

Chapter Two

Evaluation and Assessment Processes

Introduction

This chapter offers a commentary on the H.L.C.'s Core Component 2c concerning the institution's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes that provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness. It also addresses A.T.S. standards 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 3.1.2.3, 4.1.2, 5.4.1, 6.3.1, 6.3.3, 7.3.9, 8.2.2, and 9.4, that incorporate the multifaceted levels of institutional evaluation and assessment.

The Assessment Plan

The Assessment Plan of the Seminary was developed with the institution's Self-Study of 1994-1995. From that time, a systematic model has been in place for the M.Div. and M.A. programs. A model has also been adopted to assess the effectiveness of the D.Min. program since its inception in 2001. Each degree program has specific goals that are used by the faculty to formulate intended learning objectives and outcomes.

The Seminary views assessment as a process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to improve subsequent learning for students and to maintain the academic excellence of its three degree programs. The Seminary uses direct measures such as written and oral exams, papers, final projects, and case studies to evaluate what students know and how they can apply their knowledge of theology for ministry. Most syllabi list explicitly stated valid assessment tasks on the cognitive, affective and behavioral levels with various outcomes that fit the intended goals and objectives of the course and degree program.

Indirect measures from students such as self-report surveys, course evaluations, yearly self-evaluations, peer evaluations, exit interviews, and alumni surveys help provide timely information for on-going program development.

This collective information is processed through the appropriate administrative systems (i.e., committee structures, faculty meetings and workshops, Board sub-committees, and the Board of Trustees) creating an ongoing feedback loop for the institution in general and for the specific degree programs. This data is used for institutional planning and development. It has assisted the President-Rector in the formulation of yearly administrative goals which affect the institution's vision for long term planning. This systematic process has enabled the Seminary in the past ten years to formulate institutional goals that serve its mission in light of the changing needs of the Church, as well as to meet the needs of those constituents who are enrolled in our degree programs.

The following section discusses how each degree program uses various data, processes feedback loops through the committee structures, and incorporates other agencies concerned with on-going assessment of the seminary program. Programmatic changes and additions over the past ten years for each degree programs are noted in the "results column" of each chart.

The Master of Divinity Program

The current edition of the *Program for Priestly Formation* provides the five-year Master of Divinity degree with specific programmatic components that include intellectual, pastoral, spiritual and human formation. Specifically, intellectual formation addresses the knowledge of faith and tradition (religious heritage); human and pastoral formation seeks to provide the student with an understanding of the cultural context from which they will minister through an invitation to explore their human resources for ministry (e.g. integrated values, affectivity, emotional

maturity). Spiritual formation addresses growth in spiritual depth for personal and liturgical prayer, spiritual direction, moral integrity, celibate living and simplicity of life. Finally, students in their pastoral formation must demonstrate a capacity for ministerial and public leadership. These components are articulated in the programmatic objectives of the Priestly Formation norms and the A.T.S. outcomes for the degree. Table one provides some of the evaluative tools used for assessment results.

Table One reflects the four components of formation that comprise the Master of Divinity Degree program. Each component uses direct and indirect sources for the ongoing collection of data or for specific evaluative measures. In the past ten years, there have been two surveys (1999 and 2004) sent to alumni of the Master of Divinity Program in order to assess the program’s effectiveness for ministry. The data collected from these surveys assisted the faculty in revising courses in the curriculum (i.e., two preaching courses were expanded into four courses spread over four years of theology). Administration and faculty also considered the alumni’s notations of specific strengths and weaknesses from these surveys for discussions concerning the curriculum, library holdings and the field education practicum.

Table One - Assessment Components of the Master of Divinity Program (1995-2005)

Component of Program	Sources of Evaluative Information	Agents of Evaluation	Agency for program evaluation/change	Assessment Feedback Loop	Assessment Feedback loop results
Intellectual Formation	Direct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course exams; papers; projects 	Course instructors	Academic Life Committee Academic Dean	Monthly faculty meetings	Revised M.Div. Program Curriculum and moved to semesters -1996 Participated in CRS Summer-global travel

Component of Program	Sources of Evaluative Information	Agents of Evaluation	Agency for program evaluation/change	Assessment Feedback Loop	Assessment Feedback loop results
	<p>Indirect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory course evaluations • Exit interview of graduates • 5-year survey of graduates 1999 • 5-year survey of graduates & supervisor 2004 	<p>Registered students</p> <p>Graduates</p> <p>Priest-alumni in the Diocese of Cleveland</p>	<p>Faculty</p> <p>Board sub-committee of Students and Academic Affairs</p> <p>Global Awareness & Interfaith Committee</p> <p>Social Concerns Committee</p>	<p>Fall and Spring Faculty Workshops</p> <p>Yearly Board social with M.Div. students</p> <p>Meeting with Clergy Personnel Board</p> <p>Faculty –Bishop Dialogue</p>	<p>Created D. Min. program</p> <p>Added more preaching courses to curriculum - 2000</p> <p>Reviewed M.Div. curriculum with special ad hoc committee to look at course overlap/ curriculum revision - 2001</p> <p>Added student outcomes to each syllabus – 2002</p> <p>Revised handbook 2003</p> <p>Revised objectives for Academic Life Committee - 2004</p>
<p>Spiritual Formation</p>	<p>Direct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly student self-evaluation • Yearly peer review <p>Indirect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student attendance report by spiritual director • Exit interview • 5-year survey of graduates 1999 • 5-year survey of graduates 	<p>Registered students</p> <p>Spiritual directors</p> <p>Priest-alumni in the Diocese of Cleveland</p>	<p>Spiritual-Liturgical Life Committee</p> <p>Retreat Committee</p> <p>House Spiritual Director</p> <p>Spiritual directors</p> <p>Faculty</p>	<p>Two-meetings per semester</p> <p>Bi –yearly workshops w/ all spiritual directors</p> <p>Monthly conferences by spiritual director and Rector</p>	<p>Revised spiritual formation program for first theology intensive-1996</p> <p>Updated spiritual director's list -1998</p> <p>Hired full-time director of liturgy -2000</p> <p>Added course on spirituality & celibacy for interns-2003</p> <p>Revised handbook description of formation -2004</p>

Component of Program	Sources of Evaluative Information	Agents of Evaluation	Agency for program evaluation/change	Assessment Feedback Loop	Assessment Feedback loop results
Pastoral Formation	<p>Direct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student contracts/F. E. syllabi Supervisors written report Student written self-report <p>Indirect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> F.E. experience evaluation by student F.E. lab component <i>Internship</i> lay formation board interviews & reports F.E. Director Site visitation Exit Interview 5-year survey of graduates 1999 5-year survey of graduates & supervisors 2004 	<p>F.E. Director</p> <p>Registered student</p> <p>Supervisor</p> <p>Internship Lay-Board</p> <p>Faculty advisor</p> <p>Formation faculty</p>	<p>Faculty Spiritual Director</p> <p>Spiritual-Liturgical Life Committee</p> <p>Academic Life Committee</p> <p>Program for Priestly Formation (4th edition)</p> <p>Field Education Director</p>	<p>Monthly classroom workshops & discussion</p> <p>Academic Life Committee</p> <p>Faculty</p> <p>Supervisors</p> <p>Internship Boards</p> <p>Field Education Director</p> <p>Academic Dean</p>	<p>Revised program for semester system giving academic credit for internship 1996</p> <p>Reduced F.E. hours from 6 to 3 on site hours per week with 1 fluid hour in the classroom - 1998</p> <p>Recruited new supervisors -1998</p> <p>Revised student preaching during the Internship -1999/2004</p> <p>Revised Fourth theology F.E. focus to include Institution component – 2000</p> <p>Updated handbook/orientations for students & supervisors</p> <p>Extended internship to encompass post-Easter schedule & reorganize CPE program- 2004</p>
Human Formation	<p>Direct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student growth goals for formation advisor Student written self-evaluation <p>Indirect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit interviews 5-year survey of graduates 1999 5-year survey of graduates & supervisor 2004 	<p>Student</p> <p>Formation advisor</p> <p>Formation faculty</p> <p>Rector/ Vice-Rector</p> <p>Dean of Students</p> <p>Board</p> <p>Bishop</p>	<p>Faculty</p> <p>Evaluation Committee</p> <p>Chancellor (Bishop of the Diocese)</p> <p>Administrative Decisions by Rector, Vice-Rector, Spiritual Director, Dean of Students</p>	<p>Monthly meetings between student and faculty advisor</p> <p>Bi-semester Dean of Students meetings</p> <p>Faculty workshop agenda</p> <p>Monthly Rector's conferences</p> <p>Bishop-Student Dialogue</p> <p>Bishop-Faculty Dialogue</p> <p>Bi-semester house conferences</p> <p>Two yearly convocations on special topics</p>	<p>Cyclical seminars on substance abuse and boundary issues – 1996</p> <p>Addition of psychiatric interviews & background checks for admission –1997</p> <p>Thematic planning for convocations on issues pertinent to human formation 2000</p> <p>Change of name from faculty integrator to formation advisor 2001</p> <p><i>Handbook</i> revision begun in 2003</p> <p>Discussion of two-year pre-theology program begun 2003</p>

Each component of the M.Div. program has specific agents who evaluate the program. These agents consist of the student body of the degree program, faculty, staff and graduates. They have access to particular individuals (e.g.: an administrative officer) or to institutional structures (e.g., ad hoc committees and the Faculty Committee). These agencies provide members of the learning community with both an initiative and evaluative voice.

The academic life committee enables faculty and students to initiate new ideas, request change or evaluate events, programs, courses and policies that affect the mission of the Seminary. The yearly calendar of the Seminary lists all scheduled meetings, workshops, convocations and conferences to ensure that the agents and agencies meet on a regular basis to maintain a climate of assessment with an institutionalized feedback loop. The feedback loop has worked in building faculty ownership for the program, while assessing student needs and sustaining policy development. Some of the substantial results over the past ten years are listed in the last column of the table to provide evidence of the institution's culture of assessment. This assessment culture exists for the three graduate degree programs utilizing many of the same committee and institutional structures while respecting each program's specific goals and outcomes.

The Master of Arts Program

The Master of Arts program is designed for students who are seeking a solid foundation of theological study through the lens of the Roman Catholic Tradition so as to enable a personal integration of faith. The Seminary provides candidates the opportunity to study the depth and breadth of the tradition through thirty-six hours of core courses and eight hours of electives. The functional objectives of this degree program aim at providing the student with basic methodologies of the various theological disciplines; establishing a theological foundation that

introduces the basic elements of the theological tradition; reviewing pertinent literature within the theological disciplines; and providing a specialized focus of learning. Each student is required to complete a symposium that offers a variety of formats enabling the students to integrate their learning at the conclusion of their degree program.

Table Two – Assessment Components of the Master of Arts Program

Sources of Evaluative Information	Agents of Evaluation	Agency for program evaluation/change	Assessment Feedback Loop	Assessment Feedback loop results
<p>Direct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course exams; papers; projects <p>Indirect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory course evaluations Exit interview of graduates 5-year survey of graduates 1999 5-year survey of graduates & employer parishes 2004 	<p>Course instructors</p> <p>Registered students</p> <p>Graduates</p> <p>Parishes who have hired graduates in the Diocese of Cleveland</p>	<p>Academic Life Committee</p> <p>Academic Dean</p> <p>Faculty</p> <p>Board sub-committee of Students and Academic Affairs</p> <p>Yearly M.A. informal gathering</p>	<p>Monthly faculty meetings</p> <p>Fall and Spring Faculty Workshops</p> <p>Yearly Board social with current M.A. students</p>	<p>Recruitment brochure for M.A. program developed - 1996</p> <p>Revised M.A. curriculum and moved to semesters -1996</p> <p>Reviewed M.A. summative seminars and created a symposium with three format options; added M.A. students to Academic Life committee - 1998</p> <p>Established M.A. orientations – 1999</p> <p>Established night class cycle -2000</p> <p>Added M.A. Family Liturgy in September - 2001</p> <p>Added syllabi student outcomes – 2002</p> <p>Revised handbook 2003</p> <p>Revised objectives for Academic Life Committee - 2004</p>

Table Two reflects the assessment components for the M.A. program. Many of the same agents that are used to evaluate and assess the M.Div. program also evaluate the M.A. program. While many of the core courses of the M. A. program overlap with those taught in the M.Div. program, the M.A. program is viewed as a separate program by the agents of evaluation and

assessment. Graduates from the M.A. program were surveyed in 1999 and 2004. There have been two representatives for the program on the Academic Life Committee; and there have been special meetings for all M.A. students when programmatic changes were announced.

The Master of Arts program increased its enrollment from six students in 1995 to fifty-three students enrolled in the 2005 Spring Semester. The data received from exit interviews and graduate surveys contribute to the ongoing assessment of the program's structure and focus. These assessment outcomes include: the redesigning of the symposium to reflect different modes of student integration and learning (i.e., research paper, timed examination or oral presentation with an outline and bibliography); a cycle of the core courses offered in the evening time slots for students who have difficulty taking classes at other times; and the scheduling of informal gatherings for students to meet the faculty, each other and their families. The Academic Life Committee continues to serve as a forum for students to raise concerns and initiate ideas for courses and programmatic changes. In the past ten years, the Seminary has made a concentrated effort to incorporate non-traditional transient students within its academic, social, and liturgical activities.

The Doctor of Ministry Program

The Doctor of Ministry program at St. Mary Seminary is the newest of the three graduate degree programs. After a focus visit from the H.L.C. and the A.T.S., the program began its first class in the Fall Semester of 2000.

The D.Min. degree program provides a *generalist orientation* in the various areas of pastoral ministry. The program goals invite the student to reflect on his/her context of ministry, enhance pastoral competencies, foster ongoing formation and theological reflection, integrate

theological learning with ministry, and nourish one’s ministerial community with a practical project that in turn increases the minister’s competency as a leader of a faith community.

The 30-hour program meets one day a week to offer academic courses (core courses as well as guided reading electives geared toward the project) and colleague experiences (including project forums, socials, opportunities for prayer, etc., which are scheduled throughout each semester).

Table Three – Assessment Components of the Doctor of Ministry Program

Sources of Evaluative Information	Agents of Evaluation	Agency for program evaluation/change	Assessment Feedback Loop	Assessment Feedback loop results
<p>Direct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course papers; projects <p>Indirect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory course evaluations Yearly evaluation session with Academic Dean Colleague meetings Exit interview of graduates 	<p>Course instructors</p> <p>Registered students</p> <p>Graduates</p> <p>Board</p>	<p>Academic Life Committee</p> <p>Academic Dean</p> <p>Faculty</p> <p>Board sub-committee of Students and Academic Affairs</p> <p>Yearly informal gatherings with board members, faculty and students</p>	<p>Monthly faculty meetings</p> <p>Meeting with facilitators of Project Forums</p> <p>Meeting with D.Min. teaching faculty each semester</p> <p>Fall and Spring Faculty Workshops</p> <p>Yearly Board social with current D.Min. students</p>	<p>Schedule adjustment - 2001</p> <p>Curriculum Review and Course development - 2002</p> <p>Broader facilitation of the Project Forums to include more faculty 2003</p> <p>Revised timeline for prospectus and final project 2003</p> <p>Revision of <i>Handbook</i> –2004</p> <p>Addition of representative to Academic Life Committee -2005</p>

The D.Min. program was assimilated into the existing assessment culture of the Seminary. The faculty invited the first class admitted to the program to assist in shaping many of the features of the academic courses and colleague experiences (i.e., schedule, course design and the content for the yearly forums).

Table three illustrates the evaluative and assessment components for the Doctor of Ministry degree program. Evaluative information was proactively sought from the classes as they were admitted to the program. This created an immediate feedback loop that allowed minor adjustments to be made in the program. The faculty, Board sub-committee and the academic life committee incorporated the program's evaluative results for discussion and continued development. As a result, the faculty made minor adjustments that include moving the core courses to an afternoon time slot; the gradual development of new courses taught by teams of faculty, the inclusion of new adjunct professors from different faith traditions, and the inclusion of more faculty to assist in the project forums. The D.Min. *Handbook* was revised twice in order to reflect some of the timeline changes, new programmatic requirements for due dates for specific project chapters, and the inclusion of broader narratives on the requirements for the final project.

The Role of Assessment at St. Mary Seminary

The evaluation and assessment outcomes have provided the administration of St. Mary Seminary with data that have influenced yearly goals that shape the Seminary's strategic plan. The strategic plan of the Seminary filters the feedback loops into achievable short term and long-range goals.

Short-term goals are often designed and submitted to the administration by committees for the faculty to consider and vote to adapt as a goal. The Rector in consultation with the administrative staff prioritizes these goals each year at the fall Faculty workshop and Board meetings. These goals are then assessed in the spring workshop to determine how they have been implemented and achieved. At times, certain long-range goals need to be carried over to the

next academic year. Faculty meetings throughout the year often monitor the progress of these goals (see faculty meeting minutes in team resource room).

Table Four reflects the goals that have shaped the seminary's strategic plan. The bulleted markers indicate specific goals that have been presented within a five-year time frame. Those with an asterisk indicate long-term goals that required more than two years to accomplish. Minutes from faculty meetings, committee, special task forces, and bi-yearly workshops reflect the ownership of the Seminary community for each of the goals.

Long-term goals are submitted to the Rector from the administrative staff, Board, faculty or committees. The Chancellor of the Board consults with the Diocesan Financial and Legal Offices for appropriate input and discussion. A proposed budget is submitted for approval before any long-range goals are promulgated.

A specific committee or task force may spearhead a specific goal from the strategic plan. However, the faculty, committee structures and board remain the primary agency for evaluation and assessment. This ensures ongoing communication, input and shapes a strategic plan that utilizes an assessment loop, which reflects both an organic yet integrative process. The seminary works from a strategic plan that is designed to include both its fiscal resources, faculty size and needs of the Diocesan community it serves.

Table Four: Goals and strategies for implementation

1996- 2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to the concerns of the Self-Study regarding enrollment<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Focus on enrollment for the M.Div. - increase numbers to 40 by the year 2000• Develop and increase contributions to the Priestly Endowment Fund*

- Discuss with the faculty the move from quarters to semesters
- Look at increasing the learning community by exploring the possibility of offering a D.Min.. Program*
- Prepare for the Sesquicentennial in 1998/99*

2001-2005

- Implement the Doctor of Ministry Program*
- Work on Collaboration with the entities at the C.P.L.
- Increase effectiveness of committee structures as a system for assessment
- Review the Master of Divinity Program*
 - Look at Courses with regard to overlap
 - Study and review the Field Education Program
 - Look at Formation issues particularly Celibacy Formation
 - Look at the role of formation
- Begin Self-Study process in 2003
- Renovate the Aula Magna (2004)
- Restructure *Pre-Theology Program* as a two year program to incorporate the fifth edition of the PPF (2003)*

2005-2010

- Continue to build up the Priestly Formation Endowment Fund in order to become fully funded by the endowment income within the *next ten years**
- Develop an orientation process for Board as well as an evaluative process for the president and sub-committees*
- Recruit Diocesan priests for training as future faculty members*
- Create a plan to renovate student and faculty residence area*
- Work to design a portfolio rubric for the M.Div. formation program to incorporate the new PPF 2005 edition
- Budget over the next three years an integrated system (Ohiolink) for the library*
- Develop a strategic plan for information technology (IT) services*

