crisis prompted the resignations of the seminary’s VP of Finance and President, with the Board swiftly appointing strong interim leaders in these positions. The Board itself, with renewed governance oversight, was able to work with Luther’s leadership to quickly reengage in significant resource planning and stewardship. The Board’s Finance and Administration Committee’s focus is upon financial sustainability (including an emphasis on cash flows and long-term sustainability), clarifying differences between cash-flow and accrual accounting, and developing 5-year plans.

Upon reflection, our failure to maintain and monitor financial resources was due to four related factors:

1. The monitoring device and metrics we were then using provided a distorted view of the financial position. Known as Luther Seminary Institutional Scorecard, it measured 15 elements in the following 5 areas: “Strong Financial Resources,” “Effective Student Learning,” “Engaged Students & Constituencies,” “Quality Institutional Assessment & Process,” and “Engaged Community of Faculty & Staff.” The FY12 Scorecard reported 12 of the 15 measures as “green” and the remaining 3 as “yellow.” The “revenues received” measure was “yellow” on account of a miss of $300K in revenues. However, the Scorecard did not measure expenses that were running above budget for that year (at that time by $4.5M), nor account for depreciation, nor was there any metric that focused on cash management.

2. There was a lack of transparency in financial information across three dimensions: the Boards received limited overall financial information, managers neither had substantial input into the budget process nor received data on actual spending, and finance staff had limited tools to promote a broader transparency. We simply weren’t making financial information widely enough known in the community to allow for accurate and useful insights that assured the necessary responsible financial and cash flow management.

3. Deferred maintenance became an issue. Because operations did not historically plan to provide a reserve fund for repairs and/or depreciation, the seminary’s physical plant deteriorated over time. The focus on budget performance before funding depreciation or repairs caused deferred maintenance for the campus to accumulate to approximately $9-10 million and with an insufficient cash position to attend to replacement of aging infrastructure.

4. We misread the broader trends in theological education. Luther invested for and planned upon expansion at a time when overall demand for theological education was diminishing. Facilitated by grants from foundations and launching gifts from donors, and anticipating the one-time goal of 1,000 students, personnel expenses for both faculty and staff rose by more than $2M from FY11 to FY13. While our innovative distributed learning programs temporarily expanded our head count, these students’ lengthened programs typically provided less annual revenue and we
soon saw our overall tuition income begin a decline, with diminishing enrollments in our residential programs.

When we projected our FY13 results in early December, just months after the liquidity crisis came to light, we concluded that unless we took control of our spending we would lose $4.5M in unrestricted operations for the year—against an official budget that had presumed break-even results. On January 1, 2013, we issued a comprehensive set of Financial Disciplines, along with a formal spending embargo that depended principally on voluntary compliance rather than hard-stop mechanisms. As a result, we achieved a $1.6M saving against our expectation—$1.1M of which came from unexpected, unrestricted contributions, and $500K from our own expense reductions. As a result, we recorded a $2.9M operating loss at 6/30/13.

Although our Turnaround Plan and general recovery strategies were focused on our operational performance, we have also refined our organizational and governance structure. Until the turn of the FY13 year, the Investment Committee of the Boards was a sub-committee of the Finance & Administration Committee. In the new configuration, the Investment Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Directors, and is charged with monitoring investment performance and the effect of the draw rate on the “purchasing power parity” of endowment assets, and is explicitly interested in confirming that gifts received by, and intended for either Luther Seminary or Foundation endowment are remitted in good time. Its new structure also strongly continues the requirement that independent members be included on the committee so Luther can recruit individuals with specific skill sets and expertise. The Investment Committee adopted an updated investment policy in Oct 2014; the updated policy continues the existing endowment draw rate (5% of average market value for prior 12 quarters) and has adopted the UN Protocol on Socially Responsible Investing.

In February 2013, the Directors and Trustees agreed that Luther Seminary should acknowledge the $7M overdraft as an obligation to its endowment for no more than 10 years, at an annual rate of 50-basis points over 10-year Treasuries. Additional controls around the endowment were also implemented in FY14. The Investment Committee chair receives a monthly report of endowment gifts received and when they were remitted to the endowment accounts. Dual authorization is also required for any withdrawals out of the endowment accounts.

The beginnings of a public lesson in the difference between “operations” and “financing activity” and cash and earnings accompanied financial performance numbers shared monthly with the campus community as well as with the Boards and creditors. Further, we insisted that our auditor review the “annual financial report” to our donors for FY13. (This required the inclusion of non-cash charges as operating expenses, making the report far more realistic than it had become.) To these reforms we implemented a new process with the Board’s Investment Committee to assure that management could no longer hold back permanently-restricted monies for “temporary” working-capital purposes in the future.

Financial condition

Even in the best of times, ventures in theological education operate on narrow margins:

- many of our expenses are fixed rather than variable
- 49% of our income comes from private and Churchwide/Synodical contributions
• 27% of our income comes from tuition and fees. In FY13 we invested $3M of financial aid to harvest $6.5M in tuition and fees
• 14% of our income comes from endowment
• our auxiliaries, taken together, lose money annually

The budget that has been adopted for FY15 projects a $1.5M operating loss that includes the loss of $800K of student rent revenues from the sale of our two apartment complexes. Luther’s annual endowment draw currently amounts to about $3.5M. This FY15 budget achievement was accomplished about equally from donor largesse and expense-reductions. To actually reach the break-even results projected in FY19, a third factor, growth in revenues, will be required. Without roughly $3 million in net advantage from accumulated growth and expense reduction over four years (on high, but stabilized, unrestricted contributions from donors), we will not reach break-even.

Shrinking enrollment is a serious contemporary threat to our earnings and to our working capital. In the days before the liquidity crisis, our enrollment decline was masked by price increases, the celebration of our successful Distributed Learning initiative (which, by stretching the curriculum over an additional 2+ years, produces less annual tuition per student than residential programs), and the tendency to focus on headcount rather than courses bought and/or graduation rates. The Blue Ribbon Report brought new transparency to our enrollment realities by focusing on the average class size and faculty course load needed for financial sustainability, and enrollment projections are checked at every turn in the budgeting process.

On the other hand, we have enjoyed rising levels of unrestricted gift income—so high, in fact, that we have narrowed our operating losses far more quickly than our original models suggested. We began in FY14 to use an increasing percentage of our unrestricted gift income to invest in long-term earning assets in order to stabilize and then grow our revenues. This strategy is all the more prudent in light of the fact that we have been relying for some time now on large annual unrestricted contributions from a single donor. We must build up and diversify our cash reserves as fast as possible, as we will flounder if that concentrated stream of philanthropy dries up before we have found a financially sustainable and mission-consistent model of theological education that appeals to a wider range of donors.

Independent auditors, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Standards, annually audit Luther Seminary and Luther Seminary Foundation. The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the auditing firm, which is then approved by the Board. (Effective FY14, we changed auditors from Clifton Larson Allen to Baker Tilly.) The auditor’s final report is made in executive session with the Finance and Administration Committee, which recommends the audit report to the full Boards. The annual Management Letters are reviewed with the Finance & Administration Committee, the Executive Committee (since October 2012), and the President. These reviews include the prior year letter—to determine whether any outstanding issues identified have been cleared. Management prepares a formal response to any findings, along with action steps.

The FY14 effort required $3.2M in expense reductions (from the FY13 running rate), and the FY15 required $1.5M in reductions (from the FY14 running rate). Both assumed flat revenues, year-on-year. Any revenue slippage would deepen the cuts. The calculations for these cost reductions were developed with the Finance & Administration Committee of the Board in monthly reviews of month-end budget performance (which began in October 2012) and at the same meetings beginning in April 2013 in the
construction of a 5-Year Financial Plan, integrating a balance sheet, operations, and cash flows. Both the budget reviews and the development of the 5-Year Plan are circulated to the Directors and Trustees as well as to vice presidents and budget directors on campus, and the adoption of annual budgets, any resolutions bearing on property alienation, criteria for measuring financial sustainability, and the investment of either operating or capital surpluses are advanced to the plenary sessions of the Boards by the Finance & Administration Committee.

The next step is to align a 5-year budget plan with the strategic plan (in the short term, with the Strategic Alignment Proposal) with resource allocations clearly tied to institutional priorities, with strong outcome metrics. The FY16 operating and capital budgets will be developed using this approach.

**Business management**

Luther Seminary uses Jenzabar as its general ledger system. The general ledger system is used as the basis for providing monthly reporting packages to the Finance & Administration Committee and institutional management. In FY13, the Business Office and Office of Technology moved departmental budget reports to the Luther’s intranet. This makes it easier for budget owners to manage their budgetary responsibilities. Previously, these reports were available in Jenzabar, but access was not easily available to many of our colleagues. Moreover, Jenzabar provided no easily-grasppable, top-level view of results, nor any sign that a Budget Director had strayed beyond approved budgets. The fiscal disciplines we developed in FY13 for vendors and purchasing as well as employee travel and expense reimbursement policies are registered on the same section of the intranet.

Financial reports are reviewed monthly with the Finance & Administration Committee. These reports comprehend the entire institution and include a balance sheet, revenues, expenses, and cash flows. Reports are then circulated to the administration’s senior leadership as well as to the Budget Directors—along with any special appeals (to cut spending, conserve cash, finish or delay projects, etc.). Summary financial information with analysis is also distributed to all Board members, faculty, and budget managers.

As our self-portrait under 7.1 makes clear, we are constituted by and are “of” the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). However, all of us at Luther Seminary—whether on the Boards, among the faculty and staff, or in the administration—see ourselves as responsible for the welfare of the seminary and the sustainability of its mission. The principal instruments of that responsibility are envisioning (to be self-consciously clear about our purpose and direction), strategic financial planning (to realize the vision), asset-management policies (to maintain and to enhance what our work and our donors have allowed us to acquire), donor relations strategies (to acknowledge that without philanthropy, we cannot continue to exist), and a general responsibility to adapt our work to our circumstance without losing track of our mission. All these are ours in the fullest meaning thereof. Although we receive a relatively small (and declining) proportion of our revenues from congregations and synods of the ELCA, no dimension of our financial behavior is modified thereby.

Financial reporting responsibilities belong to the Vice President of Administration and Finance, and since October 2012, have been aimed at clear, and general understanding of the following: the difference between cash and earnings; “operations” and “financing activities”; operating expenses and capital expenses; and net tuition and gift income—and of the similarities between long-term debt and such
deferred liabilities as accrue by way of underinvestment in plant maintenance, compensation parity, and pedagogies and programs.

Our new routine of closing and reconciliation of the books at month-end, which forms the reporting and monitoring function for the whole seminary, beginning with the Finance & Administration Committee of the Boards, has the effect of “auditing” (and therefore lowering the risk of our losing track of) our cash position, earnings, releases from temporary restrictions, and other moving parts of our financial circumstance. The standard monthly reporting package now includes a balance sheet, GAAP statement of activity, and operating report.

Institutional development and advancement

Luther Seminary has long been particularly reliant on unrestricted gift income. The $5-6M we receive annually sustains the institution and provides a bridge to full implementation of the new curriculum that, along with other initiatives, is desired to bring our service costs into alignment with our revenues. As we gain stability in Operations, we intend to shift an increasing portion of this gift income from Operations to long-term assets. Hence, we shall continue to rely very heavily on Seminary Relations, but increasingly for the sake of long-term financial sustainability rather than short-term consumption.

Each year, the Seminary Relations office sets goals for each of its three functions—fundraising, marketing and communications, and constituent relations (alumni, church and volunteer)—based on Luther Seminary’s strategic plan. The Office continues to write its own plan, and holds a two-day planning retreat for this purpose each summer. A departmental dashboard is written at these retreats for the coming year.

A cadre of seven Philanthropic Advisors each serve a list of 120-150 giving units deemed capable of current gifts of $10,000 or more and/or deferred gifts of $100,000 or more. A dashboard indicator for this group of fundraisers is the number of persons who have made Leadership Circle gifts ($10,000 and greater) during the year. In fiscal year 2013, 104 giving units gave Leadership Circle gifts totaling $6.4 million.

In January 2010, we began a 5-year campaign aimed at raising $100 million. The liquidity crisis and the management transitions that followed, caused us to shorten the campaign, reduce its size and successfully complete it before the arrival of a new President. This effort concluded on June 30, 2014 and exceeded its reduced goal of $70 million by raising more than $81 million. 100% of our board members and 85% of our faculty and staff contributed to this campaign.

Seminary Relations solicits gifts from all donors, regardless of the size of their gift. The Sustaining Fund (annual fund) uses direct mail, telephone, email and a few personal visits to secure gifts from persons who give less than $10,000 a year. Since 2012, a greater emphasis has been placed on online fundraising, with results increasing by at least 30% each year since. Luther Seminary also has a mature deferred giving program. In FY13, over 6,800 donors contributed to Luther Seminary, including over 24% of our alumni. We have a mature deferred giving program, with a giving expectancy pipeline of more than $100 million.

Our principal challenge is replacing the donors who give us $10K and up each year. Their average age is 70 years. We are relying on two strategies to meet this challenge. First, we are asking these donors to introduce us to and inspire their successors. Second, we are experimenting with new prospecting and
cultivation processes to help us “fill the bench” with the next generation of faithful and generous donors.

A deeper worry for us is that our largest donors prize the denominational church. Given the shrinkage in denominationalism, we are trying to find donors who prize both denominational as well as emerging ministries. And we are counting on an adjustment in our own curricular and program offerings to help us in this search.

All donors who contribute to Luther Seminary receive a gift receipt for their gift, listing the dollar amount of the gift and the purpose/restriction of their gift. The exception to this is when gifts-in-kind are given, where an acknowledgement letter is sent listing the purpose of the gift, but not listing a dollar amount for the gift. Gifts of stock are considered gifts-in-kind. When gifts are given with restrictions other than for general purposes, a separate account is established to receive this gift.

Luther Seminary recognizes both current and deferred donors. Current gifts are recognized annually in a variety of ways. Donors who give annual gifts totaling $250 or more are recognized as Partners, and are invited to an annual Partners event on campus in September. Donors who give annual gifts totaling $1,000 or more are recognized as members of the Society of Stewards. Donors who contribute $10,000 or more annually are recognized as members of the Leadership Circle. The Heritage Society is a recognition society for persons who have included Luther Seminary in their estate plans. The entire listing of donors to Luther Seminary who give $250 or more and the listing of Heritage Society members are available online.

As a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) organization, the financial statements of the Luther Seminary Foundation are audited annually, as is its Form 990, which it issues annually on a calendar-year basis. The Foundation’s Board of Trustees gives, raises, and manages financial resources for the foundation. This Board consists of between 12-15 trustees, meets three times a year, and shares governance with Luther Seminary’s Board of Directors (particularly in the Investment Committee). Trustees and Directors share all plenary sessions, have voice in all discussions and serve on committees together, with each having a full voice and vote. During the board meetings, the Trustees will hold their business meeting, at which time all Directors and Trustees have voice, but only Trustees vote. Likewise, the Directors hold their business meeting, during which all Directors and Trustees have voice, but only Directors vote. All actions voted on by the Trustees come to the Directors for a final vote of approval, since the Directors alone have the legal authority to make decisions for Luther Seminary.

8.2 Further documents and data:
2012IRS990.pdf
2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf
2013AnnualReportforDonors.pdf
2013CreditCardPolicy.pdf
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013TravelExpenseReimbursementPolicy.pdf
2013VendorPurchasingPolicy.pdf
2014BudgetReportsIntranet.pdf
2014FY15_5YrProjection.xlsx
2014SampleDetailedFinancialStatement.pdf
Luther Seminary relies on four buildings [(Bockman (52,000 sq. ft.), Gullixson (54,600 sq. ft.), Northwestern (56,800 sq. ft.), and Olson (53,000 sq. ft.)] to handle its instructional needs—all of which could be met (even if convened simultaneously at any hour of the day) in the instructional space available in those four buildings alone. As of October 2014, all our buildings (including Gullixson Hall, which contains our Library) have been made accessible through elevators and other accommodations. Olson was rehabilitated and enlarged in FY11-12 as a campus center, and contains our Dining Services, Bookstore, and the larger and newer of our two chapels. The other chapel is in Northwestern. All of these are sound structures, but Bockman (our imposing Old Main) is in need of significant rehabilitation to conform to contemporary requirements in plumbing, HVAC, and electrical. The cost to renovate Bockman will depend upon upcoming programming decisions, but is likely to be in the millions of dollars.

Ever since we felt the first pinch upon our liquidity in FY08, we stopped investing in the physical plant and equipment at the level of our depreciation (and other non-cash operating charges). The estimated deferred maintenance liability reached about $10M. We estimate that $2M of this will be offset by the redevelopment of our student apartment complexes.

All Luther Seminary public facilities are inspected annually. First and foremost, the St. Paul Fire Marshal’s Office conducts annual Fire Safety inspections. In addition, we are inspected annually or semi-annually by the following: Hartford Insurance (boilers), Ramsey County (hazardous waste), Regional Water Commission (city water & sewer), ThyssenKrupp Elevator (elevators), Egan Mechanical (boilers), MK Systems (backflow preventers), and the Ramsey County Department of Health (kitchen equipment & practices.)

Our internal policies require use of low VOC products for walls coverings, flooring materials and ceiling materials. Custodial cleaning products are verified “green” before contractors or seminary staff use them.

Buildings are non-smoking and smokers are asked to move 25 feet from doorways. Alcohol is permitted on campus only for seminary-sanctioned events or in personal spaces (rented apartments). Food and alternate beverages must accompany all serving of alcohol.

External changes and improvements offer deference to the natural topography of the land and the natural flow of water. In several cases, “past-practice” structures have been changed or improved to comply with Luther Seminary’s commitment to Environmental Stewardship.

It is now common practice to rebuild sidewalks with permeable pavers and, looking to future parking lots, permeable surfacing will be used. As perennials are added to the beds and identified decorative areas, Minnesota-native plants and hybrids are being used. In addition, the seminary works with various gardeners to cultivate plants for native bees, birds and butterflies. In areas of poor-drainage, we have
made the commitment to rain gardens, which use no chemicals, require minimal upkeep, and allow all rainwater ample time to return to the soil.

The 2011-12 rehabilitation and enlargement of Olson made of it a center of campus interaction. Three multi-day continuing education conferences, each involving 200-400 persons, convene there annually, and our 5-Year Plan hopes to raise this by one additional such event each year through FY19. With increasing frequency, the building hosts public meetings of the cities of Saint Paul and Lauderdale, and of the village of St. Anthony Park.

The 25% reduction in employment and the continuing shrinkage of our student enrollment have dampened the patterns of interaction in the Olson Campus Center, and have contributed to operating losses in our Food Services and Bookstore. To counteract this, we’ve reduced the size and services of our Bookstore, moved it onto the lobby level, and hope to manage it (as well as Dining Services) to break-even levels. To help with this, we are taking inventory of our array of social activities with a view to transferring as many of them as feasible to the Olson Campus Center.

We have re-examined our approach to student housing in light of declining enrollment, the shift to distributed learning, and our financial challenges. While committed to having residential options on campus, we recognize that we have neither the expertise nor capital to operate student housing ourselves. Therefore, we have sold our apartments to an outside organization in a transaction which closed on November 11, 2014. The buyer intends to continue serving the student market—not just Luther, but other nearby campuses. Attention is now turning to the campus master plan for buildings and property included in the Strategic Alignment Process. A cross-functional task force is being formed to assess needs and options for aligning our real estate assets with our overall strategy.

We are reducing our $10M (estimated) Deferred Maintenance Liability by budgeting (contingent on funding) $500,000-800,000 of expenditures annually on “discretionary” repairs to heating plants, roofs, external drainage, fire code, ADA code, building automation upgrades, lighting upgrades, and repairs to sidewalks, steps, mechanical rooms, classroom environmental control, walls/ceilings, and restroom fixtures. Emergency repairs to capital assets critical to the health and safety of students and employees are undertaken immediately and without cavil.

For FY15, a Capital Budget distinguishes budgeted capital expenditures from discretionary expenditures, and requires Finance & Administration Committee approval of discretionary expenditures. Our financial projections suggest that the “contingent-on-funding” rule for discretionary capital expenditures will obtain until FY21, after which these may be borne by the annual operations budget.

8.3 Further documents and data:
2014CapitalBudgetFY15.xlsx

Institutional information technology resources (8.4)
Related HLC criteria: 3.D.4 and 5.A.1

On the verge of the enrollment slide associated with the operating losses leading to our liquidity crisis, Luther Seminary’s decision in 2006-08 to lead the eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America into Distributed Learning (a form of asynchronous learning delivered to students engaged in
congregational and other employment who would convene on campus periodically in cohorts to reinforce their collegiality and to extend their study), capitalized on opportunities granted us generically by the advance of modern information technology—and by the particular conviction that we could not ignore the educational potential of modern information technology. To support the initiative, and to be of use to our administrative needs, related staff positions grew from 8 to 12, and were formed into an Office of Technology (OOT) in 2011. The restructuring undertaken in the spring of 2013, in the wake of the liquidity crisis revelations reduced those 12 positions to 7, plus one FTE student position.

These reductions have forced us to make some changes in how we approach technology problems and demands: for instance, instead of honoring requests for additional external websites, we help units populate templates within the context of Luther Seminary’s existing website (with the exception that we continue to maintain an external presence for workingpreacher.org. A Library/IT partnership continues to provide students, faculty, and staff with technical training via Tech Talks. These were originally offered with HR to handle major upgrades to Windows 7 and Office 2010, and are continuing to address the remarkable opportunities opened by cloud computing, storage, and “open” software.

We are dedicated to the proposition that a shrewdly constructed self-help site will lower our costs as well as raise the effectiveness of our pedagogy and administration. (We admit students to our DL program by two-stage process that tests their readiness for that form of learning.) All of this entails culture change, and involves tension between helper and helped. The required combination of IT competency and currency and interpersonal skills has added an HR premium to our searches for staff.

8.4 Further documents and data:
2014TechTalks.pdf

Institutional environment (8.5)
Our institutional environment is implicated both in the failings leading to our financial crisis and in the resiliency demonstrated in our response. As reinforced by individuals, systems, and culture, a plethora of “silos” had compromised our interest in collaboration. The crisis broke much of this open as we worked together to build the energy and self-confidence needed to sustain morale, make tough decisions, complete reform of our curriculum, and begin our self-study. Interim administration helped us set the stage for institutional revitalization. Each of these activities provided opportunities for greater exchange of information, collaboration, and leadership.

With the election of President Steinke in the spring of 2014, we moved from an interim administration to a permanent one, with a renewed focus upon imagining and accomplishing a new future. It is our continuing conviction that our recovery and eventual achievement of financial sustainability depends on productivity increases by way of both intra- and inter-institutional collaboration, gross expense reduction, and net revenue growth.

Cooperative use of resources (8.6)
Our collaboration among proximate institutions primarily includes human resources, information technology, and academic programs. As noted previously, our Human Resource department is shared with nearby Augsburg Fortress Publishers in an arrangement defined in 2010. With information technology, a new link allows our primary data to be lodged on a new server at Augsburg College, with
our back-up site on a new, second server located on Luther’s campus. Academic program cooperation includes:

1. Library cooperation through the Minnesota Theological Library Association and state consortium (Minitex)
2. Cross-registration and other programming through the Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools
3. Dual degree programs with Augsburg College (MSW/MA) and St Mary’s University (MFT/MA)

Instructional technology resources (8.8)

(8.8.1) Information about online learning and necessary skills is available on the Luther Seminary website at: http://www.luthersem.edu/online/default.aspx?m=303. Student and faculty testimonials provide relevant insights for participating in online courses at Luther Seminary. The office of technology participates in residential student orientation activities, including hosting an information booth during first week and visiting various first week sessions upon request.

(8.8.2) Help desk staff provide prompt assistance to faculty needs via phone, e-mail, or in person. Issues can be escalated to a full-time staff person who is devoted to faculty course design and academic technologies for all faculty and courses. The Learning Designer and Technologist has over 15 years of experience in instructional technology. Course evaluation responses inform technology decisions, planned cycle of classroom technology replacement/updating, and planned cycle of online learning platform upgrading.

A Library/IT partnership provides students, faculty, and staff technical training via Tech Talks. In conjunction with major upgrades to Windows 7 and Office 2010, IT provided training in partnership with HR. The Help Desk and Learning Designer and Technologist are available for support and training in a one-on-one, as-needed delivery mode. We continue to provide faculty training for new teaching tools and build our self-service help site with on-demand training and tutorials. As we have transitioned to making use of Google’s Youtube service, we have improved lecture capture options.

(8.8.3) Course evaluations include questions regarding instructional technology. OT and library staffs engage in professional development opportunities and peer networking to evaluate current systems; cross-departmental groups participate in a variety of technology pilot projects.

8.8 Further documents and data:
2014TechTalks.pdf

Summary recommendations
Luther Seminary is in the process of building a faculty and staff workforce and culture that can thrive in a dynamic environment through performance management, change management, and a relentless focus on our mission. We need to implement best practices of financial planning and management, with a particular focus on aligning resource allocation with our strategic and tactical plans. We will also work to develop a campus real estate plan designed to create the experience for students and other stakeholders articulated the strategic plan, and to use the plan to drive decisions regarding the use, rehabilitation and disposition of buildings and other property.
III. Educational standards (ES)—(all degree programs)

ES.1 Degree programs and nomenclature

As of the 2014-15 academic year, Luther Seminar in St. Paul, MN, offers the following first theological degrees:

- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Arts (MA) in Children, Youth and Family Ministries (CYF), Congregational and Community Care (CCC), Congregational Mission and Leadership (CML)
- Dual degree—Master of Social Work (MSW) from Augsburg College and Master of Arts (MA) from Luther Seminar
- Dual degree—Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) from St. Mary’s University and Master of Arts (MA) from Luther Seminar

Luther Seminar uses the standard nomenclature for all degree programs and will follow the Commission’s formally adopted procedures. Our new Office of Institutional Effectiveness will keep track of revised standards, while our new curriculum guides us towards meeting these. Each degree program now identifies specific program outcomes, with individual courses aligned with the particular outcomes. The new curriculum groups students into cohorts, enhancing the viable community of learning. Already established learning communities in the MDiv and CYF Distributed Learning (DL) programs have demonstrated the effectiveness of grouping students into cohorts.

Luther Seminar’s Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program is designed to advance expertise in two specialized areas (or “Tracks”) of ministerial practice, Congregational Mission and Leadership (CML) and Biblical Preaching (BP). Deeply contextual, the DMin program focuses on the practice of ministry in congregations and other ministry settings, while at the same time offering students the opportunity to reflect deeply on their ministries from a theological perspective.

Program outcomes for the DMin includes the following: (1) assist persons to lead congregations from the perspective of an advanced understanding of the nature and purpose of ministry, (2) assist persons to develop enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, (3) help persons integrate their understanding of and skills for ministry into their experience through critical theological reflection, (4) help persons gain new knowledge about the practice of ministry, and (5) help persons continue to grow spiritually within their ministries. In addition, faculty and administration have identified learning outcomes distinctive to each of the tracks.

All DMin students receive training in social scientific research methodology to use as a means of gathering data and other information that will allow them to better understand their ministerial contexts. All DMin students must complete a thesis project, guided by expectation that this project will benefit practitioners in ministry in the broader church. As part of the process for evaluation and approval, students must defend their doctoral projects in a public forum.
Additionally, Luther Seminary offers both Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (currently under review with new admissions suspended) and Master of Theology (MTh) degree programs oriented toward theological research and teaching. The stated purpose of these programs is to develop scholarly leadership for Christian churches and for work in the community of theological scholarship throughout the world. The programs are deliberately theological and confessional without compromising their commitment to academic excellence and accountability. Consistent with their nature as research degrees, extensive training is available in both library research and social scientific research methodology.

Luther Seminary’s PhD program offers concentrations in Systematic Theology, History of Christianity, Pastoral Care and Counseling, and Congregational Mission and Leadership. The MTh program offers concentrations in these same areas, as well as additional concentrations in Old Testament, New Testament and Pastoral Theology.

The most diverse of any of the seminary programs in relationship to denominational theological commitments, the PhD and MTh programs give students broad exposure to a multiplicity of ethnic, cultural, social, and religious contexts. As well, and as indicated above, both programs are deliberately theological and confessional. Students are encouraged to explore their own theological, confessional, and spiritual commitments, as well as participate broadly in the Luther Seminary community and worship life. Opportunities for development of teaching capacity and skills are integrated in coursework, and through opportunities to attend periodic pedagogy sessions with Luther Seminary faculty, serve as teaching assistants at the seminary, and serve as adjunct faculty at local colleges.

All students are required to complete a thesis project and to orally defend the project before a faculty committee as a part of the project’s process of evaluation.

*ES.1 Further documents and data:*

2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
ES.2 Campus-based education
Related HLC criteria: 3.A.3 and 3.E.1

Luther Seminary provides residential courses available in a variety of times and formats: traditional one-hour classes that meet three days a week, three-hour classes that meet once a week, weekend courses, and intensive courses.

Intensive courses (one to four weeks long) scheduled during the January term and in the summer bring the largest concentration of students on campus at a single time, with students primarily staying in campus housing (dorm-style rooms) throughout these times. During these times, the campus is bustling with students attending classes, studying in the library, meeting together for meals in the cafeteria or coffee shop, participating in chapel, and generally filling every campus space with energy.

However, the limiting of residential housing available for students in the regular academic year has diminished the presence of students on campus during the fall and spring semesters. In response to fewer students needing on-campus meals, our Dining Services have reduced their open hours, further creating a sense of quietness on campus during certain times, particularly in the evening. Additionally, as more students take classes on a part-time basis as commuter students, campus-wide events such as daily chapel, occasional community forums, and other special activities are less well-attended than once were.

With our new curriculum, we anticipate that regular cohort meetings will bring small groups of students, faculty and staff together on campus with greater regularity. These cohorts will focus on the individual and collective growth of students academically, spiritually, and professionally as they prepare to be Christian public leaders. Additionally, the Office of the Registrar is examining course scheduling options to correspond better with campus-wide events so that participation is easier even for part-time and commuter students. A newly formed spiritual formation team is seeking ways to introduce and integrate opportunities to experience, develop, and lead spiritual practices as a regular part of individual and corporate life for students, staff and faculty.
ES.3 Extension education
Luther Seminary does not have any branch campuses, complete degree sites, or international sites.
ES.4 Distance education
Related HLC criteria: 3.A.3 and 5.A.1

Luther Seminary has offered distance education through online courses since 1997. The first hybrid degree program, an MA in Children, Youth, and Family, commenced in 2002. Called the Distributed Learning (DL) in CYF, this program offered students the opportunity to complete an entire degree through a combination of two-thirds online and one-third intensive courses. In 2007, the MDiv DL program began with sixteen students. To date, 55 students have graduated from the two DL programs, with 122 students currently enrolled.

Library and technology staffs have clear communication and have instituted processes to ensure that library resources are available to students in their online course space and align with the syllabi requirements. Challenges include ensuring that online information sources adhere to copyright regulations, ensuring that online resources adhere to accessibility needs, and ensuring that online information sources correspond appropriately with syllabi and course activities. The online course template provides students with a consistent look and feel for accessing information resources. The librarian and instructional design staff provide information resources in a timely manner and receive feedback through course evaluations, helpdesk tickets, and reference requests. Technological resources are continually monitored and reviewed by the Senior and Assistant directors. Upgrades are scheduled accordingly.

The instructional designer meets with faculty one-on-one as needed for course development and course review. It is difficult for faculty to attend group trainings or tech talks; however, faculty participate in many one-on-one meetings and meet frequently with the instructional designer before, during and after courses. A “teaching with technology” faculty group has been created and well received, as faculty can access this resource on their own time to assist in course development. The technology help site has a specific faculty and student category for self-service technical questions.

Students, staff and faculty can contact the technology support services via email or voicemail, 24/7. Our support services are staffed Mon-Fri, 8-5pm, and follow the seminary holiday schedule. Tickets are attended to promptly during business hours. During business hours, walk-up service is available, and staff is available for phone support. All IT staff monitor support tickets and intervene in the event the support services staff has not yet addressed an issue. Students may also access self-service options for support from the technology help website. The instructional designer offers training during first week for new students, with an overview of the MyLutherNet site, and is currently working with admissions to provide more tutorials. Tech talks include a live stream available for distance students.

Luther Seminary provides information regarding its distance education programs on both the website and in conversation with admissions staff. Our Office of Technology can answer specific questions regarding the technology. The Admissions Office will work toward providing additional specifics for each candidate who applies for admissions to our distance education programs. The Luther Seminary website provides an online learning primer to provide information regarding the skills and characteristics necessary for a successful online learner. This information can be found on our website: http://www.luthersem.edu/cyf/online_learning.aspx?m=4455.

Luther Seminary strives to provide the same services to our online students as we do for our residential students. Examples include offering online access to campus meetings and informational forums,
orientation sessions, chapel services and special events. In addition, our distributed learning students have access to academic advising and financial aid appointments on the phone just as our residential students do in person.
ES.5 Faculty-directed individual instruction
Related HLC criteria: 3.A.3

Students at Luther Seminary may take up to 5.0 courses as an independent study for the MA or MDiv degrees. Independent study courses take two forms:

1) Students, in consultation with the instructor, may design a Guided Reading and Research course including clear objectives, a means for achievement of the objectives, a method of evaluation, and a schedule. This process requires approval from the individual instructor, the division chair, and the Office of the Registrar.

2) Students can work independently through an existing course if they are unable to take the course in its regularly scheduled time. Again, this requires approval from the instructor and the Office of the Registrar.

With Luther Seminary’s new curriculum, the number of Independent Study courses will be reduced as students will have the opportunity to take a greater number of electives and as more online options will be available. In the past, students chose an Independent Study for two primary reasons: to pursue a special interest or to provide an alternative arrangement due to a scheduling conflict. We anticipate that the new curriculum will alleviate the need for independent study courses, as students have significantly more choice in courses and sequencing.

ES.5 Further documents and data:
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
Following its re-accreditation in 2004-5, the seminary undertook a number of assessment related activities, which sought to implement a systematic assessment plan at the institutional, program and course levels. The seminary also entered a substantive discussion with the Association of Theological Schools and the Higher Learning Commission and enrolled in the HLC Assessment Academy. A core of faculty and staff who possessed knowledge of assessment theory and practices led the Seminary’s efforts and were able to advocate for developing assessment work at Luther Seminary.

After a series of pilot assessment programs, a new plan took the form of what was called the “Comprehensive Academic Assessment Plan,” which involved correlating course and program learning outcomes, developing systems for measuring student learning against stated outcomes, and developing practices for analysis, distribution and application of data. Early into the implementation of the Comprehensive Academic Assessment Plan, it became evident that there were a number of key issues in contemporary theological education that challenged the fitness of the Seminary’s current curricular models and program design. The Seminary engaged in a year-long discussion in 2010/11 surrounding what was described as “New Horizons—Big Questions / Big Ideas.” The extended conversation sought to address some of the challenges facing seminaries and church leadership in the 21st century, and was organized around shifts occurring within our subject-accreditation agency as well. The data that was collected as part of our assessment work, combined with other data that was arriving from a number of other seminary-related research projects, made a convincing case to the Faculty for a now-completed Program Redesign and Curriculum Revision process.

Assessment of student learning outcomes on both the course and program level is foundational to the seminary’s new portfolio-based curriculum. The curriculum adopted by the faculty in May 2013 includes newly formulated program outcomes, and the faculty has recently added mediating competencies to help students and faculty alike to evaluate how those competencies are being met over the course of a student’s time in a degree program. Course-level student learning outcomes are also specified for every course offered.

The Comprehensive Assessment and Evaluation plan calls for utilizing four instruments: ATS questionnaires (indirect, quantitative, anonymous), course evaluations (indirect, primarily quantitative, anonymous), student portfolios (direct, qualitative), and targeted coursework sampling (direct, primarily qualitative, potentially anonymous). Historically, the seminary has collected ample assessment data. The challenge going forward is to continue to cultivate our emerging culture of assessment, particularly by tending good processes that allow the faculty and the community at large to evaluate the data and use it to guide curricular and other institutional decisions.

The adoption of the portfolio system demonstrates a cultural shift among the faculty, affirming that an outcomes-based curriculum with attention to evaluating student learning (rather than only teaching performance and student experience) is highly valued. Through the Learning Leader cohort structure, students will develop their portfolios in conversation with faculty mentors. Faculty will evaluate the portfolios at fixed points throughout a student’s seminary career, with a comprehensive evaluation in the student’s final semester. The portfolios emphasize reflection on how artifacts created for the achievement of course-level student outcomes link to the fulfillment of degree-program outcomes.
The office of the Academic Dean gathers the ATS questionnaires and Course Evaluations. Course Evaluations are distributed to the faculty members teaching each course. The recent financial crisis thwarted plans to review and report on the collective picture painted by course evaluations. ATS questionnaire data is now being reviewed in community-wide forums.

In December 2013, the faculty approved the creation of an assessment committee to oversee assessment work, with particular attention to the new curriculum. The committee comprises the Academic Dean, Director of the Library, Learning Designer and Technologist, and four faculty members. This committee is overseeing the targeted coursework sampling that begins in the 2014-15 academic year, as well as spearheading the seminary’s overall assessment efforts.

In addition, a committee consisting of faculty, staff, and students has been established by the ELC to plan community-wide “assessment events.” Some of the events present selected quantitative institutional data to the community and invite conversation around that data. Other events provide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to practice qualitative assessment and then evaluate the process. These assessment events were successfully piloted in the spring of 2014, and multiple events have been scheduled for the 2014-15 school year. Through these community-wide conversations, the faculty and administration receive guidance on what institutional changes need to be implemented.

Recommendations:
Continue routinizing the review of assessment data through community-wide forums with specific emphasis on faculty involvement.

- Continue to implement the outcomes-based curriculum, which makes assessment
- Review and regularly report on the data collected in course evaluations. The Blue Ribbon Task Force recommended reviewing tenured faculty every five years, and attentiveness to course evaluations will also feed and be fed by that process.
- Adopt program review teams (a model based upon the structure observed in the Seminary’s MDiv Distributed Learning program) for each of the degree programs. The program review teams will be engaged annually with the data from the four instruments above and will conduct a semi-decennial program review.

(From Targeted Issues Checklist) The school must provide a link to and copy of its published educational effectiveness statement, which should include evidence of effectiveness for each degree program, such as completion and placement rates and/or other appropriate measures (see section 1.4.2 of each degree program standard).

ES 6 - assessment of student learning outcomes.docx
http://www.luthersem.edu/admissions/education_effectiveness.aspx?m=4276

ES.6 Further documents and data:
2012ComprehensiveAssessmentPlan.pdf
2012HLCAssessmentAcademyImpactReport.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
2013CourseEvaluationsSpring.xlsx
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
ES.7 Academic guidelines: admission, transfer of credits, shared credit in degree programs, and advanced standing

ES.7.1 Admission
Committed to a holistic approach to reviewing an applicant’s readiness for study, Luther Seminary’s admissions criteria are outlined in the catalog and demonstrate the attention given to the applicants’ qualifications. These criteria include:

**Prerequisites (academic)**
A Bachelor of Art’s degree, or its equivalent, from a regionally accredited college or university, is required. Students without a bachelor’s degree may be considered for admission if they have significant leadership or ministry experience, possess the equivalent of an Associate Arts degree or more, and apply to the MDiv or a professional MA degree program. Other requirements may be requested by the Office of Admissions. Applicants are typically required to have a cumulative grade point average in college of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale (B average). However, factors other than the academic record are taken into consideration when making admissions decisions; these may include other graduate study/degrees, occupational experience, church and community leadership, and an applicant’s maturity. Applicants with undergraduate GPAs below 3.0 are requested to submit a statement detailing readiness for graduate school. A pre-admissions interview may also be required.

The B.A. equivalency categories at Luther Seminary include the following:

- International B.A.s or Non-Accredited B.A.s
  - ATS standards require that bachelor’s degree work involve both general and specialized studies.
  - Transcripts will be assessed by the Registrar to demonstrate:
    - General and Specialized Studies
    - Equivalent to a minimum of 120 semester hours
- A.A. + Formal Structured Learning
  - ATS standards require that bachelor’s degree work involve both general and specialized studies.
  - Transcripts from A.A. work will be assessed by the Registrar to demonstrate:
    - General and Specialized Studies
    - Equivalent to a minimum of 60 semester hours
  - Documented other formal structured learning will also be assessed by the equivalency committee.
    - Must add up to a minimum equivalent of 60 additional semester credit hours

Both the Director of Admissions and the Registrar do a review of the transcript(s). If it is deemed that the student has an appropriate mix of studies and the minimum number of hours necessary for the equivalency, the admissions committee will review the application file. The Admissions Committee will determine whether the student is ready for graduate theological study.

For those students who have not earned a baccalaureate degree, the following policy is utilized: Up to 15% of enrolled students in the MA (professional) or MDiv programs may be admitted without possession of a B.A. degree or its equivalent. Prior to admission, students must give evidence to their
capacity for graduate study. Additionally, students who are applying to the MA (professional) must also demonstrate that they have had sufficient life experience which has prepared them for graduate study.

**Exception requirements:**
- Over age 30 or with a minimum of 7-10 years of professional/ministry experience
- Completion of an Associate of Arts degree (or its equivalent) at a minimum
  - Include writing samples in the application for review
  - Include documentation of other educational pursuits
- Significant leadership and/or ministry experience
  - Admissions will require a resume to evaluate
- Application accepted for the following programs:
  - MDiv, CYF, CML, CCC
- For any MA program, the applicant must be vetted through the department for approval. This includes application review by a faculty member in the department.
- For the MDiv, ELCA students need to have a positive entrance decision through the candidacy process before an admissions decision will be made.

In the spring of 2014, 2.5% of Luther Seminary MA students had been admitted under this exception, and less than 1% of Luther Seminary MDiv students had been admitted under this exception.

As noted above, students applying to Luther Seminary in these categories go through a thorough review by both the Director of Admissions and the Admissions Committee. In many cases, a formal interview is requested with either a faculty member or an admissions staff member. Additional references and documentation of experience and learning are requested of these candidates.

Generally, Luther Seminary does not allow undergraduate students to enroll in its postbaccalaureate courses. One exception to this policy is an agreement with Augsburg College, which grants special permission to Augsburg College Christensen Scholars to take courses at Luther on a space-available basis. This agreement recognizes a long-standing partnership between the two institutions.

**ES.7.2 Transfer of credits**
Luther Seminary accepts transfer credits only from accredited graduate institutions, and those credits must have received a grade of “C” (or equivalent) or above to be considered for transfer. Students who request transfer of credits work through Luther Seminary’s Registrar, who determines appropriateness of transfer and application to requirements in consultation with the Academic Dean, division chair, and faculty point people. Luther Seminary will accept a maximum of one half (1/2) of the academic MA degree (Old Testament, New Testament, History of Christianity, Systematic Theology, and Studies in Lutheran Ministers) and Master of Divinity degree program requirements and one-third (1/3) of the professional Master of Arts (Children, Youth and Family Ministry, Congregational Mission and Leadership and Congregational and Community Care) degree program requirements through transfer credits that have been completed within the ten years prior to matriculation at Luther Seminary. The MTh program allows up to 3.0 courses to be transferred in. Transfer credits are accepted from regionally accredited institutions, all Association of Theological Schools (ATS) institutions, and international institutions with equivalent accreditation standards.

**ES.7.3 Shared credit in degree programs**
Luther Seminary works with shared credits in two ways. First, the two dual degree programs share credits, with 9.0 credits earned from Luther Seminary and 9.0 credits earned from the other institution.
Second, if a Luther Seminary graduate with an MA degree applies to the MDiv program, we allow one-half of the MA credits to apply to the MDiv degree.

**ES.7.4 Advanced standing**
Luther Seminary only has advanced standing without credit. Students are waived from specific course requirements but are required to take other courses to fulfill the credit requirement. Students do occasionally inquire about the possibility of advanced standing with credit based on ministerial or life experience, but currently we do not have a competency-based system in place to assess and grant waivers or credit for this. However, the new curriculum does allow for much greater choice, so students will be able to avoid skill/experience and course requirement redundancy more easily.

**ES7 Further documents and data:**
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
ES.8 Nondegree instructional programs

ES.8.1 Characteristics
The Center for Lifelong Learning at Luther Seminary provides non-degree learning opportunities that leverage the knowledge and expertise of the faculty and research outcomes of the strategic initiatives of the seminary. We endeavor to evolve from providing “contact hours” for continuing education to being a leading provider of new thinking, ideas and resources for congregations in the areas of stewardship, preaching, vocation, leadership, Bible and faith formation. It is our intention to partner with our graduates and others throughout their ministry to provide the training and resources needed to stay current and to lead vibrant, healthy congregations.

ES.8.2 Types of programs
To this end, the Center plans and executes KAIROS continuing education for pastors and church leaders, the School for Lay Ministry, Lay School of Theology and a variety of annual large events, described below:

KAIROS continuing education:
Participants in KAIROS programs are primarily pastors and professional church leaders who are interested in sharpening their ministry skills in the areas of leadership, bible, preaching, interim ministry, stewardship and congregational care. Courses are taught by a combination of Luther Seminary faculty and outside church professionals. Examples of external faculty for KAIROS would be instructors from the National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors (NALIP), Consultants from Alban and faculty of Augsburg College. Between 25-30 courses are offered each year, and classes range from 12 to 50 participants. Lectionary preaching courses are made available exclusively via webcast—either live or archive. We are experimenting with other forms of on-line continuing education through the KAIROS program such as combining on-line learning/coaching with on-campus cohorts. Participation in KAIROS courses is between 800—900 people annually.

School for Lay Ministry:
Available through the KAIROS program, the School for Lay Ministry is designed to meet the specific needs of laypersons who are seeking certification as synodically authorized lay ministers in ELCA synods of North Dakota and Minnesota. Three times per year, Luther Seminary faculty teach courses in Bible and practical theology to lay persons who are training to help lead the ministries of their congregations. Topics are planned in consultation with lay synod representatives. Attendance at these training events, which are open to anyone, varies from 25 to 50.

Lay School of Theology:
This program of informal, non-credit classes is designed for lay persons who want to learn more about the bible, theology, Christian faith and world religions for personal enrichment. Faculty and emeriti teach in three sessions of three courses each—fall, winter and spring. One course each session is also webcast. Annual participation in lay school is between 350 – 450 persons, although we have no way of determining how many people participate via webcast in congregational settings.

Additionally, Lifelong Learning plans and executes four major learning events each year, each unique in style and topic.
Mid-winter convocation:
Begun as an alumni event nearly 50 years ago, this annual event occurs in late January and attracts about 400 pastors and church leaders to campus with a variety of topics such as vocation, bible, leadership, worship and the changing church. The format is plenary sessions with workshops and worship and typically prominently features our faculty plus outside speakers.

Festival of Homiletics:
Purchased by the seminary from its founder, David Howell, in 2011, the Festival of Homiletics is the largest preaching conference in America, attracting 1400-1800 preachers every May to a different US city. This week-long event includes lectures, worship and preaching by preachers and Homiletics professors in the United States. The most ecumenical of all our lifelong learning activities, the Festival participants represent nearly every mainline denomination, plus others, and Lutherans are generally in the minority.

Rethinking series:
Rethinking conferences occur every summer at Luther Seminary and attract about 300 pastors and church leaders. This conference invites 10 to 12 thought leaders on a topic of significance to the church to share their varied perspectives. Participants gather in conversation to imagine and reconsider new ways of approaching Stewardship, Evangelism or Faith Formation in their own context.

Celebration of Biblical Preaching:
This smaller preaching conference has a more intimate feel, with approximately 300 attendees. The Celebration is the most ecumenical of our on-campus large events and includes five top preachers/teachers of Homiletics and an array of faculty led workshops surrounded by preaching focused worship services.

The Center reports to Senior Leadership through the office of the Academic Dean. Advisement and consultation is provided by a variety of faculty content partners who consult with the Director and Associate Director on program planning and design.

Luther Seminary students are invited to participate in all classes and events free of charge. Classes with 20 or more contact hours may be taken for academic credit with additional study and faculty supervision.

Participation levels and revenue generated is measured each year. In addition, every course, conference, seminar or class offered by Lifelong Learning has a participant evaluation. Results are used to determine curriculum and instructors/speakers for future events and classes. Enrollment is monitored carefully to ensure the course/event expense does not exceed the revenue generated for that course/event. Courses or events that do not break even financially are cancelled.
IV. Degree program standards (DPS)
Basic programs oriented toward ministerial leadership

A. Master of Divinity

A.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

A.1.2 PRIMARY GOALS OF THE PROGRAM
“The purpose of Luther Seminary’s Master of Divinity program is to educate Christian leaders for faith communities. Created in God’s image, saved by grace alone through Christ, our graduates are sent in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead faith communities in mission.” The degree’s purpose is directly related to the seminary’s mission statement.

A.1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES
Our mission statement emphasizes that we prepare leaders for Christian communities. Therefore, each outcome looks toward the role our graduates will play in those communities. The effectiveness of our program is not evident only in the coursework students complete, but in the service they provide after the completion of the program.

- Graduates will form and lead Christian communities gathered around Word and Sacrament for bold participation in God’s mission.
- Graduates, together with the communities they lead, will read the Scriptures faithfully, critically, and imaginatively.
- Graduates, together with the communities they lead, will confess the character, identity, and work of the Triune God in the world God loves.
- Graduates, together with the communities they lead, will live out their baptismal callings and nurture the ongoing life of faith, hope, and love.

A.1.4 EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
Assessment and evaluation will enable Luther Seminary to know if it is living into its strategic commitment to exist as a community of learning. As articulated in this plan, assessment and evaluation are also the means by which Luther Seminary will:

- Equip students to self-reflect on their progress towards program-level student learning outcomes (portfolio);
- Demonstrate, through direct and indirect means, student learning as measured against student learning outcomes (portfolio, course evaluation and targeted coursework sampling);
- Ensure the quality of educational offerings (questionnaires, course evaluations, outcomes assessment, and placements) and;
- Pursue ongoing quality enhancement of programs by providing better access to assessment and evaluation data and facilitating conversations about this data within the community.
A.2 Program content
The MDiv program is designed to provide a thorough grounding in core disciplines along with the flexibility needed for students to shape their education in ways that will best fit their current strengths and vocational goals. There are three categories of courses:

a) Signature courses taken by all MDiv and MA students:
The five courses convey the heart of the Lutheran witness to God and Luther Seminary’s characteristic theological identity. The courses also attend to the ecumenical openness of the Lutheran witness and the diversity inherent in both church and world. All first master’s degree students take these courses, which helps form communities of learning and shapes learners who will continue to learn about God, ministry, and the world throughout their careers.

1. *Learning Leader:* This course introduces students to the portfolio process, which will enable them to assess their learning throughout their programs. It also places them in cohorts, which will be contexts for faith and vocational formation and integration.

2. *Scripture and Its Witnesses:* A two-semester course that examines multiple ways in which Old and New Testaments present God and God’s commitments to the world. Students engage a variety of biblical books and approaches to interpretation.

3. *Reform and Expansion of Christianity 1400-1800:* An exploration of the roots of present-day Christianity in the Renaissance and Reformation which considers the reception of the tradition in this period, and the expansion of Christianity to many parts of the globe.

4. *Thinking Theologically and Confessing Publicly:* Focuses on what it means to be a public witness to Jesus in a pluralistic, post-secular society and engages classical and contemporary theological writers, while thinking critically about how God encounters people, and what that means for Christian leadership.

5. *Leading Christian Communities in Mission:* Introduces students to the complex realities of forming and leading Christian communities in a pluralistic context and engages biblical and theological traditions to foster understanding of God’s mission in the world, and how this shapes the church’s missional identity.

These courses involve various disciplines, and together engage a pedagogical strategy that is interdisciplinary and integrative. They encompass theological study that is biblical, confessional, and missional. They also include our basic commitment to engage questions surrounding the nature of God’s promise, the formation of community, and relationship to the neighbor. Faculty members teaching these courses in a particular semester meet together for conversation in order to enhance the potential for integration of the various fields.

b) MDiv core:
These courses focus more directly on the kinds of preparation needed for pastoral ministry. They broaden and deepen engagement with the kinds of questions taken up in the Signature courses, while developing the students’ ability to integrate study with the practices of ministry.

2. **New Testament Greek**: Introduction to the language and its use for biblical interpretation.

3. **Exegesis for Ministry**: A course that makes use of one of the biblical languages and prepares students to work with Scripture in faithful and engaging ways.

4. **Confessing Christ through the History of Christianity**: Students elect whether to focus on the early and medieval period or the modern period.

5. **Lutheran Confessional Writings**: Deepens student understanding of the Lutheran theological tradition and its implications for ecumenical engagement in diverse contexts.

6. **The Triune God and the World**: Provides instruction and practice in theologically-based reasoning for ministerial contexts, including a comprehensive and coherent presentation of the articles of the faith.

7. **Foundations of Biblical Preaching**: Helps students develop creative, biblical, theological, and practical capacities for faithful and effective communication of the gospel.

8. **Public Worship**: Combines the practice of communal worship with biblical, historical, and interfaith reflection.

9. **Congregational and Care and Formation**: Introduces concepts and practices for the care and formation of persons, families, and congregations while integrating theological and social-scientific resources.

10. **Clinical Pastoral Education**: Contextually-based learning in which students practice and reflect on the care of persons and congregations.

11. **Internship**: Contextually-based learning in which students take on the pastoral role and engage the full range of ministry experience.

c) Electives:

Students complete the MDiv degree with twelve elective credits that enable them to develop in all areas. Rather than requiring a specific number of courses in each discipline, the review of the portfolio each semester focuses on where students need to focus their work to meet the program outcomes, and how best to direct their work to meet their own vocational goals.

A.2.2 RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Luther Seminary has consistently offered courses that work with both the breadth and depth of our heritage. The curriculum that was in place through the spring of 2014 required Greek and Hebrew, two and a half semester-length courses in both Old Testament and New Testament, and three each in History and Theology. Interdisciplinary courses like the Lutheran Confessions and Worship courses included careful attention to our theological heritage and its ecumenical significance.

The new curriculum reduces the number of credits, while ensuring that students do basic work in religious heritage through the Signature and Core courses. Increasing the percentage of electives gives students greater flexibility, while the portfolios require that they demonstrate their competencies in each area. Electives are offered in all the classical disciplines, so students will be able to meet the program outcomes in these areas.
Attention to the classical disciplines has been a strength at Luther Seminary. As we shift curricular models, we will not be able to gauge the depth of student familiarity with these fields by the number of courses taken. We are also aware that students often begin studies with less grounding in the Bible, history, and theology than ever before. That will also be true of many of the congregations they serve. We will need to ensure that our elective offerings and portfolio process help us retain this strength in a changing context.

A.2.3 CULTURAL CONTEXT
Our previous curriculum required a course called Reading the Audiences, which focused on the contemporary social contexts of ministry. Attention was given to congregations in relation to the neighborhoods in which they were located. Instruction included both theological and social-scientific perspectives, as did the Foundations of Pastoral Care. Two half-courses were required in Christian Missions and World Religions, which dealt with the multicultural and interfaith contexts of the global church. We also had a half-credit Cross-Cultural Mission course, which enabled students to experience various contexts in the United States and beyond, while equipping them to think carefully and critically about those experiences.

Our new curriculum calls for global, cross-cultural, and multi-faith perspectives on Christian ministry to be more fully embedded in our required courses. We will continue to offer courses specifically lodged in these areas as electives. Accountability for these dimensions of the program will take place through the portfolio process. In order to ensure that these aspects continue to have an integral place in theological education, we have begun the process of identifying specific competencies for cross-cultural learning, and plan to do the same for the global perspectives on theological education.

Continued work in this area is important. According to our most recent ATS GSQ, our graduates find themselves well equipped within their own tradition (4.2 on a 5.0 scale) but less able, on average, to relate to those of other racial and religious backgrounds (3.3 on a 5.0 scale). To support this kind of learning, we have reconfigured faculty positions to include a professor of Global Christianity, Cultures, and Societies. He will teach courses that focus specifically on global Christianity and interfaith dialogue, and give input to the seminary’s commitment to providing opportunities for global education. As we explore this aspect of our work, we need to consider partnering with other educational institutions to provide opportunities for cross-cultural work as well as for study opportunities outside the U.S.

A.2.4 PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION
Our new curriculum names faith formation, character formation, and interpersonal formation as integral parts of our programs and community life. This fall, students under the new curriculum were placed in cohorts, led by a faculty mentor. For the first semester of study, the cohorts meet weekly for reflection on vocation. In the semesters that follow, the cohorts will continue to meet periodically. The faculty mentor continues to be a resource, even as students assume more leadership for this aspect of their formation. Our ATS GSQ table 14 shows the need for continued work in this area. For example, our students regularly express a high level of trust in God (4.3 on a 5.0 scale), but are more tentative when it comes to prayer (3.3 on a 5.0 scale).

This past summer, a number of faculty and staff members designed a survey that helped us identify the primary aspects of faith formation for our students. It seems clear that the traditional patterns of chapel and prayer still have a place, but other important factors include personal and small group work that is done in other settings. We need to imagine new ways in which the formative work can be done well for
part-time students and those who live at a distance. The results of the survey have been shared with the Campus Pastor, the Student Resource Center, and the faculty, so that we appropriately tend to this aspect of theological education. Using the initial survey data, our assessment processes will continue to monitor our efforts in this area.

A.2.5 CAPACITY FOR MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

All of our MDiv students take our course in Leading Christian Communities in Mission. Together they explore the ways in which leadership requires thoughtful engagement with one’s context as well as one’s own sense of identity and calling in that context. MDiv students also complete a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education in a ministry setting, as well as a 12-month internship, usually in a congregation or similar context.

The ATS GSQ tables 18 and 19 show that our contextual learning programs are highly significant for our students’ formation (95% of MDiv students indicating that internship was important or very important). This aspect of our program has been crucial under the previous curriculum and remains integral to our new curriculum. Contextual elements play a pivotal role in the process of integrating aspects of education and formation, and equipping students to be effective in ministry.

Our Contextual Learning staff has a careful process of identifying and working with internship sites and supervisors. Our challenge in the future will be to continue the strength of this program, while showing flexibility in learning opportunities for students who do not envision themselves serving in parish settings. We also want to continue our strong relationships with traditional teaching parishes, while identifying new sites that hold promise for innovation and new models of ministry.

A.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

A.3.1 LOCATION

All MDiv students are given opportunities to develop their sense of vocation and call through classroom interactions with faculty and peers, relationships with staff and administrators, regular chapel worship, participation in cohorts and through other structured and unstructured formational activities. Formation happens within community, and all students belong to cohorts that meet periodically throughout the program of study. Either residential or distributed learning-based cohorts are formed as part of the Learning Leader course, and provide contexts for faith formation and integration of learning. Part of the cohort experience is the creation of a portfolio of work that demonstrates competencies in various areas of study. In our latest Graduating Student Survey, the level of satisfaction for accessibility of faculty and accessibility of administrative/staff support remain high (4.4 and 4.1 respectively on a 5.0 scale) with very little difference by educational context (residential or distributed learning).

A.3.2 DURATION

The degree program prepares students to be faithful and effective pastors in the church as it ministers to the world through multiple pathways:

- Full-time Residential is designed to be completed in three to four years. The program involves courses on the seminary campus as well as contextual learning placements for internship and Clinical Pastoral Education. Students who complete the program in four years often do two years of course work, a year-long internship and then a final year of course work. Some students choose to do a part-time internship along with part-time study. It is possible to complete the program in three to three-and-a-half years by taking some courses during the summer and during internship.
• Distributed Learning (DL) is designed for students for whom relocation to St. Paul is not feasible. The DL track is normally completed in five years. Of the 30 required courses, students take 20 online and 10 on campus. On-campus courses are offered through one-to-two-week residential intensive sessions held in the summer term and during the January term. Students in the MDiv DL program may move to campus at any point in their studies and finish their degree in residence.

• Part-time Commuter is designed for adult learners based in and around the Twin Cities. Students may complete the program in six years through a combination of online and on-campus courses, many of which are scheduled to fit within students’ busy lives.

A.3.3 DISTINCTIVE RESOURCES NEEDED
Our faculty regularly relate course work to the practices of ministry. Many of them are ordained, and all are involved in their respective church bodies. They stay in touch with contemporary needs of people in ministry by speaking and meeting with church leaders. During the unit of Clinical Pastoral Education and the internship, students work directly under the supervision of pastors and chaplains.

A.4 Admission
Luther Seminary complies with the ATS Admission standards for this degree. Luther is committed to a holistic approach to reviewing an applicant’s readiness for study. Luther’s admissions criteria are outlined in the catalog and demonstrate the attention that is given to the applicants’ qualifications. These criteria include:

**Prerequisites (academic)**

A bachelor’s degree, or its equivalent, from a regionally accredited college or university, is required. Students without a bachelor’s degree may be considered for admission if they have significant leadership or ministry experience, possess the equivalent of an Associate Arts degree or more, and apply to the MDiv or a professional MA degree program. Applicants are typically required to have a cumulative grade point average in college of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale (B average). However, factors other than the academic record are taken into consideration when making admissions decisions; these may include other graduate study/degrees, occupational experience, church and community leadership, and an applicant’s maturity. Applicants with undergraduate GPAs below 3.0 are requested to submit a statement detailing readiness for graduate school. A preadmissions interview may also be required.

**Personal qualifications (personal and spiritual)**

Luther Seminary recognizes that the Spirit of God calls people with many different gifts to serve and lead the church. The following constellation of commitments, character traits and competencies signal an individual’s readiness for theological studies:

- A commitment to Christ, the church, and the ministry of God’s word
- The academic ability to read and learn with discernment
- The ability to communicate and write with clarity and precision
- Leadership qualities and experience evidenced by personal and relational health, integrity, and consideration of others
• The potential to lead, to inspire, and to relate positively with people

Students complete the application for admission, send all postsecondary transcripts, submit three recommendations (one from a pastor, one from a teacher and one from another of their choice) and write an autobiography/faith statement.

Starting in 2011, the Admissions Committee began reviewing the complete application for admission for all applicants, regardless of their cumulative grade point average (GPA). Prior to 2011, the GPA was the dominant factor in the admission decision. If the applicant met the GPA expectation, the committee put their file on a consent agenda for approval. Since 2011, every application is thoroughly reviewed and then voted on by the Admissions Committee, which consists of the Academic Dean (or a designate), a faculty representative from each division, the Vice President of Enrollment and Dean of Students, the Associate Dean of Student Resources and Candidacy, the Director of Admissions and the Associate Director of Admissions.

A(MDiv) Further documents and data:
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
B Master of Arts in [specialized ministry]
B.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment
B.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DEGREE
All of our programs are Classification II.

B.1.2 PRIMARY GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

LEADERSHIP
The purpose of Luther Seminary’s Master of Arts Leadership degree programs is to educate Christian leaders for serving in God’s world. Created in God’s image, and saved by grace alone through Christ, our graduates are sent in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead communities in a variety of contexts.

Recognizing the changing religious landscape and the increasing complexities of leading Christian communities in a pluralist era, the Masters of Arts Leadership programs ground theological engagement and the practices of ministry contextually within a missional framework. Graduates of these programs will have developed a missional imagination, fundamentals of ministerial competency, and become lifelong learners as they give witness and serve in God’s world.

The Masters of Arts Leadership programs are shaped by the following curricular, theological, and institutional commitments: they are biblical, confessional, and missional; are organized around promise, community, and neighbor; integrate theology, theory, and practice; tend to the formation of the leader; and imagine the communities leaders will serve.

The MA in Congregational Mission and Leadership prepares graduates for staff positions in congregations, judicatories, and other church-related organizations who focus on mission/outreach, leadership development, stewardship, evangelism, community engagement, and related areas of ministry. It also serves students for whom the MDiv is not required for ordination in their tradition and international students who are seeking further study and preparation as missional leaders.

The MA in children, youth, and family primarily prepares students for congregational positions as youth directors, youth pastors, and children’s ministers. Yet, the degree has also allowed students to find employment as schoolteachers, leading non-profits, and working with resource and publishing companies.

B.1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES
Luther Seminary aspires to educate Masters of Arts Leadership graduates who have developed program outcomes within the concentrations listed below

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: MASTER OF ARTS IN CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY (CYF)
1. CYF graduates will bear witness to God’s love in the world, as they invite and empower those in the first third of life to do the same.

2. CYF graduates will construct an integrated framework for ministry with those in the first third of life which is informed biblically, theologically, and theoretically.

3. CYF graduates will lead with a constructive understanding of leadership, conscious of their individual gifts and the shared nature of leading.
4. CYF graduates will lead ministry communities into participation in God’s mission in the world shaped by a missional vision for ministry with those in the first third of life.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: MASTER OF ARTS IN CONGREGATIONAL AND COMMUNITY CARE (CCC)
1. CCC graduates will identify congregational and community care as rooted in God’s care for the world, and relate God’s care to the role of the faith community and the role of the self in providing care.

2. CCC graduates will construct a framework for congregational and community care that integrates biblical, theological, and theoretical resources.

3. CCC graduates will demonstrate an ability to listen to God, to neighbor, and to self, as they intervene, interpret, and lead within a variety of common care settings.

4. CCC graduates will be able to distinguish between theological and various social scientific (psychological, sociological, biological, cultural, etc.) resources for congregational and community care, and discern the appropriate place of each in caregiving.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: MASTER OF ARTS IN CONGREGATIONAL MISSION AND LEADERSHIP (CML)
1. CML graduates will have a critical understanding of God’s Trinitarian mission in the world from biblical and theological perspectives.

2. CML graduates will be able to form and lead communities in visionary and imaginative participation in God’s mission in the world.

3. CML graduates will have a critical understanding of leadership and the development of one’s own gifts for leadership in particular ministry contexts.

4. CML graduates will be able to tell the gospel story vibrantly in particular ministry contexts and through different practices of ministry.

5. CML graduates will develop the ability to engage social scientific research for interpreting contexts for participation in God’s mission in the world.

B.1.4 EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
Assessment and evaluation will enable Luther Seminary to know if it is living into its strategic commitment to exist as a community of learning. As articulated in this plan, assessment and evaluation are also the means by which Luther Seminary will:

- Equip students to self-reflect on their progress towards program-level student learning outcomes (portfolio);
- Demonstrate, through direct and indirect means, student learning as measured against student learning outcomes (portfolio, course evaluation and targeted coursework sampling);
- Ensure the quality of educational offerings (questionnaires, course evaluations, outcomes assessment, and placements); and
- Pursue ongoing quality enhancement of programs by providing better access to assessment and evaluation data and facilitating conversations about this data within the community.
B.2 Program content
Each concentration offers various courses to fulfill the remaining credits of the various Leadership curricula. The *outcomes and competencies* of each concentration serve as a guide for students in navigating both the 4 credits in their concentration and their elective courses. Each concentration will have their own set of artifacts that will be part of their portfolio.

General Outline for all Leadership Master of Arts Degree Programs (20.0 Credits)

| **Signature Area (courses required of all MDiv and MA students)** | 1. The Learning Leader (1.0) |
| | 2. Scripture and Its Witnesses (2.0) |
| | 3. Reform and Expansion of Christianity 1400-1800 (1.0) |
| | 4. Thinking Theologically and Confessing Publicly (1.0) |
| | 5. Leading Christian Communities in Mission (1.0) |
| | **Total Credits: 6.0** |
| **MA Concentration Courses** | 1. Ecclesiology, Ministry, and Leadership (1.0) |
| | 2. Christian Public Leader in Context (2.0) |
| | 3. Four (4) Concentration Courses (4.0) |
| | 4. Senior Leadership Seminar (1.0) |
| | **Total Credits: 8.0** |
| **Electives** | Electives 6.0 |
| | **Total Credits: 6.0** |
| **Total** | 20.0 Credits |

CYF has seen contextual placements as central to our pedagogical mission. Rev. Tim Coltvet has overseen student placement for four years, working not only with students, but also with the sites, leading to a process of commitment in a shared learning environment. Nearly all MAs will have opportunity to be in a ministry context for two years.
B.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

B.3.1 LOCATION

Our MA students participate in courses (whether residential or distributed) alongside students from other programs at Luther, including the MDiv program. They are required to engage in contextual learning as part of their degree program. Throughout the program, they have regular access to faculty, including a point person for the degree specialization. In their culminating thesis or ministry project, they work closely under the supervision of faculty in developing a research or ministry project that fits with their vocational trajectory.

Students are given ample opportunity to learn outside the classroom with each other. CYF students are invited to a weekly lunch and given online opportunities to connect. In the last several years, students have also been invited into cohorts to discuss particular contextual/ministerial issues that they are confronting in their placements. Yet, this time also allows for personal and spiritual formation.

B.3.2 DURATION

Our Leadership MA degrees require 20 courses and are normally conducted over two academic years.

B.3.3 DISTINCTIVE RESOURCES NEEDED

Luther Seminary’s MA students work closely with faculty who have decades of experience in congregational leadership, consulting, and research. The Luther Seminary library has extensive resources in the related disciplines (missiology, leadership studies, organizational theory, congregational studies, etc.). Students are connected with a wide variety of congregations and ministry organizations for contextual learning, and local church leaders regularly participate in courses as guest speakers. The CYF program has used restricted funding to open up students to many different conversations around youth and children’s ministry. Students are invited to apply for a small grant to go to a few different conferences. The program has also invited guest lecturers who present either intellectual ideas or unique experiences/practice in ministry.

The MA programs meet a vital need for church leaders who don’t fit in the traditional boxes that defined 20th-century church leadership. It offers flexibility for a variety of vocational trajectories while providing depth in preparing students for missional leadership in today’s world. We anticipate a shifting landscape for leadership education in the 21st century, and this degree is one step into that world. The challenge is to anticipate the needs of those leaders who aren’t coming through denominational ordination processes, yet are seeking further preparation for ministerial leadership.

B.4 Admission

Luther Seminary complies with the ATS Admission standards for this degree. Luther is committed to a holistic approach to reviewing an applicant’s readiness for study. Luther’s admissions criteria are outlined in the catalog and demonstrate the attention that is given to the applicants’ qualifications. These criteria include:

**Prerequisites (academic)**

A bachelor’s degree, or its equivalent, from a regionally accredited college or university, is required. Students without a bachelor’s degree may be considered for admission if they have significant leadership or ministry experience, possess the equivalent of an Associate Arts degree or more, and apply to the MDiv or a professional MA degree program. Applicants are typically required to have a
cumulative grade point average in college of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale (B average). However, factors other than the academic record are taken into consideration when making admissions decisions; these may include other graduate study/degrees, occupational experience, church and community leadership, and an applicant’s maturity. Applicants with undergraduate GPAs below 3.0 are requested to submit a statement detailing readiness for graduate school. A preadmissions interview may also be required.

**Personal qualifications (personal and spiritual)**

Luther Seminary recognizes that the Spirit of God calls people with many different gifts to serve and lead the church. The following constellation of commitments, character traits and competencies signal an individual’s readiness for theological studies:

- A commitment to Christ, the church, and the ministry of God’s word
- The academic ability to read and learn with discernment
- The ability to communicate and write with clarity and precision
- Leadership qualities and experience evidenced by personal and relational health, integrity, and consideration of others
- The potential to lead, to inspire, and to relate positively with people

Students complete the application for admission, send all postsecondary transcripts, submit three recommendations (one from a pastor, one from a teacher and one from another of their choice) and write an autobiography/faith statement.

Starting in 2011, the Admissions Committee began reviewing the complete application for admission for all applicants, regardless of their cumulative grade point average (GPA). Prior to 2011, the GPA was the dominant factor in the admission decision. If the applicant met the GPA expectation, the committee put their file on a consent agenda for approval. Since 2011, every application is thoroughly reviewed and then voted on by the Admissions Committee consists of the Academic Dean (or designate), a faculty representative from each division, the Vice President of Enrollment and Dean of Students, the Associate Dean of Student Resources and Candidacy, the Director of Admissions and the Associate Director of Admissions.

*B(MA) Further documents and data:*

- [2014AcademicCatalog.pdf](2014AcademicCatalog.pdf)
- [2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf](2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf)
Basic programs oriented toward general theological studies

D Master of Arts in [academic discipline]

D.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

D.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DEGREE


Along with its larger Master of Divinity degree, Luther Seminary also offers a series of other Master’s degrees (“First Theological Degrees”), including a cluster of academically-oriented Master of Arts degrees in the areas of Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic Theology, and the History of Christianity. The term “academic” is often applied to these degrees to indicate that they are not primarily focused on educating students for specific congregational leadership positions, such as ordained ministry or Children Youth and Family ministry. This being said, the degree still fits within the rubrics of the Luther Seminary mission statement, and these MA students still receive an education oriented toward leadership within the wider Christian community.

Students in these MA areas enter the program for a number of different reasons. Some students are interested in an MA for personal edification or discernment; they wish to learn more about these areas of the Christian tradition, and to think about how they might put such knowledge into vocational careers. Some students enter this program because they are not yet clear about their own possible calls to rostered leadership in the Christian community, and wish to explore seminary as an option; some of these students eventually transfer to the MDiv degree program. Conversely, there are some MDiv students who discover that they do not have the call to rostered ministry that they thought they did, and these students transfer into the MA program as a means of completing their program at Luther. Still others of our MA students feel a calling to teaching or graduate doctoral programs, and use the MA program at a step in this direction.

D.1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: MASTER OF ARTS IN OLD TESTAMENT

Master of Arts in Old Testament graduates will demonstrate:

1. Skill with a variety of tools and methods useful for interpreting the Old Testament, including literary and theological perspectives, familiarity with the various types of biblical literature, and an intermediate knowledge of Hebrew.

2. Familiarity with the social, religious, and political context of the ancient Near East.

3. Ability to read and interpret Old Testament and related texts with care and accountability, including an understanding of the ways in which biblical texts and the communities that read them influence one another.

4. Familiarity with the various ways the relationship between the two testaments has been described in the past and how it is being expressed today.

5. Familiarity with how the Old Testament is read and applied in the contemporary world.

6. Critical thinking and integration skills in the final writing project.
PROGRAM OUTCOMES: MASTER OF ARTS IN NEW TESTAMENT
Master of Arts graduates in New Testament will demonstrate:

1. Skill with a variety of tools and methodologies useful for interpreting the New Testament, including literary and theological perspectives, familiarity with the various types of biblical literature, and an intermediate knowledge of Greek.

2. Familiarity with the historical and cultural contexts of the New Testament, including the Jewish, Greek, and Roman worlds.

3. Ability to read and interpret New Testament and related first-century texts with care and accountability, including an understanding of the ways in which biblical texts and the communities that read them influence one another.

4. Familiarity with the various ways the relationship between the two testaments has been described in the past and how it is being expressed today.

5. Familiarity with how the New Testament is read and applied in the contemporary world.

6. Critical thinking and integration skills in the final writing project.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: MASTER OF ARTS IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY
Master of Arts graduates in the History of Christianity will demonstrate:

1. Familiarity with the basic elements of Church History across the span of time, and have a working fluency in its basic chronology, important dates and figures, and formative movements.

2. Competency in chronological periodization (its usefulness and its limits), and the basic elements of historical methodology.

3. Ability to discern how the discipline of Church History exists as an area of study separate and distinct from other theological disciplines, and how all the elements of Christianity, including theology, work together to form its distinct historical traditions.

4. An appreciation of the diversity of Christian expressions through history and across the world today, and a sympathetic yet critical understanding of these expressions within their own contexts while learning from them, not imposing their own modern assumptions.

5. Skill in engaging primary historical texts and using them critically in their study while employing a variety of sources in their research, including (but not limited to) theological texts.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: MASTER OF ARTS IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
Master of Arts graduates in Christian Theology will demonstrate:

Working knowledge on the central themes of the Christian faith as expressed in the doctrines of the Triune God, creation, sin, salvation, church and eschatology, including the historical and contextual trajectory of doctrinal development.
1. A critical and constructive understanding of the art of theological practice and thinking within the life and mission of the church grounded in the depth of the Christian claims in dialogue with the breadth of the contemporary cultural, social, philosophical, political and religious contexts.

2. The ability to think creatively about God’s address to the world by way of engaging multiple voices from within the diverse traditions of the church, the wider culture, and the global context.

3. Familiarity with the ways in which prominent Christian thinkers and theological currents have understood God’s reality and presence in the world and the ethical implications for Christian life.

4. Capacity to critically interpret theological texts and topics, integrate them, write clearly about them, and develop faithful and constructive insights in the final project(s).

D.1.4 EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
Assessment and evaluation will enable Luther Seminary to know if it is living into its strategic commitment to exist as a community of learning. As articulated in this plan, assessment and evaluation are also the means by which Luther Seminary will:

- Equip students to self-reflect on their progress towards program-level student learning outcomes (portfolio);
- Demonstrate, through direct and indirect means, student learning as measured against student learning outcomes (portfolio, course evaluation and targeted coursework sampling);
- Ensure the quality of educational offerings (questionnaires, course evaluations, outcomes assessment, and placements) and;
- Pursue ongoing quality enhancement of programs by providing better access to assessment and evaluation data and facilitating conversations about this data within the community.

D.2 Program content
General Outline for all Academic Master of Arts Degree Programs (18.0 Credits)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature Area (courses required of all MDiv and MA students)</th>
<th>1. The Learning Leader (1.0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Scripture and Its Witnesses (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Reform and Expansion of Christianity: 1400-1800 (1.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Thinking Theologically and Confessing Publicly (1.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Leading Christian Communities in Mission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Credits</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MA Concentration Courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Research and Writing Methods (1.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Four (4) Area Concentration Courses (4.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Two (2) Writing Projects (2.0)*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Electives</strong></td>
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<td>Electives 5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing projects**

The norm for this requirement will be two research papers of 25-40 pages in length. Students may request instead a single writing project of 50-80 pages in length; permission to take this option rests with the area point person and the faculty member advising.

All MA students in these academic degree programs demonstrate their proficiency in their respective fields by means of a final thesis or writing project. Through this means, students demonstrate an appropriate mastery of their respective fields, as well as their ability to complete a significant written project or projects, an ability to deal with the conventions of academic work in Religion at the MA level, their ability to synthesize their learning, and their ability to do significant independent scholarly work.

The norm for this requirement will be two research papers of 25-40 pages in length. Students may request instead a single writing project of 50-80 pages in length; permission to take this option rests with the area point person and the faculty member advising.

**Two papers**

Each extensive research paper is between 25 and 40 pages in length and arises from the concentration courses. The faculty involved in the selected courses shall be consulted by the student for guidance and approval. Two faculty members shall read the paper(s) and then conduct a one-hour structured conversation during which the student is given the opportunity to demonstrate competence and comprehension in the special interest areas of the papers.

**Thesis (if granted)**

The thesis is between 50 and 80 pages in length and is written in the concentration area. Two faculty members shall read the thesis and conduct a one-hour structured conversation in which
the student is given the opportunity to demonstrate competence and comprehension in the special interest area of the thesis.

D.3 Educational resources and learning strategies
D.3.1 LOCATION
Luther appoints one or two faculty to be the “point person” for the MA in each academic area. These “point people” meet with MA students at the beginning of their programs and regularly throughout the course of their studies, consulting with them about courses, independent studies, and thesis requirements.

D.3.2 DURATION
Our academic MA programs require two academic years of study and required 18 courses.

D.3.3 DISTINCTIVE RESOURCES NEEDED
MA students have adequate elective courses and faculty from which to choose. They also have the opportunity to design independent studies with different faculty and choose which faculty to work with as their thesis advisers and readers. The faculty “point people” help provide vocational guidance for these students, though of course, other faculty offer guidance as well.

D.4 Admission
Luther Seminary complies with the ATS admission standards for this degree. Luther is committed to a holistic approach to reviewing an applicant’s readiness for study. Luther’s admissions criteria are outlined in the catalog and demonstrate the attention that is given to the applicants’ qualifications. These criteria include:

Prerequisites (academic)
A bachelor’s degree, or its equivalent, from a regionally accredited college or university, is required. Students without a bachelor’s degree may be considered for admission if they have significant leadership or ministry experience, possess the equivalent of an Associate Arts degree or more, and apply to the MDiv or a professional MA degree program. Applicants are typically required to have a cumulative grade point average in college of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale (B average). However, factors other than the academic record are taken into consideration when making admissions decisions; these may include other graduate study/degrees, occupational experience, church and community leadership, and an applicant’s maturity. Applicants with undergraduate GPAs below 3.0 are requested to submit a statement detailing readiness for graduate school. A preadmissions interview may also be required.

Personal qualifications (personal and spiritual)
Luther Seminary recognizes that the Spirit of God calls people with many different gifts to serve and lead the church. The following constellation of commitments, character traits and competencies signal an individual’s readiness for theological studies:

- A commitment to Christ, the church, and the ministry of God’s word
- The academic ability to read and learn with discernment
- The ability to communicate and write with clarity and precision
• Leadership qualities and experience evidenced by personal and relational health, integrity, and consideration of others

• The potential to lead, to inspire, and to relate positively with people

Students complete the application for admission, send all postsecondary transcripts, submit three recommendations (one from a pastor, one from a teacher and one from another of their choice) and write an autobiography/faith statement.

Starting in 2011, the Admissions Committee began reviewing the complete application for admission for all applicants, regardless of their cumulative grade point average (GPA). Prior to 2011, the GPA was the dominant factor in the admission decision. If the applicant met the GPA expectation, the committee put their file on a consent agenda for approval. Since 2011, every application is thoroughly reviewed and then voted on by the Admissions Committee, which consists of the Academic Dean (or a designate), a faculty representative from each division, the Vice President of Enrollment and Dean of Students, the Associate Dean of Student Resources and Candidacy, the Director of Admissions and the Associate Director of Admissions.

D(MA) Further documents and data:
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
E Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
Luther Seminary’s DMin program gives students the opportunity to choose between two alternative curricular “tracks” that are designed to advance expertise in the specialized areas of Biblical Preaching (BP) and Congregational Mission and Leadership (CML). This document provides information as to both of these tracks.

E.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

E.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DEGREE
The Luther Seminary Academic Catalog states that the purpose of the CML DMin is as follows: “The purpose of the doctor of ministry (DMin) is to prepare and provide leadership for the 21st century missional church that is both theologically grounded and informed by the social sciences. Graduates will be prepared to lead congregations in vitalization and redevelopment, and to engage in mission/new church development. They will also be prepared to become missional administrative leaders in their denominations at regional and national levels.”

The Academic Catalog states that the purpose of the BP DMin is as follows: “The Doctor of ministry (DMin) degree in biblical preaching arises from the central convictions that the living word of God changes lives, creates faith, and motivates mission, and that the proclamation of the gospel in Christian worship is a primary manifestation of the word of God in our midst and is central to the life and mission of the church. The program is intentionally biblical, practical, collegial, and spiritual. The objective is to equip and train leaders who can bear compelling witness to Christ through sermons whose conception, design, and delivery all stem from their engagement with the biblical witness.”

E.1.2 PRIMARY GOALS OF THE PROGRAM
The overriding goals of Luther Seminary’s DMin Program, relating to both the BP and CML tracks, are as follows:

- Participants will be able to lead their congregations from the perspective of an advanced understanding of the nature and purpose of ministry
- Participants will be able to lead their congregations with enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills
- Participants will be able to lead their congregations with new knowledge about the practice of ministry
- Participants will be able to integrate their new knowledge and skills into their contextual ministerial experience through critical theological reflection
- Participants will be able to lead their congregations with enhanced spiritual growth and maturity

As indicated above, students participating in Luther Seminary’s DMin program specialize in one of two specialized areas of ministerial practice, or tracks: biblical preaching or congregational mission and leadership. Each track has distinctive learning outcomes.
E.1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Learning outcomes: CML track
The learning outcomes adopted by administration and faculty relating specifically to the CML track are as follows:

- Participants will be able to form and lead communities with a critical understanding of God’s Trinitarian mission in the world from biblical and theological perspectives
- Participants will be able to form and lead communities in visionary and imaginative participation in God’s mission in the world
- Participants will be able to form and lead communities with a critical understanding of leadership and an enhanced development of one’s own gifts for leadership in particular ministry contexts
- Participants will be able to tell the gospel story vibrantly in particular ministry contexts through different practices of ministry
- Participants will develop the ability to engage in social scientific research for interpreting contexts for participation in God’s mission in the world
- Students shall develop and advanced understanding of the nature and purpose of ministry

These CML track learning outcomes are further supplemented and particularized by course learning outcomes adopted by the faculty in May 2014 as the endpoint of a comprehensive review of the CML track undertaken during the 2013-2014 academic year.

B. Learning outcomes: BP track
The learning outcomes adopted by administration and faculty relating specifically to the BP track are as follows:

- Students shall develop their own theology of the word and how it informs their preaching by moving interactively between practices of interpretation with particular biblical texts and reflection on those practices.
- Students shall demonstrate increased proficiency in the technical and performative aspects of preaching, such as sermon design and delivery.
- Students shall demonstrate increased skill in preaching the word within Christian worship to a particular time and place by relating the biblical text and context at each stage of sermon development.
- Students shall develop increased competencies in library research as well as in qualitative and quantitative research methodology.
- Students shall produce thesis projects that will be of benefit to those engaged in ministry in their practical context and to the church in mission.
- Students shall manifest growth in spiritual maturity.
Instructors teaching courses in the BP DMin track are required to follow a sample syllabus which requires them to develop course learning outcomes that further supplement, develop, particularize and relate to the DMin BP track learning outcomes.

E.1.4 EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
Luther Seminary has developed written assessment plans for each of the tracks that set forth ongoing strategies to assess and evaluate on a regular, ongoing and sustainable basis the effectiveness of the tracks in achieving the outcomes and goals stated in E.1.3.

Luther Seminary has for a number of years had established outcomes bearing upon “institutional effectiveness” relating to the two DMin tracks and has regularly collected data in order to monitor whether these outcomes are being realized. These outcomes of institutional effectiveness are:

- The institution shall undertake for the programs an effective admissions process as evidenced by applications and enrollment.
- The institution shall maintain in the programs high rates of retention and graduation.
- The institution shall monitor student progress and promote graduation by the third (BP) and fourth (CML) years.
- The institution shall maintain in the programs student satisfaction with course content and teaching.

E.2 Program content
A. Program content: CML track
The CML DMin curriculum is designed to allow a student to graduate in four years. The first three years consist of six half courses, with a weeklong residency attached to each. First-year courses deal with issues related to pastoral identity and leadership, together with methodological and substantive matters relating to integration of theology and ministry. Second-year courses deal with a theological examination of the missional church and missional leadership, together with the skills and practices associated with such leadership. In the second year, students begin their study of qualitative and quantitative social scientific research and its use in the practice of ministry. In the third year, students learn the theological grounding for congregational vitalization, continue their training in social scientific research, and develop a thesis proposal. The fourth year is a yearlong thesis-writing seminar that includes three on-campus residential editorial sessions plus a final public thesis defense.

B. Program content: BP track
The BP DMin curriculum is designed to allow a student to graduate in three years. The curriculum consists of nine course, three three-week summer residencies, a thesis project, and a thesis defense. Three of the courses are core seminars. The first, Preaching as the Word of God, invites the students to discover and assess their own theology of the word and how it informs their preaching. The second, Preaching as the Proclaimed Word, focuses on the technical and performative aspects of preaching. The third, Preaching as the Word in Context, focuses on the contextual aspect of preaching. Three of the courses are electives designed to further the curricular goals of the program. Three of the courses are “colloquies” that are designed to allow students to reflect upon their learning in the other courses, develop the technical skills necessary for thesis writing, and complete a thesis project. Finally, as a final step, the students must each undergo a public thesis defense.
In both tracks, a DMin-level thesis project is required of all students which is expected to be of benefit to practitioners in ministry in the broader church. All thesis projects are subject to a public thesis defense in which a faculty thesis committee participates. The student’s cohort is also given an opportunity to participate in the public defense.

The curriculum of the CML and BP Tracks as a whole are designed to foster spiritual, professional, and vocational competencies that enable witness to a maturing commitment to appropriate religio-moral values for faith and life. (See the comments above on program content.) Specifically as to ethics, the moral and ethical implications or impacts of projects to be undertaken in ministry contexts are required to be considered. All thesis project proposals submitted for approval by the thesis committee include a section on ethics. All projects and papers that include qualitative or quantitative social scientific research must be evaluated and approved by the Luther Seminary Institutional Review Board (www.luthersem.edu/irb).

(2.2) All students are admitted, move through the program, and graduate in cohorts. These cohorts provide for mutual support, peer accountability, and the opportunity for a genuine collaborative and mutual teaching and learning experience. Most courses focus on applying the theoretical to concrete ministerial contexts. All post-residency sermons and projects are required to be developed and undertaken in a student’s ministry context. Often students are required to recruit members of their congregations to assist in the development, execution, and evaluation of projects.

Students are required to spend a minimum of two to three weeks in residence on campus each year, at which time they have full access to Luther Seminary’s library and other facilities. When away from campus, students continue to have access to the library and other facilities through the internet. Students are provided with form and file guides, templates, and bibliographic software to assist them in their work, as well as on-going training in their use. Luther Seminary maintains hired and trained staff to continue to give training in these resources on an individual bases and to respond to inquiries.

Opportunities for spiritual growth and formation are built into each of the courses. In addition, while in residence, DMin students participate in community activities and events, including daily chapel. When absent from campus, students have chapel available on the internet, and are able to interact via course websites and other internet facilities with respect to their coursework, projects, vocational and professional development, and spiritual well-being.

(2.3) In its recruiting and admission practices, Luther Seminary seeks broad diversity that represents a multiplicity of cultural, religious, and linguistic contexts of ministry. This effort has been largely successful, as a review of current and existing students in the CML and BP tracks confirm. The diverse contexts represented by these students and the unique challenges they present are the subject matter of student papers and projects as well as classroom discussions.

(2.4) All doctoral projects are required to be defended in a public forum as a part of the process for their evaluation and approval. All completed and approved projects are accessioned in Luther Seminary’s library.

E.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

E.3.1 LOCATION
All coursework takes place on the Luther Seminary campus.
E.3.2 DURATION
The Luther Seminary DMin requires at least the equivalent of one full year of academic study and the completion of a doctoral project. The CML Track requires four years to complete. The BP track requires three years to complete.

E.3.3 DISTINCTIVE RESOURCES NEEDED

**Faculty: BP track**
Karoline Lewis, a faculty member in Luther Seminary’s Homiletics department, provides primary faculty leadership for the program. Retired Homiletics Professor Michael Rogness, a former faculty point person in Preaching, also regularly teaches in the program. Since the program is considered a partnership between the Leadership Division and the Bible Division, members of the Gible division teach regularly in the program, including Rolf Jacobson, Matthew Skinner, Craig Koester, Kathryn Schifferdecker, and Fred Gaiser (now retired). Other members of the faculty who teach in the program include Dirk Lange, Andy Root, and Amy Marga. In addition, the program employs adjunct professors to teach in the DMin tracks. Adjunct teachers regularly teaching elective courses include Thomas Long, Anna Florence, Paul Scott Wilson, Audrey West, and Clayton Schmidt, all of whom have been recognized as national leaders in the teaching of preaching.

**Faculty: CML track**
Faculty leadership for the CML DMin is provided by Luther Seminary’s Leadership Division, specifically its congregational Mission and Leadership faculty, including Craig Van Gelder (now Emeritus), Alvin Luedke and Dwight Zscheile. Since the track is considered a partnership between the Seminary’s Congregational Mission and Leadership faculty and its Systematic Theology faculty, Gary Simpson has regularly taught and provided leadership for the program. Former seminary President Richard Bliese also has also taught in the program on a regular basis. In addition, the program has employed adjunct professors to assist in the teaching of program courses, including Scott Fredrickson, Dan Anderson and Michael Peck, all of whom hold degrees from Luther Seminary doctoral programs.

Primary administrative responsibility for the DMin tracks rests with the Associate Dean—Graduate Theological Education, who is also a member of the teaching faculty of the seminary, and the Associate Director—Theological Education. This administrative responsibility is shared with faculty point persons in CML and Homiletics. Administrative responsibility is also shared with a Graduate Theological Education Committee, which normally consists of four faculty members, along with student representatives.

Faculty assignments of DMin courses are made by a collaboration of the Deans, faculty point persons and the faculty division chairs in the same manner as courses for other degree programs. At the option of the faculty persons, DMin courses may either be counted toward normal faculty load, or may be paid on an over-and-above basis. All adjunct faculty and other personnel receive formal orientation.

As indicated above, Luther Seminary’s DMin programs have a deep commitment to the contextual and practical nature and purpose of a DMin degree, and the tracks’ courses and required projects are structured in a way that reflects this. All of the instructors in the tracks are ordained in the ministry, and most have parish experience.

Other portions of the Self-study document deal with Library resources and services, including collections, electronic resources, services, and staffing. These have generally proved adequate to
support the needs of Luther Seminary’s DMin program. Library staff have been particularly attentive to the needs of our DMin students. Similarly, academic support services and other resources are available to the DMin program and its students.

E.4 Admission
With very rare exception, every student admitted to the DMin Tracks has an MDiv degree. It has not been the policy to admit students on an equivalency basis. In the future, it is likely that Luther Seminary will admit persons with a master’s degree, provided that the degree meets the 72 graduate semester hours with broad-based work, etc., under the criteria set forth in E.4.1. Luther Seminary believes that its own MA degrees meet the criteria specified in E.4.1. The master’s degrees from other sources will be measured against the Luther Seminary MA degrees and the criteria specified in E.4.1.

Luther Seminary’s admission practices are fully in compliance with E.4.3. Admitted students without the requisite three years of ministry experience are well below the 20 percent threshold. Criteria for admission unique to each of the DMin tracks are set forth in the applications for admission to the tracks.

E DMin further documents and data:
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014DMinBPAadmission.pdf
2014DMinBPAssessmentPlan.pdf
2014DMinBPCurriculumChart.pdf
2014DMinBPElectives.pdf
2014DMinBPSStudentProgress.pdf
2014DMinBPSStudentSurvey.pdf
2014DMinBPSyllabus.pdf
2014DMinBPTThesisAbstracts.pdf
2014DMinCMLAdmission.pdf
2014DMinCMLAssessmentPlan.pdf
2014DMinCMLCurriculumChart.pdf
2014DMinCMLProgram.pdf
2014DMinCMLStudentProgress.pdf
2014DMinCMLStudentSurvey.pdf
2014DMinCMLThesisAbstracts.pdf
Advanced programs primarily oriented toward theological research and teaching

I Master of Theology (MTh)

I.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

Luther Seminary’s academic catalog states, “the master of theology (MTh) degree program provides for continuing study through the discipline of academic excellence. It aims to develop in the student an informed, critical approach to a chosen field of study.” Like the PhD, this degree program has an uncompromising commitment to academic credibility combined with an equally strong confessional commitment.

Luther Seminary faculty and administration have denominated the following broad objectives of the MTh program:

- Provide in service to the church an advanced research and scholarship degree program available to pastors, lay religious professionals and continuing learners enabling them to become effective leaders in their fields on behalf of the church and its mission.
- Provide a research and scholarship degree program that will provide aspiring PhD applicants an intermediate degree preparing them for advanced PhD study.
- Maintain excellence and accountability in the execution of the program in all of its facets by faculty and administration.
- Instill in its students a confessional identity and commitment in service to the church and the community of theological scholarship throughout the world.

I.1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

Luther Seminary faculty and administration have established the following learning outcomes for the MTh program which shape and inform the curriculum and instructional strategies that appertain to the program:

- Students will develop a global knowledge base at the MTh level appropriate to their concentration and field.
- Students will develop information research skills appropriate to their fields.
- Students shall develop the capacity to think critically.
- Students will develop the capacity to write clearly and effectively.

I.1.4 EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Luther Seminary has articulated an assessment strategy for its MTh program in the Master of Theology Plan of Assessment.

Outcomes related to the institutional effectiveness of the MTh program have been established as follows:

- The institution shall have for the program an effective admissions process as evidenced by applications and enrollment.
• The institution shall maintain high rates of retention and graduation.
• The institution shall monitor student progress and promote graduation by the end of the third year.
• The institution shall maintain in the programs student satisfaction with course content and teaching.

I.2 Program content

The MTh program currently has seven concentrations: Scripture (the student may major in either Old Testament or New Testament), History of Christianity, Systematic Theology, Mission and World Religions, Pastoral Theology and Ministry, and Pastoral Care (clinical pastoral theology, and Congregational Mission and Leadership). Degree requirements include four area courses, two electives, a language proficiency examination, a thesis, and a thesis defense. While the program is designed to be completed in two years, many MTh students, being employed elsewhere, work on their degree program on a part-time basis. The time limit for completing the program is five years.

The curriculum requirements for the program include six courses. Four of these courses are required to be in the student’s area of concentration. Two of the courses may be electives. All of the courses are required to be at least at the MTh (6000) level. MTh students have sometimes satisfied their course requirements by taking courses offered at the PhD (8000) level. Course requirements may also be satisfied by taking independent studies and through upgrades of lower level courses offered throughout the system.

MTh students are required to pass one written examination in Latin or a modern research language, normally French, German, or Spanish. Students in Congregational Mission and Leadership are required to pass a proficiency examination in social scientific research methodology. Students in scripture must demonstrate knowledge of biblical languages. Students may be required to demonstrate proficiency in other languages required by their thesis work. Graduation requirements for the MTh degree include an oral examination.

I.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

I.3.1 LOCATION

The MTh program is undertaken exclusively on the Luther Seminary campus.

I.3.2 DURATION

The MTh program is designed to be completed in two years. The first year is normally taken up with course work. The second year typically is spent on thesis work and a final oral defense. Many MTh students work on their degree program on a part-time basis. The time limit for completing the program is five years.

I.3.3 DISTINCTIVE RESOURCES NEEDED

There is broad participation in the MTh program by faculty persons at every level in each of the divisions and departments. This participation consists of teaching courses, overseeing independent studies and course upgrades, serving as thesis advisers, and serving on thesis committees. Library holdings and facilities are dealt with in other portions of the self-study and comply with I.3.3.2.
I.4 Admission
Luther Seminary recruiting and admissions policies and practices are in compliance with I.4.1.

MTh Further documents and data:
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014MThAssessmentPlan.pdf
2014MThCourses.pdf
2014MThThesisTitles.pdf
J Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Note: Luther Seminary’s PhD program is currently under review. New admissions to the program have been suspended since 2013. A task force, consisting of faculty, staff, and students, is assessing the program to address issues of future sustainability, including cost, faculty resources, and the needs of the domestic and international church. The Luther Seminary faculty and boards will likely consider a task force proposal in the spring of 2015. If a proposal is adopted to continue the program on some basis, it is likely that admissions would resume in the fall of 2016.

J.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

Luther Seminary’s academic catalog describes the purpose of the school’s PhD program as follows: “The Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) is an advanced research degree designed to develop scholarly leadership for Christian churches and for work in the community of theological scholarship throughout the world. The Program is deliberately theological and confessional without compromising its commitment to academic excellence and accountability.” It is this commitment to uncompromising academic credibility, combined with an equally strong confessional commitment, that has made the program unique and attractive to potential scholars and leaders of faith.

J.1.2 Primary goals of the program

Luther Seminary faculty and administration have denominated the following broad objectives of the PhD program that define its effectiveness:

- Establish and maintain the national and international reputation and influence of the program
- Maintain excellence and accountability in the execution of the program in all of its facets by faculty and administration
- Produce academic professionals who can advance their disciplines and be effective leaders in their fields on behalf of the church and its mission
- Foster in its students a professional and confessional identity and commitment in service to the church and the community of theological scholarship throughout the world

J.1.3 Learning outcomes

Luther Seminary faculty and administration have established the following learning outcomes for the PhD program, which shape and inform the curriculum and instructional strategies that appertain to the program:

- Students will enter the program with a beginning theological competency at the MDiv level
- Students will develop a global knowledge base appropriate to their concentration and field
- Students in Pastoral Care and Counseling and Congregational Mission and Leadership will develop capacity to effectively utilize social scientific research methodology
- Students will develop the capacity to think critically
- Students will develop the capacity to write clearly and effectively
J.1.4 Educational assessment
Outcomes related to the institutional effectiveness of the PhD program have been established as follows:

- The institution shall have for the program an effective admissions process as evidenced by applications and enrollment
- The institution shall maintain high rates of retention and graduation
- The institution shall monitor student progress and promote graduation by the fifth year
- PhD graduates shall find employment appropriate for a PhD graduate
- The institution shall maintain high student satisfaction with course content and teaching

J.2 Program content
Luther Seminary’s PhD program currently has four concentrations: Systematic Theology, History of Christianity, Pastoral Care and Counseling, and Congregational Mission and Leadership. Students in all concentrations must successfully complete degree requirements that include entrance examinations, language proficiency examinations, three core seminars, four area courses, two elective course, a library practicum, clinical work in the case of Pastoral Care and Counseling, comprehensive examinations, a thesis, and an oral thesis defense. PhD students generally complete these requirements in four to six years.

All incoming PhD students are required to take entrance examinations in order to demonstrate that they have broad theological competence at an MDiv level at a minimum. Students who cannot demonstrate this competence must either defer starting the program or alternatively may be given remedial work at the first theological degree level through coursework or assigned research papers.

All PhD students are required to be in residence for at least the first two years and are considered full-time students for four years. The program is required to be completed in a maximum of seven years. Students are evaluated and given a degree audit every year.

All PhD students are required to take a library research methods course, and are required to demonstrate competence in research methods and training as a part of their research projects. Students in Congregational Mission and Leadership and in Pastoral Care and Counseling are required to pass a proficiency examination in social scientific research methodology, and are required to take a final course in their curriculum designed to assist them to design a social scientific research methodology appropriate to their thesis research project.

PhD students are given the opportunity to attend regular luncheon sessions in which faculty persons discuss issues of pedagogy. Students are also given the opportunity to serve as teaching and research assistants, where faculty persons mentor them. Luther Seminary has from time to time entered into an arrangement with Augsburg College whereby advanced PhD students are given the opportunity to serve as adjunct professors teaching courses in Religion under the mentorship of Augsburg College faculty persons.

The vast majority of courses taken by PhD students are courses designed at the PhD level or are independent studies designed at the PhD level with a faculty independent study mentor.
All students are required to pass proficiency examinations in two research languages. Other languages may be required if necessary for a student to study or concentrate in a particular subject area. Students in Congregational Mission and Leadership and Pastoral Care and Counseling are required to pass proficiency examinations in social scientific research methodology and are offered courses to assist them in developing these research competencies.

Students are required to be in residence at least the first two years. Colloquy and other sessions are made available to PhD students to allow them to interact with each other and with faculty. Special study space is made available for PhD students in the library.

**J.3 Educational resources and learning strategies**

**J.3.1 LOCATION**

All PhD courses are offered on the seminary campus in St. Paul, Minnesota.

**J.3.2 DURATION**

PhD students are required to be on-site in residence for the first two years of the program, during which coursework is required to be completed. Students generally take four to six years to finish the program. Students are required to finish the program in not more than seven years.

Luther Seminary faculty resources, including their training, specialties, and records of scholarship, are dealt with in other portions of the Self-study and demonstrate ample compliance with J.3.3.2.1-2.

Luther Seminary faculty persons broadly contribute to the advancement and progress of PhD students through teaching courses, mentoring, evaluating comprehensive examinations and thesis proposals, and serving as readers and advisers.

Faculty participate in policy making in relationship to the PhD program through service in their departmental and divisional faculty committees, and through serving on the Graduate Theological Education Committee.

The PhD program is the most diverse of any of the seminary programs in relationship to denominational and theological commitments. Although Luther Seminary is a Lutheran Seminary, great care is taken to insure that no theological point of view is imposed on any student and that all students are free and encouraged to pursue their interests, provided that they do so in a way that is academically and critically credible.

All students have been given a full tuition remission plus a living expense stipend of $6,000 per year. International students also receive a stipend to be used for books and technology. ELCA international students receive additional living, family, and travel support.

Library holdings and facilities are dealt with in other portions of the Self-study but comply with J.3.3.5.

**J.4 Admission**

Luther Seminary recruiting and admissions policies and practices are in compliance with J.4.1 and J.4.2. In addition, admission is offered only to those students whose perceived vocation appears to be in resonance with Luther’s mission for the PhD program, which is to train and mentor a new generation of teachers and scholars for the church worldwide.
Luther Seminary’s PhD program currently has approximately 50 enrolled students at various stages of their program, distributed relatively evenly among the four concentrations.

*Further documents and data:*
- 2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
- 2014PhDAcademicBibliography.pdf
- 2014PhDAcademicAssessmentPlan.pdf
- 2014PhDCurriculumCharts.pdf
- 2014PhDDissertationTitles.pdf
V. Conclusion

Luther Seminary’s self-study process and document demonstrates the challenging and changing nature of theological education. The uncertainty of the financial crisis and leadership transition emerged simultaneously with the innovation toward a new MA and MDiv curriculum in 2012/13. The majority of the self-study was conducted during a time of interim planning and leadership (President, VP for Finance and Administration, and Academic Dean) in 2013/14. Final input and edits to the self-study were completed during a time of new curriculum, new planning efforts, and new leadership (President and VP for Finance and Administration) in fall 2014.

Luther Seminary, emerging from a time of crisis and interim planning, has begun a strategic alignment process that will lead into formal strategic planning efforts. Luther Seminary has just launched a new curriculum with a smaller faculty, new courses, and new assessment processes that will lead to a formational and integrated experience for students and provide better data for ongoing educational improvement. Luther Seminary has a new budget processes and property partnerships that will lead toward a newly defined “financial sustainability.” We are enhancing and rebuilding long-standing virtuous habits of planning and evaluation, now with a hard-won humility from our crisis and a re-energized view of our resilient vision of our mission towards what we are yet to become.

Summary findings and recommendations

Luther Seminary continues to be in compliance with all Association of Theological School Standards. Internal reviewers and stakeholders have consistently praised the Self-study for its outstanding thoroughness and detail. Based on these judgments, we confidently commend the reaccreditation of Luther Seminary by the Association of Theological Schools. Yet the self-study process also yielded new insights and opportunities. As our result of the self-study, we have identified the following as priority areas for enhancement:

1. Build a faculty and staff workforce and mission-focused culture that is dynamically attentive to the needs of our external constituencies, yet normed by new, long-term financial and performance expectations.
2. Expand the deliberative process around institutional, administrative, and curricular planning and review.
3. Refine the newly innovated first-degree curriculum and embedded assessment processes based on the first year’s experiences and feedback.
4. Integrate First Degree (MA/MDiv) and Graduate Theological Education (MTh, DMin, and PhD) admissions into an overall enrollment strategy that identifies new audiences (and appropriate marketing tactics) in order to achieve moderate enrollment growth.
5. Develop a campus real estate plan in relationship to this comprehensive enrollment strategy; link decisions regarding the use, rehabilitation and disposition of buildings and other property to the kinds of student and other stakeholder experiences we hope to realize programmatically (and vice versa).
6. Deepen and strengthen board governance, increase diversity of skills and experiences in board members, and assure clear processes for strategic leadership as well as appropriate oversight of Luther Seminary’s operations.
Summaries by standard

STANDARD 1

- Continue use of Luther Seminary’s mission statement to shape priorities and planning throughout the institution. It informs the focus on leadership formation in the MA and MDiv programs, and in graduate theological education.

- Bring a greater coherence to our resource management and lay the groundwork for a more extensive strategic planning process. Luther Seminary’s planning and evaluation process, while establishing a strong vision for the future, was insufficiently attentive to some areas, particularly our finances. Subsequent attention to questions of sustainability and alignment throughout Luther Seminary has led to the development of the Strategic Alignment Proposal.

- Enhance our planning and evaluation processes at Luther Seminary through creating systems of strategic planning and review at both the institutional and unit level.

STANDARD 2

- Continue our strength in institutional integrity. We have been honest and appropriately transparent in our interactions with accreditors, government, ecclesiastic bodies, donors, students, employees and other constituencies, especially in navigating the financial crisis.

- Improve diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture in hiring and enrollment. While Luther Seminary enjoys a strong international student presence and has done some significant work in creating conversations around diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture—we still have room for improvement. While hiring practices are already in place, the Enrollment Strategy Group will continue to develop new proposals for enhancement in this area.

STANDARD 3

- Continue the innovative and creative work in implementing and improving the new MA and MDiv curriculum. The redesign offers programs that are both centered and flexible, and suitable for both residential and distributed learning programs. The development of portfolios and cohorts of learners holds considerable promise for the future.

- Leverage the clearer means of assessment being implemented in our new curriculum. The Assessment Committee and Learning Leader Team will and help integrate co-curricular activities and continue to monitor our work in this area.

- Effectively coordinate efforts in study abroad, student/faculty exchanges, and global partnerships, in order to build upon our excellent track record with global engagement. A Global Dimensions of Theological Education Working Group has been tasked to study this.
STANDARD 4
- Continue work in developing capacity for information literacy and lifelong learning among our students through the library’s engagement with the curriculum, faculty within individual courses, and responsiveness to individual students.
- Create processes and platforms to better capture and promote Luther Seminary’s own intellectual output through establishing an institutional repository.

STANDARD 5
- Update our faculty policies, hiring procedures, and culture to accommodate our diversifying models of faculty through use of both tenure and contract faculty.
- Cultivate faculty strength and flexibility through implementing 5-year faculty reviews in addition to the various tenure and promotion reviews.
- Develop faculty engagement with learning outcomes and assessment through all of our degree programs.

STANDARD 6
- Fully integrate admissions for Graduate Theological Education (MTh, DMin, and PhD) into the overall enrollment strategy.
- Develop an overall enrollment strategy that identifies new markets for existing programs and marketing tactics with a plan for moderate enrollment growth.
- Identify housing options and opportunities for our various student needs (full-time residential, international students, and distributive learning students).

STANDARD 7
- Participate in shared governance with improved processes and systems for the work of individual committees and that of the Boards as a whole. Enhanced communication and collaboration between the Boards and the faculty has resulted in mutual agreement around greater rigor in the sabbatical program, plans for more robust and regular reviews for tenured faculty, and much of the work that has become the basis for the Strategic Alignment Plan.
- Continue to work toward achieving diversity of membership on the Boards, building upon the improved gender diversity in recent years. The Boards have begun a formal process to assess the diversity of capabilities and experience that will assure the Boards are competent to fulfill their fiduciary and strategic responsibilities.
- Use the newly-established Presidential Support Committee to provide assistance and support in her leadership, annually review the President’s performance and establish goals for the coming year, and work with the President in the performance appraisal, compensation planning and succession planning for the senior leadership team.

STANDARD 8
- Build a faculty and staff workforce and culture that can thrive in a dynamic learning environment through collaboration, adaptability, and a relentless focus on our mission.
• Implement best practices of financial planning and management, with a particular focus on aligning resource allocation with our strategic and tactical plans.

• Steward our campus real estate holdings to enable learning communities of our students and others as articulated through the strategic plan; use that plan to drive decisions regarding the use, rehabilitation and disposition of buildings and other property.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS
• Develop new strategies for scheduling courses and hosting campus-wide events to better account for the number of campus-based students with more complex scheduling needs.

• Develop habits and practices of using the assessment of student learning outcomes for ongoing improvement and formal program reviews.

• Build upon our successful Lifelong Learning programs to help Luther Seminary adapt and respond to rapidly changing contexts of ministry.

DEGREE PROGRAM STANDARDS
• Leverage the new curricula-required internship for the MDiv in order to develop and prepare new internship models.

• Evaluate current and potential MA programs to be more competitive in meeting the needs and interests of our constituencies.

• Explore and consider new models for the PhD program in light of Luther Seminary’s mission and the program’s contribution to theological education.
### VI. Documents Cited

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<td>Spiritual Formation Survey of Faculty/Staff/Students Executive Summary and Results</td>
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<td>Executive Summary of a spiritual formation survey conducted summer 2014</td>
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