Sensus fidelium: ATS membership speaks out on Degree Program Standards
Of rigor and flexibility

I
t was the object of attention in the 1930s, when the Conference of Theological Schools voted to become an association, begin accrediting schools, and adopt the first Standards of Accreditation. It was the subject of continued interest as those standards were revised in subsequent years, most recently in the early-1980s and mid-1990s. And it is the focus of the work of a Commission on Accrediting task force to consider changes to the Degree Program Standards.

The “it,” of course, is the ubiquitous concern of ATS member schools across the decades: What constitutes good theological education for religious leaders? It is not a question that can be answered once and forever be settled, and most initial attempts to answer it evoke more questions than answers: What is the long tradition that must be passed on for every generation of priests and ministers? Is the two-thousand-year history of practice, theology, and interpretation of texts weighted to the most ancient and fundamental elements or the most current and crucial elements? As the patterns of ministry continue to expand, what is the character of ministerial work for which theological education is preparing students? What kind of leaders do congregations and parishes most need at this time? How has higher education changed, and what do those changes mean for the way seminaries do their work? How much and what kind of theological education can schools and students afford? Anyone reading these questions will note important questions excluded from the list, which only illustrates how many variables must be considered when theological schools construct an educational program that responds to the fundamental desire for good—maybe even excellent—theological education.

Work on revisions of the Degree Program Standards began at the concluding session of the June 2010 Biennial Meeting and will continue through this academic year, with the goal of publishing a first draft of revised Degree Program Standards by early fall 2011. A central theme that emerged in those Biennial Meeting discussions is that the standards should be both rigorous and flexible. Rigorous and flexible do not always travel together, and I have thought a great deal about what it means for the Commission Degree Program Standards to be rigorous and flexible.

By rigorous, I think that Biennial Meeting participants were holding onto a long-standing emphasis in ATS accreditation: Postbaccalaureate theological education should be intellectually and academically rigorous. Education resulting in graduate degrees should be on a par with other graduate professional programs. This kind of education should be respectful of the intellectual tradition that has formed and guided Christian believing from Paul and Augustine, to Luther and Calvin, to Wesley and Newman. Many twentieth-century Christians have been suspicious of intellectual approaches to faith, and the ATS standards throughout that century reflected a commitment to the academic character of ministerial and priestly education. I don’t think that rigorous necessarily means rigid; I think it means that any changes to the Degree Program Standards must not abandon the commitment to intellectual rigor that was at the root of the initial Standards of Accreditation. But rigor should be understood as more than intellectual rigor. Graduate, professional education should result in the ability to engage in ministry practice that is intelligent, skillful, and responsible.

Daniel O. Aleshire
ATS Executive Director
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Cover Photo: Voting card from 2010 Biennial Meeting; Ugo Magni, photographer
With the ink barely dry on the revised General Institutional Standards, approved by the ATS membership at the 47th Biennial Meeting in Montreal in June, participants turned their attention to a new task. The meeting’s final session was an educational forum designed to gather participants’ collective wisdom relative to the Degree Program Standards. Approximately 200 of the 311 Biennial Meeting registrants participated in guided conversation focused on the issues that define the Degree Program Standards: program purpose and goals, content requirements, location and residency, and duration. Data were gathered from participants concerning the presenting problems and proposed solutions affecting schools’ engagement with the Degree Program Standards.

Discerning the sense of the membership

Prior to the Biennial Meeting, the Task Force on the Revision of the Standards and Procedures had conducted a survey of ATS deans to begin to test the waters. Nearly half of the chief academic officers at ATS member schools responded to the survey, and their input both confirmed the changing patterns of duration and residency among students and revealed school preferences concerning the duration of degree programs. Of those responding, 54 percent reported that more than half of their students are distance learning or commuter students, and 35 percent reported that more than three-quarters are distance learning or commuter students. The survey results suggest that schools have had sufficient experience with varied duration and residency scenarios to offer well-informed input in the second phase of the standards revision. They also suggest that work needs to be done to amend existing standards to reflect and respond to current realities. For instance, 60 percent of schools participating in the survey offer courses in which online components are used to satisfy required instruction hours, yet 66 percent do not have a working definition of a hybrid course.

At the educational forum, which lasted about an hour and a
half, participants were assigned to one of thirty tables, each consisting of one conversation leader (an ATS staff or task force member) and five to nine peers from various denominational families and school sizes. Gary Riebe-Estrella (Catholic Theological Union) facilitated the conversation from the podium, asking participants to reflect first as individuals and then as a group on the following questions:

- What is the primary concern that invites change in the Degree Program Standard(s)?
- How should the standard be changed?
- What would be the positive and negative impacts of these changes?

At the tables, participants generated 187 individual and thirty group worksheets. Both the individual and the group worksheets reflected a general congruence of concerns and seven dominant themes, with a number of accompanying recommendations.

1. The world in and for which the standards were written has changed dramatically.

   Indeed, the future has arrived. As Daniel Aleshire discussed in his opening plenary at the Biennial Meeting, this brave new world includes the decline of the traditional residential student population, new ways of understanding ministry and the church, a multicultural and multireligious world into which graduates are launched, and new technologies and educational delivery systems. As one group summarized, “Currently, students pursue their studies differently than envisioned in the standards,” declaring the current standards “thin” on contextual issues of ministry education.

2. Access to theological education is the dominant concern of constituents.

   For every group in the forum, concerns with access underscored comments on residency and location, duration, and admissions requirements. Students no longer fit the profile of the stereotypical MDiv residential student, and most argued that the standards, as they exist, put theological education out of the hands of many, including racial/ethnic groups (particularly Hispanics and Latinos/as) without undergraduate degrees, those already practicing ministry who cannot quit or relocate, women and those with children, and those with financial or geographic limitations. The current standards presume a traditional postbaccalaureate student, able to relocate for full-time degree work, thereby limiting the ability of schools to attract and serve a changing demographic. As one group summarized, “Some [students] have to leave families and ministry, disrupting communities and families,” with an “undue effect on those who are poor.” The standards, occasionally described as “inflexible,” need to permit schools to respond more effectively to these students. Another issue of concern was the degree length and guidelines for advanced standing/credit for prior life experience.
Recommendations

- Recognize the three distinct types of students: those with undergraduate degrees, those with no prior degrees, and those with significant ministerial experience (perhaps in lieu of prior education or eligible for advanced standing).
- Increase the nonbaccalaureate limit from 10 percent to 20 percent.
- Provide more clarity about definitions of residency and duration.
- Allow more distance/online/offsite classes up to a limit.
- Bring the permissible percentages for distance learning in the MA and MDiv degrees into parity.
- Consider approval of the BTh degree.
- Permit shorter degree programs for those with Bible college degrees or significant ministry experience.
- Accommodate the need to compete with non-ATS schools with shorter degree programs.

3. Formation is a key concern and issue, regardless of what happens to the residency requirements.

The majority of groups at the forum raised significant questions about formation: What is it? How and where does it—or should it—happen? And who is responsible for facilitating it? A third of the groups named it as a “most pressing issue” for the task force to address. In many cases, these comments appeared in conjunction with discussions of distance and online learning. Nearly all participants agreed that new educational delivery methods were an inevitable part of the new landscape of theological education, but for the most part, their willingness to move in this direction was hedged by serious concerns about formation. As a result, only four groups advocated for 100 percent online/distance degrees, and of those, three advocated for the MA only.

However, concerns about formation extended to residential programs as well. Most agreed that, in principle, residential communities intended to foster spiritual and learning environments that would form students, and these would potentially be at risk with increased movement toward distance programs. However, in reality, many schools said that this formational component was already at risk, given the number of commuter and part-time students. Some groups advocated for demanding residency only for the MDiv program, while others even wondered if it was still appropriate to presume that formation happened as an inevitable consequence of living on a school’s main campus. Regardless of whether doing face-to-face or distance education, many agreed that schools need to assess the efficacy of their formation programs.

Recommendations

- Hold all degree programs—both residential and distance—accountable to formation goals.
- Reframe formation strategies from an outcomes perspective.
4. *The relationship between the church and local communities (both ecclesial and secular) and the theological school is not effectively utilized and must be more central, for both the accountability and the success of the degree programs.*

Many groups observed that the church for which their students are being educated has changed. This was frequently translated as high-altitude wondering about the future and relevance of the MDiv degree and the need to recognize the shifting nature of both community and ministry. Students are doing ministry in an increasingly secular and multicultural world, and schools need to do better at finding out what churches and other constituents really need from graduates. Seven groups suggested that distance learning would force a connection to ecclesial communities and leaders in the local church, increasing both the access to and the relevance of the degree earned. Two groups even said that the work of formation was more appropriately the function of the worship community, not the educational institution. Two schools with robust online learning programs stated that the online community experience is valid and has exceeded their expectations; yet another group cautioned that distance and face-to-face learning were qualitatively different and that some students do better in one environment than in the other.

**Recommendations**

- Pilot formation programs with remote mentors and local church communities to address the needs of distance students, with attention to issues of cost, oversight, and accountability.
- Add participation in the local context as a degree requirement.
- Revise program purpose and content requirements to include more attention to interreligious and multicultural literacy among students.

5. *The Degree Program Standards need to be framed by outcomes.*

One of the most surprising themes to emerge from the discussion was the overwhelming emphasis on outcomes, which were named as a “most important change” in seventeen of thirty group summaries. According to participants, emphasizing outcomes would help preserve “accountability for competency” among graduates, provide the key to the creation of multiple gold standards, and guarantee rigor in the midst of flexibility. Understandably, many of these same groups also asked for guidance in determining and measuring outcomes, particularly around the evaluation of student readiness for ministry. Overall, these comments reflect the general sense that the Degree Program Standards and the standards revision need to be more explicitly framed by outcomes, rather than simply having outcomes become yet another standard that needs to be met.

**Recommendations**

- Rewrite standards around student learning outcomes.
- Redefine residency and duration in terms of outcomes rather than time or other codified standards of traditional institutional character.
- Use outcomes to determine advanced standing.

6. *Clearer definitions are needed for certain standards.*

How does the call for clearer definitions square with the clear support for increased flexibility in the Degree Program Standards? Much of the discussion at the forum tables raised opposing points: “on the one hand . . .” followed by “on the other . . .”. Schools recognize the need for an outcomes-driven approach to the Degree Program Standards and accreditation, but they also want clearer definitions and bright-line indicators for certain standards.

Yet the data also suggest that schools are aware that clear directives are not the sole guarantor for quality and excellence in education. On the one hand, schools want to know how much distance learning they are allowed to do or how short a degree can be; on the other hand, they want to assure the value of the degrees they grant. On the one hand, they want to know how many nonbaccalaureate students they can admit; on the other hand, they want flexibility and guidance in evaluating students for advanced standing. They appear to look to the Degree Program Standards to give them clear guidance and reference points to determine how to best achieve degree program outcomes—while taking into account the specific contexts of their respective institutions. To this end, the term *principled flexibility* appeared on multiple summary sheets.
Recommendations

- Define residency and duration—What are they? Can they be measured exclusively in terms of credit hours? And how flexible can the requirements for them be? Residency proved to be a key concern, particularly for those already in ministry contexts.
- Define credit hours.
- Define outcomes and assessment standards for the degree programs.
- Define distance learning and the permissible limits regarding it.

7. Schools continue to share lingering worries over the revision of the Degree Program Standards.

Despite the robust and imaginative conversation about the changing landscape of theological education, a bittersweet note permeated many groups’ discussions. Despite all of the excitement and urgency surrounding new technologies, new potential pools of students, and the like, many schools admitted that many of the changes they suggested have a shadow side. This appeared most frequently in the call to further embrace distance learning and changes to admissions requirements. They expressed worry about the potential loss of the learning community and the potential incoherence and erosion of the Degree Program Standards. This most often appeared in response to the summary question, “What would you most like the task force to remember?”

A third of the comments urged the task force to “hang tough” and not “cave” to pressures to diminish the rigor of the standards or the value of the degrees. Rigor without flexibility would render the Degree Program Standards irrelevant, but flexibility without rigor would lead to the “lowest common denominator.” As a number of groups pointed out, the residency standard is intended to protect the learning community; a move toward more experimentation and distance learning could lessen the influence of the institution, faculty-student contact, and the self-reflective growth of the students. As one group stated, “How can you graduate and assess a ministry student you have never met?” Another wondered if technological access issues would just create an “alternate elitism.” On the other side, however, was the school that warned of leaving the Association if the residency component was not significantly changed.

Regarding changes to admissions requirements, groups most often expressed concern about diminishing the value of graduate-level education if larger numbers of nonbaccalaureate degree students enrolled. The most commonly named negative impacts included fears about watered-down curricula and increased numbers of students requiring remedial academic attention.

More questions . . . and a pervading hope

The data gathered at the educational forum suggest a basic disconnect among the worries and suggestions named by schools. On the one hand, participants were concerned with assuring the quality of theological education and keeping the Degree Program Standards rigorous; on the other hand, they called for more flexibility and openness around residency, duration, and admissions. On the one hand, they wanted clear definitions and bright-line indicators to benchmark their degree programs. On the other hand, they knew that meeting all of the numbers doesn’t mean that they were necessarily providing their students with good formation or the best and most appropriate education. On the one hand, the group discussions addressed certain institutional directives, proposing amendments to residency requirements, degree length, and permissible percentages for offsite education and nonbaccalaureate admissions. On the other hand, groups engaged in deep wondering about the state of the industry, suggesting that a revision of the Degree Program Standards be more radical than a tweaking of numbers or increased permission to experiment. One group wondered, “Instead of technical changes to degree programs, could the task force conduct a deeper study—survey schools—to undertake a more dramatic revision over a larger time? Is a common definition of quality possible? The groups tethered these oscillating conversations together as they referenced a pervading hope for the revision of the Degree Program Standards—that these standards provide a way to promote rigor in the midst of flexibility and the means for remaining nimble and delivering quality without schools losing their educational souls.

Helen Blier is ATS director, student information and organizational evaluation.
David L. Tiede receives Distinguished Service Award

David L. Tiede was presented the Distinguished Service Award at the ATS Biennial Meeting in June. He is the twelfth recipient of the award, which acknowledges individuals who have contributed in extraordinary ways to the improvement and enhancement of theological education.

Tiede served as president of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, for seventeen years, retiring in 2005. He helped the seminary shape and serve the newly formed ELCA and contributed significantly to thought about the aims and purposes of theological education. In the process, he left the school stronger and more fitted for service to the church and the realities of a changing world. Tiede described his agenda at Luther by saying,

We have worked to get outside our comfort zone so we could find out what is really needed from us. We have to remember that we’re sent not to take care of [our] own agenda but to do what the world needs.

Tiede served as president of ATS from 2002 to 2004 and has been both a member and chair of the In Trust board as well as an In Trust mentor, consultant, and speaker. In all these capacities, he has contributed significantly to the understanding of governance in theological schools.

Before being called to the presidency of Luther Seminary, Tiede established a reputation as a New Testament scholar, and he continued his study of Scripture both while he was president and since his retirement. He has written extensively, including the textual notes for the Gospel of Luke in the Harper Collins Study Bible and for The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts in The Access Bible; Jesus and the Heritage of Israel (ed. With David Moessner); Jesus and the Future; Holy Week: Proclamation 4; Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Luke; Search Bible Studies, Units I and II, Acts; and Prophecy and History in Luke–Acts. Most recently, he has contributed to the work of theological education through his involvement in the Leadership that Works research project of Auburn Seminary, which studied the background, experience, patterns of work, and vocational outlook of seminary presidents—and defined better practices that constitute good seminary leadership.

A graduate of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, Tiede attended Princeton Theological Seminary in 1962–63, received a BD degree from Luther Seminary in 1966, and earned his PhD degree from Harvard University in 1971.
In late June, 325 registrants gathered in Montreal, Quebec, at the 47th ATS Biennial Meeting. The group included 266 participants from 173 member schools; seventeen representing eleven new member schools; twenty-six representing affiliate organizations, consortia, and other guests; two representing a new affiliate organization; and fourteen ATS staff members. It was held at the Marriott Chateau Champlain hotel in the heart of the city, just steps from historic Old Town Montreal.

The theme of the meeting—The Future has Arrived: Changing Theological Education in a Changed World—was framed in an opening plenary1 by Daniel Aleshire, who enumerated the ways in which the religious landscape has changed and raised issues about how theological schools might respond and adapt. He spoke of changes in denominational strengths and loyalties, of shifting world demographics, of differences in the makeup and attendance patterns of students, of alterations to degree offerings and theological disciplines, of technological transformation, of the altered financial picture. Turning to possible responses to a changed world, he discussed adapting the gold standard of theological education with attention to multifaith understanding; to the wisdom that emerges from pastoral work; and to exploring a diversity of educational models to serve a broader range of ministerial settings, possibly broadening to include baccalaureate theological education, on-the-job training, and lay education. He concluded with a triad of simple positive statements: (1) Christianity in North America is changed but not diminished. (2) Theological schools are needed as much in this changed world as they have ever been, if not more. (3) There will be adequate resources—through providence, hard work, and frugal budgets—to accomplish what needs to be done.

The opening plenary set the stage for a working meeting in which the revision of the General Institutional Standards and Commission Procedures was a central focus. An open forum earlier in the day had given registrants the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the proposed changes, which had also been vetted several times online prior to the Biennial Meeting. The business meetings of the Association and the Commission on Accrediting included the following highlights:

**Elections**

The membership elected the nominated slate of new officers for the Association: President, Richard Mouw, president, Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California; Vice President, Dorcas Gordon, principal, Knox College in Toronto, Ontario; Secretary, Patricia Schoelles, president, St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry in Rochester, New York; and Treasurer, Mary McNamara, president, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in New Brighton, Minnesota. Also elected were seven new members of the Board of Commissioners, six new members of the Association Board of Directors, and forty-nine members of various Association and Commission committees.

**New member schools and affiliates**

The membership voted to admit eleven new Associate Members:

- Baptist Seminary of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky
- Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario
- China Evangelical Seminary North America in West Covina, California
- Lubbock Christian University Graduate Studies Program in Biblical Studies in Lubbock, Texas
- Moody Bible Institute, Moody Theological Seminary and Graduate School in Chicago, Illinois
The Association
Northwest Nazarene University School of Theology and Christian Ministries in Nampa, Idaho
Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan
Redeemer Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas
Shepherd University School of Theology in Los Angeles, California
St. Mark’s College in Vancouver, British Columbia
Saint Paul University Faculty of Theology in Ottawa, Ontario

In addition, Affiliate Status was granted to two organizations:

Association for Doctor of Ministry Education (ADME) in Austin, Texas
Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York

Policy guidelines
Following up on directives from the membership at the 2008 Biennial Meeting, ATS directors and staff reviewed six outdated policy statements over the course of the biennium. The membership approved a proposed change in nomenclature—from policy statements to policy guidelines—for all existing policies to reflect the nonbinding nature of ATS policies, which are intended as advice and counsel for adoption at the prerogative of each school. The guidelines are not intended to establish best practices applicable in all jurisdictions or create standards against which member schools’ conduct would be measured, nor are they intended as legal advice. The membership approved four new policy guidelines to replace the six outdated statements:

- Faculty Reductions During Financial Crisis
- Faculty Resignations, Leaves, and Retirements
- Striving for Culturally Competent School Communities
- Student Financial Aid

The membership also voted to retire the policy on Professional Ethics for Teachers, which had been recommended for review at the 2008 Biennial Meeting.

Revision of General Institutional Standards and Commission Procedures

The most animated discussions of the meeting centered around the revision of the General Institutional Standards 1 through 9 and the Commission Procedures. The proposed revisions, incorporating some changes recommended during the online vetting process, had been published in the Biennial Meeting Program and Reports book. Sections 2.5 and 2.6—dealing with diversity and gender—prompted considerable discussion and changes that were drafted on the floor. With those changes, the proposed revisions were ultimately adopted. The Standards of Accreditation and Commission Procedures as approved by the membership are published in Bulletin 49, Part 1, which has been distributed in print to all member schools and is available on the Publications page under Resources on the ATS website, www.ats.edu.

Gatherings and celebrations

The first day closed with a welcoming reception hosted by the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University, Montreal School of Theology, and the Kern Family Foundation. At the banquet following, David L. Tiede, interim president of Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, received the 2010 Distinguished Service...
The second day closed with receptions for In Trust member schools, women serving as presidents and deans, and all interested registrants with the Kern Family Foundation. After the receptions, registrants were free to spend time enjoying the City of Montreal and the festivities celebrating St. Jean Baptiste Day.

**Workshops**

Fourteen different leadership development workshops offered the expertise of twenty-five presenters on a full range of topics including outcomes assessment, financial management in challenging economic times, a missional model of education, supporting racial/ethnic diversity, creative resource-sharing among schools, distance learning, governance, and training for prospective accreditation evaluation team members.

**Educational forum**

Once the new policy guidelines and the revised General Institutional Standards and Commission Procedures had been voted upon on the final morning of the meeting, the business turned to an educational forum, which offered the opportunity for participants to discuss key educational issues represented in Standard 10 and the Degree Program Standards and to inform revision of them over the coming biennium. For full coverage of the educational forum, see “Sensus fidelium: ATS membership speaks out on Degree Program Standards” on page 2.


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**ENDNOTES**

1. The plenary is available in its entirety from the Papers and Presentations link under Resources on the ATS website, www.ats.edu.

2. The policy guidelines are published in Bulletin 49, Part 1, which has been distributed in print to all member schools and is available on the Publications page under Resources on the ATS website, www.ats.edu.

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**EDITORIAL continued from inside cover**

By flexible, I think people were asking that the revised standards not be so rigid that they do not provide room for the expanding number of reasons why students pursue theological education and the wide range of occupational uses to which students put that education. I suspect that flexible was also a plea not to confuse educational practice with intellectual quality. A program is not necessarily intellectually rigorous because students complete the courses only on one main campus in classrooms with faculty and other students present, and a program is not necessarily intellectually wanting because it includes some extension and distance education. These judgments are often made, and when they are, they falsely associate academic quality with one pattern of educational practice. I think that the call for flexibility was a call to understand the increasing diversity of ATS schools, the diversity of patterns of effective educational practice, and the diversity of motivations that prompt students to pursue theological studies. Diversity is not merely an option for excellent theological education; in this culture at this time, it is near the center. If the standards are inflexible, they have no way to accommodate the principled diversity that is crucial for effective theological education in this era.

I think there was wisdom in the reflections that emerged from the structured discussions of the 2010 Biennial Meeting. This decade’s revisions to the Degree Program Standards will be successful to the extent that they reflect the proper degree of rigor and flexibility in their response to the underlying question that previous generations of revisions to the standards have addressed: What is good theological education—at this moment in the church’s life, for communities of faith in this culture, for North American theological education in the context of global Christianity?
ATS welcomes new board members

Six new members have been elected to the ATS Board of Directors

Forming the class of 2014 are

Mario O. D’Souza, CSB, dean of the Faculty of Theology, the University of St. Michael’s College in Toronto, Ontario;

Heidi Hadsell, president of Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut;

Charles Kosanke, rector/president of SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan;

Steven Land, president of Pentecostal Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tennessee;

Jan Love, dean at Candler School of Theology of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia; and

Rod Wilson, president of Regent College in Vancouver, Canada.

In addition,

Cheryl Sanders, professor of Christian Ethics at Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, DC, had previously been elected by the ATS board to fill Michael Battle’s unexpired term through 2012.

Mark Latcovich, vice president-vice rector and academic dean at Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Wickliffe, Ohio, will serve as the ATS Commission representative.
Hispanic Theological Initiative at Princeton Seminary earns Excelencia In Education honors

Excelencia in Education, a Washington, DC, nonprofit has named the Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) at Princeton Theological Seminary the winner of its 2010 Examples of Excelencia at the graduate level. Excelencia in Education recognizes schools that best fulfill a responsibility to help Latina/o students succeed.

The Hispanic Theological Initiative, working at the seminary’s Princeton campus through a consortium of eighteen academic institutions, has been supporting for fourteen years Latina/o students studying religion. It offers fellowships, networking, and mentoring to help students succeed.

The program was honored based on graduating Latina/o students, accelerating Latina/o students’ achievement, creating strong networks of stakeholders, providing professional staff focused on addressing the needs of Latina/o students and all students, and integrating the Hispanic culture and enhancing students’ navigation between their homes, communities, schools, and professions.

“The need for an integrated plan to help Latina/o students is evident when you study the changing demographics of our culture,” said Joanne Rodríguez, HTI’s director for the past eight years. “The US Census projects that Latinas/os will represent 20 percent of the US population by 2020; they will represent nearly 25 percent of the college-age population by 2025. Yet, as of 2008, only 19 percent earn a college degree. That’s compounded by the fact that only 3.5 percent of the faculty at schools accredited by The Association of Theological Schools is Hispanic. By helping more Latinas/os become educators, we are helping all cultures in the new marketplace.”

Increasing the number of Hispanic professors is an important HTI result. Justo L. González, who helped create HTI in 1997 and served as past executive director, said there are now more than 136 Latina/o professors working in all ATS accredited schools. “When I started teaching in the United States in 1969, there was not one other tenured or tenure-track Latino professor in the country. I didn’t think this success would happen so rapidly,” he said.

HTI’s graduates include sixty-eight fellows who earned doctoral degrees, forty-nine who teach full time, and nineteen who serve in administration, research, and ministry.
ATS honors retiring staff member; welcomes two new members

It is with heartfelt appreciation for her twelve years of service that ATS announces the December retirement of Eleanor Bertoty. Bertoty joined the staff in 1998, serving most recently as administrative assistant for Leadership Education. In that role, she provided support for the presidential workshops, which include the Presidential Intensive Week and the New Presidents Seminar. She also provided support for the Student Personnel Administrators Network and other leadership education and faculty seminars throughout the year.

Prior to joining ATS, Bertoty served for twenty years as an administrative assistant in the field of hospital administration, her most recent position as administrative assistant to the executive vice president of finance of Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh. She has served on the board of directors for the YWCA and the McKeesport Hospital Federal Credit Union.

Alissa Horton joined the ATS staff in October 2010 as an administrative assistant for the ATS business office and information technology department. Her responsibilities include daily accounting functions, such as accounts payable, accounts receivable, cash receipts and disbursements, and payroll timekeeping. She is also responsible for working with member schools to complete the ATS Annual Report Form process in the fall of each year.

Before coming to ATS, Horton worked at Global Industries, an oil field services company in Houston, Texas, where, as IT procurement administrator, she managed budgets and accounts payable. During that time, she attended Lone Star Community College in the accounting program.

Caitlin Rohrer joined the ATS staff in October 2010 as an administrative assistant for accrediting where she supports the directors of accreditation and institutional evaluation. Other responsibilities include providing administrative support for the accreditation visit cycle, educational programming, Commission-related events, and other accrediting-related activities.

Earning a Master of Divinity degree at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (PTS), Rohrer completed a seminary-related work study at the PTS World Mission Initiative, interned at Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community, and served as a chaplain intern at the Allegheny County Jail and as chaplain at Highlands Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center. She also earned a certificate in Urban Ministry from the Metro-Urban Institute at PTS. Prior to graduate school, Rohrer worked in adoption/foster care and earned a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from John Carroll University.

In conjunction with these staff changes, former business office assistant Linda Giehll has accepted the position of administrative assistant for Leadership Education. In this role, she provides support for conferences and workshops such as the New Presidents Seminar, Student Personnel Administrators Network, Chief Financial Officers Conference, and other Leadership Education meetings throughout the year.
Go to the land that God will show you

By Daniel Aleshire

The LORD said to Abram, “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s home, and go to a land that I am going to show you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations.” When Abram was seventy-five years old, he started out from Haran, as the LORD had told him to do; and Lot went with him. Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the wealth and all the slaves they had acquired in Haran, and they started out for the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1–5).

Most of you have preached a sermon on this text, but texts, as you well know, take a different turn when they are preached at you: “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s house. It was all but unthinkable. I can only imagine what Sarai said when Abram told her what God had commanded: “Abram, don’t tell me you didn’t at least ask for some directions?” “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s land.” It is a hard text, the kind that makes you question how the word of the Lord was heard, how it was remembered, how it was passed down for generations and found its way to sacred text. It may be hard, but it preaches well, doesn’t it? “Forsake all, and follow.” “God’s people are a people on journey.” “Have faith, the Lord will show you the way.” “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s home, and go to the place that I will show you.”

The text is saturated with a grand promise, of course. “I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing” (Gen. 12:2). Maybe Abram hired a consultant to perform a risk analysis to see if the blessing might be worth leaving everyone and everything for an unknown destination. Hard to know; we don’t really know much about this ancient
time. I wonder what Abram thought about when the voice of the Lord grew silent as the day grew late or what awakened him in the middle of the night. Leaving for God-only-knows-where is no easy task. But, as you know, he did.

Abram got to take his possessions, and they must have provided great security because he was rich. But he would no longer see the sunset beyond the only landscape he had known—his future would be indelibly severed from his past. The story evokes so much that we cherish about our faith—the call of God, the promise of blessing. It also evokes what many of us truly fear about our faith—that God’s call will tell us to leave everything that has provided security and to go to a place we do not know and cannot name.

Leaving is very different from going. “Leaving” fixes us on memory. “Going” directs us toward hope. Sometimes, memory and hope travel together—as they do when Christians gather around a sacred meal and the past and future mingle in bread and wine. Much of the time, however, they travel in very separate parts of our understanding of faith. Memory can so fix us in the past that we turn to salt—and all we are good for is preserving something that used to be. Hope often comes slowly and is more likely to come after a great flood than a powerful blessing.

I don’t need to say any of this, of course; most of you have said it better, probably in more than one sermon. The text is for the people who are usually in the pulpit or, maybe I should say, more pointedly, for people in the president’s office.

The text is not about seminary presidents, of course, but we seem to be in a time when many are being called to leave familiar institutional and educational homelands for an unknown destination. This fall, I have been asked to speak to several boards—about eight if I remember correctly—and their consistent question has been “Where is theological education going?” I have only one answer for the question they are asking, and while I have tried to say it in as interesting a way as possible, there are very few intellectually satisfying ways to say “somewhere.” People need a destination, and all I can be sure about is that many schools need to leave.

After more than two decades at ATS, I am no longer sure what my academic discipline is. I was trained as a psychologist, but I don’t think that I can claim to be one anymore. To the extent that I have a discipline, it is practical theology, but whenever I use that term, I am reminded of the historical opposition to its use at the seminary where I taught. It was opposed because it implied that other forms of theology were “impractical.” A practical theologian has three tasks: The first is to think theologically, the second is to engage actions that faithfully implement that theological understanding, and the third is to understand that these tasks are reciprocal. One task is not superior to or the precursor of the other; actions and thoughts are mutually informed by each other. What is the practical theological task at a time like this in theological education?
First, we have some theological thinking to do. What does it mean to be on the front side of God’s command to leave? What does faithfulness look like when all you can be sure about is that you are to leave? How do we keep from confusing institutional success with faithfulness or the conclusion of one school’s mission with failure? What does it mean to lead at a time like this? What good is being fashioned; what grace is being shared; what creation is coming into being? Some ATS member schools will continue to do what they have been doing and will change as they grow better at what they have been doing all along. Others will change more dramatically. They will take on new institutional forms and new educational patterns. But right now, the most dominant reality most of them are facing is that they are leaving something. “Leaving” worries trustees who feel responsible for setting the direction and unsettles faculty and staff who tend to hunker down rather than pull up stakes. It burdens leaders whose task is to balance the comfort needed to educate students this year with the discomfort needed to refashion schools so they will be able to educate students next year. Some schools will fail in the middle of being faithful in venturesome ways. A few schools will likely die because the constituency that founded them is no more. In the middle of these changes, a pressing task is to think theologically about this moment. God is as present, as interested, as engaged in this moment as God has been in any other moment. What does it mean to be God’s servants in this moment? The task is not so much to answer these questions as to live with them, to be patient with them, and to listen in the middle of them.

Any school that changes from what it is used to being to what it has never been before will need to do some leave-taking, make preparations for change, and take the first steps into the future—wherever it is and whatever it entails.

Second, we have some actions to undertake. Academic hungers are often satisfied by thinking. Sometimes, it seems like a theological faculty can think, think, think, take a bathroom break, and come right back and think some more. The closest action to their thinking is to talk about it. You have heard the quip that the faculty meeting went so long because everything had been said but not everybody had said it. I have seen schools put months and months of thinking into a strategic plan, but it is as if they had used up all their energy thinking up the plan and had none left to put it into action. Practical theology is not content with thinking and talking about ideas, as crucial as these tasks are. It requires activity. If the call is to leave, then it involves pulling up stakes, organizing the work force, packing the bags, loading the wagons, saying farewell, and finally, taking the first steps. A day finally came when Abram walked away with his family, slaves, and livestock, and nothing more than a promise that when they got to the place where God wanted them to stop, God would tell him. Any school that changes from what it is used to being to what it has never been before will need to do some leave-taking, make preparations for change, and take the first steps into the future—wherever it is and whatever it entails.

Third, we have the task of understanding both the faith and our faith in a new way when we leave, because we understand that, somehow, the providence and goodness of God are present in our leaving. This is no time for theological thought to be informed only by other theological construals and institutional decision making to be guided only by our best understanding of educational corporations. We have much to learn, and that learning will emerge only as we consider the moment, act in it, and understand that our consideration and action combine to refine faith and cultivate faithfulness.

Because we are Christians, it might be well for us to turn from the Scriptures we share with Abram’s descendents to the ones we claim as the Christian gospel. Maybe they have something to say about leaving. It happens that they do.

Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26–27 NRSV).

I heard Barbara Brown Taylor preach several sermons last summer, and she told us that she had referred to this “hate” text in a recent manuscript. Her editor, whom she says does not know a great deal about religion, sent the manuscript back with a note in the margin: “check source, this cannot be right.” What in the world does Jesus mean? Give us the YHWH of Abram; he got back with a note in the margin: “check source, this cannot be right.” What in the world does Jesus mean? Give us the YHWH of Abram; he got to take his family with him. Cynthia Campbell pointed me to an address that Wendell Berry gave at Lexington Seminary several years ago and was subsequently published in The Christian Century. In the speech, he talks about the burden of the Gospel. Here is what he says:

> Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26–27 NRSV).

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But my reading of the Gospels, comforting and clarifying and instructive as they frequently are, deeply moving or exhilarating as they frequently are, has caused me to understand them also as a burden, sometimes raising the hardest of personal questions, sometimes bewildering, sometimes contradictory, sometimes apparently outrageous in their demands . . . .

But what, for example, are we to make of Luke 14:26: “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own also, he cannot be my disciple.” This contradicts not only the fifth commandment but also Jesus’ own instruction to “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” It contradicts his obedience to his mother at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. It contradicts the concern he shows for the relatives of his friends and followers. But the word in the King James Version is “hate.” If you go to the New English Bible or the New Revised Standard Version, looking for relief, the word still is “hate.” This clearly is the sort of thing that leads to “biblical exegesis.”

My own temptation is to become a literary critic, wag my head learnedly and say, “Well, this obviously is a bit of hyperbole—the sort of exaggeration a teacher would use to shock his students awake.” Maybe so, but it is not obviously so, and it comes perilously close to “He didn’t really mean it”—always a risky assumption when reading, and especially dangerous when reading the Gospels. Another possibility, and I think a better one, is to accept our failure to understand, not as a misstatement or a textual flaw or as a problem to be solved, but as a question to live with and a burden to be borne.1

Part of our theological task is to understand that we are living in a time that we do not fully understand. We are bearing a certain burden but certainly not as heavy as the ones borne in the years of the great depression when salaries—not just retirement payments—were reduced or suspended, or not as heavy as World War II, when students were scarce, evil was on display, and the future frightfully uncertain. We ought not to think too highly of the burden we bear. But it is a burden.

I wish the institutions that founded most ATS schools—the denominations of North American Christianity—were doing well, but most of them are not. They have been theologically conflicted, subject to declining membership, and receiving declining resources to do their work. I wish that we could educate students for ministry with more certainty about what they would do and how they would do it, but we can’t. I wish that Jesus had never said what Luke quotes him as saying. But the heart of our faith is not wishful thinking. It is a hopeful honesty about human sinfulness and God’s goodness, about failure and redemption.

I wonder if we are in a time when leaders are called to bear the burdens caused by conflicting signals and fundamental change, the burdens that accrue from caring for the present—with the anxieties that the people we lead invariably feel—and working for the future—with its requirement for people to make the very changes they fear will be their undoing. Maybe the call to leadership at this time is to hold on to the questions that the present moment relentlessly poses to us because we are held by the unrelenting grace of God.

Last year at the Presidential Intensive week, I told you that good leaders never make it to the Promised Land. This year, I am encouraging you to think seriously about what it means to lead by leaving even though you may not know where you are going. This may be a time when you lead by bearing the burdens of a community that finds itself in uncertain change.

I have referenced several Scripture passages, but I would like to remind you of one more: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28, 29a, 30 NRSV).*

ENDNOTE


Daniel Aleshire is executive director of The Association of Theological Schools. He presented this essay at the 2010 Presidential Leadership Intensive Week in Santa Fe.
The reality for many ATS institutions is that, apart from the president, only one person does the work of development. So how do all the different areas in a typical development portfolio get covered?

I think the word *focus* could help answer that question. Even large development teams need to focus, but for the one-person office, it is even more critical. But how do you determine on which areas to focus?

Throughout my years in development work, I have found it helpful to return to the principles of strategic planning to help determine the “what” and “when” of development activity. The process falls into three stages: strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategy implementation. The process is not linear per se, as shown in the figure to the right, but a clear progression of thinking is needed.

**Strategic analysis: Do you really know where you stand?**

Strategic analysis is essentially a reality check. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis will reveal where you are and what you need to do. It requires looking both internally, to gauge your strengths and weaknesses, and externally, to assess the environment in which you work.

**Internal assessment**

To do an internal assessment, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your institution have a compelling need?
- How big is your budget and is there room for growth?
- What kind of support personnel do you have?
- What technology and IT support is available?
- What is the history of development at your institution?
- Are there any sacred cows?

**External assessment**

The next step is to determine what is happening in the environment. While not always as obvious as internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities for development are impor-
tant to enumerate. The following questions may help you determine what opportunities to focus on while avoiding potential threats and pitfalls:

- What is your current donor base capacity?
- What do your donors respond to?
- What is the age range of your donors?
- What is the economy like, and how is it affecting your donations?
- What is your institution’s reputation in the community, currently and historically?
- Does your school operate in a conservative arena where some means of fundraising may be frowned on?
- Is your institution situated in an environment that attracts people to it?

Develop your own list of questions that will help determine what area of development might be the most effective. For example, if your donor base is primarily older, then a planned giving program may be an effective, even essential, focus of your development plan.

Having made this analysis, move on to making strategic choices about your priorities. I should point out that, at this point, the SWOT analysis need not be comprehensive—even a superficial assessment will reveal the most important factors affecting development in your institution.

### Strategic choices: What are your options?

The generation of strategic choices for your development plan should be a creative mix of your development dreams and strengths, an honest appreciation for the limitations that surfaced in your SWOT analysis, and an understanding of the expectations within the institution.

You have a list of possible strategies—now evaluate them. The reality check will help you eliminate strategies that won’t work or are not for this time. Two principles should guide you here: (1) It is impossible to do all that needs to be done in development, which points to (2) Develop three to five strategies that will give you the “biggest bang for the buck” and give you immediate success. My experience has shown that if you concentrate on a few proven ways to involve donors, the success will cause momentum to grow in other areas. Now evaluate these strategies:

- What development activity uses your strengths the best? your president’s strengths?
- What is the best fit right now for the institution given its vision, values, strengths, and weaknesses?
- What has been successful in the past, and is it still timely?
- What hasn’t worked in the past, and why?

As well, factor in what else is happening in other areas of the institution. For instance, it may be that the academic department wants to develop international partners to attract international students to its programs. A development strategy here is to foster relationships with local churches that would support this venture.

**Strategic choices need a communication plan**

The communication plan needs to ensure the necessary support and allocation of resources. There must be a clear rationale for the selected strategies, including rationale for not choosing other options, particularly if those other options represent clear internal expectations.

The implementation plan must have a timeline, a budget, and measurable goals so that it is clear what the institution can reasonably expect. You should keep in mind some alternatives or “Plan Bs.”

WEBB continued on inside back cover
Performance and perceptions: A guide to using student questionnaire data in the self-study process

By Helen Blier

Data for assessment can come from a variety of sources. A robust approach to assessment always includes both direct measures of performance and indirect measures of perception, both quantitative and qualitative data.

Direct measures of performance—student work, faculty or advisor comments, field supervisor or mentor reports, and other evaluation tools—are generally built into the educational programs of a school or are relatively easy to institute. They should be based on explicit criteria tied to degree program goals and/or student learning outcomes.

Indirect data, on the other hand, requires those doing the assessment to discern the perceptions of students and alumni/ae. Among the tools for doing this are the student information surveys: the Entering Student Questionnaire (ESQ), the Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ), and the Alumni/ae Questionnaire (AQ). These surveys, which offer diagnostically helpful indirect data for evaluating aspects of both institutional performance and degree program effectiveness, can be a valuable part of an overall assessment plan. The reports generated from these surveys include information on student demographics and finances, professional plans and job history, motivations for attending an institution, and satisfaction with academic and student services programming.

For schools that use the ESQ, GSQ, and AQ to gather data on current and past students, the removable centerfold reference guide should help to mine information for use in the self-study process and align it with the newly revised Standards of Accreditation.

For more information, visit the Student Information page under Resources on the ATS website (www.ats.edu) or contact Helen Blier at 412-788-6505, ext. 248, or blier@ats.edu.

Helen Blier is director, student information and organizational evaluation.

For help with your self-study process, please remove the centerfold reference guide

For schools that use the ESQ, GSQ, and AQ to gather data on current and past students, the guide should help to mine information for use in the self-study process and align it with the newly revised Standards of Accreditation.

Remember that Degree Program Standards require that schools measure the percent of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions.

Commission on Accrediting invites third-party comments

The following member schools are receiving comprehensive evaluation committee visits during the spring semester:

- American Baptist Seminary of the West
- Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
- Brite Divinity School
- Carolina Evangelical Divinity School (tentative)
- Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary (ON) (tentative)
- Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
- Drew University Theological School
- Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary
- Interdenominational Theological Center
- Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University
- Knox Theological Seminary
- Logsdon Seminary of Logsdon School of Theology
- Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg
- Queen’s School of Religion
- Seminary of the Immaculate Conception
- Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- St. Mary’s Seminary and University
- Westminster Theological Seminary in California
- World Mission University (tentative)

The ATS Commission on Accrediting invites any member school to submit third-party comments on any school scheduled to receive a visit. Comments should be addressed to the attention of the Commission on Accrediting and sent by mail, fax, or email to Susan Beckerdite, beckerdite@ats.edu as soon as possible.

Petitions to the ATS Board of Commissioners must be received by April 1 for consideration in its spring meeting and by November 1 for consideration in its winter meeting.
### Performance and perceptions: A guide to using student questionnaire data in the self-study process

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| 1. Purpose, planning, and evaluation  | 1.2.2.1 Institutional evaluation  
1.2.3 Comprehensive evaluation | Using the instruments, analyzing the data, and reporting data-driven changes and enhancements all demonstrate the use of information gained in evaluation processes for administrative and educational planning.  
1.2.2.2 Degree program evaluation | Standard 1.2.2.2 deals with degree programs and student learning outcomes. Cross-reference this to Standard 3, which addresses the curriculum, and the degree program standards A through L. |
| 2. Institutional integrity | 2.3 Accurate representation of institution to constituencies | Are the professional plans of your students consistent with the mission and purpose of your educational programming? See the Professional Plans tables and charts:  
ESQ—22  
GSQ—20, 21, 22  
AQ—10, 13, 24  
Is there congruence between your students’ perception of the theological position of the school and their own? Between their position and your institution’s self-understanding? See the Theological Positions table and charts:  
ESQ—17  
2.5, 2.6 Promotion of awareness and inclusion of racial and gender diversity | How diverse is your student body? Are your graduation rates for racial/ethnic and gender minorities tracking with your enrollment of these students? Check the tables and charts that report Demographics:  
ESQ—1 through 5  
GSQ—1 through 6  
Are the satisfaction rates for experience, services, placement, and programming comparable between your male and female students? How comparable are the job histories and attrition rates in ministry? One of the two primary variables used in reporting data is gender. (The other is degree program.) See the Growth and Satisfaction tables and charts:  
GSQ—12, 13, 18 through 21  
AQ—10 through 16 (job history); 19, 24, 27 through 29 (satisfaction) |
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| 3. The theological curriculum: learning, teaching, and research         | 3.1 Goals of the theological curriculum                                   | The goals of each of the degree programs include the development of “theological understanding”—the integrated and mature capacity for reflection and wisdom in a life of faith. Although this should not be the only measure you use to see if your school is successful, how well do your students think you prepared them for this? See the tables and charts related to Growth, Skills, Influences, and Impact:  
  - GSQ—12 (personal growth) and 13 (progress in skills)  
  - GSQ—15 (most important influences on education)  
  - GSQ—16 (importance of field education), 17 (effects of field education)  
  - AQ—19 (satisfaction with skills), 21 through 23 (effectiveness) |
|                                                                         | 3.2 Learning, teaching, and research                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                         | 3.2.2 Teaching                                                           | How important were the Faculty to the students’ educational experiences? See the perspectives of both entering and graduating students:  
  - ESQ—20, 21 (influences on decision to attend seminary)  
  - GSQ—15, 18 (experience with faculty)                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                         | 3.3 Characteristics of theological scholarship                           | Two of the standards in 3.3 address the students’ Engagement with Diverse Publics and Global Awareness as necessary components of their education. The ESQ and GSQ have a number of tables and charts that address these issues:  
  - ESQ—21 (reasons for choosing institution)  
  - GSQ—12, 13 (growth and skills); 15 (influences); 16, 17 (field education)  
  Pay attention to the measures that consider multicultural and ecumenical experiences.                                                                 |
|                                                                         |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 4. Reserved                                                             |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                         |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5. Library and information resources                                    | 5.1 Library collections                                                  | Look at the level of satisfaction with the school’s Services and Academic Resources, which lists two criteria in this area:  
  - GSQ 18—adequacy of library collection, writing and research support                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                         | 5.2 Contribution to learning, teaching, and research                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                         |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 6. Faculty                                                              | 6.2 Faculty role in teaching                                             | Once again, look at the GSQ satisfaction measures that refer to the Faculty; 6.2.2 encourages the integration of the disciplines and the primary degree program goals. The AQ can help you determine if that integration holds over time:  
  - GSQ—12, 13, 15, 16, 19  
  - AQ—19, 21, 22 through 24                                                                                               |
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<td>7. Student recruitment, admission, services, and placement</td>
<td>7.1 Recruitment</td>
<td>Who is being recruited, how are they being recruited, and why are they choosing your school? Look at the tables and charts that Profile the entering student body: ESQ—13 (denomination), 17 (perception of self/institution), 18 (how they learned about school), 19 (first contact), 21 (factors in choosing institution), 22 (professional plans)</td>
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<td>7.2 Admissions</td>
<td>Are you accepting students who will be well served by your institution's resources and able to do graduate level work? How diverse is your student body? View Demographics tables and charts: ESQ—1 through 5; plus 7 (undergraduate degree) and 8 (highest degree earned by parents)</td>
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<td>7.3 Student services</td>
<td>Look at the GSQ table and chart that reports student satisfaction with twenty-three areas of Service and Academic Resources. If your school has extension sites/distance education programs, compare the data for the various groups to ensure that all students are adequately served. GSQ—18</td>
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<td>7.4 Student borrowing</td>
<td>In the revised standards, student borrowing now has its own standard. The ESQ, GSQ, and AQ all contain a number of tables and charts that address student finances; schools must “review student educational debt” and “develop strategies” to mitigate the impact of that debt; heavy debt will impact their ministerial plans. ESQ—9 through 12 How much debt are they entering school with? How do they plan to support themselves? How important was financial aid in their decision to attend? GSQ—7 through 10; 21, 22 What will be their debt upon graduation? How did they support themselves? Will their professional plans adequately support them? AQ—5, 6 What are their loan payments, and are their finances adequate?</td>
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<td>7.5 Placement</td>
<td>Historically, vocational discernment and career placement have been the most poorly rated student services. Schools have a responsibility to provide “appropriate assistance” to students seeking employment and to adjust programming in light of current market trends. See reports of student expectations and experiences: ESQ—22 (professional plans) GSQ—18 (rating of services); 21, 22 (professional plans) Are their professional plans realistic? Are they graduating with offers of employment? The AQ looks at the number of jobs they have had, what those jobs have been, how long it took to find placement in their first jobs, and their attrition rates in ministry. Consider comparing as well the experiences of graduates by gender and degree program: AQ—10, 11, 12 (first job, length of time to find job, helpfulness of placement services); 13 through 18 (subsequent jobs, future plans)</td>
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<td>8. Authority and governance</td>
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<td>Not applicable</td>
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<td>9. Institutional resources</td>
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<td>10. Multiple locations and distance education</td>
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<td>Standard 10 is currently under revision. However, if your institution has multiple sites or you use distance education delivery methods, compare the experiences of your students in the different programs to ensure that their educational experience is comparable across the board and that the degree program goals are all being adequately met for all students.</td>
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For more information, visit the ATS website, www.ats.edu. See in particular the ESQ/GSQ/AQ pages within the Student Information section under Resources or the Assessment Resources page under Commission on Accrediting.

Contacts:
Helen Blier, Director, Student Information and Organizational Evaluation, 412-788-6505, ext. 248, blier@ats.edu.
Linda Griffin, Administrative Assistant, Student Information Resources, 412-788-6505, ext. 223, griffin@ats.edu.
The Commission welcomes seven new board members

Seven new members have been elected to the ATS Commission on Accrediting

Forming the class of 2016 are

**William Cahoy**, Dean, St. John’s University School of Theology–Seminary in Collegeville, Minnesota;

**John Martin**, President, Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary in Rochester, New York;

**Alton Pollard**, Dean, Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, DC; and

**Phillip Zylla**, Academic Dean, McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario.

Three new public members for the class of 2012 are

**Ron Mercier**, Rector, Bellarmine Jesuit Community, Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri;

**Nancy Washington**, Professor Emerita, University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and

**James Wind**, President, Alban Institute in Herndon, Virginia.
The board considered reports from evaluation committees for the following schools:

- Alliance Theological Seminary, Nyack, NY
- Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, OH
- Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO
- Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, Chestnut Hill, MA
- Concordia Theological Seminary (IN), Fort Wayne, IN
- Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, SC
- Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN
- Hazleip School of Theology, Nashville, TN
- Moody Theological Seminary and Graduate School, Michigan, Plymouth, MI
- Nashotah House, Nashotah, WI
- Oral Roberts University School of Theology, Tulsa, OK
- Pentecostal Theological Seminary, Cleveland, TN
- Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, TX
- Reformed Episcopal Seminary, Blue Bell, PA
- Regent College, Vancouver, BC
- Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL
- Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry, Seattle, WA
- St. Andrew’s College, Saskatoon, SK
- St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Wynnewood, PA
- St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, Boynton Beach, FL
- Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL
- Urshan Graduate School of Theology, Florissant, MO
- Wake Forest University Divinity School, Winston-Salem, NC

The board considered petitions for new or revised degree programs, changes in degree programs or nomenclature, and other petitions regarding course-offering sites, distance and extension programs, and removal of notations from the following schools:

- Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, NS
- Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY
- Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, OH
- Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO
- Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, ME
- Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Richmond, VA
- Beeson Divinity School of Samford University, Birmingham, AL
- Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, IN
- Boston University School of Theology, Boston, MA
- Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX
- Campbell University Divinity School, Buies Creek, NC
- Capital Bible Seminary, Lanham, MD
- Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Shawnee, KS
- Christian Witness Theological Seminary, San Jose, CA
- Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, CA
- Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester, NY
- Columbia International University, Seminary & School of Missions, Columbia, SC
- Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO
- Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, Berkeley, CA
- Drew University Theological School, Madison, NJ
- Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC
- Eastern mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, VA
- Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, TN
- Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, SC
- Florida Center for Theological Studies, Miami, FL
- Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA
- Heritage Theological Seminary, Cambridge, ON
- Houston Graduate School of Theology, Houston, TX
- Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO
- James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
- John Leland Center for Theological Studies, Falls Church, VA
- Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, KY
- Logsdon Seminary of Logsdon School of Theology, Abilene, TX
- Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, IL
- Memphis Theological Seminary, Memphis, TN
- Mennoite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, CA
- Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, OH
- Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO
- Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO
- New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, NJ
- Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA
- Palmer Theological Seminary, Wynnewood, PA
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA
- Queen’s College Faculty of Theology, St. John’s, NL
- Queen’s Theological College, Toronto, ON
- Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS
- Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC
- Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY
- St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, Denver, CO
- St. John’s Seminary (MA), Brighton, MA
- Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, Ambridge, PA
- Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, VA
- United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH
- University of Winnipeg Faculty of Theology, Winnipeg, MB
- Vancouver School of Theology, Vancouver, BC
- Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA
- Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA
- Washington Theological Union, Washington, DC
- Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA
- Wycliffe College, Toronto, ON

The board acted on reports received from the following member schools:

- Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, MA
- Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, NS
- Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, TX
- Barry University Department of Theology and Philosophy, Miami Shores, FL
- Catholic University of America School of Theology and Religious Studies, Washington, DC
- Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Shawnee, KS
- Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL
- Concordia Lutheran Seminary (AB), Edmonton, AB
- Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO
- Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA
- Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA
- Grand Rapids Theological Seminary of Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, MI
- Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, GA
- International Theological Seminary, El Monte, CA
- James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
- Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, St. Louis, MO
- Knox College, Toronto, ON
- Logsdon Seminary of Logsdon School of Theology, Abilene, TX
- Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY
- Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, IL
- Memphis Theological Seminary, Memphis, TN
- Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Dyer, IN
- Multnomah Biblical Seminary, Portland, OR
- New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA
- Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, IL
- Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, TX
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA
- Phillips Theological Seminary, Tulsa, OK
- Phoenix Seminary, Phoenix, AZ
- Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ
- Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS
- Regent University School of Divinity, Virginia Beach, VA
- Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO
- Saint Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, PA
- Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, TX
- Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC
- Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY
- United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH
- University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA
A new kind of learning: Contextualized theological education models

By Alvin Padilla

Have we structured our system of theological education in such a way that best serves our aspirations? Do the current institutional arrangements (systemic structures) help or hinder our efforts to flourish in the twenty-first century world? Keep that set of questions in mind as we proceed, for we shall return to them at the conclusion. As to a brief, one paragraph glance at our past, I would like us to abandon the idea that theological education in North America hitherto had not had to deal with transformative change. In the middle decades of the eighteenth century, the North American colonies found themselves in a wave of religious excitement that came to be known as the Great Awakening. That religious movement represented a watershed moment in the eventual birth of the United States: It not only created a self-identity as a unique people of God in the colonists’ mindset, but it also marked the transition from medieval to modern in North American Christianity. In the Great Awakening and its aftermath, we witnessed the collapse of the traditional pattern of parish life as it was then understood: “The lines of ecclesiastical authority, the purity of Episcopal instruction, the stability of apostolic succession—these and much else besides were shattered in the Great Awakening.”

Challenges for the church—then and now

The challenges for the church then were not too dissimilar to our own challenges. Two of the notable names of the eighteenth century clearly express the educational challenges they faced. Gilbert Tennent in a much quoted sermon (“The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry”) argued that “if a minister is himself spiritually undernourished, it is not likely that he can offer real sustenance” to another in need of spiritual direction. John Hancock, father of the famous signer of the Declaration of Independence, adds his own apprehension about ministry without brains, or, as he puts it, “prostituting the Holy Ministry by opening a wide door of entrance to every bold intruder.” If I were to transport the gist of their concerns to our context, I would imagine that the former might sponsor tremendous growth and expansion of Christianity in “unlikely” places as an opportunity for the overlooked to lead the rest of us, while the other might emphasize a more “traditional” mode of empowering people for leadership in the church.

Most of us would agree that the institutions that have been established to provide theological education in North America are in the midst of tremendous changes. Early in this twenty-first century, the Christian church finds itself in a challenging position as it confronts the multicultural, postmodern, and pluralistic world in which it has been called to bear witness to Christ. As its members, we are, at best, perplexed and bewildered, not knowing what in the world God is doing through us. At worst, some of us claim the death of the church and even Christianity itself—ignoring the tremendous growth of Christianity in cities like Boston. Still others see the next wave of Christianity emerging over the southern horizon and long for the arrival of its powerful undertow on our very shores so that it may take hold of the North American church and sweep it under its power.

Leadership is like fishing. Successful anglers are adaptable, constantly reading the water to discover the best place to cast their line. . . . Effective leaders constantly read the cultural stream. They continually study social, cultural, and organizational trends that are like currents in a stream. They get a sense of what will likely happen as a result of those trends.
Indeed, the whole world has come to our doorstep. Learning to live well in the diverse culture of North America is no longer an option, but a necessity. The US Census estimates that in 2040 the proportion of whites in the population will be only 53 percent. Our children will live and serve in a society in which their classmates, neighbors, and fellow disciples of Christ will be equally divided between whites and people of color. As new people move into our cities and local communities, the communities undoubtedly will change. The changes could be haphazard and filled with misunderstandings, hurt feelings, and even violence; or the changes could permit all to reinvent and reinvigorate themselves for the better.

Although the West (North America, Europe) has indeed lost its numerical superiority, it still retains an iron grip on the reins of power in the church. We in the West assume that we speak ex cathedra for all of Christendom. It is our theology that is normative. We believe our way of being the church is the standard for all to follow. In the area of theological education, we continue to assume that Western educational methods work best for everyone. We have not dared to envision new ways of learning to serve the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity overwhelming our society—we are unwilling to reinvent ourselves.

The fact that we are in the middle of tumultuous change is only half of the challenge we face. I am sure that you, as I do, affirm that the end goal of our theological education programs is the future leadership of the church. Preparing tomorrow’s leaders today has become a catch phrase in many seminaries. Although we may say that we are educating the future leaders of the church, the reality is that church leadership is changing far more rapidly in the local church than in our theological schools. Leadership is like fishing. Successful anglers are adaptable, constantly reading the water to discover the best place to cast their line. They learn to think like a fish. In their attempt to outsmart the slippery fin, frequently they approach the water slowly, keeping a low profile. Effective leaders constantly read the cultural stream. They continually study social, cultural, and organizational trends that are like currents in a stream. They get a sense of what will likely happen as a result of those trends. Thus, they are better prepared to face today and tomorrow. Churches are confronting issues and needs that we in seminary give no consideration to. We do a much better job at keeping pace with the changing face of theological scholarship—Jesus research for example—than with the rapid change of congregational leadership.

It should be noted, for example, that current practices in American seminaries reveal that theological schools remain enamored with pedagogical systems that are dated, increasingly irrelevant to our communities, and disconnected from both global and local realities. They fail to incorporate Hispanics, blacks, and others in leadership roles at all levels of the schools’ structures and neglect paying attention to issues of particular relevance to ethnic Americans, such as immigration reform, healthcare, education, urban violence, youth at risk, and so forth. There are many challenges facing theological schools in the twenty-first century, and the challenge of dealing well with the different histories, worldviews, languages, dialects, and cultures is the most significant and most overwhelming.

Transforming mission statements to reality

While Christianity in North America continues its slow progress toward the creation of a multiethnic church, seminaries for the most part are mired in monoculturalism. Yes, there are mission statements indicating the schools’ commitment to ethnic diversity and their desire to attract racial/ethnic students. However, these statements are rarely accompanied by a significant multiethnic presence among faculty and senior administrators. Recently, I spoke with a colleague from another seminary in the midst of searching for its chief executive. A comment he made surprised me. He said that the majority culture finds it difficult to follow someone who is not white or has a notable foreign accent. With opinions and comments like that, no wonder seminaries lack ethnics among their senior leadership. What my colleague demonstrated with that comment is his school’s lack of intentionality in its pursuit of ethnic diversity—though its mission statement clearly indicates its welcoming stance of the stranger. Lacking intentionality, schools find reasons to rationalize the continuation of past hiring practices. The challenge to diversify staff and faculty is endemic to Christianity because of our commitment (in principle) to the equality of all—Christian institutions must diversify or risk making a mockery of our belief that all men and women are made in the image of God.
must diversify or risk making a mockery of our belief that all men and women are made in the image of God.

Indeed, God is performing a transformation in the Church, a transformation that is reshaping the very core of what the church is—how it is structured, when it meets to worship, how it worships, in what language, with what instrumentation, and by whom it is led (women and men from diverse backgrounds and perspectives). It is transforming how we envision and deliver theological education. It is a lot like curricular review—we may be attracted to its promise of a more transformative educational experience for our students, but we all fear, nay hate, the process of getting there. Transformation is a wonderful thing; it is the process of changing from one state to another. However, if you do not like change, transformation can be a very troubling thing. If you do not like uncertainty or unpredictability, then transformation is indeed a daunting thing, a very painful process—but the end results are well worth it.

If we were to take seriously the vision of Revelation 7:9, then we would understand that becoming a multicultural church or seminary is not a condescension of the white dominant culture to facilitate educational efforts among ethnic minorities around it. Rather, it is the elevation of every one of us, including the white dominant culture, into something far greater, far more marvelous and wonderful—the people of God.

Why this fear of truly embracing a multicultural future? Seeing our cultural perspective as the norm, we view others as divergent and devalue their contributions to our lives, to our churches, and to our educational institutions. We value them as definitely less than we are, and we do a great thing to humble ourselves for their sake. That is the attitude in far too many of our educational institutions. We can only think of how we can help minorities rather than how they could invigorate our academic institutions. In dire need of new students and members, schools and churches would welcome them into our hallowed halls and sanctuaries—as long as they conform to our norms, as long as they become just like us in every shape and form. It is sad to say that some theological educators see ventures into ethnic America (African Americans, Hispanics, Korean Americans, etc.) as an accommodation that waters down educational quality. Rarely do we see the value and expertise they can contribute to the attainment of our missional aspirations.

As we take note of the diversity among us, we marvel at what God is doing and, in the process, disclose our ignorance of early Christianity. Glance at the original New Testament story of the early Christian movement and you will see how the slaves, the disenfranchised, the low merchants, the widows, the unemployed, the immigrants, and the socially downcast found a new and exciting alternative to social life that the world at that time had not imagined possible. In this new community, everyone was accepted with reverence and respect. The early Christians understood that the Lord Himself had emptied himself of all social status for their sake; shouldn’t they do the same for each other?

Consider the originality of the Christian movement: everyone had a new family name, “Christian,” a third race, a new common bloodstream, the blood of Christ! This new reality was created not by transforming the basic nationality of each person but by transforming the limitations of national identities inherent in each person. The early Christians were considered atheists by others because they refused to recognize the national gods of any particular nation while accepting the One God of all humanity.

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Going beyond the numbers

Having taken a brief look at this original Christianity, doesn’t it seem strange that we in North America see multiculturalism as something new? And there lies the gist of our problem. We as a society envision a multicolor institution rather than a truly multicultural one. Let me explain what I mean: We are concerned primarily with the numerical make up of the ethno-cultural compositions of our institutions. I agree that numerical representation is important—but we must go beyond that, for numbers are but one of the factors that determines what is a multicultural community. And it is not the most significant factor.

We must consider how each of the ethnic groups is represented and involved in the lives of our schools. Do the organization and structure of the schools involve or allow for the experiences and faith traditions of these groups to
influence how we carry out our missions? It may be that structural change will have to represent the cultural mix of that congregation, but this cannot be done without a clear understanding that the Bible provides the necessary tension for that formulation.

This aspect of multiculturalism also has to do with matters of reconciliation and justice. S. D. Gaede states in his *When Tolerance Is No Virtue*:

Multiculturalism also carries much baggage that ought to worry Christians. This baggage has less to do with the details of multiculturalism than with its general orientation. And perhaps the best way to get at this is to notice that, more and more, those who favor multiculturalism argue not on the basis of a desire for justice but on the basis of multiculturalism’s practical necessity or its validity as a general worldview.3

In other words, we want the numerical numbers without the transformative commitment. The goal here is simply cooperation, good relations, harmony, and agreement. And it thereby undermines and displaces the true ends of human existence. Presence of the multiethnic community in our seminaries is a given, if mission is applied, when students, faculty, staff, and administrators of color are discipled and become responsible members in that community of learners. It is a state of incompleteness when the church neglects to train and incorporate believers into the fullness of the ministry.

In a true Multi-Cultural Ethnic Community (MEC), as women and men from other cultures and ethnic groups are incorporated into leadership roles, the structure of the institution, of the community of faith itself, is reshaped (reformed if you will) in order to allow for a smoother transition and in response to the inner workings of the Spirit in the community. Conversely, if you do have some participation of ethnic persons in your community of faith, but it has not structurally changed the institution, then what you have is assimilation and not a true multicultural community. Referring to the tragedy of assimilation, Hispanic educator Arturo Madrid states, “Diversity is desirable only in principle, not in practice. Long live diversity—as long as it conforms to my standards, to my mind set, to my view of life, to my sense of order.”4 Not only is there structural change, there is also change in purpose, in mission, and, of course, in the overarching vision of the ministry. As we are transformed into a godly MEC, we incorporate the issues and concerns affecting the lives of everyone in the community and we allow the other to lead us in this transformational journey.

Multiculturalism is not simply the coloring of the water with a sprinkling of different people. It demands a willingness to define communal norms more broadly than one standard for all. Intersections of race, class, gender, and other diverse facets of human existence must be considered in all circumstances. Culture is defined by more than race, class, or gender alone. Authentic Christian multiculturalism proactively encourages persons to affirm their culture within the context of a Bible-centered, theologically constructed, and communally nurturing group that shares power as an innate aspect of their inclusive witness.5

Therefore, the challenge before us, as we seek to become truly multicultural Christian institutions, is how we become really multicultu-
tural without the trappings of a merely quantitative approach—interested only in numbers and balanced budgets—how we can reach a level of interaction and personal engagement wherein everyone feels welcomed and affirmed. Christian ministry (service, really) is at its core interacting with all kinds of people in ways that give them glimpses of Jesus in us. In Christianity we affirm the value of each person—indeed we claim that before God we are all the same—we are equal regardless of ethnicity, culture, or language.

In empowering others for Christian service, educational institutions and the churches they serve face a multilayered problem. How do we prepare our students and would-be disciples to live in a multicultural, multiethnic world that is largely freed from racism? The word prepare in the previous sentence suggests an educational process. One of the key objectives of educational institutions is the reshaping of life in relation to human purpose. For theological schools, this implies that we must seek to reshape our students to enable them to live well in a multicultural world. The work of the Church is expressed through koinonia (community and communion), diakonia (service and outreach), kerygma (proclaiming the Word of God), and didache (teaching and learning). To foster an environment of multiculturalism within an institutional ethos, theological schools must create a climate that embraces this work of the church.

How can we foster such a process in our educational institutions, so laden with traditional structures that resist change to the core, in order to enable them to become multicultural communities? The process of developing a curriculum that fosters multiculturalism begins when members of the institution come together to discuss issues relevant to multicultural communities. This is koinonia. The school’s leadership drafts and develops an intentionally antiracist, pro-multiethnic statement to be adhered to by all. This is kerygma. This intentionality must be accompanied by practices that promote multiculturalism (diakonia) and a discussion of strategies, policies, and legislation needed to further promote multiculturalism (didache).

How can the church respond to and minister positively in a changing world? What is ministry in a changing church? How do we effectively prepare women and men for leadership in this changing church?

We need to ask the question, for there has been a blurring of the definition of theological education.

Some of this has been intentional: ‘theological education’ no longer refers to seminary education alone, but to efforts on the part of the whole church to learn from its rich traditions. With many different locations and agendas now associated with theological education, it is natural for some blurring to occur.Ô

Since one distinctive and enduring characteristic of theological education is that it serves the mission and ministry of the church, fundamental change appears to be on its way. The result will probably mean more than just a change in delivery systems; rather, it will likely involve fundamental systemic changes in our institutions.

The changing demographics of Christianity (the growing church in the global south) suggests that there is systemic change within the church itself and, therefore, the educational institutions that serve it. Since one distinctive and enduring characteristic of theological education is that it serves the mission and ministry of the church, fundamental change appears to be on its way. The result will probably mean more than just a change in delivery systems; rather, it will likely involve fundamental systemic changes in our institutions.Ô

ENDNOTES

2. Ibid., 29.

Alvin Padilla is dean of the Boston campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (Center for Urban Ministerial Education), dean of Hispanic initiatives, and associate professor of New Testament. This paper is adapted from a presentation given at the 2010 CAOS Conference in Montreal, Canada.
Financial wellness: More than buzz words in financial aid

By Erica E. Kennedy

Average student debt figures for theological education and student loan borrowing continue to increase. The “financial wellness” of students is not only a growing concern but also an interdisciplinary opportunity for financial aid officers and other seminary leaders to address.

One such discussion took place in April at the SPAN conference in Chicago. Those who participated in the Financial Wellness workshop discussed the repeated pattern of students taking on loan after loan—believing and trusting that God provides. The primary challenge facing financial aid officers is developing and using theological and financial language to engage those students called to Christian public leadership. At the same time, students must understand that making financial decisions involving significant amounts of money will follow them for years to come. Being both an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and a former financial aid officer, I believe that God provides and that all things are possible with God. I also believe and teach my students that God gives the gift of knowledge and wisdom and the ability to use sound financial sense when making ministry decisions, especially when it comes to paying for theological education.

Knowing and trusting in the power of God at work in these theological students, I believe the key to successful financial wellness ministry is integration. Financial wellness must integrate theology and practice in order to be more than a financial exercise while introducing biblical messages and stewardship practices that prepare well-formed stewardship leaders who embrace financial health as an expression of faith.

“Financial Aid: We’re More than Loans” is how we describe the mission of the financial aid office. This commitment to financial wellness begins when a prospective student visits the financial aid office and continues with on-campus learning opportunities, online tools, financial stewardship coaching, and postgraduation support in partnership with synod and churchwide partners.

Why financial wellness?

Luther Seminary is committed to financial wellness by faithfully addressing money issues and student debt through a lens of financial stewardship and by...

In preparing well-formed stewardship leaders who embrace financial health as an expression of faith, we must equip our leaders to confidently talk and teach about money as Jesus does through the Scriptures.
embracing the role of financial stewardship while making informed money choices;

preparing students to faithfully lead “money talk” in family, vocation, and congregation; and

providing opportunities and resources to students and graduates.

Talking about money in our culture is a taboo. Pastors and church leaders often avoid talking or even teaching about money even though money is one of the things Jesus talks about the most. Congregations sometimes discourage their leadership from talking about money because money talk, more often than not, is focused on the congregation’s need to fund the budget rather than the givers’ needs to give related to their faith. Jesus talked about money, most often, as an obstacle to faith. In preparing well-formed stewardship leaders who embrace financial health as an expression of faith, we must equip our leaders to confidently talk and teach about money as Jesus does through the Scriptures.

How does it integrate?

Meeting with a prospective student is the ideal time to introduce a commitment to financial wellness. Students are usually eager and open to planning financially at this stage of their discernment. Engaging students in budgeting and planning is a natural part of these campus visits, but raising the question of financial sustainability as a steward of God’s resources takes the conversation to a deeper level.

After an initial introduction to financial wellness during the campus visit, the topic comes up again in the application for admission and the introduction of financial aid. Inviting questions about funding theological education, while introducing the importance of partnerships, provides another opportunity to frame the money talk in light of a student’s call to ministry. These are some examples from the application that begin to engage the student in financial wellness:

- Describe your current academic and vocational goals and why these have led you to apply for admission to Luther Seminary.
- How do you plan to meet your financial obligations when enrolled, and what additional financial resources could you draw upon, should you need them?
- If enrolled, what nonfinancial resources could the seminary provide to help you succeed both academically and personally?

Financing of a seminary education is a partnership, and Luther Seminary identifies several partners:

- **School**—Through endowments, the generous gifts of supporters, and faithful stewardship of resources, it is our goal to make your education affordable.
- **Student**—You, after all, are ultimately responsible for making sure that all your financial obligations are met by managing your resources in a manner that allows you to maximize your experience while seeking out other opportunities for funding.
- **Home congregation**—While it is not a requirement that your congregation provide financial resources for your education, it is our hope that with your assistance they come to realize the part they play in helping us meet the need of the greater church beyond their doors.
- **Denomination**—You should be in contact with your national and local church organizations to determine if they have a program...
for helping you fund your education. In the ELCA, that assistance comes in the generous support to our general budget from churchwide offices and various synods around the country.

- **Others**—There are many organizations that provide scholarship assistance to students pursuing a seminary education. Many of these might be right in your home community.

**Financial stewardship coaching**

Ideally, students would have financial stewardship coaches who walk with them through discerning how to finance their theological education as well as accepting their first call following graduation. Volunteer coaches are not currently available before students begin seminary, nor do students always seek coaches at the beginning of their seminary education. However, many students eventually find their way to the financial aid office, seeking information and aid to keep the cost of seminary and student loan payments sustainable. While there are always limited sources for aid, I am delighted to offer a financial stewardship coach, who will help the student seek ways to prioritize, organize, and construct a financially sustainable plan for now and into the future.

A financial stewardship coach walks alongside a student as a volunteer with whom the student can safely talk about his or her relationship with money. Early in the coaching relationship, the student and coach prepare a money autobiography as one way to reflect on the role of money and material possessions in the student’s journey as a steward. In these conversations, the student gains confidence in personal financial decision making, and the coach encourages viewing financial transactions through the lens of a stewardship leader. Coaches are great resources for students facing any kind of transition. Too many times, students make uninformed money decisions in transitions because they are rushed or have few people to guide them. This is the one-on-one kind of informed support that many students seek and that connects the information from financial aid to lifelong practices of stewardship.

**When does it happen?**

During new student orientation, opportunities are offered to introduce financial wellness and the availability of financial stewardship coaches. A session called “Financial Sustainability for Seminarians” helps relate financial sustainability to solid financial transactions and places this conversation contextually in the hyperconsumer culture that encourages and teaches consumption. We introduce resources available across the seminary to support students in this financial wellness journey because we know students live in the tension of a consumerist culture while trying to embrace financial health as an expression of faith.

The financial aid office offers annual workshops on clergy financial taxes, coordinates a cadre of local tax preparers to staff a “free tax help” table in January and February, supports the financial stewardship coaching ministry, cosponsors the “How to Save on a Student Budget Contest,” and encourages students to take the two elective stewardship courses available in the academic curriculum. From the financial aid perspective, connecting students to coaches, providing workshops and resources, and encouraging confident lifelong financial practices is that hybrid work that connects financial aid and stewardship, thus expanding financial aid beyond a list of scholarships, grants, and loans.

**ENDNOTES**

1. In 2009, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) offered “Competencies in a Well-Formed Stewardship Leader” to seminaries as a way of thinking about the attributes or assets of a well-formed stewardship leader. One of these competencies, “embraces financial health as an expression of faith,” comes from a list of six competencies that serve as guides rather than rules to help those who work with leadership formation in this church and, in particular, seminaries and those who work with roster candidates.

2. Taken from Luther Seminary Application for Admission, www.luthersem.edu/admissions.

3. Taken from the Luther Seminary Financial Aid website, www.luthersem.edu/finaid.

Erica E. Kennedy is associate dean of students for Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
Responding to the standards revision process: Integrating ISTE NETS into institutional practices

By Sebastian Mahfood

In June of 2010, the presidents and rectors of ATS member schools met in Montreal and approved the technical changes to the General Institutional Standards, many of which had to do with meaningfully integrating “the use and support of educational technology” (Standard 1, section 1.2.1) into all the standards. For those of us who worked on that project, a sigh of satisfaction with a successful initiative on behalf of the ATS member schools is in order. From the outline developed by Victor Klimoski and others in 2005, to the redaction efforts of those serving on the ATS Technology in Theological Education Group (TTEG) in 2008, to the integration efforts of the ATS Task Force on the Revision of the Standards in 2009 and 2010, to the review efforts of the voting membership in attendance at the 2010 Biennial Meeting, we can assert that a great many of us walked a long road and are glad of a short rest before documentation of the implementation efforts has to begin in all of our schools.

While the technical changes are being implemented, the work of standards revision continues. Phase II, concerning adaptive changes, began the third day of the 2010 Biennial Meeting (so, no real breathing space at all!) and involved a “focus on the Degree Program Standards and General Institutional Standard 10, the standard on extension and distance learning.” What this means for TTEG is a recognition that ATS schools are becoming more creative in the ways in which they use technology to advance their missions. An example is the emphasis that is placed on human formation, which is different from spiritual formation in its focus on affective maturity and the capacity to relate to others, and the concern “formators” will have to ensure that human formation can be meaningfully accomplished online.

When TTEG proposed its technology revisions, it intended for them to spread across the standards to provide structural support to what was already a healthy tree. It did not intend that its suggestions would take the place of the trunk or the central root system, and in that sense it accomplished its task. That being established, TTEG recognizes that certain additions that affect faculty and administration do need some kind of organizing principle if they are to be actualized.

Faculties are being asked to cultivate appropriate technologies in their teaching and learning environments while administrations, usually in the persons of their academic deans, are asked to provide them with the
necessary training (Standard 6, section 6.2.3) and staff support (Standard 9, section 9.8.2) by which to do so. When a standard reads, “Faculty should be appropriately involved in the consideration of ways in which technology might enhance or strengthen student learning” (Standard 3, section 3.2.2.3), it may seem a natural move for faculty to ask the rather concrete question, “What does appropriate involvement with technology considerations mean to us as teachers, which, granted, is only one component of what we do as theological faculty?” The question may not, of course, be of immediate importance until self-study committees begin to be organized and institutions begin the process of documenting how they are meeting the standards of their accrediting agencies.

The technological revisions require “institutions using instructional technology to enhance face-to-face courses and/or provide online-only courses” to “be intentional in addressing matters of coherence between educational values and choice of media, recognizing that the learning goals of graduate education should guide the choice of digital resources, that teaching and learning maintains its focus on the formation and knowledge of religious leaders, and that the school is utilizing its resources in ways that most effectively accomplish its purpose” (Standard 9, section 9.8). Such intentionality involves cultivating a culture of planning concerning how the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning can be mapped out across a curriculum in a way that responds to administrative, faculty, and student (Standard 9, section 9.8.1) needs.

To help achieve this intentionality, embedded in the understanding that what is happening in the larger educational world under the Department of Education is also applicable to graduate theological education, I would like to propose that we look into that world for some guidance by adapting the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)4 to the needs of graduate theological education. ISTE, which promotes its standards for use in higher education, underwent its own revisions for teachers in 2008, for administrators in 2009, and for technology facilitators in 2011.5

To focus just on faculty, ISTE NETS-T is designed to “provide a framework for educators to use as they transition schools from Industrial Age to Digital Age places of learning.” It includes five areas as follows: (1) facilitating and inspiring student learning and creativity, (2) designing and developing digital-age learning experiences and assessments, (3) modeling digital-age work and learning, (4) promoting and modeling digital citizenship and responsibility, and (5) engaging in professional growth and leadership. Each of these is broken down into a handful of components that provide some insight into how they might be actualized. The fifth area is explained, for instance, in these terms: “Teachers continuously improve their professional practice, model lifelong learning, and exhibit leadership in their school and professional community by promoting and demonstrating the effective use of digital tools and resources.” It asks that teachers

- participate in local and global learning communities to explore creative applications of technology to improve student learning;
- exhibit leadership by demonstrating a vision of technology infusion, participating in shared decision making and community building, and developing the leadership and technology skills of others;
- evaluate and reflect on current research and professional practice on a regular basis to make effective use of existing and emerging digital tools and resources in support of student learning; and
- contribute to the effectiveness, vitality, and self-renewal of the teaching profession and of their school and community.6

If our theological faculties, in their attempt to understand what is expected of them as teachers under the revised ATS standards, were to adapt these more concrete components from ISTE NETS to the needs of their own institu-
tions, they would provide themselves with an adequate structure by which to address the larger ATS revisions.

Because all ISTE NETS components are broken down in this way, those targeting administrators and technology facilitators are equally useful in the development of a comprehensive framework by which to actualize the technology revisions. The work institutions do in adapting these components to the needs of their own environments will also help provide a context for the adaptive changes currently on the horizon, for graduate theological education involves not only intellectual and pastoral formation (what our students are learning and how they will ministerially apply it), but also human and spiritual formation (who they are and how they pursue their relationship with Christ). Work concerning how these last two areas are appropriately addressed through the use of technology is being pursued by TTEG and by other groups such as The Association of Christian Distance Education (ACCESS). Resources exist, then, and coordination of these resources is being done on a national level, but what is important to each of us is how that work plays out in our own schools. This is the task our presidents and rectors approved in Montreal, and it involves our coordinating and contextualizing what most of us are already doing by way of incorporating appropriate technologies into our teaching and learning environments within a framework that makes sense to our institutional missions.*

ENDNOTES

1. The proposed revisions involving just the technology components have been collected and posted online at http://www.kenrickparish.com/nts/ats techstandards.pdf.
2. Located online at http://www.tteg.org
3. “Proposed Revisions to the Standards, Procedures, and ATS Policy Guidelines,” retrieved August 18, 2010, from http://www.ats.edu/pages/proposedrevisions.aspx. Note that these are the complete proposed revisions while the link in endnote 1 merely provides those relevant to technology.
4. The details, which are quite helpful for envisioning what is meant by each of these standard sets, are online at http://www.iste.org/.
7. Located online at http://www.accessed.org/.

Sebastian Malfood serves as coordinator of instructional technology at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis Missouri, and is chair of the ATS Technology in Theological Education Group.
Financial stress is a reality for most ATS member schools, from the well-endowed to the totally tuition driven. The stress being reported varies widely in magnitude and makeup, but everyone is feeling it to at least some degree.

The Institutional Viability and Financially Stressed Schools project recently completed the second of three sessions in which coaches are working with fifteen schools to help them achieve and sustain financially viable operations and to develop new models and recommendations that can be of help to other schools in the Association. Begun in spring 2009 under the leadership of staff from the Association and the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education, this project was launched with a survey of chief financial officers of ATS schools to gather baseline information about how the schools were responding and planned to respond to the financial challenges of the market downturn. After the survey, the project cohort of fifteen schools, which represent the diversity of schools and funding models within ATS, was selected from among forty-six applicants.

Five coaches work with three schools each, and each school commits a three-person team consisting of the president, the chief financial officer, and an appropriate member of the board. The coaches have been selected on the basis of their expertise in the area of finance in higher education. Two meetings of all the teams have been held to date, on February 11–13, 2010, and November 4–6, 2010. A final meeting will be held June 1–3, 2011. During the meetings in Pittsburgh and in the times between the meetings, the coaches work with the schools individually to develop accurate understandings of their financial situations and plan actions to help them achieve and sustain financial sustainability.

In the midst of working on this project, Chris Meinzer and Stephen Graham recently answered questions about the project and the lessons learned that can help other ATS member schools.

Editor: Are there any lessons learned from this project that can apply to ALL ATS member schools?

CM: Economic equilibrium is an important concept that is being used throughout theological education to measure a school’s viability, and it has become a major emphasis of this project. This concept is being advanced by Anthony Ruger, Senior Research Fellow at the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education, who has done significant work with many presidents and CFOs of ATS member schools. Ruger began using the concept early in his work with theological schools, and he credits Richard Cyert, former president of Carnegie Mellon University, as the one who developed the broad concept for nonprofit organizations.

Editor: Just what is economic equilibrium?

CM: Economic equilibrium goes beyond mea-
suring a school’s annual operating surplus or deficit. A school is deemed to be in equilibrium when (1) the organization fulfills its mission with adequate quality and quantity, (2) the organization maintains the purchasing power of its financial assets, and (3) the organization maintains needed facilities in satisfactory condition. The first section is a review of operations, and revenues should be sufficient to cover expenditures necessary to operate the organization. If expenditures exceed revenues, then, obviously, a school is not in equilibrium. The second section is concerned with making sure that financial assets, including long-term endowments, have adequate growth to ensure their future purchasing power. If an organization is drawing resources from its endowment in excess of what is deemed prudent (i.e., the 5 percent recommended in the ATS Commission Standards of Accreditation), then the school is not in equilibrium. Finally, the third section is concerned with the necessary physical plant of an organization. If a school has material deferred maintenance on its property, then the school is not in equilibrium. Because of its broad application, economic equilibrium can work with all types of theological schools as a device to measure a school’s ongoing viability.

Editor: Does every school need to assess economic equilibrium? Aren’t some schools working from a position of financial strength?

SG: Most of the schools involved in the Financially Stressed Schools project have demonstrated a deficit between 4 and 20 percent. That’s not surprising, given that the economic downturn has affected endowments, donations, and the ability of students to pay tuition. The project has helped many of the schools to recognize the depth of their gaps for the first time. But even those who don’t currently show a gap are able to use this tool to look ahead and foresee if they will experience a loss of equilibrium over the next five years. This offers the opportunity to avoid problems before they arise.

Editor: The concept sounds simple enough, but might execution be more difficult? What might the impediments be to achieving economic equilibrium?

SG: The participating schools had no difficulty in naming impediments to achieving economic equilibrium. They named thirty-two of them—which can be grouped into five major areas—and they can all be tied to the General Institutional Standards of Accreditation. Perhaps the

The Top Five Impediments to Achieving Financial Equilibrium

1. **Personnel issues.** With personnel cost issues ranked as the largest line item in most school budgets, it’s not surprising that tenure, deferred salaries, health insurance and other benefits costs, and the removal of mandatory retirement policies all figured on the list of impediments. It was also suggested that high costs of living in certain regions make it difficult to recruit and retain faculty members (Standard 6).

2. **Enrollment issues.** With fewer prospective students being “called” and more students pursuing their education on a part-time basis or through nontraditional means, schools must work harder to attract and retain sufficient students to create a community of learning and generate necessary tuition revenues. Another impediment in the area of enrollment is the rising level of debt with which students enter or graduate and the low salary expectations for graduating students (Standard 7).

3. **Learning and teaching issues.** In response to the changing marketplace and resource limitations, schools face the daunting task of re-evaluating their programs to be more efficient and sustainable. But many report that it’s not easy to move beyond traditional ideas and practices and move quickly into new markets. This process is complicated by the changing student prospect profile; today’s prospects are less biblically oriented, less interested in graduate-level education, and more interested in “just in time” education (Standard 3).

4. **Resource issues.** Debt was, of course, named as a significant factor in the stress schools are experiencing. The related issue of donor viability came up repeatedly, with schools reporting that not only is church support declining, but the market downturn has had its impact on foundation, individual, and even board donors as well. In addition, some noted a prevalent new donor attitude in favor of venture capital or entrepreneurial giving that seeks to launch sustainable programs rather than giving to programs that require long-term, ongoing underwriting. Deferred maintenance and library resources were cited as the most problematic physical resources (Standard 9).

5. **Fear of change.** In order to address these issues and institute necessary changes, schools must be agile, creative, and results oriented. But many are stalled by either denial or fear of change, according to participants in this project. They need to think in terms of a “new normal,” to articulate and disseminate a compelling vision, and to make difficult decisions promptly and with resolve, all while meeting the reporting and regulatory requirements of ATS and other accrediting bodies (Standards 1 and 8).
most surprising discovery, however, was how many of the impediments are within the control of school administrators.

Editor: So which of these impediments are most controllable? Which are most difficult?

CM and SG: Numbers 1, 3, and 5 in the sidebar [on page 35] are controllable (at least more so than whether students choose to enroll or whether donors choose to give), but they are all three extremely difficult to adjust.

For nearly all schools, the cost for personnel is easily the largest budget item, and some areas are largely out of a school’s control, such as the cost of health insurance or the growth of salary norms within the larger realm of higher education. Within the institution’s control, though, are patterns and structures of staff and faculty work. Many of them follow models from the larger higher education community, are deeply entrenched, and have served good and valid purposes in the past. Some are changing, however, and others are under intense pressure to change, such as faculty workloads, the traditional link between scholarship and teaching, divisions into discipline areas, tenure, and academic calendars and schedules.

Closely related are understandings and practices of teaching and learning. Changes in student demographics, expectations, and learning styles require rethinking the ways schools function and faculties do their work. Changes in delivery systems, while usually the most noticed (and debated!) developments, are just one part of the equation. Schools must also attend to larger concerns about access, cost, and new ways of accessing and processing information.

Institutions of higher education in general are slow to change. The church in general is slow to change. Theological schools, as institutions of both higher education and the church, are particularly slow to change! And many serving those institutions fear change. Theological schools by their very nature are conserving institutions that are stewards of both the larger Christian heritage and more specific heritages of particular groups. Those who lead theological schools in these days of rapid change must be adept at leading their institutions with transparency, honesty, and courage. Fear of change is real and warranted. But it can be addressed.

Editor: Can you name any strategies or tactics that have already been working for specific schools?

SG: The list of actions that are working was considerably smaller than the list of impediments—half the size, in fact—but they fall into five major areas: new markets, personnel, policies and practices, collaborative structures and delivery systems, and external relations. Some actions offer short-term results, but most require what one coach referred to as “the audacity of planning,” adding that “hope alone won’t do it.”

Editor: Are there any strategies that seem to offer particular promise?

SG: I’ve been struck by the variety of creative funding scenarios that have surfaced during the course of this project so far. Looking beyond the usual three strategies—raise tuition or enrollment, build endowment, or increase annual giving—these scenarios sometimes look at resources other than traditional financial resources, making the most of available, sometimes underutilized, talent or assets. Shifting from a simple admissions program to an enrollment management program aimed at both proactive recruitment and thoughtful retention, for instance, is a more holistic approach to ensuring a sustainably sized student body.

CM: Many schools have excess capacity in faculty and staff. They would be well served to understand the full range of skill sets they have available to them—academic expertise, development skills or contacts, and others—and think in terms of maximizing their use.

Some schools may seek savings through the economy of scale represented in larger student-faculty ratios. These adjustments, which can be achieved by changing the number of either students or faculty, don’t have to be dramatic to make a significant difference. But schools must...
keep in mind that reducing faculty is a complex and sometimes painful process. And increased enrollment must be sustainable to make a lasting difference. More students sometimes leads to necessary increases in faculty and staff. Some schools have experienced the fact that even online delivery solutions can end up costing more than they bring in. The bottom line is that schools are not likely to be able to simply grow their way out of economic disequilibrium. They need to think about new ways of doing their work.

Editor: We hear a lot about collaborations as a possible solution to financial stress. Are they the answer? What new ideas have come to light in that arena?

SG: More than a third of the schools involved in the project are seeking forms of collaborations even as they seek to solve their own internal operational problems. But collaborations take time. And schools should approach them from a position of strength, getting their own shops in order first so they can take assets (financial and otherwise) to the bargaining table.

Editor: What is the best way for a school to get started with incorporating economic equilibrium assessment into its operations?

CM: Because of the growing complexity of theological schools, it is worthwhile investing in a strong CFO with sensitivity to small, but complex budgets. It takes a savvy individual with good financial skill sets but also the ability to speak to the school’s mission, to be “mission-based but margin-aware.” In the end, it is likely best to talk to someone who has already used the economic equilibrium assessment model and successfully incorporated it into decision making. In addition, schools should consider using the model as a tool to build more accountability into their operations.

Editor: How can other schools gain access to this economic equilibrium assessment tool?

CM: We are exploring ways to make this tool more broadly available. In the meantime, anyone interested in discussing this concept further can contact Tony Ruger at atr@auburnsem.org or Chris Meinzer, ATS director of finance and administration, at meinzer@ats.edu.

Five Strategic Areas for Achieving Economic Equilibrium

1. **New markets.** Creative thinking about markets can spawn new programs that address the needs of different cultures, widen the definition of service to extend beyond degree students, or open extension sites.

2. **Personnel.** Strategies in the realm of human resources can range from hiring a strong CFO to strategic hires with revenue enhancement potential—through either boosted enrollment or increased development—to sensitive retirement practices that transition individuals and programs in concert.

3. **Policies and practices.** Policy solutions can include such tactics as formal endowment draw policies or spending policies that incorporate new ways of thinking. For example, just because it is in the budget doesn’t mean that it must be spent!

4. **Collaborative structures and delivery systems.** Proposed strategies cover a broad spectrum, from deployment of new delivery systems (including online programs) to creative collaborations with other institutions.

5. **External relations.** Building support—financial and other—with established and new constituencies can include such tactics as aggressive fundraising, innovative student recruiting, renewed denominational relationships, or enhanced board/trustee education.

Chris Meinzer is ATS director, finance and administration.

Stephen Graham is ATS director, faculty development and initiatives in theological education.
Women In Leadership

Leadership success strategies for women

By Diane Kennedy

At the beginning of the ATS Women in Leadership initiative, I recall meeting in a hotel conference room with Michael Gilligan, Rosemary Skinner Keller, and three or four other women to conceive the first conference. We knew then and we are certain now that this is a transformational initiative that demands commitment for the long haul. Despite the consistent effort of ATS since that first meeting to promote and prepare women for leadership in theological education, today women represent only 13 percent of the 499 president and dean positions in ATS accredited schools.

But the world of theological education is not radically different from American society. In the US Congress, women represent 16.9 percent of the membership—17 percent in the Senate and 16.8 percent in the House of Representatives. In our fifty states, six governors are women; and in the 100 largest cities of the United States, only seven mayors are women. In cities with populations of more than 100,000, 14.5 percent of the mayoral positions are held by women.

We are part of the real world—the post feminist world of the “Mama Grizzlies.”¹ This is the “GOP Year of the Woman,” and Mama Grizzlies are the marketing image. Granting that both terms are marketing tools of an antigovernment stance that lacks solutions for real problems, we do know that real mama grizzlies are aggressive, irrational, and mean. How did we get here? I ask myself.

But I can’t breathe that air too long—surfing the web can be dangerous to your sanity and sensibilities. And trying to figure it all out by rational processes seems futile. For inspiration I turn to poetry—and especially to Mary Oliver, whose “Instructions for living a life” I love:

Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.²

Leadership can be learned, just as virtue is acquired. Yes, gifts are given and talents are identified and developed, but leadership can be learned, and I am still learning from gifted leaders with whom I serve.

What’s the role of leadership?

Build a network of friends and colleagues, weave teams of relationships through which new ideas can be born, craft challenging questions, and offer a vision. Share responsibility with talented people and trust them.

Of foremost importance is a mentor.

You need someone who sees your gifts, knows your potential, and is willing to be your counsel. I had a great mentor when I was director of formation: a sister who was twenty years older, a great scholar, a college president, and then vicaress general of the congregation. A national speaker, she would be writing a talk and ask if she could read it to me and receive suggestions for improvement. She wanted to test new ideas on me and others. She drew me into committees and events that broadened my horizons and stimulated my imagination. She was someone I trusted for advice and wisdom and great good sense.

I am now at the point where I hope I am mentoring new talent, paying attention to their gifts and telling them how astonishing they can be.

Sustained, open communication is essential.

Regular staff or cabinet meetings and weekly one-on-one conferences with those who report to you are essential. Team building is an ongoing, never-finished task. I prepare an agenda for my weekly meeting with the president, and I ask the four directors who report to me to do the same so that our conferences are focused and productive.

Master the art of the apology.

Never hesitate to heal or reconcile—or at least acknowledge and bring an issue out into the open. Gentle firmness is the best modus operandi.
Take time to build relationships with your colleagues.

In my last years at Aquinas, Faith Rohrbough, Martha Horne, Rosemary Skinner Keller, and I had come to know each other through ATS, and we decided that we would spend a day together each year sharing what was going on in our lives, telling our stories, seeking one another’s wisdom. I think we were only able to fulfill that promise three times, but I remember those conversations as profound and warm and wonderful. What we had in common was that we were women serving as deans and presidents in theological education.

But you also need good friends in your immediate world.

Our model, of course, is Jesus: “I have not called you servants, but friends.” We all need those who know us truly and accept us fully, who offer both comfort and challenge. Friendship is a school of virtue. It is a source of abundant grace and also of purification if we are faithful to the process. I love the wisdom with which Adrienne Rich writes about friendship:

An honorable human relationship is a process, delicate, often terrifying to both persons involved, a process of redefining the truths they can tell each other. It is important to do this because it breaks down human self-delusion and isolation. It is important to do this because in so doing we do justice to our own complexity. It is important to do this because we can count on such few people to go that hard way with us.

Good friends show us the way to our best selves. For that gift William Butler Yeats says it best:

Think where man’s [woman’s] glory most begins and ends,
And say my glory was I had such friends.

Be faithful to study and prayer.

Do so despite the tsunami of work that threatens every day. In stillness there is clarity. Nurture your contemplative core. Thomas Merton wrote:

Contemplation is [spiritual wonder]. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is gratitude for life, for awareness, and for being. It is a vivid realization of the fact that life and being in us proceed from an invisible, transcendent, and infinitely abundant Source.

James Connor, influenced by Merton, speaks of contemplation in Silent Fire as “the deep glance, the awakening to a world with dimension, a world that blends with Mystery.” Thus our contemplative study is fed not just by Scriptures and theological texts but by poetry and novels, the splendor of mountains and oceans—all the truth revealed in beauty. Chicago is having a splendid autumn; the trees are ablaze against the crystalline sky, and for the

Forty-two women attended the Emerging Leadership Development Institute in October 2010—a new annual conference designed for female administrators and faculty with significant leadership components in their jobs. ATS hopes it will further advance the professional development of “emerging” female leaders (i.e., women transitioning into new administrative roles or considering this change) in their current and future capacities.
moment they are holding still, waiting for me to stand still and notice.

**Commit yourself to collaboration.**

Here Donna Markham offers clarity on the benefits and demands of collaboration:

Effective leadership is about liberation, about loving, about listening, about telling the truth and taking risks, about solidifying the circle of friends for the sake of the mission.7

Mission-driven vision, conflict management, community and inner authority . . . become the spiritlinks that usher in transformation . . . A deep respect for the sacred, along with an unwavering courage to manage conflict, provides the context for leaders to address resistance to global conversion.8

Inner authority, reverence, and wisdom provide a base for managing conflict and being able to withstand the high levels of frustration felt as firm, rich ground is sought.9

Borrowing words from the Irish writer John O’Donohue, I will end with a blessing “For a Leader.”

ENDNOTES

1. In an October 27, 2010, article titled “Who are the ‘Mama Grizzlies?’” Forbes.com reported Sarah Palin coined the phrase in May to mean “common-sense conservative women, banding together and rising up” to form “an emerging, conservative, feminist identity.”


8. Ibid., 132.

9. Ibid., 133.


Diane Kennedy, OP, is vice president for mission and ministry at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois. She presented this essay at the October 2010 Women in Leadership Conference in Pittsburgh.

**For a Leader**

May you have the grace and wisdom
To act kindly, learning
To distinguish between what is
Personal and what is not.

May you be hospitable to criticism.

May you never put yourself at the center of things.

May you act not from arrogance but out of service.

May you work on yourself,
Building up and refining the ways of your mind.

May those who work for you know
You see and respect them.

May you learn to cultivate the art of presence
In order to engage with those who meet you.

When someone fails or disappoints you,
May the graciousness with which you engage
Be their stairway to renewal and refinement.

May you treasure the gifts of the mind
Through reading and creative thinking
So that you continue as a servant of the frontier
Where the new will draw its enrichment from the old,
And you never become a functionary.

May you know the wisdom of deep listening,
The healing of wholesome words,
The encouragement of the appreciative gaze,
The decorum of held dignity,
The springtime edge of the bleak question.

May you have a mind that loves frontiers
So that you can evoke the bright fields
That lie beyond the view of the regular eye.

May you have good friends
To mirror your blind spots.

May leadership be for you
A true adventure of growth.
Strategy implementation: How do you put your plan into action?

Three considerations when putting together your implementation plan

Resource planning. The most important thing to do is to carefully assess the resources needed in order to accomplish your goals. This means thinking through each step of implementation and assigning a price tag and a timeline. Don’t forget the cost of producing special materials; communication costs of telephone, television, and radio; and the people costs.

Organizational structure. The successful implementation of your plan will often depend on where the development office fits in the structure of the institution. A quick look at your organizational chart will indicate the priority your institution gives to the work of development. If development does not have a direct voice in the allocation of resources, this will cause you needless frustration and impede the productive movement forward you need.

People and systems. Part of any development plan’s implementation is ensuring adequate people and systems resources. You will want to evaluate the board and how available, and willing, its members are to participate in fundraising strategies for the institution. You need to take a hard look at the president’s schedule, especially if he or she also teaches, if one of your strategies is to do major gift fundraising. The president is key in implementing this strategy with success. You will want to ask yourself how you can use the board members and president most effectively. How do you use their personalities, gifts, and experience to their maximum potential? You will have less resistance in getting them to participate when you ask them to do something that fits within their strengths.

Also look at other volunteers available to you, such as students. Using committed and personable students in phone-a-thons and taking them along for selected visits is a good strategy. Think about what you can offer your volunteers for helping you. It will be less expensive than you think, as often it is the kind of gift, not the amount, that is important.

Another key to success in a one-person development office is access to trained and experienced support personnel. Without this resource, you will end up doing the administrative tasks needed to implement a strategy, instead of focusing on the higher level development work of relationship building.

You also need to have adequate IT systems, such as a contact management software package and database. You need to be able to efficiently assess the data compiled on your donors and donor activity so you can be strategic, effective, and realistic in setting goals. It is true that donor software packages are expensive, but they save money in the long run, make you more effective, and save your sanity!

Finally, you need to find a mentor/champion—someone who will help you understand how to move through hoops and misunderstandings, help you brainstorm and think critically about your development plan, and encourage you as you encounter unexpected difficulties and frustrations.

If you concentrate on a few proven ways to involve donors, the success will cause momentum to grow in other areas.

So . . . surviving or thriving?

It is not easy being the only person leading the development effort in an institution, but this is the reality of smaller schools in particular. However, if you enjoy development work, especially the diversity of development activities, then you get to try your hand at everything. This can be challenging, however, especially if you have been in development work for only a short time. But it can also be an exciting learning experience as you develop new skills and become aware of resources and information available to help you get up to speed quickly.

So the key is to think strategically. Do a careful analysis of your institution and its development operation, make some inspirational but supportable choices of development activities, and then put your implementation plan into action, thinking through the resources and systems available to you. And have a great and exciting solo flight!

Patricia Webb is director of advancement at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton Ontario.

WEBB continued from page 19
ATS Events

**March 10–11 • Pittsburgh, PA**
A Preseminar for Women Faculty

**March 11–13 • Pittsburgh, PA**
Faculty Focused Consultation

**March 16 • Orlando, FL**
Women in Leadership (WIL) Consultation for Deans

**March 17–19 • Orlando, FL**
Chief Academic Officers Society (CAOS) Conference

**April 10–12 • Pittsburgh, PA**
Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices Consultation

**April 13 • Baltimore, MD**
Entering Student, Graduating Student, and Alumni/ae Questionnaires (ESQ/GSQ/AQ) Workshop

**April 13–15 • Baltimore, MD**
Student Personnel Administrators Network (SPAN) Conference

**April 28–30 • Pittsburgh, PA**
Presidential Leadership: Conference for Theological Leaders in Relationship with Undergraduate Institutions

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