Three Insights about Faculty Development in Theological Education

Deborah H. C. Gin
The Association of Theological Schools

Stacy Williams-Duncan
Virginia Theological Seminary

ABSTRACT: This article builds upon more than 20 years of other studies about faculty by introducing a new focus on faculty development. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research addressed three questions: How do theological school faculty understand faculty development? What motivates faculty to engage in research? What are faculty members' perceptions of online teaching in theological education? The findings are instructive for those charged with building and overseeing theological school faculties and engendering in them a sense of collective vocation.

This study grew from a series of conversations between two practical theologians who shared the vocational goal of using the tools of educational research to benefit theological education. One of us is a quantitative researcher who wanted to determine how The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) could best use its resources to support faculty. The other is a qualitative researcher who wondered how the experiences of theological school faculty members were similar to and distinct from the general population of higher education faculty. In fall 2014, we began a collaborative effort to investigate the faculty development needs of theological educators. The work was grounded in a commitment to build upon the foundation of previous research, to use empirical social science methods to benefit theological education, and to ask theological school faculty directly to identify their needs.

For the last 20 years, the majority of the research on faculty working in theological schools was done by the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education and focused on who the faculty are. Its first study, while addressing faculty preparedness (in terms of earning the MDiv) for

teaching in theological schools, focused more intently on the demographics of faculty in theological schools and evaluated how the retirement of baby boomer professors would impact their institutions.[1] In 2005, an Auburn team identified how theological school faculty had changed over the previous 10 years.[2] In its most recent study, the Auburn Center collected defining information on 24 doctoral programs whose graduates regularly became theological school faculty.[3]

The studies conducted by the Auburn Center provided a wealth of historical data on the demographics of theological school faculty and their doctoral training, but they did not directly address faculty development. In 2011, ATS surveyed faculty members who had either attended an ATS program or received an ATS grant and invited 36 faculty members to talk about the changing nature of the work required of faculty in theological schools and of their preparation for this new work. Stephen Graham, ATS senior director of programs and services, reported four main areas of faculty concern that were identified by participants in this consultation: (1) increased emphasis on evaluating student learning and questions about effective ways of measuring student achievement; (2) increasing pressure to use more educational technology and to teach online; (3) changes to seminary culture stemming from increased financial pressure; and (4) the impact of changes in church demographics on theological education.[4]

While foundational, both the Auburn and ATS studies did not provide a complete picture. The Auburn studies focused on collecting descriptive data. Graham's data were based on a small, self-selecting sample. The Auburn and ATS studies could be used to infer faculty development needs, but we were interested in a more direct investigation. Failing to locate any other studies on faculty development in theological schools, we concluded that there was a need for current, more robust research in this area, bringing together both quantitative and qualitative methods and

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1. Barbara G. Wheeler, *True and False: The First in a Series of Reports from a Study on Theological School Faculty,* Auburn Studies (1996); Tending Talents: The cultivation of effective and productive theological school faculties," Auburn Studies, No. 5 (1997).

2. Barbara G. Wheeler, Sharon L. Miller, and Katarina Schuth, *Signs of the Times: Present and Future Theological Faculty*. (New York: Auburn Theological Seminary, 2005).

3. Helen M. Blier and Barbara G. Wheeler, *Report on a Study of Doctoral Programs that Prepare Faculty for Teaching in Theological Schools* (New York: Auburn Theological Seminary, 2010).

4. Stephen R. Graham, "Changes in faculty work," *Colloquy* 20:1 (2011): 38–43.

exploring a larger sample of theological educators. This article reports the findings from this research focused on three questions:

1. How do theological school faculty understand faculty development?
2. What motivates faculty to engage in research?
3. What are faculty members' perceptions of online teaching in theological education?

Methodology

We chose a mixed-methods approach to the study because, for each of our questions, we were interested in the broader perspective the quantitative data would provide, the more nuanced narrative data the focus groups would provide, and how they would inform our understanding of the other.[5] The design, collection, and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data were empirically based, rigorous, and comprehensive. We followed a qualitative-quantitative-qualitative sequence (initial focus groups, random sample survey, and regional focus groups) to gather data, adjusting the focus group protocol midway, based on early survey findings. This approach, an exploratory sequential research design, allowed us to use initial data to inform later phases of the study.[6]

Initial exploratory focus groups

In order to identify the areas this study needed to address, we convened seven focus group sessions at four events that were already part of ATS leadership education programming. The initial focus groups involved convenience samples, meaning participants were already in attendance at these events. The groups included 55 faculty attending the 2014 American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature meeting in San Diego and eight academic deans gathered at the 2014 ATS School for New Deans. At each event, an open invitation was sent to all faculty or deans who were in attendance. These focus groups were facilitated, but not structured,

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5. We chose the methods outlined in J. W. Cresswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013).

6. Ibid.

discussions about the areas of faculty development that participants thought the study needed to explore.

Survey participants and sampling method

The population studied in this project was full-time faculty at ATS-accredited institutions. ATS currently services more than 270 seminaries/schools of theology in the United States and Canada, with nearly 3,500 full-time faculty teaching at these institutions.[7] Studying a subset of this population, which was randomly selected, justified the generalization of the survey results to everyone who falls within this population.[8] To build the sample for the survey, we determined a final target size of 225 participants and assumed a response rate of 30 percent, so we agreed on an invitation list of 750. Table 1 shows various demographic characteristics of the final sample.[9] To guarantee representation of the various populations within ATS membership, we drew a stratified random sample based on

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Final Sample (N=782)

Demographic Characteristic (T=Institution, D=Individual)	Actual % of Sample	% in ATS Database
Roman Catholic/Orthodox (T)	22%	22%
Mainline Protestant (T)	37%	35%
Evangelical Protestant (T)	40%	43%
United States (T)	88%	85%
Canada (T)	12%	15%
Deans	12%	14%
Faculty	88%	86%
Male	60%	60%
Female	40%	40%
Racial/ethnic	31%	30%
White (D)	69%	70%
Unknown (D)	1%	—

7. For this study, we used counts from the 2013–2014 ATS Annual Data Tables: http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2013-2014-annual-data-tables.pdf.

8. We chose the methodology in L. M. Rea and R. A. Parker, *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014).

9. The final number of useable cases returned was 242, corresponding to a 31 percent response rate.

demographics.[10] This resulted in a total sample of 782 (22 percent of the original list of faculty in ATS member schools).

Survey design and construction

The survey contained 50 items concerning institutional faculty development, individual engagement and preferences in faculty development and research/scholarship, perspectives on recent shifts in theological education, and demographic items.[11] Descriptives of key variables can be found in Appendix A. To increase the validity and usability of the survey, we refined it by having it expert-reviewed by two theological educators and a survey methodologist.[12] After this, we field-tested the survey with three faculty members who were not part of the random sample.

After the survey was administered, we scrubbed the data to improve the quantity and accuracy of the results presented. Rank order items were first reverse coded so that "1" designated the least rank, then recoded to name the "Top" or "Top Two" responses, based on greatest frequency (e.g., "The types of faculty development that most interest me are . . ."). Responses for mark-all-that-apply items (e.g., "Faculty development resources at my institution include . . .") were recoded into dichotomous variables in order to use them in regression analyses. In addition, when we determined that responses to two items—"At my institution, participation in faculty development is mainly seen as a reward (e.g., for those who have already secured book contracts)" and "At my institution, participation in faculty development is mainly seen as a form of remediation (e.g., for those who need to boost teaching evaluations)"—were significantly skewed, we omitted them from any subsequent analyses, including regressions. Finally, responses to nominal variables (e.g., race) were recoded into dichotomous variables for use in regression analyses.

Regional focus groups

While surveys are very effective in providing large amounts of data about a specific population, they do not provide rich understandings or

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10. We chose the methodology in R. M. Groves, J. Fowler, J. Floyd, M. P. Couper, J. M. Lepkowski, E. Singer, and R. Tourangeau, *Survey Methodology*, 2nd ed., (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009).

11. Please contact the authors for the complete survey or list of items.

12. Groves et al.

explanations of the responses.[13] In order to provide greater insight and context to our survey data, we held 10 regional focus groups in eight cities across the United States and Canada. As demonstrated in Table 2, we selected cities based on concentrations of ATS-accredited schools, partnered with a theological school in each area to host the focus group, and invited all full-time faculty from ATS schools within driving distance. We planned for 15 participants at each site and closed the online RSVP when we exceeded this number. A grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation allowed us to provide each focus group participant with a $100 stipend.

Table 2 Focus Group Participants

City	Host	Participants	Institutions Represented
Atlanta	Candler School of Theology of Emory University	17	6
Chicago	Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary	15	5
	Catholic Theological Union	16	7
	ATS Deans' Meeting	9	9
Dallas	Dallas Theological Seminary	11	4
Orlando	ATS Mid-Career Faculty Event	18	18
Seattle	Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry	10	3
Toronto	Wycliffe College	17	9
Vancouver	Carey Theological College	13	8
Washington DC	Howard University School of Divinity	12	4

The focus groups were structured, recorded, transcribed, and coded. We each facilitated a focus group at each location, so group size varied from five to nine persons. Using a formal protocol, we systematically

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13. Ibid.

moved through a series of questions that fell under four categories: general faculty development, research motivation, shifts in teaching and learning, and online education. After the audio recordings from each focus group were professionally transcribed, we de-identified all the transcripts by removing references to specific people or institutions. The transcripts were coded using a three-step process: (1) an open-coding approach was used to develop a running list of themes;[14] (2) the themes were condensed into categorical codes; and (3) the transcripts were recoded according to the categorical codes.[15]

Faculty development as a collective endeavor

At the beginning of this project, we discussed how we each understood faculty development. In recognition of our own differences, we did not impose a formal, previously articulated definition to guide our work. Instead, we chose to see what would emerge from the focus groups and how participants' understandings would relate to the survey data.

While participants raised the need for financial support of independent research and conference attendance, there was also a great interest in the collective benefits of faculty development and a strong belief that these benefits should be an institutional priority. Within the focus group transcripts, we found 64 references to the "collective nature" of faculty development. These references emphasized the role of faculty development in creating alignment with an institution's mission, building greater cohesiveness, and addressing the changing academic environment. The three statements below are representative of the observations of the focus group participants.

> I think faculty development also for me involves what the institution [does] to help the faculty member settle into the processes in the institution and the environment in the institution [to] be as successful as possible. Certainly teaching and research are part of those, but every institution has its own culture.

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14. We chose the methodology in C. Marshall and G. B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010).

15. We chose the methodology in J. W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2012).

> Not so much in our specific disciplines, but how we can work together as a cohesive, coherent, trusting [faculty], and not be quite so silent. That's another element of faculty development that I think of.
>
> The fields in which we are active are changing so quickly that we have not really trained for what we're doing today, much less what we may be doing 10 years from now. We have to constantly be retooling and relearning and gathering, not only new data, but [new] skillsets. For me, it's this constant evolution or morphing of who we are that has to happen, and in order for us to keep up with the changes that are happening and going to happen.

Based on the importance attached to this element of faculty development by focus group participants, institutions would be wise to ask the following questions. Do your faculty have a sense of a collective vocation? And are they being socialized into a collective vocation?[16] In other words, do they have a sense of shared responsibility for the good of the institution and the faculty body, not just for individual professional agendas, and are they being "integrated into the institution's culture"?[17]

Survey items addressing collective vocation

This notion of developing a collective faculty vocation was not considered in our original survey design. We realized its importance after the topic was extensively discussed in our regional focus groups. When we were analyzing the focus group and survey data, we discovered we could operationalize the construct of a collective faculty by a series of topical questions. Theological conversation on, and useful tools for, assessment are relevant in theological education today; however, for this article, these were primarily meant to operationalize the notion of having a sense of collective vocation. To explore the concept of collective vocation, we looked at how participants responded to these three items on the survey:

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16   Gordon T. Smith, "Attending to the Collective Vocation," *Theological Education* 44, No. 2 (2009), 95–111, reprinted from *The Scope of Our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher*, ed. L. Gregory Jones and Stephanie Paulsell, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 240–261.

17.   Barbara G. Wheeler, *Tending Talents*, 1997.

- At my institution, we have a shared understanding of the purpose of student assessment.
- At my institution, we have engaged in adequate theological reflection on assessment.
- At my institution, we have established useful mechanisms of assessing student formation.

By asking about the purpose of assessment, the survey moved beyond the act of assessment to a deeper layer of meaning and mission and allowed the responses to function as a concrete representation of a sense of collective vocation. According to faculty responses, having a shared understanding of the purpose of assessment is directly related to having engaged in adequate theological reflection on the topic and having established useful mechanisms of assessing formation. These items (see Table 3 for the list of top predictors) accounted for more than 47 percent of the variance.[18] In other words, the faculty most likely to feel this shared understanding comes from an institution that has engaged in adequate theological reflection on assessment and has established useful mechanisms of assessing student formation. One resides in the realm of the philosophical; the other is more functional. A significant majority (66 percent) of respondents believed their institutions had established useful mechanisms for assessment. However, only 42 percent believed they had engaged in adequate theological reflection on assessment.

Table 3 Predictors of Shared Understanding of the Purpose of Assessment

Having a Shared Understanding of the Purpose of Assessment is Most Closely Related to:	
Adequate theological reflection on assessment	β=.323
Useful mechanisms of assessing student formation	.312
Access to FD resources is equally available to full-time faculty	.161
FD programs align with mission and institutional goals	.134

18. In this regression, we attempted to predict having shared understanding of the purpose of assessment with a number of specific independent variables. We ran a stepwise regression and used mean substitution for missing data. See Appendix B for full regression results. Four variables entered the equation, yielding an R-square of .472. The two most important predictors were having engaged in adequate theological reflection on assessment and having established useful mechanisms of assessing student formation.

So what did we learn about cultivating this collective vocation? The data suggest that, while integrating faculty into the collective through attending to functional needs (i.e., establishing useful mechanisms for assessing an institutional need) has been successful, guiding the faculty body through intentional theological reflection around the various needs of the institution would be even more effective.

What motivates faculty when choosing research areas?

Faculty research seems to occur outside the collective vocation. We found the majority of statements about research in the focus group transcripts focused on personal development as a scholar. Comments such as the following were common and highlighted the personal motivations regarding research: "I want to participate more in professional, academic guilds and make a difference there as well in terms of my own scholarly development."

In the survey, we specifically asked which of the following would be most influential when considering a research project: personal interest, academic guild, needs of the church, needs of theological education, or needs of the public. Eighty percent named personal interest as one of the top two influencers. Roughly half (56 percent) indicated the needs of the church as one of their top two influencers, about 25 percent named disciplinary guild, another 25 percent named the needs of theological education, and only 11 percent of the faculty reported the needs of the public as one of their top two.
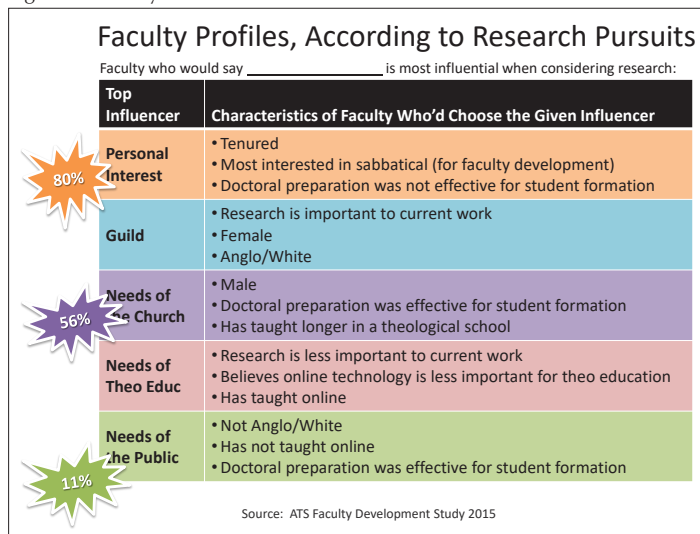
Figure 1 shows the profiles of faculty members who identified one of the five as most influential in their research.[19] Personal interest was the most influential among faculty who are tenured, most interested in sabbaticals for their professional development, and less prepared by their doctoral program for their role in forming students. The disciplinary guild was the most important influencer of research choices among white women for whom the role of research was important for their current work. Faculty who considered the needs of the church as the most influential were men with the longest time in theological education and whose doctoral

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19. Stepwise regressions were run to predict each research area of influence, using mean substitution for missing data. Highlighted in this discussion and in Figure 1 are some of the strongest predictors among personal variables. Institutional variables that entered the equations at the final step were omitted from this discussion and figure. Contact authors for full reports.

program was effective in preparing them for their role in student forma-
tion. Faculty who said that the needs of theological education were the
most influential are those for whom the role of research is less important
for their current work and who feel online engagement is not important
for theological education but who have taught online. And, finally, faculty
who considered the needs of the public as the strongest influencer for their
research are non-white faculty who have not taught online and whose doc-
toral programs were effective in preparing them for their role in student
formation.

Figure 1. Faculty Profiles

Faculty Profiles, According to Research Pursuits

Faculty who would say _____ is most influential when considering research:

Top Influencer	Characteristics of Faculty Who'd Choose the Given Influencer
Personal Interest (80%)	• Tenured • Most interested in sabbatical (for faculty development) • Doctoral preparation was not effective for student formation
Guild	• Research is important to current work • Female • Anglo/White
Needs of the Church (56%)	• Male • Doctoral preparation was effective for student formation • Has taught longer in a theological school
Needs of Theo Educ	• Research is less important to current work • Believes online technology is less important for theo education • Has taught online
Needs of the Public (11%)	• Not Anglo/White • Has not taught online • Doctoral preparation was effective for student formation

Source: ATS Faculty Development Study 2015

What might these results mean? One way to read these findings is to
conclude that, in order to strengthen research with a particular purpose,
schools need to increase the number of faculty with the corresponding
profile. Another way to understand these findings is to consider both the
content of the profiles and the number of faculty reporting each of these as
their top influencer. It is particularly interesting to note that having had a
doctoral program that prepared a faculty member for the work of student
formation is related to a commitment to research on behalf of the church as
well as the public. It is notable that we have few who would choose either
of these (56 percent and 11 percent, respectively). Given the rise of the
religious "nones" or "dones" in society today, this information gives us
reason to pause and ask: While "personal interest" for some may include
the needs of various publics, what are the implications that only one in 10
faculty looks to the needs of the public for their research? What does this

mean for theological education? How might we get personal interests to intersect explicitly with the needs of the public?

Experience with online teaching

In his report, Graham identified a negative perception of the role of online education in theological schools.[20] Of the 192 people who completed his survey, 65 percent indicated a less-than-positive or a negative view of online theological education. One of our goals for this study was to gain a more in-depth understanding of theological educators' perspectives of, and experiences with, online teaching. Our survey results were unexpected and challenged several assumptions we held. While 58 percent of the sample had taught a hybrid course, only 43 percent had taught a fully online course. The faculty who had taught a fully online course did not differ individually by their tenure status, discipline, race, or gender, nor did they differ institutionally, by ecclesial family, size, or country of institution.

There were three areas of difference that surprised us. First, we expected most online teaching to occur in embedded schools, where infrastructures would be more available to support such engagement. This was not so. In fact, 72 percent of those at embedded institutions (as compared to 47 percent at freestanding institutions) indicated they had *not* taught a fully online course.[21] Second, we expected to see online engagement at its highest among the younger faculty, assuming those newer to teaching

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20. Stephen R. Graham, "Changes in faculty work," *Colloquy* 20:1 (2011): 38–43.

21. This drops to 66 percent at embedded institutions when faculty at research institutions are removed from the sample. While beyond the scope of this article, the picture of online engagement at research schools deserves further study. Not only does the frequency of faculty engagement with online teaching differ significantly, but perceptions of the importance of online technologies for theological education differ significantly as well. Mean responses for both items are lower among faculty at research schools; online engagement is less among faculty at research schools ($\mu = 2.78$, on a 4-point scale, versus $\mu = 3.04$ for non-research schools); and online technologies are perceived as not as important among faculty at research schools ($\mu = 1.11$, on a 2-point scale, versus $\mu = 1.47$ for non-research schools). While there is no statistical difference in mean response between faculty at research schools and faculty at non-research embedded schools on the item related to importance of online technologies, the presence of faculty at research schools in the "embedded" group does create a statistical difference between faculty at embedded schools and those at freestanding schools on the same item. Further study is warranted here.

were younger and therefore technological natives. In fact, most online teaching was done by faculty in mid-career (i.e., those with 11–15 years of teaching experience). Table 4 summarizes online teaching by faculty, based on years of experience. Last, online engagement was least among the newest and the most veteran faculty. Faculty with 11–15 years of teaching experience were the only group where more (55 percent) have taught a fully online course than have not. For comparison, only 29 percent of those in the group with 0–5 years of teaching and the group with 21 or more years of teaching reported they had taught a fully online course.

Table 4 Online Engagement by Teaching Experience

Number of years teaching in theological school (graduate level only):		0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21+ years	**Total**
I teach/have taught completely online course(s):	No	30	26	23	20	29	128
	Yes	12	26	28	20	12	98
	Total	**42**	**52**	**51**	**40**	**41**	**226**

Single characteristics, both personal and institutional, are not the only ways in which online engagement differs. Asking "which faculty would be the most likely to teach a fully online course" calls for looking at multiple characteristics simultaneously and requires an analysis that goes beyond finding out how many said they had taught such a course. We analyzed the data to determine the profile of the faculty member who would be most likely to engage teaching online.[22] The results are presented in Table 5. The three strongest predictors of positive perception of online education are the belief that online technologies are important, a doctoral program

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22. For this analysis, we ran a stepwise regression where we predicted online teaching with a series of variables that included personal perceptions and faculty habits, background variables, institutional characteristics, and other variables, using mean substitution for missing data. Contact authors for full list of variables. Eight variables entered the equation as significant predictors. The R-square at the final step was .325, indicating that collectively the independent variables predicted 33 percent of the variation in online teaching.

that was effective in preparation for teaching, and confidence in the ability to assess outcomes-based student learning.[23]

Table 5 The faculty most likely to have taught a fully online course is the one who/whose:

Believes online technologies in theological education are important	β=.254
Doctoral program was effective in preparing them for teaching	.197
Is confident in their ability to assess student learning based on outcomes	.195
Institution has a significant online presence (more than roughly 25% of courses)	.183
Institution has tenure	.181
Institution is freestanding	.171

Dependent Variable = I teach/have taught completely online course(s). (R^2: .325)

Focus group insights about online teaching

The focus group conversations about online teaching included brief forays into the traditional debate about its appropriateness in theological education, but the participants very quickly shifted to embrace it as a reality. Faculty who had not taught online identified a lack of confidence and experience as hindrances. This was the case for older and more experienced faculty as well as for less experienced and younger faculty. The following two focus group excerpts, the first from an experienced faculty member and the second from a younger faculty, articulate this point effectively.

> I think there are some things that I could do that would be engaging, but I can't even think about it because I don't know. I tell people, if you went to college with a slide rule, then they need to help you.
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> I feel a little embarrassed to say that I don't know how to do . . . some of this stuff. I really wish that there were some tech-savvy people who would tutor me and help me, get me going on this. There's an assumption that we all know

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23. Two additional variables that entered the equation at the final step were: "My institution is [not] doing enough with respect to faculty development in research/scholarship" (β = -.243) and "My doctoral program was [not] effective in preparing me for the ability to serve the school/larger community" (β = -.125). These were omitted from the discussion above because of the unclear reality that the negative betas portray. It is likely that these predictors represent underlying factors that were not examined in this project. Further research is needed to understand fully the salience of these significant predictors.

> how to do this. It's just not true. I wish someone would get
> me up to speed.

Focus group participants' most significant concerns about online teaching were pedagogical, not technological. Comments such as this showed that most support and training focused on mastering the technology without addressing the broader pedagogical issues: "She's [instructional designer] provided a lot of support. Some of it is just technical. Actually, more of it has been technical than pedagogical, I would say." There was also a concern that theological education is not keeping up with developments within the broader context of online teaching within higher education. "There are certain things that are going on in the larger online educational system that theological education just is not paying attention to yet because we're still caught up in the tools." Finally, there was a sense that faculty were left to their own devices to learn about effective online pedagogy.

> I think faculty were left to discover or to figure out that
> online teaching is a completely different pedagogical
> environment from a four-walled classroom. Some of us
> got that pretty early on, and [others] of us [are] still very
> much trying to force online teaching into the four-walled
> classroom model. We have not had significant faculty
> development events or conversations that would help us
> share with one another what we've learned about this
> new pedagogical environment that we were in. We've had
> informal conversations and lunchtime conversations, but
> not anything that's been formal or intentional.

Conclusion

What are the faculty development concerns of theological school faculty today? How and why do they develop as teachers and researchers? They are motivated both extrinsically and intrinsically to engage in professional development, and they are well-, or over-, prepared for research and underprepared for administrative work and student formation. They are engaged in online teaching if in their mid-career as a theological educator at a freestanding institution. They are influenced by personal interest when considering scholarly pursuits, which means they are most likely tenured, didn't have a PhD program that prepared them for student formation, and

are most interested in sabbatical for professional development. They are aware of the need for collective vocation and for spaces for theological reflection about institutional needs, such as assessment. And, if given the opportunity, they would overwhelmingly choose theological education as their vocation again.

There are a number of ways to read the findings that gave rise to the foregoing conclusion, depending on the context of the readers and their institutions. If there is a concern that faculty are individuals who merely share an institutional home, these data suggest that faculty development is one way to develop a shared collective vision. If an institution wants to strengthen research in a particular direction, it could choose to increase the number of faculty with the corresponding profile. Research generated by the needs of the public would most likely come from an increase in the number of

> 66 *[F]aculty development is one way to develop a shared collective vision.*

non-white faculty whose doctoral programs were effective in preparing them for student formation. If a theological school wants to expand its online teaching presence, it would be most beneficial to invest in pedagogical and technological training for mid-career faculty.

A final piece that emerged from the data addresses whether faculty would choose teaching in a theological school again. Of all possible characteristics explored in the study, the profile of the faculty member who would choose this vocation again is the one

- whose institution is doing enough with respect to faculty development in *research/scholarship*,
- who feels the recent shift in emphasis from evaluation of teaching to assessment of student learning has encouraged greater *attention to student formation*,
- for whom the *ability to serve* the school and larger community is important in her/his current work, and
- whose institution's *online structure* has made *global engagement* (e.g., wider reach for student enrollment, greater diversity of instructors teaching courses) more viable.[24]

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24. Contact authors for full regression results.

Faculty members who fit the mission of their institutions are happiest! The good news is that 90 percent agreed they would choose teaching in a theological school again as their vocation, with 50 percent strongly agreeing. As researchers committed to enhancing theological education through faculty development, we find this final piece of data very encouraging. It speaks to a positive overall morale of theological educators, which is an important foundation for all faculty development.

Deborah H.C. Gin is Director, Research and Faculty Development for The Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Stacy Williams-Duncan is visiting faculty at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia.

Appendix A – Descriptives for Key Survey Variables

Item	N Mean S.D.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree* 4
At my institution, faculty development is explicitly discussed and encouraged.	242 2.98 .797	14 5.8%	37 15.3%	131 54.1%	60 24.8%
At my institution, faculty development programs directly align with our mission and institutional goals.	242 2.87 .772	14 5.8%	48 19.8%	136 56.2%	44 18.2%
Engagement with faculty development is tied to performance evaluations at my institution.	238 1.64 .481	No 86 36.1%	Yes 152 63.9%		
At my institution, current resources for faculty development compared to what was available seven years ago are:	183 2.51 .725	Much less 17 9.3%	Less 64 35.0%	More 94 51.4%	Much more 8 4.4%
At my institution, access to faculty development resources is equally available to all full-time faculty.	238 3.20 .724	10 4.2%	13 5.5%	134 56.3%	81 34.0%
Getting faculty development approval/funding at my institution is:	237 2.45 .738	Impossible 35 14.8%	Difficult 60 25.3%	Easy 142 59.9%	Very easy 0 0%
My doctoral program was effective in preparing me for doing administrative work.	229 1.90 .843	Very ineffective 81 35.4%	Ineffective 101 44.1%	Effective 35 15.3%	Very effective 12 5.2%
My doctoral program was effective in preparing me for formation of students for ministries.	230 2.50 .975	43 18.7%	67 29.1%	83 36.1%	37 16.1%
My doctoral program was effective in preparing me for research/scholarship.	229 3.55 .602	1 0.4%	10 4.4%	80 34.9%	138 60.3%
My doctoral program was effective in preparing me for the ability to serve the school/larger community.	230 2.87 .850	13 5.7%	60 26.1%	100 43.5%	57 24.8%

Item	N / Mean / S.D.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree* 4
My doctoral program was effective in preparing me for teaching.	230 / 3.01 / .776	8 / 3.5%	44 / 19.1%	116 / 50.4%	62 / 27.0%
In my current work, doing administrative work is:	234 / 3.13 / .874	Unimportant 9 / 3.8%	Somewhat important 49 / 20.9%	Important 79 / 33.8%	Very important 97 / 41.5%
In my current work, formation of students for ministries is:	234 / 3.71 / .551	0 / 0%	11 / 4.7%	47 / 20.1%	176 / 75.2%
In my current work, research/scholarship is:	236 / 3.13 / .885	11 / 4.7%	46 / 19.5%	81 / 34.3%	98 / 41.5%
In my current work, the ability to serve the school/larger community is:	235 / 3.23 / .731	4 / 1.7%	30 / 12.8%	110 / 46.8%	91 / 38.7%
In my current work, teaching is:	236 / 3.78 / .508	2 / 0.8%	4 / 1.7%	38 / 16.1%	192 / 81.4%
My institution is doing enough with respect to faculty development in doing administrative work.	235 / 2.23 / .740	Strongly disagree 35 / 14.9%	Disagree 118 / 50.2%	Agree 74 / 31.5%	Strongly agree 8 / 3.4%
My institution is doing enough with respect to faculty development in formation of students for ministries.	236 / 2.82 / .807	9 / 3.8%	75 / 31.8%	102 / 43.2%	50 / 21.2%
My institution is doing enough with respect to faculty development in research/scholarship.	236 / 2.63 / .858	27 / 11.4%	65 / 27.5%	112 / 47.5%	32 / 13.6%
My institution is doing enough with respect to faculty development in the ability to serve the school/larger community	234 / 2.78 / .723	8 / 3.4%	68 / 29.1%	125 / 53.4%	33 / 14.1%

Item	N Mean S.D.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree* 4
My institution is doing enough with respect to faculty development in teaching.	235 2.95 .732	6 2.6%	51 21.7%	127 54.0%	51 21.7%
I am confident in my ability to assess student learning based on outcomes.	229 3.17 .652	4 1.7%	20 8.7%	137 59.8%	68 29.7%
At my institution, we have a shared understanding of the purpose of student assessment.	232 2.70 .775	18 7.8%	61 26.3%	126 54.3%	27 11.6%
At my institution, we have engaged in adequate theological reflection on assessment.	227 2.39 .847	31 13.7%	99 43.6%	74 32.6%	23 10.1%
At my institution, we have established useful mechanisms of assessing student formation.	227 2.70 .803	20 8.8%	57 25.1%	121 53.3%	29 12.8%
At my institution, there is an effective process to assess student learning for courses in online formats (e.g., completely online, hybrid/blended).	220 1.57 .496	No 94 42.7%	Yes 126 57.3%		
I teach/have taught completely online course(s).	229 1.43 .496	No 130 56.8%	99 43.2%		
I teach/have taught hybrid course(s), which combine online and traditional sessions.	229 1.58 .495	97 42.4%	132 57.6%		
Online technologies in theological education are:	227 3.11 .774	Unimportant 4 1.8%	Somewhat important 45 19.8%	Important 101 44.5%	Very important 77 33.9%
My institution has a significant online presence (more than roughly 25% of courses).	230 1.46 .500	No 124 53.9%	Yes 106 46.1%		

Item	N Mean S.D.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree* 4
My institution's online structure has made global engagement (e.g., wider reach for student enrollment, greater diversity of instructors teaching courses) more viable.	221 2.62 .958	Strongly disagree 32 14.5%	Disagree 63 28.5%	Agree 83 37.6%	Strongly agree 43 19.5%
If given the chance to do it over again, I would choose teaching in a theological school as my vocation.	230 3.39 .702	4 1.7%	17 7.4%	94 40.9%	115 50.0%

*Response options in this item category followed these column headers unless otherwise noted.

Descriptives for Demographics of Response Set

Variable	N, Mean, S.D.	Response Label	Frequency	Valid Percent
Years teaching	230 2.93 1.378	(1) 0-5 (2) 6-10 (3) 11-15 (4) 16-20 (5) 21+	44 52 52 40 42	19.1 22.6 22.6 17.4 18.3
Tenure status	230 1.87 1.259	(0) Institution does not have tenure (1) Non-tenure track/Short-term (1yr, 2yr) (2) Tenure track/Ext'd contract (3yr, 4yr) (3) Tenured/Term-tenure contract (5yr, 7yr)	59 22 40 109	25.7 9.6 17.4 47.4
Employment status	220	Part-time Full-time	9 201	4.0 96.0
Dean status	232	Academic dean Not academic dean	37 195	15.9 84.1
Gender	229	Female Male	109 120	52.4 47.6
Race	230	African, African American, Black American Indian, Native American, First Nations, Alaskan Native, or Inuit Asian/Asian North American, Pacific Islander Hispanic, Latino/a, Latino/a American Visa White Other	21 1 14 21 3 175 10	

Appendix B
Stepwise Regression—Prediction of Shared Understanding of Purpose of Assessment

Stepwise Regression—Prediction of Shared Understanding of Purpose of Assessment

Independent Variable	Beta	t	Sig.t	
Adequate Theological Reflection on Assessment		.323	5.966	.000
Useful Mechanisms of Assessing Student Formation	.312	5.535	.000	
Access to FD Resources Equally Available	.161	3.219	.001	
FD Programs Align with Mission and Institutional Goals	.134	2.533	.012	

Dependent Variable = At my institution, we have a shared understanding of the purpose of student assessment.

R = .687
R2 = .472
F = 34.964
Sig. F < .001
N = 242