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Self-Study Report for continued accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission

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Luther Seminary

Self-Study Report

For continued

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Commission

LUTHER SEMINARY
March 2015

Contents

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

This self-study, while formally a review of the past ten years, is deeply and profoundly shaped by the demands of the last two years–understanding the immediate causes of our financial challenge and restoring equilibrium. This story will be engaged most specifically in conversation with HLC Criterion 1.A.3 and 5.A.5.

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

About Luther Seminary

Luther Seminary is one of eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and educates leaders for Christian communities through four distinct processes: Missional Pastors (MDiv), Academic and Professional Degrees (MA), Graduate Theological Education (MTh, DMin, PhD), Lifelong Learning for Leadership (continuing studies).

These educational processes are influenced by common theological convictions, neatly summarized by our first-degree curricular strategy and its four interrelated movements: learning the Christian story, interpreting and confessing the story, leading in mission according to the story, and living the story.

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

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

Demographic summary

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

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

The seminary's total income budget is $20.4M, with 41% coming from private gifts and grants, 18% from the endowment, 6% from auxiliary enterprises, 8% from our sponsoring denomination (ELCA) and 27% from tuition and fees. The endowment is $86.96M. Annual full-time MDiv tuition is $15,500. We have 3451 alums in all 50 states and at least 46 countries.

Major changes since 2004

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

2004

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

2005

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

2006

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

2007

- President Bliese and Academic Dean David Lose report on efforts to increase ties to Lilly Foundation granting process by increasing number and size of several grant requests – reference strategic plan
- Board expressed concern for adequacy of faculty compensation and authorized VP for Administration and Finance and Academic Dean to develop "comparison matrix" with comparable schools

- Major revisions to Faculty Handbook were begun
- Center for Lifelong Learning reports on growing array of conference, classroom and Luther Production (media arm of LLL program) products
- Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws revision process begun by Board Governance Committee
- Board approves moving forward on Campus Facilities Master Plan
- Faculty strongly affirm the effectiveness of the strategic planning process in regular meeting

2008

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

2009

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

2010

- *Moved by the Promise*, Luther Seminary's new public identity launched

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

2011

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

2012
- First Distributed Learning (DL) cohort graduates
- New Campus Master Plan unveiled – financing secured for 10-year capital improvement plan for Gullixson, Bockman and Northwestern Halls.
- New Director of Marketing and Communications hired
- Masters in Sacred Music program reviewed and placed on suspension
- October/November Board meetings reveal troubling financial news: $15 M in debt, significant revenue losses for 3 years and pattern of funding shortfalls from loans and tapping endowment funds
- Vice President of Administration and Finance Lewis resigns
- William Frame elected Interim Chief Financial Officer
- President Bliese resigns
- Richard Foss elected Interim President

2013

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

2014

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

Accreditation history

First accredited by the Higher Learning Commission in 1979, our most recent reaffirmation was in 2005 after a joint visit with the Association of Theological Schools in November 2004. The HLC's "Assurance Section" report recommended:

1. A monitoring report due January 2, 2006 "in which the Seminary presents a strategic plan to address the immediate and long-term capacity of the library to support current as well as projected educational objectives of the Seminary."
2. A progress report due January 1, 2007 "on the implementation of the strategic plan to improve library capacity in order to meet educational objectives of the Seminary."
3. A monitoring report due January 1, 2007 "which includes a clear, comprehensive and systematic plan for assessment of student learning…"

Those reports were received and accepted by the Higher Learning Commission in 2006 and 2007. In July 2007, a focused visit was proposed for 2008-09 to further address these issues. After substantive discussion between Luther Seminary and the Higher Learning Commission, the seminary was enrolled in the HLC Assessment Academy beginning in 2008. With the close collaboration of a HLC Assessment Academy tutor, a new "Comprehensive Academic Assessment Plan" was developed and ultimately formed the basis for our reimagined MDiv and MA Curriculum. A change visit occurred in October 2012 to seek approval for expanded distance-delivered programs and the expansion of distance education up to 100% of total degree programs was approved. The addition of an elevator in Gullixson Hall in 2014 (for accessibility) and broader shifts in the content and use of the library (in terms of space needs) address library issues previously noted by the Commission.

Self-study design

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

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

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

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

- Faculty Concerns Committee (ATS 5, 7; HLC 3)
- Faculty Educational Leadership Committee (ATS 1, 2; HLC 1, 2, 4)
- Joint Assessment Committee (ATS 1, 2; HLC 1, 2, 4)
- Joint Admissions Committee (ATS 6; HLC 3.4, 4.C)
- Staff Directors Group (ATS 8; HLC 5)

Board committees
- Academic Affairs (ATS GS 3, 4, 5; ATS ES; ATS GS; HLC 4)
- Finance and Administration (ATS 8; HLC 5)
- Seminary Relations (ATS 1; HLC 1)
- Student Affairs and Enrollment (ATS 6, HLC 3.D, 4.C)
- Governance Committee (ATS 2 and 7; HLC 2)

In each case, the Self-study Team sought feedback related to the following prompts:

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

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

Organization

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

Criterion one. Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities called and sent by the Holy Spirit to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ and to serve in God's world.

1.A.1 The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

The mission statement was developed through a process suitable to the nature and culture of this institution and adopted by the governing board in 1995. The drafting process included all appropriate constituencies and continues to meaningfully articulate the school's particular mission, identity, and values.

Further documents and data:

ATS 1.1.1 and 7.x

2004SelfStudyReport.pdf (pp. 8-10)

1.A.2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Our mission statement clearly states the commitment to and focus on Christian theological formation. As a seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are grounded in the Lutheran tradition but have a curriculum and a commitment that embraces Christianity more broadly. In educating leaders for Christian communities, Luther Seminary takes a broad view of both leadership and Christian communities. Our largest academic program, the MDiv, largely serves to train and help credential formal religious leadership as pastors in congregations. A Luther Seminary MDiv, as well as our MA degrees, also provides the basis for leadership in youth ministry, non-profit organizations, mission work, and education, and adds value to work in other professions (medicine, law, social work, music, etc.). Of our second graduate degrees, the MTh and PhD serve to further a student's leadership within higher education, while the DMin typically furthers leadership within church or faith-based contexts. Additional detail about our degree programs and their consistency with the broader institutional mission can be found in our 2014-15 Academic Catalog.

Beyond programing, the Student Affairs team is also structured to support the mission and students of Luther. Our Student Resource Center assists students with ecclesiastical endorsement, course selection and career services. The Center serves ELCA MDiv graduates with denominational assignment and judicatory placement. All students are able to obtain help with résumé writing, mock interviews, and career placement workshops. Our services are designed to support all students as they navigate their roles as leaders in Christian

communities, whether it is in churches, non-profits, corporate settings, new ministries or educational settings.

In addition to the Student Resource Center, Luther Seminary has a Center for Writing and Research that assists students with writing assignments and in thesis and dissertation completion. The Associate Dean of Students oversees the Student Council and student organizations. Student groups support the mission of the institution by helping students explore their vocations and interests as well as providing leadership opportunities for students. Student groups include VOCA (a group focused on social justice and community engagement), DRBC (a group focused on dismantling racism and building beloved communities), EMMAUS (a group of LGBT students and allies that help support and educate the community on how to minister and lead diverse communities, specifically the LGBT community), and Exploring Diakonia (a group for students preparing for Word and Service ministry).

The seminary's mission is at the core of how we recruit and retain students, as well as how we support them in their work and ministry after seminary. We seek to help students reach their vocational goals while staying true to the commitments of our mission.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.1.3 and 1.2.1 and 6.3.2 and 6.1.1
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014orgCharts.pdf
2014StudentOrganizations.pdf

1.A.3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

Luther Seminary continues to benefit from a long and resonant history of consistent institutional purpose. To ensure that our work is consistent with our purpose in a changing cultural context, we began a process in 1993 that required us to listen carefully to the seminary community, our graduates, and our constituencies. We aspired to become a responsive learning organization that cultivates a culture of assessment and accountability; we aspired to rigorous evaluation and planning practices for the sake of institutional vitality and, ultimately, God's world. The distinctive theological vision articulated here (i.e., forming evangelical public leaders for apostolic mission) invites an unusual attentiveness to audience and context.

The two core practices of Luther's culture of assessment and accountability were reflected in the strategic plan itself, which was reviewed and updated annually, and linked to a "dashboard" or "institutional scorecard" that was reviewed and updated quarterly. These comprehensive planning and evaluation procedures, informed by a deep sense of institutional purpose, officially guided decision-making at Luther about programs, resources, constituencies, and other related matters between 2007 and 2012.

Annual updates to the strategic plan detailed specific strategies and action steps for realizing each of the five goals stated there, as well as an overarching theme or emphasis for the year. Institutional scorecards were then linked directly to the annually updated plan, relating the overarching mission of forming evangelical public leaders for apostolic witness to the annual focus (e.g., the Eight Cylinder Strategy in 2012-13) and then to specific impact areas (e.g., Strong Financial Resources) derived from one of the five strategic goals (i.e., Goal 4). The scorecard then identified an institutional home or owner for each impact area (i.e., "Finance and Administration; Seminary Relations") and a description of specific measures (e.g., "$ Revenues Received") that would then be used to assess effectiveness relative to a predetermined benchmark or target (i.e., "$24 million"). The status of these efforts was then reported quarterly in the manner of a traffic control signal with red, yellow, or green shaded circles under the heading "Actuals."

Helpfully, annual revisions to the plan and scorecard were usually introduced at special kick-off gatherings for key constituencies (e.g., faculty, staff, etc.). Additionally, it was common practice to also gather these groups for updates following Board meetings. These meetings occurred with even greater frequency in the midst of the Great Recession. Summary reports from the institution's comprehensive evaluation process were widely shared and discussion was encouraged.

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

The Boards responded quickly upon realizing the gravity of the situation. The $7M overdraft was "capped" and our working capital temporarily stabilized through decisive action by interim management and the generous philanthropic supporters of the seminary. The seminary has formally committed to repaying the endowment plus interest. Also critical to increasing our liquidity was successful renegotiation of credit arrangements with two financial institutions. By February 2013 the seminary had produced a Turnaround Plan that pledged the removal of a $5.7M structural deficit (annual gap between revenue and expenses) in unrestricted operations in 42 months—a recovery span that allowed us to bring to maturity the curricular, cultural and

pedagogical reforms that had been flagged before the crisis as necessary to the institution's sustainable pursuit of its mission.

The liquidity crisis and the contributing operating losses also triggered an immediate revision of the budgeting processes of the seminary with strong Board oversight. In FY13 we instituted a bottoms-up budgeting process for FY14, and in October 2013, launched its successor for FY15. The annual budgets are now built from zero but made to comply with the approaching year as conceived in the current version of the 5-Year Budget/Plan. Moreover, both the budgeting process and reports of our financial performance now include depreciation and other non-cash charges. National searches resulted in the hiring of a new president in June 2014 and a new VP of Finance and Administration in October 2014, both with significant financial acumen and a commitment to more carefully linking the budget with assessment and planning efforts.

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

Ultimately, however, the financial and leadership challenges that came to light in late 2012 severely tested—and validated—the practical resonance of our mission. Confronted by an unexpected crisis, Luther's external constituents, institutional Boards, and interim administration quickly united behind this history of shared mission, passionately and decisively acting to put the institution back on course. Most concretely, this history enabled the institution to reconcile competing goods by defining priorities and cutting operating expenses. Externally, it inspired a spike in unrestricted gifts. This referendum on Luther's consistent institutional mission also proved it to be realistic, accurate, and resonant. In short, it helpfully guided action amidst great uncertainty.

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.1 and 8.X

2007StrategicPlan.pdf with [2008StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2009StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2010StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf]
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2013TurnaroundPlan.pdf
2014FY15_5YrProjection.xlsx
2014SampleDetailedFinancialStatement.pdf
2014SeptFinancialReportForFacultyAndDirectors.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

Luther Seminary's mission is widely articulated in public documents that help define institutional priorities and engagement with diverse publics.

1.B.1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

Luther widely and clearly articulates its mission statement on our website and strategic plans. The mission is also clearly articulated in the recent development of the new MA/MDiv curricula, particularly the student learning outcomes. As we continue to engage in both institutional and programmatic planning efforts, the mission continues to be formative.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.1.1 and 2.3
2007StrategicPlan.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

1.B.2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

While officially adopted in 1995, the mission statement has been formally reviewed and reaffirmed several times since then, most recently by the board in June 2012. The design, development, and adoption of new first degree curricula in 2013 both affirms and extends the twenty-five year educational strategy at Luther Seminary to "form evangelical public leaders." Understood in the context of institutional documents and memory, this phrase effectively

distills the 1995 purpose statement into these four words. The new curriculum affirms this linkage, and with it a strong continuity of purpose, by explicitly referencing the current strategic plan (adopted in 2007 and updated annually through 2012) with a new strategic alignment process which emerged in the summer of 2014.

Also, various aspects of our mission were defined within formal strategic planning documents, most explicitly in these five strategic goals defined in our strategic plan:

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.1
2007StrategicPlan.pdf with [2008StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2009StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2010StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf]
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf

1.B.3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The institutional mission statement, and the "educates leaders for Christian communities" clause in particular, captures part of the nature, scope, and intended constituency of our higher education programs. The "educates leaders" phrase partly defines the nature and scope of our work; we are both in the education and leadership business. Luther Seminary is not primarily a trade school or apprenticeship program. Similarly, while not every graduate will assume titles like S_enior Pastor_ or _Chief Executive Officer_, we do expect our graduates to function as leaders within their contexts and communities. Starting in 2000, Luther's strategic plan identified congregations as the ultimate constituents for our higher education programs and services. Most concretely, they are the eventual employers of our graduates and constitute the majority of the "Christian communities" for which Luther Seminary educates leaders.

Further documents and data:

ATS Standards: 1.1.1. and 1.2.1 and 6.X

2007StrategicPlan.pdf with [2008StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2009StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2010StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf]

1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

In our mission to "educate leaders for Christian communities," Luther Seminary values a diversity of both leaders and communities in their contributions to society. Our church and communities are diminished through any lack of diversity in navigating the cultural shifts and modes of being for new generations.

1.C.1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

Student reported race/ethnicity in 2003, 2008, and 2013

	2003	2008	2013
NON-RESIDENT ALIEN	41	45	44
BLACK, NON-HISPANIC	26	12	19
NATIVE AMERICAN	2	0	2
ASIAN/PACIFIC	10	3	8
HISPANIC	6	1	10
WHITE, NON-HISPANIC	605	244	504
TWO OR MORE RACES	NA	NA	8
UNKNOWN	57	517	110
GRAND TOTAL	**747**	**822**	**705**

Luther Seminary addresses its role in a multicultural society by encouraging diversity in student recruitment and the employment of faculty and staff. The student body, mirroring our supporting congregations, continues to be predominantly white, with a nearly even male/female ratio. Our faculty now includes 20 men and 10 women, with two who are Hispanic, one who is Middle Eastern and one who is Asian-American. Our staff includes 41 men and 57 women, with five who have ethnically diverse backgrounds.

According to our most recent ATS Graduating Questionnaire, age is well distributed, with just under half of the respondents reporting as young adults (under 35 years of age). The same survey demonstrates over 75% of our graduating respondents are affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with the remaining distributed across 10 other denominations or traditions. While still high, the percentage is reduced from the 2003-04 survey, where ELCA students represented over 85% of graduates. This trend correlates with internal registration statistics which show ELCA students comprising 80% of the 2003-2004 graduates but just 70% of the 2013-14 graduates.

Luther Seminary provides opportunities for student learning to occur through conversation with diverse publics through participation in programs like the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE) and other cross-cultural trips and seminars. In recent years, Luther Seminary has also engaged in significant grant-funded research that has brought it into conversation with a broader variety of distinct and diverse publics.

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

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

In addition to these discrete projects, several degree programs and cross-disciplinary elements of the seminary regularly bring our faculty and students into contact with diverse publics. According to our 2013 ATS Graduating Student Survey, students rated the seminary an average of 4.0 on a 5.0 scale in response to "The school has tried to be a diverse and inclusive community" and a 3.8 average on a 5.0 scale in response to "I have come to know students from other racial, ethnic, and cultural groups."

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 2.5 and 2.6
2003ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013ATS_IPPR.pdf
2013IPEDSDataFeedbackReport.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014EmploymentStatistics.pdf
2014StudentRaceEthnicity.pdf

1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Institutional diversity and intercultural development

Many conversations around the topic of diversity have occurred since the last self-study. In April of 2008, a small group of faculty held a discussion around the topic of "The Dimensions of Diversity: Identifying and Refining the Issues." This conversation led to July of 2008, when the faculty crafted possible next steps in the faculty conversation and discernment in regards to diversity. The faculty determined three recommendations for addressing issues of racial diversity, as well as ecumenical and theological diversity. In 2009, Dr. Frances E. Kendall shared her recommendations for Luther based on the campus climate survey she conducted. Some of the faculty completed the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) during this time.

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

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

Also, the seminary has initiated important community-wide conversations. For instance, we recently hosted a well-attended celebration of MLK Day with leaders of the church, both local and national. In April 2014, the faculty gathered in a seminar around the theological dimensions of welcoming difference. Included in this seminar was a discussion of a study done of faculty syllabi in light of our commitments to diversity, a study commissioned by the original convening of the CORE team.

Curricular diversity and intercultural development

The IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) was a key initiative noted in the 2004 self-study as a tool for preparing students in their cross-cultural experiences. While we found this to be effective for the students that took the IDI and received their individual feedback, it was not

integrated into the full curriculum. We are also considering a more integrative approach through using the IDI with incoming students to assess their intercultural development at the point of entry, and then again prior to graduation, to assess if growth occurred on the intercultural development continuum.

As reflected in our academic catalog, intercultural competencies are no longer housed in a single course, but rather, deeply imbedded in the outcomes of the new curriculum. Cross-cultural education places the student in an unfamiliar context through various educational settings, including but not limited to, academic and theological course work, independent study, immersion encounters, and prior life experience. Scholarly and theological pursuit of cross-cultural competencies is a critical aspect of a cross-cultural education, but so too is real-world encounter with diverse cultural locations and the people who live, work and worship there. Students will demonstrate their acquisition and continued integration of cross-cultural competencies, including but not limited to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and self-awareness that contribute to becoming effective cross-cultural Christian public leaders. Students may achieve cross-cultural competencies through:

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards 2.5 and 2.6
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2008Dimensions_of_Diversity.pdf
2008DiversityNextSteps.pdf
2009DiversityKendallReport.pdf
2012DiversityCOREStatement.pdf
2014DiversityCOREReport.pdf

1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

In our mission to "educate leaders for Christian communities," Luther Seminary is committed to the public good both institutionally and through the work our graduates.

1.D.1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

Section 2 of the Articles of Incorporation filed in the state of Minnesota describes that the Corporation is authorized "to establish and conduct a Lutheran theological seminary... [to] provide theological education for those who are preparing for service as pastors, missionaries, teachers, and for other forms of lay or ordained ministry... [as well as] the continuing education of laity and clergy." In these Articles of Incorporation, Luther Seminary is authorized by the "public," as represented by the state, to fulfill our educational role for those preparing for "public" leadership and service in a variety of different roles. Therefore, our institutional bylaws, mission statement, and other policies reflect the public obligation of Luther Seminary in our educational service.

Our graduates and students who are involved in contextual or co-curricular activities engage the public in significant ways through service in churches, social services, education, and mission work. Through our focus on "educating leaders for Christian communities," our students and graduates have a greater public impact. Also, Luther Seminary, through research projects and informal conversations, has sought to directly engage a diversity of communities.

Beyond our educational degree programs, several of Luther Seminary's lifelong learning offerings directly engage a broader dimension of the church and public. These include conferences like the Festival of Homiletics (which draws between 1,500-2,000 preachers across denominations annually), websites like WorkingPreacher.org and EntertheBible.org (which receive more than half a million views per month), and the ebook Renew52 (which includes the work of 54 authors from across traditions and which has been downloaded 10,000 times). These and similar offerings have taken advantage of new media to draw Luther Seminary faculty, staff, and students into conversation with a variety of ecumenical and global partners from numerous and diverse publics.

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

1.D.2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

Luther Seminary generates no financial returns for investors, our parent organization, or any other external interests. We only provide educational services to support the work of our parent organization, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The ELCA and Synod Support for FY13 represented around 7% of our annual unrestricted operating revenues.

1.D.3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Lifelong Learning engages alumni and congregational leaders (both lay and professional) through classes, courses and events that draw well over 4,000 participants annually. Every class and event is evaluated and feedback is used to shape and strengthen future events. The Lilly-funded Vibrant Congregations Project convened multiple conversations between congregational leaders and faculty, both at the seminary and in over 30 congregational site visits, while conducting research in the areas of stewardship, preaching, bible and vocation. The Vibrant Congregations Project is one of many research projects reviewed by the Congregations Task Force for the 2012 Program Redesign and Curriculum Review (PRCR). A full summary of research is linked below. This research led to specific curricular and pedagogical recommendations for developing leadership capacity in our graduates.

In addition to the work of Lifelong Learning:

- Admissions engages with key constituencies for recruitment.
- Development engages with alumni and other communities of interest for support.
- Contextual Learning responds to the needs of congregations in placing our students as interns.
- Administration and faculty are engaged with their own churches and denominational leaders.
- Global Mission Institute helps the seminary engage with global partnerships.
- Other centers or projects similarly may respond to the needs of external communities.

Criterion two. Integrity: ethical and responsible conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

The updated faculty handbook and the revised staff and student handbooks all contain policies that address the importance of ethical behavior. The handbooks also include policies on equal employment opportunity, conflict of interest, harassment, unlawful discrimination, and hostility. Specific reference is made to creating a climate of mutual respect and responsibility in which the following governing values are reflected: 1) The Luther Seminary community seeks to be collegial rather than competitive; 2) It seeks to foster a spirit of freedom rather than fear; 3) seeks to promote a spirit of excellence and inquiry; 4) It seeks to promote and encourage equality and access; and 5) It seeks to engender a spirit of forgiveness and love.

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

To ensure fairness in student employment practices on campus, a consistent procedure for all job postings has been developed. Every posting is opened up to all interested students on our job opportunity webpage for a minimum of two weeks before selection. This practice gives all qualified candidates an equal opportunity to apply and be considered for a student position. Additionally, all existing student employment supervisors are coached by Human Resources on fair selection practices before they begin their recruitment process.

The updated faculty handbook and the revised staff and student handbooks also outline a clearly-defined process for addressing grievances. In the faculty handbook, this is covered primarily in the Guidelines for Resolution of Conflicts. In the student handbook, this is covered in the Student Disability Grievance Policy and Procedure and the Code of Conduct Violation Process. In the staff handbook, this is covered in the Conflict Resolution Policy.

Currently, the Governance Committee of the Board provides a post-meeting evaluation for the Boards' members to complete after each in-person meeting. That feedback is used to improve

the processes for the meetings. In addition, every person who is eligible to stand for re-election completes a thorough evaluation of their own performance as a Director or Trustee and provides their perspective of the overall performance of the Boards. That evaluation is accompanied by a conversation with a member of the Governance Committee. All of the feedback each year is reviewed by the Committee and is used in the Boards' performance improvement. As required in their Bylaws, the Boards undertake a Conflict of Interest review via a questionnaire to each member. Any conflicts identified are evaluated and dealt with by the Governance Committee.

The 2007-2012 strategic plan describes the seminary that Luther aspired to be. There was strong support for growth and Luther took steps to be ready for it. Faculty and staff were hired (as seen in the significant increase in staffing from 2008 to 2012). Partnerships were explored, programs were launched and money was spent. During this time, budget managers did not have access to up-to-date expenditures for their departments and the Administrative Cabinet did not receive regular budget reports for the institution. This lack of information made it difficult to manage departmental budgets. The lack of the larger context of finances made it impossible to make conscious decisions about financial matters. The strategic plan called for growth while our financial reality showed us the limits of our aspirations. Starting in 2013, budget managers have electronic access to current expenses. The President's Table receives monthly financial updates that outline cash flow, revenues and expenditures. The Financial Committee of the Board has met monthly to review the financial documents. The financial picture is shared openly and honestly across the community, allowing for integrity in our financial management.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 2.4, 7, 8.1
Conflict of Interest Reports (in Document Room)
2013FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf
2014BoardBylaws.pdf
2014BudgetReportsIntranet.pdf
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2014SampleDetailedFinancialStatement.pdf
2014SeptFinancialReportForFacultyAndDirectors.pdf
2014StaffHandbook.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf

2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Luther Seminary strives to present ourselves to students and the publics we serve with honesty and transparency. We provide a variety of information, both electronically and in print, to many constituents throughout the year. In doing so, we use an extensive review process to ensure the information is accurate and appropriate. This process ensures that experts in content, as well as experts in the Office of Marketing and Communications, give their approval prior to the release of the information. Luther Seminary also advertises in a small number of publications, ranging from Christian magazines and online websites to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.-specific publications. We are very careful to portray the institution fairly and honestly to the public, as well as to use gender-inclusive language in all our public materials.

For instance, our 2013 Annual Report shows our audited financial numbers, bringing transparency to the financial realities of Luther Seminary. Also, the IRS Form 990 for the Luther Seminary Foundation publicly discloses financial information. In addition to our degree programs, our continuing education programs are also fully and accurately described on our website and in print publications.

Luther Seminary's programs, requirements, faculty, costs and refund policies, control, and accreditation relationships are clearly disclosed in the Luther Seminary academic catalog available at https://www.luthersem.edu/catalog/ as well as other appropriate locations on our website:

- http://www.luthersem.edu/admissions/degrees/
- https://www.luthersem.edu/admissions/apply_process/
- https://www.luthersem.edu/finaid/tuition_costs.asp
- http://www.luthersem.edu/about/leadership.aspx
- http://www.luthersem.edu/about/quickfacts.aspx?m=3380
- http://www.luthersem.edu/about/accreditation.asp
- http://www.luthersem.edu/people_and_contacts.aspx

Any Luther Seminary representative can create a liability for Luther Seminary and threaten Luther Seminary's federal funding by making oral or written statements that are "likely to confuse or deceive" others regarding 1) the nature of the seminary's education program, 2) its financial charges, or 3) the employability of our graduates. It is the expectation of the administration that all employees must be as clear and accurate as possible in all written/oral communication about the nature of Luther Seminary's educational program, financial costs and employability of Luther Seminary graduates. All information provided in written materials and online is vetted for validity and transparency prior to publication. In the future, training regarding oral communication will be provided each year in order to have updated and accurate information to share.

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 2.3
2012IRS990.pdf
Samples of ads, Samples of printed materials, Story magazine, Master of Divinity brochure, Kairos – 2014 Course Offerings, Quick Facts 2013-2014 (in Document Room)

2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

The membership of the Board of Directors is established through requirements of the ELCA that are reflected in the Bylaws of the seminary. Each supporting Synod of the ELCA elects a member through their convention process. The ELCA Church Council elects twenty percent of the members and two Bishops are elected, one each by the supporting regions of the ELCA. The nominees in each case are identified through careful consultation with the President of the seminary to help ensure the needed competencies are brought to the work of the Board. As of January 2014, the Board is 22 members, with about 15 non-member representatives, administration and staff usually present for Board meetings.

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

2.C.1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The Boards' duties are set forth in their Bylaws, and begin with establishing and maintaining the Purpose, Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan of the seminary. In consultation with the President, members of the administrative staff, faculty and students, the Board support the seminary in accomplishing the strategic goals and fulfilling the mission. The Board minutes, particularly around the recent periods of leadership and financial crisis, demonstrate deep and honest conversations about preserving and enhancing Luther Seminary.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 7.3.1.1 and 7.3.1.5

2013FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf
2014BoardsGovernanceHandbook.pdf
2014BoardBylaws.pdf
Conflict of Interest reports (in Document Room)
Board member evaluation tools and evaluation reports (in Document Room)
Minutes of Board and Board Committee meetings (in Document Room)

2.C.2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Most of the work of the Boards is conducted through the Committees of the Board of Directors:

- Academic Affairs oversees the academic life of the seminary, and the Academic Dean supports the work of this committee.
- Finance and Administration oversees the finances, capital management and administration of the seminary, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance supports the work of this committee.
- Investment oversees the endowment assets and the investment of those assets for the Foundation and the seminary, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance as well as the Controller supports the work of this committee.
- Presidential Support assists the President in performance of her duties and works directly with the President.
- Seminary Relations oversees the development, public relations and fundraising programs of the seminary, and the Vice President for Seminary Relations supports the work of this committee.
- Student Affairs and Enrollment oversees admissions, retention, student life, and delivery of student services of the seminary. The Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs supports the work of this Committee.
- An Executive Committee and Governance Committee of the Board who are responsible for proper operations for both Boards.

Each of the Committees provides the opportunity for:

- Exercise of the Board's authority and governance
- Oversight of each area's implementation of the strategic plan and mission
- Monitoring performance
- Raising initiatives

During 2013, the committees were restructured and, as a result, they improved their performance under newly-adopted charters, setting forth their purpose and responsibilities. In

that effort, they substantially improved the committees' effectiveness and functionality. For example:

- The Student Affairs Committee now receives more detailed information and comparative metrics, and there is open dialogue with Board members, students, staff, faculty and the Campus Pastor.
- The Investment Committee, which had been only a subcommittee of Finance and Administration, was established as a standing committee of the Board of Directors. Its purview was expanded from simply overseeing the investment managers to being responsible for overseeing the inflows, investment and outflows from the endowments. As a result, there is now clear understanding and care for the goal of preserving generational equity in the endowments.
- In Finance & Administration, especially in reaction to the financial and leadership crisis described in Criterion 1.A.3 and broadly in Criterion Five, the Committee has moved from standard meetings to meeting on an as-needed basis, which meant meeting much more frequently, reviewing draft proposals repeatedly to arrive at the "financial sustainability" plan, and to report much more frequently to the Boards. For example, they brought to the Boards, early in that process, a proposal to commit to achieving financial sustainability that the Boards jointly adopted in their meeting in October 2013. Taking that step required openness and candor about the then-current situation, a thorough discussion and understanding of the situation by the Boards, and a commitment to financial integrity. With that Resolution, the parameters were established that allowed financial planning to move forward at a higher level of professionalism, consistency and commitment. In July of 2014, at the meeting of the boards it was recognized that the balance sheet is now under control and is continuously managed and evaluated. However, the cash flow situation is not yet sustainable. The board has instructed the President and the administration to discontinue a five-year approach to the sustainability planning, to install an interim plan for FY2015, and to work toward a rolling three-year financial plan for FY2016 and beyond.
- In all of the committees, there has been a greater focus on the strategic direction of the committee work, and a greater attention to assuring that the administrative departments are contributing to achieving the vision and mission of the seminary.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 7.3.1
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf
2014BoardCommitteeRoster.pdf
2014BoardRoster.pdf
2014BoardsGovernanceHandbook.pdf

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

2.C.3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

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

The Luther Seminary Board of Directors and Board of Trustees operate with sufficient and effective autonomy. The Bylaws and brief summary at 2.C provide the specifics of membership and election. While the ELCA administration, Church Council, and supporting synods elect the membership of the Board of Directors; this actually represents a dispersal of interests and groups within the church. Further, the Board of Trustees, through their process of self-nomination and participation in the shared governance of Luther Seminary, further dilutes any single controlling interest. Finally, the Bylaws themselves provide some process and protection from any undue influence.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 7.3.1.9

1994ArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf
1996FoundationArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf
2013FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf
2014BoardBylaws.pdf

2.C.4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

As detailed in the Bylaws, the Board of Directors delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration through the office of the President. The Board has established a Presidential Support Committee, made up of the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and two appointed additional members from the Directors and Trustees. The purpose of this committee is to support the President in performance of his/her duties, and conduct an annual review of the President's performance, focusing on his/her responsibility for the mission and purpose of this seminary. The committee also determines the President's compensation and conditions of employment and acts as the Compensation Committee of the

Board of Directors to review and recommend for approval by the Board the compensation levels and conditions of employment for officers and certain key employees of the seminary.

The Board of Directors has delegated to the faculty responsibility for pedagogy, curriculum, instruction and learning outcomes for the students, under the Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission, and the Charter for the Academic Affairs Committee. There is significant collaboration and cooperation between the faculty and the Board of Directors as evidenced by the involvement of faculty representatives at all Board meetings, joint representation on the recent President Search Committee, the work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, and informal interactions and discussions during and around meetings of the Board.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 7.3.2.1 and 7.3.3.1
2014BoardBylaws.pdf
2013FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf
2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2014orgCharts.pdf

2.D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Part I, section IV of the Faculty Handbook states that the Luther Seminary faculty subscribes to the Association of Theological Schools' Statements on Academic Freedom and Professional Ethics. Those ATS statements are included in Appendix I of the handbook. They call attention to the importance of preserving the seminary as a place for freedom of inquiry within the confession of the Christian faith. Luther Seminary's statement affirms the confessional commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. At the same time, the policy states that Luther Seminary seeks and welcomes the presence of diverse expressions of the Christian faith in this community of learning.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.3.2 and 5.1.5
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf

2.E. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students, and staff.

Through clear policies on academic integrity, as well as the efforts of library staff and our Center for Writing and Research, the Luther community is supported in their responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge.

2.E.1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

Luther Seminary has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that reviews all research conducted by seminary students, faculty, and staff involving human subjects. The purpose of this review is to insure that research subjects are treated ethically with respect to such matters as level of risk, confidentiality, and consent. The IRB reviews twenty-five applications per year on average. Three-fourths of these applications are from students seeking review of research to be conducted in connection with their capstone thesis projects, while the remainder is related to research undertaken by faculty and staff. The seminary website http:///www.luthersem.edu/irb/ provides ready access to the rules and procedures governing the IRB approval process as well as to forms and other content intended to facilitate IRB review.

Effectiveness, credibility, and reliability are issues evaluated by faculty advisers. For example, at the graduate level, proposed student thesis project research must be a part of a formal Thesis Proposal that is approved in advance by the thesis adviser, thesis readers, a faculty division, and Graduate Theological Education For all students, faculty regularly review research proposals and projects, particularly in view of the policies of academic honesty and integrity noted below (2.E.3). Similarly, scholarship plays an integral role in the review processes associated with reappointment, tenure, and promotion, with a review process from both internal and external colleagues (see Faculty Handbook).

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.3.5 and 4.2.1 and 5.X
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf

2.E.2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Guidance is provided primarily through the Center for Writing and Research and the library who have worked together to create an online reference guide for "Writing & Style" which includes details on both plagiarism, proper citation, and templates for writing. It is our most frequently viewed guide. Center for Writing and Research and library staff promote learning, research, and teaching through regular instruction and providing reference services in person and by phone, email, and online chat. To boost responsiveness for commuter, part-time, and distributed learning (DL) students, the library implemented LibAnswers in fall 2012. This 24x7 virtual reference and online chat program contains a "knowledge base" that provides reference help. The online chat function allows librarians to interact in real time during weekday, daytime hours and by email in the evening and on weekends.

Luther Seminary is committed to providing an environment that encourages the use of computers and electronic communications as essential tools to support the seminary's

operations. Luther Seminary also has a policy that outlines the acceptable, appropriate and legal use of Information Technology equipment, communication equipment and computer systems at Luther Seminary. It is the responsibility of each employee or student to ensure that this technology is used for proper and lawful purposes and in a manner that 1) is responsible, professional, and legal; 2) does not compromise the confidentiality of proprietary or other sensitive information; 3) does not compromise the security of the seminary's computer resources or the reputation, policies or mission of the seminary; and 4) is consistent with good stewardship and the mission of Luther Seminary. For the complete policy, please see the Student and Staff Handbooks.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 4.2.1 and 5.X and 2.10 IT policies
2014StaffHandbook.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf

2.E.3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.
The seminary has a clear policy regarding Academic Honesty, which is included in the student handbook and the academic catalog. The policy defines plagiarism and procedures by which instances of plagiarism will be addressed. The seminary has adopted a syllabus template that includes expectations concerning Academic Honesty as a standard element in the syllabi used for all courses. A summer writing program was instituted in 2011, primarily targeted to international students, to provide resources to prevent academic dishonesty. Over the past two academic years, we have only had four faculty-reported incidents involving plagiarism, which were all handled according to our procedures.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.3.5
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014SyllabusTemplate.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf

Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

As a graduate theological seminary, Luther Seminary's degree programs are appropriate both to higher education and graduate education. Luther offers 9 first graduate degree programs: the MDiv, requiring 30 courses (or 90 credit hours); 5 academic MA programs, requiring 18 courses (or 54 credit hours); and 3 professional MA programs, requiring 20 courses (or 60 credit hours). At the second graduate degree level, Luther offers 3 programs: the MTh, requiring 6 courses (or 18 credit hours); the DMin, requiring 8 courses (or 24 credit hours); and the PhD, requiring 8 courses (or 24 credit hours).

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

All Luther Seminary courses and programs are current with the most updated information contained in our academic catalog. A recent effort of program review and curricular revision reimagined our MA and MDiv curricula. The program as a whole, as well as individual courses, have recently undergone review and approval by the faculty. The MTh DMin, and PhD programs are also current and subject to regular review and revision.

Specific program standards are required by the Association of Theological Schools, which define accrediting standards for individual degree programs as well as the institution as a whole. All individual courses are taught at the post-baccalaureate level with levels of performance evaluated by faculty through appropriate tests, writing assignments, and presentations. Appropriate to post-baccalaureate theological education, our courses and programs involve attention to primary texts from the Bible, major theological texts, our confessional tradition, and contexts in which ministry will take place.

The MA and MDiv programs have recently adopted a portfolio process that measures and ensures appropriate progress and performance toward educational outcomes in those programs. For MA students, a capstone project is also required. The MTh, DMin, and PhD programs all require summative projects, which along with other measures, ensures an appropriate level of performance in those programs.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.2.1.1 and Degree Program Standards
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
Sample Syllabi (in Document Room)

3.A.2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

Luther Seminary is an institution that provides exclusively graduate degree and certificate programs, each with distinctive learning goals. The learning goals and program outcomes for the MA and MDiv programs were recently revised and are now prominently included in our academic catalog. Similarly, distinctive learning goals for MTh, DMin, and PhD programs are articulated in the academic catalog. See our ATS Self-Study Report (Degree Program Standards) for a further analysis of each degree program.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.1.2 and Degree Program Standards
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf

3.A.3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Learning goals are established by the degree program and remain consistent across all modes of delivery (residential and distance delivery) and locations (main campus, consortial arrangements, and our internships). We monitor consistent program quality across and locations through analysis of data from the ATS student surveys, course evaluations, and soon, the portfolio reviews.

In our most recent ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire, the level of satisfaction for "Quality of Teaching" was ranked above "satisfied" for both on-campus and distance delivery students (4.2 and 4.4 respectively on a 5.0-point scale). Similarly, within course evaluations for spring semester 2013, for the prompt "Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this course," students responded in agreement with the statement (4.2 for online and 4.4 for residential on a 5.0-point scale). While not a statistically significant difference, the course evaluations together with the portfolio review will help us achieve a more granular analysis in the future.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.2.2.4 and ES2.1 (campus-based), ES4.2 (distance), and ES5 (directed study)
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013CourseEvaluationsSpring.xlsx

3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

As a graduate-level theological seminary, we assume a basic set of broad learning and skills from our students' foundational undergraduate degrees. Luther Seminary strives to build upon this basic foundation with an exercise of intellectual inquiry in our specific subject domains. For our first graduate degree programs, MA and MDiv degrees, we have created a common set of "Signature Courses." These courses address the knowledge, beliefs, and capacities that the faculty deem essential for all first master's degree graduates. Next, Luther Seminary's "Core Courses" address a set of knowledge, beliefs, and capacities that, in addition to the Signature Course material, the faculty deem essential for a specific degree program. Finally, "Elective Courses" grant individuals agency in the learning, while holding them accountable to the learning outcomes. Electives also take seriously that each student comes with different life experiences to draw upon, different gaps in knowledge, unique gifts, and individual passions and callings. An internship or contextual learning experience is also a significant component of these programs that further integrates learning and the application of skills.

The second graduate degree programs (MTh, DMin, and PhD) assume a basic graduate theological degree (MA or MDiv) in order to go deeper into a specific field of intellectual inquiry.

All degree programs and modalities benefit further from the assistance of the Library, Center for Writing and Research, and individual faculty, who work with students on developing their own research agendas.

Further documents and data:
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf (pp. 8-9)
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014SignatureCourseSyllabus.pdf
2014MDivCoreCourseSyllabus.pdf

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
Not applicable, as we have no undergraduate program.

3.B.2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
Not applicable, as we have no undergraduate program.

3.B.3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
All degree programs at Luther Seminary provide opportunities for students to engage with collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. Graduate theological education's general mode of inquiry is in the humanities, with typical work in collecting, analyzing, and communicating reflections upon ancient or modern texts. For those in any of our degree programs, there are required papers in biblical exegesis or theological reflection that make use of textual, theological, or interpretive analysis. Some courses explore social science inquiry, where information about a specific context (e.g., church or hospital) or people is collected directly, analyzed, and then communicated in a paper or presentation. Modes of communication can be very specific, such as engagement in "preaching," which is a peculiar act and skill of both rhetorical persuasion and communicating information. Other modes of communication could include brief reflections, research papers, or formal presentations. Luther Seminary's mission to "educate leaders for Christian communities" assumes that leadership will often be expressed through varied communication modes.

In terms of developing skills adaptable to changing environments, one focus for us is to develop research and communication practices that prepare our graduates to engage in lifelong learning. Our new curriculum for MA and MDiv students is inquiry-driven, contextually-intensified, outcomes-based, and portfolio-assessed. It includes multiple strategies and practices to enhance information literacy, integrative learning, and developing skills. The process by which students create and assess portfolios of material will engage both the students and faculty and staff. The review of portfolios each year enables students to assess their learning and faculty to become more aware of the way in which our entire program is or is not serving students well.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 4.2.2 and 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.1.3
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014PortfolioInfographic.pdf

3.B.4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

Luther Seminary has historically had a commitment to global awareness and cultural diversity in our educational program, coordinated through our own Global Mission Institute. The most visible sign on campus of Luther's global engagement continues to be our international students, who currently comprise 7% of the student body. In 2012-13, Luther had 71 international students. In 2013-14 the number decreased to 58, due in part to the suspension of admissions to the PhD program. These numbers do not include international students who are naturalized citizens or the families of international students, who are part of our campus community. The international community is involved in many parts of campus life, including attendance at and leadership of daily chapel services, student government, and student employment. Some international students in the PhD programs also serve as teaching assistants and instructors for MDiv and MA courses.

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

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

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

Under the previous curriculum, every MDiv student was required to complete a half-course Cross-cultural Mission Experience. These classes ranged from international travel courses (to Israel/Palestine, Guatemala, Germany, South Africa, etc.) to domestic immersion experiences (urban, rural, Native American reservations, immigrant communities). In the new curriculum, the outcomes for cross-cultural and global awareness have been imbedded in a variety of courses. To ensure that students achieve such awareness as part of their programs, faculty members have identified specific competencies that might be met through various courses. Our 2013 Curriculum materials refer to "engaging multiple voices from within the diverse traditions of the church and the wider culture as [students] teach, preach, and think about God,

discovering new readings of Scripture from diverse communities, and seeking opportunities for encounters and shared projects with neighbors that surround [students'] faith communities."

A significant way that the 1993 Curriculum addressed cultural engagement for the MDiv program is through a required, non-credited, full-year (or its equivalent) supervised internship in a faith community under the leadership of our Director of Contextual Learning. We have regularly researched and assessed the effectiveness of internship and it has consistently scored very high in effectiveness relative to our overall goal of educating evangelical public leaders. The 2014 Curriculum continues to require a full-year (or its equivalent) supervised internship for MDiv students. In the 2014 Curriculum, MDiv students receive two course credits (6 hours) for internship. Internship may now include particular additional course work as an opportunity to fulfill certain courses, which benefit from intensive contextuality. For instance, one Signature course well suited for internship is Leading Christian Communities in Mission. Both the 1993 and the 2014 Curricula addressed this standard in a third way through our MA program in Children, Youth and Family, which incorporated a robust contextual component with a faith community. Evaluations of this embedded contextual component have consistently shown its effectiveness.

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

There is potential for strong global awareness and engagement in the new curriculum, and intentional action will be taken to realize that potential. For more information on our institutional response to diversity, please see the response to criterion 1.C.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.2.2.2 and 3.2.2.3
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014CoreCourseSyllabus LCCM.pdf

3.B.5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.
Part I Section XI.A of the Faculty Handbook states, "As public scholars responsible for shaping and interpreting the changing contours of Christian leadership in the church and the world,

members of the faculty are expected to be active participants in the scholarly discourse of their respective disciplines. Research, publication, and contributions to academic societies are essential elements of the faculty's commitment to pedagogical excellence, service to the church, and influencing the future of theological scholarship." Scholarship plays an integral role in the review processes associated with reappointment, tenure, and promotion. As part of the review process, a faculty member is expected to submit a sampling of publications, papers at professional societies, public lectures, and other forms of research and scholarship. In addition, we ask for a narrative review of scholarship from both internal and external colleagues.

The faculty of Luther Seminary have a distinguished record of producing traditional scholarship that has benefited both the church and the academy. A faculty culture that values scholarly research, a generous sabbatical plan, and a tenure structure that includes scholarly output among its criteria have all fostered conditions in which an accomplished faculty can produce a significant body of work. Our current faculty are authors of almost 60 books, 140 articles and essays, 60 academic papers and presentations, and many blogs, podcasts, and other web-based resources.

Much traditional scholarship–the researching, writing, and production of monographs and journal articles, for instance–is a somewhat private activity, highly valued by the academy, and time intensive. Certainly the fruits of such research enter into classroom teaching and inform engagement with other colleagues (particularly via scholarly conferences and similar activities). Further, such work will continue to have a high value in both the Church and academy as it contributes to the accumulation of knowledge and expertise in various content disciplines.

In recent years, Luther Seminary has established a growing record of 1) cultivating the expertise of not being the expert, but rather, being an engaged and critical learner, and 2) seeing in our students and traditional constituencies partners in exploring the changed and changing world in which we live as Christians. In particular, we have invited students, recent graduates, colleagues at other institutions, and members of a diverse collection of congregations to be our partners in surveying, mapping, and navigating the major contextual changes in North American (and to some degree global) culture.

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

Further, work in these projects has changed the teaching and learning environment in the classrooms of participating faculty, as students are actively engaged in learning with their professors how best to be a public Christian leader in a changed environment. Students have therefore not only benefited by the research completed as part of these projects, but have increasingly been active participants in it, both working directly in the research project as well as giving feedback on the ongoing process and findings.

In addition, the collaboration with faculty in other disciplines and at other institutions that these and similar projects have nurtured has resulted in several monographs, edited collections, and various scholarly articles and presentations. We expect an ongoing commitment to both the principles named above, which are critical for understanding our new context, and to working with colleagues, students, and constituencies across the church and world, which will continue to enhance our ability to conduct collaborative and productive scholarly research.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.2.3.1 and 3.3.1.1 and 5.4.1
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2014FacultyArticles_EssaysSince2012.pdf
2014FacultyBooksCumulative.pdf
2014FacultyElectronicResourcesSince2012.pdf
2014FacultyPapers_PresentationsSince2012.pdf

3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Luther Seminary has a dedicated faculty and staff with requisite credentials to support our educational programs and services. We established a cabinet-level Department of Human Resources in June 2010 by a sharing arrangement with Augsburg Fortress Publishers. After instituting a consistent hiring process for faculty, staff and students in 2011—in place of a decentralized one that regularly produced intra-institutional compensation and performance-expectation anomalies—the HR office has developed and is initiating an "onboarding" orientation program to engender an institutional perspective of the seminary. This initiative provides new staff employees with peer-mentors who help them work out a training and experiential trajectory. The HR office also now provides training to student employment supervisors—on interviewing, selecting, and orienting new student employees.

Part of our financial crisis was precipitated by the growth of our compensation and benefits expense, rising by a total of $2.3M over the two fiscal years 2012 and 2013. To start the seminary toward recovery, we reduced our faculty by 35% (almost entirely by voluntary means) and our staff by 15% (or 18 FTE) by way of a modest reduction in force. The net staff reductions occurred primarily in support services such as our own day care facility, and our offices of

technology, physical plant, and dining services. The seminary continues to analyze job assignments in search of productivity increases and better vocational alignment as attrition occurs.

3.C.1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

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

In the fall of 2013, a group of faculty and board members worked together to develop the "Report of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Faculty Structure and Organization" which, among other things, looked at faculty staff needs in light of enrollment trends and educational commitments. The analysis of budget implications dealt with income/expense projections, course size, teaching load, and faculty size in the future. One major insight was to make calculations based on the number of credits students actually take in a given year, rather than trying to rely on student headcount or FTEs. As a result, the Task Force was able to demonstrate how our current level of faculty would be adequate to meet the curricular needs of the seminary and was able to make several projected scenarios based on section size, teaching load, and faculty size in the future.

For decisions around the curriculum, student performance, policies for instructional staff credentials, and assessment of student learning, there are specific committees and structures in place that bring recommendations to faculty as a whole for deliberation and approval. Oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance is lodged in the Educational Leadership Committee. The academic credentials required for instructional staff are established in the Faculty Handbook, which is largely tended by the Faculty Concerns Committee. The specific credentials required for any new hire are established through a coordinated effort of the Academic Dean and the Academic Leadership Committee. Faculty assessment of student learning is conducted through the assigning of grades and a variety of

efforts over the last decade to more closely evaluate student learning at the program or curricular level. The new curriculum for the MA/MDiv has allowed us systematize this higher level of assessment through the introduction of student portfolio review (which will be described in greater detail within Criterion Four).

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 5.1.3
2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

In 2014–2015, we have 25 full-time teaching faculty members, all of whom have research doctorates, as do the president, academic dean, and director of graduate studies. In the current academic year, we also have one visiting professor with the same qualifications. Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities, and expects all faculty members to be active in their respective church bodies. All of our part-time faculty members also have research doctorates and experience as either pastors or lay leaders in the church. Many are our own emeriti. Several are our own PhD graduates. On occasion we employ other part-time instructors who have comparable qualifications. Similarly, any joint-degree or consortial instructors are appropriately credentialed and qualified through their home institution's process for hiring and promotion.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 5.1.1
Faculty CVs (in Document Room)

3.C.3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Part I of our Faculty Handbook articulates policies and Part II details procedures for implementing the policies. There are clear statements concerning faculty rights and responsibilities (Handbook I.XI.A), which are monitored through the office of the academic dean and the regular review processes. Procedures for evaluation have been straightforward in most years. Our HR office collects the portfolios of material used for personnel decisions, the material is evaluated by the appropriate committee, and a report with the recommendation is made using the standard criteria for teaching, scholarship, and service. Votes to approve the recommendation are done by written ballot in the committee and the faculty. If the president gives approval, the board does final approval. In 2014-15, we have 2 faculty members at the

rank of assistant professor, 14 associates, and 12 full professors. Two administrative faculty members are not assigned rank.

When major financial issues came to light in the fall of 2012, processes for tenure and promotion were delayed by one year to allow the seminary to determine what size of faculty could be sustained. At that time, 68% of the faculty were tenured and another 20% were on a tenure-track, for a total of 88%. In a largely tenured faculty it is difficult to reduce the number of positions in response to major changes in revenue and expenses, or to change the composition of the faculty in order to meet changing instructional needs. To accommodate the delays in the process, the academic dean made use of the Handbook provision to extend the appointments of affected faculty members by a year through administrative appointment (II.II.A.5).

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

To ensure sustainable faculty development in the future, the board of directors called for a Blue Ribbon Task Force to review the seminary's policies and practices. The Task Force included the academic dean, one board member, and five faculty members elected by the faculty. The report of the Task Force was submitted to the faculty and executive committee of the board in December 2013 and to the full board in February 2014. It recommended that the practice of granting tenure to some faculty members should continue. It also recommended that the seminary consider hiring some faculty members through renewable contracts that would not lead to tenure but would give the faculty member fair compensation and considerable stability in employment.

When implemented, such arrangements would help the seminary support a strong faculty while providing some flexibility to change the size or composition of the faculty to meet the changing needs of theological education. Care will need to be taken to ensure that both tenured and contingent faculty members have the necessary competencies and are fully valued for their contributions.

On May 14, 2014, the faculty adopted a thorough and regular process in which all tenured faculty members receive a comprehensive review every five years. In addition, tenured faculty members annually produce a written self-evaluation and meet with the VP for academic affairs for ongoing formative evaluation. At the discretion of the vice president and in consultation with the faculty member and appropriate division chair, courses may be evaluated, peer reviews may be initiated, or other evaluative processes may be tailored to individual cases.

3.C.4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Luther has a clearly outlined sabbatical program. In the spring of 2014, the faculty adopted an updated policy for applying for sabbaticals and reporting on the way the time is used. The updated policy also calls for a clear plan for disseminating the work done on sabbatical.

In 2006, the faculty established a policy for granting pre-tenure writing leaves of one semester. In the years that followed, many of our pre-tenured faculty members were able to take advantage of this opportunity. Because of the need to reduce our faculty size, we have not been able to continue this policy. Pre-tenure faculty members may explore the possibility of reduced teaching loads or a semester without teaching if the person can obtain a research grant to support the work.

As stated in the Luther Seminary Faculty Handbook, Part One: Policies (XI. A.), "members of the faculty are expected to be active participants in the scholarly discourse of their respective disciplines. Research, publication, and contributions to academic societies are essential elements" of the faculty's work. To support such participation, the seminary will pay the annual dues for membership in not more than two professional societies, with or without journals, for all faculty members.

The seminary budgets $1200 each academic year available to each full-time member of the faculty for financial aid for transportation, registration, lodging, and meals for attendance at meetings of professional societies, academic congresses or other professional development meetings, payment made only when the faculty member attends such meetings—including during sabbatical years. Part-time faculty members shall receive that proportion of the allowance corresponding to the proportion of workload indicated in the letter of appointment. These budgeted allocations may accumulate for up to two years.

Over the past decade, teaching has come to include a greater proportion of online and intensive learning options. Some faculty members are well prepared to teach in these venues, while others would welcome more support. When online courses were first developed, a few faculty members attended workshops that helped with online teaching, and they shared their insights with others. As we developed the MDiv Distributed Learning (DL) program, Prof. Richard Nysse gathered regular and adjunct faculty to share experiences from online teaching.

In June 2009, the seminary hosted a three-day workshop on DL instruction. About 30 people attended, including faculty from Luther and other institutions. In 2010 there were two workshops devoted to online instruction and intensive courses.

About a third of our faculty members have taken advantage of Wabash workshops for pre-tenure or mid-career faculty. These workshops have offered a stimulating environment in which to explore approaches to teaching and learning with faculty members at other schools. These workshops provide focused time away from the usual responsibilities and opportunity to learn from peers about innovative ways to teach.

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

Further documents and data:
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2014TechTalks.pdf

3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
Faculty are expected to be available to students outside of the classroom through a variety of formats (e.g., office hours, appointments, email, phone). From our ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire, the category "Accessibility of Faculty" was among the highest rated "Level of Satisfaction with School's Services and Academic Resources," earning a 4.4 on a 5.0-point scale in 2013/14. In reviewing available questionnaires over the past 10 years, the satisfaction score has never been lower than 4.0.

Further documents and data:
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf

3.C.6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.
Luther is committed to providing robust student services for all enrolled students. We are fortunate to have a team of staff that assists students in a variety of areas including, but not

limited to, advising, writing, contextual education, disability services, community and residential life, student groups and activities, pastoral care and the parish nurse.

Our position descriptions for student support staff require experience in the church or service-related contexts prior to employment at Luther Seminary. A Master's Degree is also required for all Student Affairs professionals, preferably in the applicable field of advising, student affairs, leadership and/or counseling. Staff stay current in their fields by membership in professional organizations, including NASPA and Association of Theological School's SPAN and attending training and conferences that address best practices in advising, career counseling, housing, case management, and disability services. As an expectation of the team, professional development is supported with time and resources.

Our Financial Aid staff members are active members in MAFAA and NASFAA. They regularly attend the national and regional meetings to stay current on financial aid policies and government regulations and are active on electronic mailing lists to learn about and share best practices in the field.

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 6.3.2 and 8.1.1 and 8.1.3
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2014orgCharts.pdf

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

Luther Seminary provides a range of support for both students and faculty toward effective learning and teaching. Services include the Registrar, Campus Pastor, Library, Archives, Bookstore, Learning Design, Center for Writing and Research, Office of Technology, Student Resource Center, and Contextual Education. Campus lectures, visiting scholars, chapel services, lifelong learning events, exhibits, films, and art exhibitions also enhance learning and teaching.

Finally, our physical and technological infrastructure also supports teaching and learning a variety of program modalities.

3.D.1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

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

The seminary surveys students about particular events and experiences that it hosts, including First Week orientation, intensives for distributed students, guest housing and first-semester, first-year students. These survey responses have helped us shape future events. The ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire is distributed to graduating students to evaluate a number of student support services, such as spiritual formation, financial aid, housing, extracurricular activities, etc., with results that can be tracked by modality, over time, and against peer schools.

As a result of student feedback, the following changes have been implemented: Many on-campus events, including outside speakers and learning events, are now broadcast online so that anyone with a Luther Seminary log-in can view the program and send questions/comments via live chat. The Center for Writing and Research has upgraded their resources so they are able to work with students remotely, regardless of if they can get to campus for an appointment. We now have orientation programming twice a year—in the fall (primarily for new residential students) and in January (when the distributed students are first on campus). Additionally, Luther has developed more extensive resources for working with students with disabilities. Our disability policy is shared with students through the Student Handbook and administered through the Student Resource Center. Budgets have been expanded to include funds for supporting students with documented disabilities. Expanded processes, as well as staff training, are goals for the next few years.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 6.3.2 and 6.3.3
2013ATS_AQ(2007-2008).pdf
2013ATS_AQ(ClassOf2004).pdf
2013ATS_AQ(ClassOf2008).pdf
2013ATS_ESQ.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2014_101UsesForTheoDegree.pdf
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf

2014StudentLoanStatistics.xlsx
Financial Coaching http://www.luthersem.edu/student_services/coach.aspx
Financial Planning Tools http://www.luthersem.edu/finaid/planning_tools.aspx?m=3012
Loans http://www.luthersem.edu/finaid/lutherloans.aspx?m=1761

3.D.2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

The Student Resource Center was developed in 2008 to more intentionally address the learning and vocational formation needs of students. It focuses its work in five key areas: Career Development, Academic Advising, Denominational Resources, the Center for Writing and Research, and Disability Resources. In partnership with the academic affairs office, it aims to accompany students so they can be academically successful while in seminary.

A number of innovations have taken place in the last few years to address some common academic challenges among our students. The Associate Dean for Student Resources and Candidacy sits on the admissions committee and directs a process for accompanying students who are conditionally admitted due to academic concerns. During orientation, we offer workshops on writing, study skills and time management as well as technological and research resources for academic success. Students identified in the admissions process who need extra support in writing skills are invited to a comprehensive two-week workshop prior to the start of classes aimed to improve their writing and communication skills.

Through its work in vocational formation, the Student Resource Center is continually in conversation with students discerning whether or not their chosen degree process is best for their vocational goals. The service is able to direct them to courses, mentors and programs that help them continue to discern and prepare for their callings. The 2013 ATS Graduating Student Survey rates level of satisfaction of career/vocational counseling an average of 3.4 on a 5.0-point scale.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 6.3
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Advising students involves several roles: 1) academic advising, 2) faith and vocational formation, and 3) participating in denominational processes for review of candidates for ordained or rostered lay ministries. Until the fall of 2013, the practice was that each faculty member had a number of advisees, including both residential and DL students. Academic advising took place as needed. Faith and vocation were the focus of small groups that met

about once per week for reflection, devotional reading of Scripture, prayer, and mutual support. Participation in the ELCA candidacy process involved meeting with MDiv students once in their second full year of study for endorsement and again in their final year to recommend approval for ordination or rostered lay service.

Some challenges emerged for this model. Within academic advising, some elements were often best handled by the Registrar, Student Resource Center, or faculty point people for various programs. In terms of faith and vocation, the increasing diversity of student schedules and growth of the DL program made it difficult for small groups to meet regularly. Moreover, some students were unsure how much to share about their own discernment process, because their advisors also met with candidacy committees to make decisions about readiness for ministry.

In 2013-14, we adopted an interim separation of the three roles. Academic advising was done primarily by the Student Resource Center and Registrar's Office. Separate spiritual formation groups were then formed, which involved faculty, staff, and students as they had time and interest. Finally, faculty members continued to work with students in the ELCA candidacy process as before. Candidacy mentors accompany ELCA students through the candidacy process, and may be the student's cohort mentor, or another faculty member agreed upon by both the student and faculty cohort mentor. The 2013 ATS Graduating Student Survey rates level of satisfaction of academic advising an average of 3.6 on a 5.0-point scale, and we look forward to using this data as a benchmark against our new pattern of advising.

A new pattern began in the fall of 2014 that employs the cohort model. All incoming MDiv and MA students and current students who have shifted to the new curriculum are assigned to cohorts of about 10 students each. Each cohort has a faculty cohort mentor who oversees the review of student portfolios at designated credit markers. Another faculty member joins the cohort mentor to provide input to students concerning ways to shape their program to meet stated outcomes. The cohort mentor also meets with the cohort periodically for activities that support vocational and spiritual formation.

The cohort and portfolio review elements of the new curriculum are embedded within a ½ credit course, The Learning Leader, in which students will participate in structured self-reflection on their learning in relation to degree program outcomes and competencies. Critically, this review process equips the institution to more effectively accompany individual students and, as needed, to also make program-level interventions.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 5.3.3 and 6.X
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2014LearningLeaderSyllabus.pdf

3.D.4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Luther Seminary relies on four buildings [Bockman (52,000 sq. ft.), Gullixson (54,600 sq. ft.), Northwestern (56,800 sq. ft.), and Olson Campus Center (53,000 sq. ft.)] to handle its instructional needs—all of which could be met (even if convened simultaneously at any hour of the day) in the instructional space available in those four buildings alone. As of September 2014, all buildings are ADA accessible. Olson Campus Center was rehabilitated and enlarged in FY11-12 as a "campus center," and contains our Dining Services, Bookstore, and the larger and newer of our two chapels. All of these are sound structures, but Bockman is in need of a significant rehabilitation to bring it into compliance with contemporary new-construction requirements in plumbing, HVAC, and electrical.

Luther Seminary has two primary chapels that provide the appropriate space and context for daily chapel services that are held when classes are in session. In these services, worship leadership in all its varied dimensions is modeled for students. Students also have opportunities to help plan chapel services and to serve as worship leaders. Members of the chapel staff team, through planning meetings and training opportunities, give attention to effective practices and habits for worship leadership. These two chapels are also used for preaching labs and worship practicums. In addition, the chapels are regularly used as rehearsal space for musicians and musical ensembles providing leadership for worship services and for seminary-sponsored conferences.

The Office of Technology manages many tools available to Luther Seminary students. There are several computer labs and print stations available in main campus buildings. Wi-Fi is also available in these spaces. Other services provided by the Office of Technology include accessing online class content via mobile devices, managing software and email, providing research tools for managing references, creation of thesis templates. Upon admission, all students receive online seminary accounts to access network services and email. These accounts are the official channel of communication. Students are expected to monitor and use them to receive important information regarding registration, bill payments and other student services. On September 1, 2014, a link was opened that allows our primary data center to be located at Augsburg College. Our backup site is located on the seminary campus served by our power-failure survival machinery.

The strength of the Luther Seminary Library is in the individual and collective work of the library staff. Individual staff members have a variety of expertise and knowledge that affords faculty, staff, students, and visitors a wonderful resource as they find, consume, and create knowledge. The 2013 ATS Graduate Student Questionnaire shows average satisfaction of 4.3 on a 5.0-point scale for "adequacy of library collections," the second-highest ranking among services and

academic resources. Within available prior Graduate Student Questionnaires, "adequacy of the library collections" is consistently among the most highly ranked academic resources.

Previous accreditation reports have noted an inadequacy of library physical spaces with specific mention of inadequate stack space, user spaces, and overall accessibility. Stack space has become less of an issue thanks to a deaccession of duplicates created through the merger of predecessor libraries, mass-digitization efforts which reduce our need to maintain all existing print volumes, and the purchase of an increasing number of digital materials (especially journals, but also some books) that reduce the number of physical volumes added (see 2012 White Paper and 2014 Collection Development Policy). In fact, recent statistical reports have indicated an annual net loss of print volumes in the library. As deaccessioning efforts and digital purchasing continues over the next decade, we expect the growth rate of our print collection to be around 0% thereby ensuring the adequacy of our physical space for the near future. The library collection is protected by climate control and controlled access.

Library user spaces include 80 individual carrels (of which 62 seats or 78% are assigned), 75 seats in the Reference and Catalog rooms, 17 computer stations, and a group study room. Even during peak weeks around midterms and finals, library seat usage only reaches 60% of capacity. This is due to our diminishing residential population as well as alternative spaces, like the OCC coffee shop, which provide space for study on campus. We will continue to monitor and survey library usage in terms of gate count, persons in seats, etc. Overall accessibility has been greatly enhanced through the addition of a building elevator in Gullixson that transports patrons from building entry to all floors of the building, and especially the 2nd floor, where the library is located. The elevator project has also enabled other modifications to doors and restrooms such that the building is more hospitable to those with accessibility needs.

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

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) offers students the opportunity to develop and integrate theological knowledge and professional skills in a wide variety of clinical contexts such as hospitals, extended care facilities, social service and social justice organizations and congregational settings. The primary loci of learning are the people and relationships affected by the act of giving spiritual care, including both the one who receives and the one who gives that care. Some methods employed to develop this reflective practice include verbatims, journaling, peer group sessions and one-on-one conversations with a CPE supervisor.

3.D.5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Library staff promote learning, research, and teaching through providing Reference services in person and by phone, email, and online chat. A significant challenge is the delivery and evaluation of library services for commuter, part-time, and distributed learning (DL) students. To boost responsiveness, the library implemented LibAnswers in fall 2012. This 24x7 virtual reference and online chat program contains a "knowledge base" that provides reference help. The chat function allows librarians to interact in real time during weekday, daytime hours, and by email in the evening and on weekends. LibAnswers tracks questions and reports statistics. In our first year of use, the number of reference transactions doubled from 312 (FY12) to 653 (FY13). We have also created online reference guides targeted to specific subjects, courses, or issues. When used in conjunction with in-class instructional sessions, LibGuides offer students the opportunity to review content at their convenience. In 2013, Writing & Style was our most frequently viewed guide (over 7,000 times).

Reaching students in all degree programs, library staff promote theological learning through our instruction programs. We have reached a high percentage of graduate students through the PhD practicum (required) and sessions with DMin students (about 75%). Overall, we held training sessions for over 450 students (2013).

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

3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

The educational environment at Luther Seminary is enriched by curricular and co-curricular activities.

3.E.1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

The co-curricular program provides students with opportunities to explore leadership, fellowship, and service to the Luther Seminary community, our local communities, and to the world. The co-curricular programs at Luther Seminary are intentionally designed to enhance the curricular experience through diverse programming framed by the Wholeness Wheel and dynamic student leadership opportunities such as Student Council and several student-led organizations. While programs are currently surveyed within the ATS Graduating Questionnaire (earning an average 3.5 satisfaction on a 5.0-point scale), we are encouraging the selection and reflection upon co-curricular artifacts as part of the new student portfolio reviews.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: ES2.1.2
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2014StudentOrganizations.pdf
2014wholenesswheel.pdf

3.E.2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Contextual Learning is an integral part of theological education for all students. In Luther Seminary's MA and MDiv degree programs, students are able to choose a variety of options in which they can engage spiritual and practical questions in real-world congregations and faith-based organizations. For the MDiv program, the expectation is for a year-long internship program. Within the 2013-14 ATS Graduating Student Survey, "experiences in ministry," whether in formal internships or not, was rated the top "influence on the educational experience" (Table 17). In the same survey, 77.1% rated the required field education/internship as "Very Important" (Table 18) and rated the experience as highly effective in developing any number of personal and pastoral capacities (Table 19).

Recognizing the importance of tending to the spiritual development and well-being of students, many opportunities and resources are made available to them to help deepen their faith lives. The central practice of corporate worship is experienced through daily chapel services. In addition, regular prayer services are offered throughout the year. Occasional lunchtime forums and panel discussions on topics such as spiritual direction and resiliency are offered throughout

the academic year. Spiritual care groups, led by members of the faculty and staff along with PhD students, provide regular opportunity for Christian fellowship centered on Scripture, prayer and mutual conversation around vocation and service. Luther Seminary has enlisted qualified and trained spiritual directors and provides the funding for all students interested in group spiritual direction. Referrals for individual spiritual direction are also offered. There are occasional opportunities throughout the academic year for students to take part in a silent retreat. Seminary musical ensembles also provide an avenue for spiritual growth and development. In our Graduating Student Questionnaire (Table 20), student satisfaction with spiritual formation and pastoral care are rated 3.6 and 3.7 respectively (on a 5.0-point scale). We want to improve in this area. A group of faculty and staff worked on approaches to spiritual formation in the summer of 2014, and the input received from faculty, staff, and students has been shared in a report with those overseeing our educational programs and campus life. Our goal is to identify ways of doing this more effectively in the coming year.

Further documents and data:

2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2014SpiritualFormationReport.pdf
2014SpiritualFormationSurvey.pdf

Criterion four. Teaching and learning: evaluation and improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

Luther Seminary is responsible for and takes seriously the quality of our educational programs. We continue to build new academic policies and procedures for oversight as well as establishing regular patterns for assessment and review.

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

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

 After a series of pilot assessment programs, a new plan for MA and MDiv degrees took the form of what was called the "Comprehensive Academic Assessment Plan," which involved correlating course and program learning outcomes, developing systems for measuring student learning against stated outcomes, and developing practices for analysis, distribution and application of data. Early into the implementation of the Comprehensive Academic Assessment Plan, it became evident that there were a number of key issues in contemporary theological education that challenged the fitness of the seminary's curricular models and program design at that time. The seminary engaged in a yearlong discussion in 2010/11 that sought to address some of the challenges facing seminaries and church leadership in the 21st century, and was organized around shifts occurring within our subject-accreditation agency as well. The data collected as part of our assessment work, combined with other data arriving from a number of other seminary-related research projects, made a convincing case to the faculty for a now-completed Program Redesign and Curriculum Revision process. This not only was a comprehensive review of the MA and MDiv programs, but also established an assessment process that would allow for regular reviews of these programs.

The PhD, MTh and DMin programs also have a history of assessment and program reviews based on assessment data. Program outcomes have been developed for each of these programs. These outcomes are made available to students and faculty through program websites, student handbooks, syllabus templates, course syllabi, and student orientations.

Direct and indirect evidence and benchmarks of student learning is based upon course evaluations and surveys, entrance examinations, course projects, comprehensive examinations, capstone thesis projects and public defenses, and annual student degree and performance audits. Based in part upon assessment data, these programs have regularly been made subject to review by program teaching faculty and a graduate theological education committee. All of the programs were subject to an extensive review in academic year 2012-2013. The Congregational Mission and Leadership DMin program was reviewed again in academic year 2013-2014, which resulted in the faculty adopting a revised curriculum that allows students to graduate in four years rather than the previous five years. It is anticipated that the Biblical Preaching DMin will undergo a similar review in Academic year 2014-2015. The PhD program, which suspended further admissions beginning with academic year 2013-2014, is currently under review by a faculty, staff, student, and alumni task force, charged by the seminary board and administration to develop a proposal by the end of the current academic year relating to whether the PhD program will be continued in the future and, if so, in what form.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.2 and ES6.1 and Degree Program Standards
2012HLCAssessmentAcademyImpactReport.pdf
2012ComprehensiveAssessmentPlan.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf

4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

According to our Academic Catalog, credits earned at other accredited graduate institutions with a grade of C (or equivalent) or above may be considered for transfer to Luther Seminary upon evaluation by the Registrar and in consultation with the academic dean, division chair and faculty point people. Luther Seminary currently only allows advanced standing without credit. Our Association of Theological Schools accreditation forbids the granting of credits "on the basis of ministerial or life experience."

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: ES7.2.1 and ES7.4.1
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf

4.A.3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

As specified in our Academic Catalog (p71), credits earned at other accredited graduate institutions with a grade of C (or equivalent) or above may be considered for transfer to Luther Seminary upon evaluation by the Registrar and in consultation with the academic dean, division

chair and faculty point people. Transfer credits are accepted from the following types of schools:

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: ES7.2.2 and ES7.4.2
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf

4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Authority over the quality of our educational programs belongs primarily to the faculty as led by the Academic Dean. All decisions about prerequisites, course rigor, learning expectations, learning resources, and faculty qualifications rest within the faculty and through faculty-appointed committees and divisions. Only a few of our courses have prerequisites, and those are monitored by the Registrar's office. Students are not allowed into a course until the prerequisite has been met. All of our courses have been approved within academic divisions, the Educational Leadership Committee, and the faculty as a whole with course descriptions and stated learning outcomes. The library, as a significant learning resource, has a faculty-approved collection development policy with the Library Director, who is a member of the faculty. Regular faculty members who teach in the field carefully review the qualifications of all adjunct faculty members, ensuring that the education provided will be of high quality. As a graduate theological seminary, we do not enroll or provide dual-credit to high school students.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: ES7.3.1 and ES7.3.2
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf
2014LibraryCollectionDevelopmentPolicy.pdf
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf

4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Luther Seminary also maintains specialized accreditation through the Association of Theological Schools, which provides overall institutional accreditation as well accreditation to our specific degree programs.

Further documents and data:

2015ATSSelfStudy.pdf

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

The Associate Dean of the Student Resources sits as a voting member of the admissions committee and is active in ensuring that students are moving forward with denominational requirements as they go through the admissions process so they are on a good vocational trajectory as they enter the seminary. We also discuss students' vocational goals as they are expressed in their application and seek to discern if their goals are consistent with our institutional and degree goals.

We have found that students matriculate to seminary for an MA or MDiv for the four following vocational reasons: career change, preparation for a PhD program, enhancing their current role, or personal edification. Success of our graduates is claimed when fulfilling any of these vocational goals for their education.

The Student Resource Center tracks MA and MDiv graduates and the Graduate Studies office tracks PhD, MTh and DMin graduates based on placement rates via personal contact and accompaniment in the job search process, the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire, and by following up with graduates individually following graduation.

We easily track MDiv ELCA candidates for ordination through ELCA contacts. Over 90% of students who participate in the ELCA "first call" assignment process are able to find congregational calls within 6 months of graduation.

MDiv students who are preparing for ordination in denominations other than the ELCA work directly with their denominational leaders and structures to find calls after seminary. MDiv students not preparing for ordination and MA students tend to be the hardest for us to assist in their vocational goals, as there is not a predictable path to employment. We seek each year to build relationships that accompany students (particularly MA students) as they pursue their vocational objectives. It is a continuing goal to find ways to accompany these students following

graduation, to offer assistance, and better understand their employment patterns. We track this information to not only know that our students are finding gainful employment, but also to expand our list of the kinds of ways that our graduates are engaging work in the church and the world. Our list of "101 Uses for a Theological Education" is a continually-updated document that we use as a recruiting tool. We plan to implement the use of the ATS Alumni Questionnaire to help with this goal.

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.2.1.4, 6.5.2, ES6
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013ATS_AQ(2003-2004).pdf
2013ATS_AQ(2007-2008).pdf
2014_101UsesForTheoDegree.pdf

4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

4.B.1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

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

Learning goals for all our programs are clearly stated in our academic catalog, with further rationale for recently-revised learning outcomes for MA and MDiv programs available within the PRCR document. There is study across the various disciplines in each case. Attention is given to biblical, theological, and contextual elements. Each program has a focus, but all require engagement with the various aspects of the Christian tradition and its significance for contemporary life. These processes unfold in the context of faith communities. The engagement with those communities plays a role in shaping the education.

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

Historically the seminary has collected ample assessment data. The challenge is to continue to cultivate our emerging culture of assessment, particularly by tending good processes that allow the faculty and the community at large to evaluate the data and use it to guide curricular and other institutional decisions. The Comprehensive Assessment and Evaluation plan calls for utilizing four instruments: ATS Questionnaires (indirect, quantitative, anonymous), Course Evaluations (indirect, primarily quantitative, anonymous), Student Portfolios (direct, qualitative), and Targeted Coursework Sampling (direct, primarily qualitative, potentially anonymous). All of these instruments will be used in all of our First Degrees Programs, and the first two will be used in all of our programs (First Degrees and Graduate School). The office of the Academic Dean gathers the ATS questionnaires and Course Evaluations. Course Evaluations are distributed to the faculty members teaching each course. ATS questionnaire data has been reviewed in community-wide forums.

Assessment of student learning outcomes at both the course and program levels is foundational to the seminary's new portfolio-based curriculum for our MA/MDiv degrees. The curriculum adopted by the faculty in May 2013 includes newly-formulated program outcomes to help students and faculty alike to evaluate how those outcomes are being met over the course of a student's time in a degree program. Course-level student learning outcomes are also specified for every course offered. The adoption of the portfolio system demonstrates a cultural shift among the faculty, affirming that an outcomes-based curriculum with attention to evaluating student learning (rather than only teaching performance and student experience) is highly valued. Through the Learning Leader cohort structure, students will develop their portfolios in conversation with faculty mentors. Faculty will evaluate the portfolios at fixed points throughout a student's seminary career, with a comprehensive evaluation in the student's final semester. The portfolios emphasize reflection on how artifacts created for the achievement of course-level student outcomes link to the fulfillment of degree-program outcomes.

In an effort to ensure the quality of overall assessment, several steps have been taken:

1. In December 2013, the faculty approved the creation of an assessment committee to oversee assessment work, with particular attention to the new curriculum. An official charge was approved in August 2014. The committee comprises the Academic Dean, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Learning Designer, Assessment Coordinator, a student, and four faculty members.

2. As part of spearheading the seminary's overall assessment efforts, the committee also plans community-wide "assessment events." Some of the events present selected quantitative institutional data to the community and invite conversation around that data. Other events provide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to practice qualitative assessment and evaluate the process. These assessment events were successfully piloted in the spring of 2014, and multiple events have been scheduled for the 2014-15 school year. Through these community-wide conversations, the faculty and administration receive guidance on what institutional changes need to be implemented.

3. In May 2014, Luther Seminary created an office of institutional effectiveness. Our Director of Library Services, Andrew Keck, serves as our Director of this office. A part-time staff person has also been added as an Assessment Coordinator. This work includes assessment as well leadership of the self-study processes and reporting for accreditation for both ATS and HLC.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.1, 5.3.1, ES6.2.1

2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf

2012ComprehensiveAssessmentPlan.pdf

2014AssessmentCommitteeMembershipandCharge.pdf

2014DirectorInstEffectiveness.pdf

2014AssessmentCoordinator.pdf

4.B.2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

As indicated above, formal learning outcomes have been developed through a program assessment and revision process that culminated with new MDiv and MA curricula that add a portfolio review process and course sampling to the ongoing course evaluations and student experience surveys. While the establishment of a systematic set of learning outcomes is rather recent, Luther Seminary has attended to monitoring student achievement of curricular and co-curricular program goals.

One layer of institutional assessment is the Student Perceptions and Experience Survey. This survey is itself made up of three separate surveys, which will be given to students at three different points: entrance (to seminary), graduation, and five years after graduation. The surveys are provided to the seminary by ATS, which administers this survey in over 60% of member schools. The questionnaires cover issues related to student debt, student work, housing, vocational trajectory, and student experiences/expectations of seminary education (examples of the three surveys can be found online: http://www.ats.edu/resources/student-data). Because the same instrument is used by a number of other institutions within our sector,

the data can also help us to develop a sense of how our students and our seminary compare to other institutions.

A second layer of assessment is the course evaluations. While we began course evaluations for students in all of our online and intensive courses, course evaluations are now used regularly with residential courses as well. Course evaluations will be built on our current template and will take the following shape:

- Qs 1-5: Course administration
- Qs 6-8: Student experience
- Qs 9-11: Classroom, library and technology
- Qs 12-20: Program-specific learning outcomes
- Qs 20-30: Instructor-specified questions (optional)

While both surveys and course evaluations will provide us with data related to student experience and support, most importantly, they will offer us insight into the student's sense of their own attainment of program learning outcomes. Such a benchmark can be contrasted with direct evidence of outcome attainment that will be derived from the portfolio reviews and targeted coursework sampling.

A third layer of assessment is through portfolio review process, which offers students the opportunity to demonstrate to themselves and the institution their vocational formation. Throughout their program of study, they will collect artifacts that they believe demonstrate their engagement with each of the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of their program and concentration (if applicable). Because learning occurs in a number of settings, they will be asked to collect artifacts from their coursework and their co-curricular activities. In addition to collecting the curricular and co-curricular artifacts for each of the Student Learning Outcomes for their program, each year students will also write a short reflection piece on how these artifacts relate to the Student Learning Outcomes. In these reflections, they'll be asked to honestly consider the ways in which coursework or co-curricular experiences have supported their development in the area specified by their learning outcome.

A fourth layer of assessment is through target coursework sampling, taken from a targeted selection of student coursework and measured against program learning outcomes. Each semester, 1-2 courses from each division will be chosen in advance as the context for sampling of course work. Each course will be assigned a program learning outcome, and the instructor of the course will pick a single piece of coursework from their course that they determine as indicative of the aims or competencies sought by the selected learning outcome. The instructor will then determine what an acceptable average grade for the assignment is (across the entire course). This target average will be the benchmark against which the actual assignment grade average will be compared at the end of the course. Results of this sampling exercise will be used as one indicator of students' engagement of program learning outcomes. This is not an

assessment of the course or the instructor, but an average indicator as drawn from direct evidence of student learning.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.2.1.4, 5.3.1, ES6.2-6.4

2013ATS_AQ(2003-2004).pdf
2013ATS_AQ(2007-2008).pdf
2013ATS_ESQ.pdf
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf
2013CourseEvaluationsSpring.xlsx
2014CourseEvaluationForm.pdf
2014PortfolioInfographic.pdf

4.B.3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

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

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

In addition to these larger efforts, particular attention was given to improvement of student learning as we added our "distributed learning" modalities. We leveraged the cohort model to survey and engage in discussion in one cohort in order to improve the experience for those following. In addition to the course evaluations created and used for each online course, surveys were conducted after each intensive to assess intensive experience. This information was then collected and provided to the faculty and deans. Three sets of workshops were then developed for faculty teaching online and/or intensive courses in order to share results of

evaluations and cohort meeting conversations, present best practices for online and intensive courses, and allow for time for peer sharing of other practices that work.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: ES6.4.1

2012HLCAssessmentAcademyImpactReport.pdf

2013CurriculumPRCRforMDIVMA.pdf

4.B.4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Luther Seminary assessment processes and methodologies continue to move toward reflecting good practice. While the movement toward best practices has sometimes created a need for more fundamental changes or giving up something of value, Luther Seminary has demonstrated a sustained commitment towards developing a culture of assessment.

Like many institutions of higher education, we have sometimes learned that we cannot always put new assessment practices on top of older structures. While some pilot projects and studies were helpful in building institutional capacity and knowledge, it wasn't until we were able to revise the entire curriculum that we could fundamentally integrate best assessment practices (like rigorous portfolio reviews) into the system. Also, we have attempted to further institutionalize assessment practices through creating an Office of Institutional Effectiveness and developing a faculty-authorized Assessment Committee.

Sometimes adopting a best practice means giving up something good in order to achieve something better. While we had a good system of student experience surveys that were developed locally to meet our particular needs, we moved to using a set of surveys produced by the Association of Theological Schools. While we gave up complete institutional control and lost some longitudinal comparisons for a period of time, adopting a more standard set of questionnaires as a best practice allowed us to better compare and benchmark ourselves among various peer schools in theological education.

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

- equip students to self-reflect on their progress towards program-level student learning outcomes (portfolio);
- demonstrate, through direct and indirect means, student learning as measured against student learning outcomes (portfolio, course evaluation and targeted coursework sampling);

- ensure the quality of educational offerings (questionnaires, course evaluations, and outcomes assessment) and;
- pursue ongoing quality enhancement of programs by providing better access to assessment and evaluation data and facilitating conversations about this data within the community.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.2.1.4, 5.3.1, ES6.3.1-6.3.3, ES6.4.1
2012ComprehensiveAssessmentPlan.pdf

4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Luther Seminary recognizes the importance of retention, persistence, and completion rates while recognizing that some transitions helpfully result from a student's further vocational discernment. By tracking not just numbers but people, we have a better chance of understanding any educational improvements that will need to be made.

4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

In the 2014-15 Academic Catalog, Luther Seminary clearly states an expectation of degree completion for each of our educational programs. MDiv students can complete their program in as little as three years, though students normally take up to four years to complete the program (including internship). Part-time students may take up to eight years. MA programs are designed to be completed in two years, however, part-time students can take up to five years. MTh students have five years to complete their degree. DMin students in Biblical Preaching have three years, while DMin in CML have four years. Finally, our PhD students have four to seven years to complete their degree.

We currently track retention from fall to fall for all students in each program. Beginning in the fall of 2014, we will begin tracking retention by entering cohort for each degree program. We will then identify revised retention goals based on the benchmarks established through this more robust tracking system.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: ATS 6.5.2 and HLC 4.A.6
2014AcademicCatalog.pdf

4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

We currently track retention from fall to fall for all students in each program. We take the number of students registered for the fall term, subtract the graduates from the year and then look to see who remains in the program from the previous fall. Using this calculation, our retention rates have been in the low 90% range. We track our students that are on a leave of absence, as well as those that have officially or unofficially withdrawn. We use this information to enhance our services as appropriate. For example, in 2010-11 and prior, several of our incoming students received a scholarship for full tuition for one year. Some of these students withdrew due to financial difficulties in their second or third year of study. We revised our scholarship program to provide scholarships that are renewable for every year of study while the student is enrolled full time.

As previously stated, starting in the fall of 2014, we will begin tracking year-to-year retention of our first theological degree students by entering cohort.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 3.2.3.1 and 3.2.3.2
2013ATS_GSQ.pdf
2013ATS_IPPR.pdf
2014StudentAdmissionsKeyMetrics.pdf
2014StudentRetentionGridMDivMA.pdf

4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Once we begin tracking our year-to-year retention of our first theological degree students by entering cohort, we will be overlaying this information with our financial aid data to determine the impact of aid on retention. We will also be able to look at other demographic, academic, and retention information to determine any trends. As appropriate, we will update our practices to better serve subpopulations of students. For example, students with a lower incoming GPA might be required to meet with an academic advisor prior to registration, or students moving to campus from a distance might have a Student Affairs staff person check in after three weeks to see how they are adjusting to their new community.

In the past, we have used this data to inform program development and curriculum reform. Data on student debt showed that the longer a student took to complete his/her degree, the more debt was incurred. Our new curriculum was designed so that degrees can be completed in as little as three years. Our research on part-time students and distance learners led us to launch our Distributed Learning program. This past year, we also sought additional market research to learn about our program limitations and opportunities. Retention and degree

completion rates show that we need to provide a more deliberate part-time program for residential students so that they can complete in the timeframe that we expect them to.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 6.5.2
[2013ATS_AQ(ClassOf2004).pdf](#)
[2013ATS_AQ(ClassOf2008).pdf](#)
[2014StudentAdmissionsKeyMetrics.pdf](#)
[2014StudentLoanStatistics.xlsx](#)

4.C.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

We continue to grow our processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student performance. We regularly report our enrollment statistics to IPEDS, ATS (Association of Theological Schools), and the ELCA (our denominational body). We also share information with the National Clearinghouse for any student that receives federal financial aid. We share our statistics on our educational effectiveness webpage, as well (http://www.luthersem.edu/admissions/education_effectiveness.aspx?m=4276).

> Luther Seminary is committed to assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Institutional structures help to ensure that stakeholders are engaged in an active and productive conversation about the health of our programs and the development of our students. To aid us in data-driven decision making, quality assurance and enhancement efforts are informed by a variety of direct and indirect measures of student experience and student learning, such as student surveys and interviews, course evaluations, and the direct assessment of student learning measured against clearly stated learning outcomes at the institutional, program or course level. Looking outside the seminary, we also measure educational effectiveness through a wide variety of faculty-led research projects that aim to better understand the pressing issues that face the church, world and academy and shape our collective work.
>
> Finally, we understand that "educating leaders for Christian communities" is, in part, about setting students on a firm foundation to fully live out God's calling in their lives and so we take seriously their financial and vocational future. As a result, 30% of our students are able to complete their program without the need of federal loan assistance and 50% of our first degree students receive merit-based scholarships ranging from $5,000 to $15,000. In addition, students can apply for need-based aid and an

institutional loan of which 50% can be forgiven after 5 years of ministry upon graduation. Finally, on average, 85% of our graduates find employment within one year of completing their program of study.

But, as previously stated, we have plans for significant changes in our data collection regarding retention and completion rates. These changes will be implemented starting in the fall of 2014. We are also at work creating a data dictionary that will be used across campus so we have alignment on terms and reporting practices.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 6.5.2
2013ATS_IPPR.pdf
2013IPEDSDateFeedbackReport.pdf

Criterion five: resources, planning, and institutional effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Luther Seminary has sufficient resources to support and strengthen its educational programs. These resources include financial and human resources (faculty and staff) as well as physical infrastructure and technological infrastructure.

5.A.1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fiscal resources

While Luther Seminary currently maintains sufficient fiscal resources for operations and is working toward greater sustainability, the seminary is not immune from operating losses, especially when including non-cash charges such as depreciation or the putative cost of asbestos abatement in a facility rehabilitation or demolition. Even in the best of times, ventures in theological education operate on narrow margins:

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

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

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

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

Human resources

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

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

To start the seminary toward recovery from the liquidity crisis to which these practices contributed, we reduced our staff by 15% (initially by way of a modest reduction in force in March 2013, by which we reduced our staff by 18 FTE positions). The net staff reductions occurred primarily in support services such as our own daycare facility, and our offices of technology, physical plant, library, and dining services. The seminary continues to shuffle job assignments in search of productivity increases and better vocational alignment as attrition

occurs, and have found that our ingenuity and esprit de corps is beginning to recover even as our employment base continues to shrink.

Over the past two years, we have also reduced the size of our faculty by 35% through retirements and faculty members taking other positions. To make these changes effectively, faculty members have shown flexibility in their teaching and a willingness to vary their course offerings to meet our instructional needs. Where reductions have required additional hiring, we have used flexible arrangements, such as courses offered by our emeriti and a visiting professor in pastoral care. Our goal is to ensure that we have qualified faculty members in all key disciplines, while making wider use of contractual arrangements to allow for changes in the size and composition of the faculty as needed to meet the changing educational needs of the church and our goal of financial sustainability. The coincident reduction of faculty and the formation of the new curriculum also precipitated a welcome collaboration among the divisions of academic affairs and finance—to reconcile our projected course-load, class-size, and course-offering schedule with our long-term financial planning. The first fruit of this collaboration is registered in "The Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on a Right Sized, Right Fit Faculty for Luther Seminary."

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

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

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

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

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

External changes and improvements offer deference to the natural topography of the land and the natural flow of water. In several cases "past-practice" structures have been changed or improved to comply with the seminary's commitment to Environmental Stewardship.

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

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

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

We have re-examined our approach to student housing in light of declining enrollment, the shift to distributed learning, and our financial challenges. While committed to having residential options on campus, we recognize that we have neither the expertise nor capital to operate student housing ourselves. Therefore, we have sold our apartments to an outside organization in a transaction scheduled to close by December 31, 2014. The buyer intends to continue serving the student market, not just Luther, but also other nearby campuses. Attention is now turning to the campus master plan for buildings and property included in the Strategic Alignment Process. A cross-functional task force is being formed to assess needs and options for aligning our real estate assets with our overall strategy.

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

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

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

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

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 5.1.3, 8.1, 8.2.1.2, 8.3.1, 8.4, ES4.2.10

2012IRS990.pdf
2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf
2013AnnualReportforDonors.pdf
2013AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2013AuditManagementLetter.pdf
2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2013TurnaroundPlan.pdf
2014AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2014AuditManagementLetter.pdf
2014BookstoreRecommendations.pdf
2014CapitalBudgetFY15.xlsx
2014EndowmentPolicy.pdf
2014EmploymentStatistics.pdf
2014FY15_5YrProjection.xlsx
2014HirePayrollFlowchart.pdf
2014PieChartWithIncomeExpensesForFY14.pdf
2014StaffingandRecruitment.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf
2014SummarizedBudgetFY13-FY15.pdf
2014TechTalks.pdf

5.A.2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

The seminary's resource allocation process is almost exclusively focused upon the educational purposes articulated in our mission. Our auxiliary services (i.e., dining, bookstore, housing) are perhaps the most distant from that educational core, but ideally enable the kinds of learning and learning communities we seek to create at Luther Seminary. As possible, we seek to leverage these auxiliary functions for additional revenue so as to make them cost-neutral. Our dining service provides catering and other food services to the community beyond just the seminary faculty, staff, and students. As a task force reviewed the future of our bookstore, the resulting recommendations demonstrated a choice to primarily serve the seminary's educational purposes. The bookstore may also meet some of the religious bookstore needs of the region, but that is not its primary purpose. Especially for auxiliaries, the alignment with educational purposes is an important value.

As our self-portrait makes clear, we are constituted by and are "of" the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). However, all of us at Luther Seminary—whether on the Boards, among the faculty and staff, or in the administration—see ourselves as responsible for the welfare of the seminary and the sustainability of its mission. Although we receive a substantial (and declining) sum from congregations and synods of the ELCA, we disburse no revenue back to them.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.1, 8.2.2.4
2014AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2014BookstoreRecommendations.pdf
2014PieChartWithIncomeExpensesForFY14.pdf
2014SummarizedBudgetFY13-FY15.pdf

5.A.3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

Various aspects of our mission were defined within formal strategic planning documents, most explicitly in these five strategic goals defined in our strategic plan:

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

While these goals remain active and realistic, the leadership, faculty, staff, and financial transitions since October 2012 have significantly reframed Luther Seminary's organization, resources, and opportunities. The first goal is an articulation and affirmation of our foundational mission statement that is fulfilled in the work of our graduates. The second and third goals were born from assumptions of significant expansion, where we would be recruiting significant numbers of new faculty, staff, and students. Instead of significantly expanding the institution itself, the undergirding assumption has shifted toward expanding the network of people and other institutions that will partner with us and support us in our mission. While facilities remain important, our focus is more upon stewarding and leveraging our facilities rather than expanding them. The fourth goal remains significant for us, but the transformation of culture is now born from renewing our identity in the light of our contraction and new

leadership team. The fifth goal has renewed realism and focus for Luther Seminary, as the recent crisis has laid out the stakes for failing to be a responsive learning organization. From our new curriculum to a new Assessment Committee to a new Office of Institutional Effectiveness to a new transparency in finances and budgets, we have carefully laid the groundwork for a culture of assessment and accountability.

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

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.1.3
2007StrategicPlan.pdf with [2008StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2009StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2010StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf]
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2014AssessmentCommitteeMembershipandCharge.pdf
2014DirectorInstEffectiveness.pdf
2014SampleDetailedFinancialStatement.pdf
2014SeptFinancialReportForFacultyAndDirectors.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

5.A.4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
In place of a decentralized hiring process that regularly produced anomalies in intra-institutional compensation and performance expectation, the HR office instituted a consistent hiring process for faculty, staff and students in 2011. Market compensation surveys are used for new hires to determine the compensation range. In addition, the HR office has developed an onboarding and orientation program to engender institutional rather than constituency or individualistic thinking in the seminary. This initiative provides new staff employees with peer-mentors who help them work out a training and experiential trajectory guided by vocational-discernment exercises. The HR office also provides training to student employment supervisors—on interviewing, selecting, and orienting new student employees.

Individual staff members have a variety of areas of expertise and knowledge that affords faculty, staff, students, and visitors a wonderful resource as they find, consume, and create knowledge. As to increase their skills and contribute to the profession, faculty and some staff are supported financially in appropriate professional development opportunities. Faculty and student support qualifications, training, and support is dealt with at greater length in response to Criterion 3.C.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 4.5.2, 5.1.1, 7.3.2.3, 8.1.3, 8.8.2, A.2.5.4
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf
2014HirePayrollFlowchart.pdf
2014JobDescriptionTemplate.pdf
2014orgCharts.pdf
2014StaffHandbook.pdf
2014StaffingandRecruitment.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf

5.A.5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

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

The Boards responded quickly upon realizing the gravity of the situation. The $7M overdraft was "capped" and our working capital temporarily stabilized through decisive action by interim management and the generous philanthropic supporters of the seminary. The seminary has formally committed to repaying the endowment plus interest. Also critical to increasing our liquidity was successful renegotiation of credit arrangements with two financial institutions. By February 2013, the seminary had produced a Turnaround Plan that pledged the removal of a $5.7M structural deficit (annual gap between revenue and expenses) in unrestricted operations in 42 months—a recovery span that allowed us to bring to maturity the curricular, cultural and pedagogical reforms that had been flagged before the crisis as necessary to the institution's sustainable pursuit of its mission.

The liquidity crisis and the contributing operating losses also triggered an immediate revision of the budgeting processes of the seminary with strong Board oversight. In FY13, we instituted a bottom-up budgeting process for FY14, and in October 2013, launched its successor for FY15. The annual budgets are now built from zero but made to comply with the approaching year as conceived in the current version of the 5-Year Budget/Plan. Moreover, both the budgeting process and reports of our financial performance now include depreciation and other non-cash charges. National searches resulted in the hiring of a new president in June 2014 and a new VP of Finance and Administration in October 2014, both with significant financial acumen and a commitment to more carefully linking budget with assessment and planning efforts.

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

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

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

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

3. Deferred maintenance was not addresssed. Because operations did not historically plan to provide a reserve fund for repairs and/or depreciation, the seminary's physical plant

deteriorated over time. The focus on budget performance before funding depreciation or repairs caused deferred maintenance for the campus to accumulate to approximately $9-10M and with an insufficient cash position to attend to replacement of aging infrastructure.

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

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

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

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

accounts. Dual authorization is also required for any withdrawals out of the endowment accounts.

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 8.2.2.4, 8.2.2.5
2007StrategicPlan.pdf with [2008StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2009StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2010StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf]
2012AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2012AuditManagementLetter.pdf
2013AnnualReportforDonors.pdf
2013AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2013AuditManagementLetter.pdf
2013ConflictOfIntereset.pdf
2013CreditCardPolicy.pdf
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013PurchasingOfficeSuppliesPolicy.pdf
2013TravelExpenseReimbursementPolicy.pdf
2013TurnaroundPlan.pdf
2013VendorPurchasingPolicy.pdf
2014AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2014AuditManagementLetter.pdf
2014BudgetReportsIntranet.pdf
2014CapitalBudgetFY15.xlsx
2014FY15_5YrProjection.xlsx
2014SampleDetailedFinancialStatement.pdf
2014SeptFinancialReportForFacultyAndDirectors.pdf
Minutes of Board and Board Committee meetings (in Document Room)

5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

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

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

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

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

The Board of Directors, following nomination by the Trustees, elects the members of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees are significant financial supporters of Luther Seminary and are also

nominated on the basis of the skills and abilities they bring to governance. As of January 2014, there are 11 Trustees.

5.B.1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The purpose of governance at the seminary is to:

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

New Directors and Trustees are each assigned an experienced Director or Trustee as a mentor who works with them throughout their first year to assure they can be effective. New members also meet in two extended sessions with the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and senior members of the Administration. Those sessions occur after the new member has had an opportunity to experience at least one full Board meeting. The orientation process for new Directors and Trustees is being revised and strengthened, with new processes to be launched early in 2015.

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

In response to the strategic challenges of the 2012 crisis, the Board of Directors and Foundation Board of Trustees re-evaluated the actions, processes, policies and performance of the Boards. Several steps were taken during the 2012-2014 fiscal years:

- The Articles of Incorporation were reviewed to determine that the authorities granted remain appropriate;
- The Bylaws of both Boards were thoroughly reviewed and significantly revised;
  - The majority of changes in the By-laws were not substantive, but were done to bring the Bylaws up to date and organize them more effectively;

- o Some of the changes brought the Bylaws into alignment with ELCA requirements; and
- o Some of the changes improved the oversight of financial issues as well as the seminary and Foundation endowments.
- The Committees were reviewed, some re-organization was accomplished and emphases of some Committee Charters changed, and the Investment Committee was promoted to its current status as a full-standing committee of the Board;
- The Staff and Student Handbooks were thoroughly reviewed and revised.

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

- The Student Affairs Committee now receives more detailed information and comparative metrics, and there is open dialogue with Board members, students, staff, faculty and the Campus Pastor, all present.
- The Investment Committee, which had been only a subcommittee of Finance and Administration, was established as a standing committee of the Board of Directors. Its purview was expanded from simply overseeing the investment managers to being responsible for overseeing the inflows, investment and outflows from the endowments. As a result, there is now clear understanding and care for the goal of preserving generational equity in the endowments.
- In Finance & Administration, the Committee has moved from standard meetings to meeting on an as-needed basis, which meant meeting much more frequently, reviewing draft proposals repeatedly to arrive at the "financial sustainability" plan, and to report much more frequently to the Boards. For example, they brought to the Boards, early in that process, a proposal to commit to achieving financial sustainability, which the Boards jointly adopted in their meeting in October 2013. Taking that step required openness and candor about the then-current situation, a thorough discussion and understanding of the situation by the Boards, and a commitment to financial integrity. With that Resolution, the parameters were established that allowed financial planning to move forward at a higher level of professionalism, consistency and commitment.
- In all of the Committees, there has been a greater focus on the strategic direction of the Committees' work, and a greater attention to assuring that the Administrative departments are contributing to achieving the vision and mission of the seminary.

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

ATS Standards: 7.3.1.11 and 7.3.1.12

1994ArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf

1996FoundationArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf

2013FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf

2014BoardCommitteeRoster.pdf

2014BoardRoster.pdf

2014BoardsGovernanceHandbook.pdf

2014LutherSeminaryBylaws.pdf

2014StaffHandbook.pdf

2014FacultyHandbook.pdf

2014StudentHandbook.pdf

Board member evaluation tools and evaluation reports (in Document Room)

Minutes of Board and Board Committee meetings (in Document Room)

5.B.2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

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

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

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

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

- Members of the Administration are present in all plenary sessions of the Board, and are present and participative in meetings of the Board's Executive Committee.

- At least one member of the Administration is assigned to each of the Board Committees and works closely with the Chair of those committees to set agendas and assure the work of the committee is accomplished.
- Representative from the Staff: the Administration appoints a Staff Representative who is present in all plenary sessions of the Board.
- Representatives from the Faculty: the Chair of the Faculty Concerns Committee, and one at-large representative, both elected by the Faculty, are present in all plenary sessions of the Board.
- Student Representatives from the Student Council (two members of the Council and the Student Council President) are present in all plenary sessions of the Board.
- An Alumni Council representative and a representative of the Friends of Luther Seminary are present in all plenary sessions of the Board.

The Faculty, Staff, Student, Alumni and Friends representatives attend Committee meetings of their choosing, where they have a voice in the discussions, and have the opportunity to propose special initiatives. Representatives are not appointed or elected members of the Board, so they do not vote, but otherwise are able to be fully engaged in the work of the Committees and help add to the knowledge of Board members.

Most of the work of the Boards is conducted through the Committees of the Board of Directors:

- Academic Affairs oversees the academic life of the seminary, and the Academic Dean supports the work of this committee.
- Finance and Administration oversees the finances, capital management and administration of the seminary, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance supports the work of this committee.
- Investment oversees the endowment assets and the investment of those assets for the Foundation and the seminary, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance as well as the Controller supports the work of this committee.
- Presidential Support assists the President in performance of her duties and works directly with the President.
- Seminary Relations oversees the development, public relations and fundraising programs of the seminary, and the Vice President for Seminary Relations supports the work of this committee.
- Student Affairs and Enrollment oversees admissions, retention, student life, and delivery of student services of the seminary. The Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs supports the work of this Committee.
- An Executive Committee and Governance Committee of the Board who are responsible for proper operations for both Boards.

The Board of Directors has delegated to the faculty responsibility for pedagogy, curriculum, instruction and learning outcomes for students under the Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission,

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

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

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

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.3, and 7.3.4
2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2013FoundationBoardofTrusteesBylaws.pdf
2014BoardCommitteeRoster.pdf
2014BoardRoster.pdf
2014BoardsGovernanceHandbook.pdf
2014FacultyHandbook.pdf

2014LutherSeminaryBylaws.pdf
2014StaffHandbook.pdf
2014StudentCouncilConstitution.pdf
2014StudentHandbook.pdf
Minutes of Board and Board Committee meetings (in Document Room)
Minutes of Faculty and Faculty Committee meetings (in Document Room)
Minutes of Student Council (in Document Room)

5.B.3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Senior administration and departments of the seminary emerge through the Board's delegation of authority for administration to the President. The President has the authority to create and dissolve the administrative positions, departments, and structures at Luther Seminary. While not primarily a decision-making body, senior administration and other invited guests constitute a Presidential advisory and communication group now known as the President's Table. (Previously, it was called the "cabinet.") Requirements, policy, and processes that need to be set at the Presidential or institutional level are often vetted in this group.

The Board of Directors has delegated to the faculty responsibility for pedagogy, curriculum, instruction and learning outcomes for the students. The faculty sets requirements for programs, most recently through the process of curricular revision. The curricular requirements were vetted through various committees and formally approved by the faculty as a whole. Policies and procedures for faculty are set in the Faculty Handbook. All receive formal approval by the faculty as a whole. Oversight of the Handbook is entrusted to the Faculty Concerns Committee, whose members are directly elected by the whole faculty.

Most requirements, policies, and processes are set at the departmental level: the business office and VP for Finance and Administration set the requirements for handling cash, the library sets the fine policy for late books, and the Registrar sets the process for course registration. Other requirements, policy, or processes are set through collaborative effort between units through standing committees, ad hoc task forces, and informal conversation. Larger initiatives or significant decisions will often include a staff representative and/or open forum where all staff may attend to provide input. The Bookstore Task Force, the curriculum revision (PRCR), and the Presidential Search Committee are all examples of where staff input and representation was solicited at multiple points. While there are not currently formal staff-focused committees, there is an informal group of staff managers who meet regularly for communication and planning.

Students at Luther Seminary are tasked with learning in the classroom, but also beyond the classroom. Students' governance work while at Luther comes through participation in and

leadership of student organizations. Through the Board of Director's delegation of governance authority to the Administration of the seminary, certain governance authority has been delegated to the Student Council. The Council itself stands for election annually and is governed by the Student Body Constitution and Student Handbook. The Student Council and the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment, as well as other offices of the Administration, collaborate in governance of the student body. In that role, the Council is tasked with overseeing a budget set by the Administration, creation and governance of student groups, and direction for certain campus-wide events.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.3, and 7.3.4

2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf

2014BookstoreRecommendations.pdf

2014FacultyHandbook.pdf

2014LutherSeminaryBylaws.pdf

2014orgCharts.pdf

2014StaffHandbook.pdf

2014StudentCouncilConstitution.pdf

2014StudentHandbook.pdf

2014StudentOrganizations.pdf

2014StudentPetition.pdf

5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

At Luther Seminary, strategic plans are openly discussed, with all relevant stakeholders given opportunities for input and feedback. Although most input is derived from internal stakeholders, external audiences are also solicited along with appropriate external data. While the financial crisis of 2012/13 shook our confidence and underlined our need for good data, Luther Seminary continues to be a dynamic campus resulting from ongoing systematic and integrated planning.

Looking to the future, we will continue use of Luther Seminary's mission statement to shape priorities and planning throughout the institution. It informs the focus on leadership formation in the MA and MDiv programs, and in graduate theological education.

But we will also work to bring a greater coherence to our resource management and lay the groundwork for a more extensive strategic planning process. Luther Seminary's planning and evaluation process, while establishing a strong vision for the future, was insufficiently attentive to some areas, particularly our finances. Subsequent attention to questions of sustainability and alignment throughout the seminary has led to the development of the Strategic Alignment Proposal. This will require us to enhance our planning and evaluation processes at Luther

Seminary through creating systems of strategic planning and review at both the institutional and unit level.

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

Luther Seminary allocates its resources through careful planning in light of its mission and strategic priorities. We ethically and responsibly plan in order to meet our educational and sustainability goals. As our Mission is "Educating leaders for Christian communities," our first priority is our students and educating them as leaders. From the addition of a coffee shop in the Olson Campus Center to a new elevator in Gullixson, these projects were priorities for student community and learning. Investments in upgrading our phone system or use of LED bulbs in our buildings were both strategic investments that will contribute to our sustainability. Our largest campus expense is not buildings, but people. Every new or vacant position is carefully vetted and evaluated for its impact on the education of students or enhancing the sustainability of the seminary.

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

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.1

2007StrategicPlan.pdf with [2008StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2009StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2010StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf]
2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2013TurnaroundPlan.pdf
2014-5YrBudgetProjection.xlsx
2014PieChartWithIncomeExpensesForFY14.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf
2014SummarizedBudgetFY13-FY15.pdf

5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

Acknowledging that the quality of assessment data is improving and we are still learning how to incorporate best practices, the institution has already incorporated assessment data into our planning and allocation of resources. The curricular revision was driven by the evaluation of assessment data collected and analyzed by the faculty. Recent technological upgrades and

space reconfigurations to our classrooms are another example of working together in a planning process to make improvements based on our best assessment of student learning needs. As we collect data from the new student portfolio reviews, we will prioritize curricular needs and faculty resources in order to further enhance our student learning.

We are considering a shift in our model for linking these processes from a pyramid to a network. In this new scenario, the President's Table (formerly known as the Administrative Cabinet) would tie together the systems, interactions, and behaviors at the department or project level and also encourage greater communication across the organization.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.3
2012ComprehensiveAssessmentPlan.pdf
2014AssessmentCommitteeMembershipandCharge.pdf
2014DirectorInstEffectiveness.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

Luther's 2000 and 2007 institutional strategic plans intentionally and deeply engaged the perspectives of internal and external constituents. Recognizing disruptive patterns in our broader ecologies, the 2007 plan structurally resisted the temptation to impose a five-year shelf life on the plan. We understood that innovation and adaptation in our dynamic context required greater openness and greater discipline, so we resolved to annually assess the fit of our strategic plan, make adjustments as needed, and then reissue a new plan. While well-intended and, indeed, worthy of replication, the process by which this commitment was operationalized warrants closer attention.

Instead of presuming relevance for the traditional five-year period, our current planning framework, inaugurated in 2007, committed us to a discipline of ongoing assessment and resource realignment in response to changing circumstances. Annually updated editions of the strategic plan contained specific strategies and action steps for realizing each of the five institutional goals as well as an overarching theme or emphasis for that year. Updated institutional scorecards were then linked directly to the updated strategic plan each year. Progress made toward institutional vitality goals (as measured by the scorecards) was then reported out at predetermined times throughout the year, usually in conjunction with a meeting of the Boards. For example, the 2012-13 edition of the scorecard related the institution's overarching mission of forming evangelical public leaders for apostolic witness to a unique focus for that year (i.e., the Eight Cylinder Strategy) and then to specific impact areas (e.g., Strong Financial Resources) derived from the strategic plan's five goals (i.e., Goal 4).

These comprehensive 2000 and 2007 strategic plans were developed collaboratively with a variety of constituencies (Board, faculty, staff, students, alumni) and made available as public documents on our website. The work of assessing, adapting, and revising these plans, particularly between 2007 and 2012, however, was not widely shared. To correct for this concentration and regain some of our neglected capacities to see the whole, and to better anticipate and manage interdependencies within our organization, we have in recent years begun to pioneer a new deliberative form, the short-term task force. The most heralded use of this form allowed for a focused yet participatory inquiry into the sustainability of our campus bookstore.

The Strategic Alignment Proposal, in its core work, recommends a series of investigations driven by short-term task forces. The results of these investigations become the raw data and bridge to a new strategic planning process commencing next summer.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.1, 8.2.2.4
2007StrategicPlan.pdf with [2008StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2009StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2010StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf]
2012TaskForce5Report.pdf
2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2014BookstoreRecommendations.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

Clearly, this is a place where Luther Seminary has clearly fallen short in recent years, but our financial crisis was not wasted. We now have a much sounder understanding of our current capacity and a clearer definition of sustainability moving forward. Our interim VP for Finance and Administration, with the help of a capable staff and a new auditor, clarified our financial capacities so that we can better anticipate and allow for fluctuations in the future.

But in the early years of our recovery, the Blue Ribbon Report played a critical role in more precisely calculating instructional costs/revenue and proposing some more flexible models of faculty employment for the future. In our review of enrollment trends, we have added new resources towards recruiting students from other traditions and with part-time educational needs. Using our physical resources as well as building upon the great work of our Center for Lifelong Learning, Luther Seminary intends to broaden the revenue base for the future.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.1

2013FinancialSustainabilityDefinition.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2013TurnaroundPlan.pdf
2014AuditedFinancialStatements.pdf
2014FY15_5YrProjection.xlsx
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

The seminary tends to be keenly aware of emerging factors in theological education. Our specialized accrediting agency, Association of Theological Schools, is a great resource for collecting and disseminating data and emerging trends. For example, when we noticed demographic shifts and a developing need for distance learning, we began to experiment with a technologically-enhanced distributed learning program in the late 1990's.

Further documents and data:
2012LibraryWhitePaper.pdf
2012TaskForce5Report.pdf
2013BlueRibbonTaskForce.pdf
2013Issues_and_Opportunities.pdf
2014StrategicAlignmentProposal.pdf

5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

Luther Seminary is constantly trying to improve performance and become more systematic in this effort. In the last few years, systematic attention to constituent needs culminated in a major overhaul of our core degree programs. A Bookstore Task Force was established to systematically review the location and patterns of the bookstore in order to improve its chances for viability and growth. Enrollment management has used consultants to systematically review and reorganize their operations in order to yield and retain more students. With the introduction of an Office for Institutional Effectiveness, an Assessment Committee, and regular Assessment forum, Luther Seminary aspires to continue to regularize our systemic improvement efforts across all seminary programs and units.

5.D.1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

The seminary aspires to be a data-driven institution as we track, analyze, and use data to improve our decision-making. The two core practices of Luther's culture of assessment and accountability since 2007 have been our strategic plan itself, reviewed and updated annually, and a linked "dashboard" or "institutional scorecard" that was reviewed and updated quarterly. Informed by a deep sense of institutional purpose, these two comprehensive planning and

evaluation practices officially guided decision-making at Luther about programs, resources, constituencies, etc., between 2007 and 2012.

Annually updated editions of the strategic plan detailed specific strategies and action steps for realizing each of the five institutional goals as well as an overarching theme or emphasis for that year. Updated institutional scorecards were then linked directly to the updated strategic plan each year. Progress made toward institutional vitality goals (as measured by the scorecards) was then reported out at predetermined times throughout the year, usually in conjunction with a meeting of the Boards. For example, the 2012-13 edition of the scorecard related the institution's overarching mission of forming evangelical public leaders for apostolic witness to a unique focus for that year (i.e., the Eight Cylinder Strategy) and then to specific impact areas (e.g., Strong Financial Resources) derived from the strategic plan's five goals (i.e., Goal 4). The scorecard then identified an institutional home or owner for each impact area (i.e., "Finance and Administration; Seminary Relations") and a description of specific measures (e.g., "$ Revenues Received") that would then be used to assess effectiveness relative to a predetermined benchmark or target (i.e., "$24 million). The status of these efforts was then reported quarterly in the manner of a traffic control signal with red, yellow, or green shaded circles under the heading "Actuals."

Helpfully, annual revisions to the plan and scorecard, Luther's two-pronged approach to comprehensive institutional evaluation, were usually introduced at special kick-off gatherings for key constituencies (e.g., faculty, staff, etc.). Additionally, it was common practice to gather these groups again following Board meetings to present status updates. Similar presentations occurred even more frequently during the Great Recession. In summary, reports out from the institution's comprehensive evaluation process were widely shared and discussion was encouraged.

This was the state of the institution in the summer of 2012. But an unforeseen financial crisis severely tested the adequacy of our evidence of performance, revealed a leadership crisis, and forced an interim administration to engage in dramatic planning and evaluation procedures under duress. While the immediate response to these events was, in most cases, inspiring and decisive, it was not without costs. One of these costs that we are just now beginning to reckon with is the uncomfortable gap between our seemingly adequate—if not enviably robust—capacity for purposeful planning and evaluation and the descriptive reality of a financial crisis.

Amid the recovery, as we have regained a measure of financial stability and live into the possibilities of a new administration, it is becoming possible to step back to rebuild our evaluation assets. As indicated in response to other criterion (esp. 5.A.5), we have corrected the accuracy and transparency of our financial performance. In FY13, the Business Office and Office of Technology moved departmental budget reports to the seminary's intranet to simplify budget manager's ability to monitor their own budgets. Also, since October of 2012, monthly financial reports for the seminary as a whole are reviewed with the Board's Finance &

Administration Committee. These reports are then circulated to senior staff (collectively now referred to as "sitting" members of the President's Table and, formerly, the Administrative Cabinet) as well as to decentralized budget managers—along with any special appeals (e.g., to cut spending, conserve cash, finish or delay projects, etc.).

Beyond overall financial performance, Luther continues to closely monitor institutional performance in a number of traditional areas: admissions in recruitment, development in fundraising, and students in meeting course and program outcomes. Various units directly measure performance in other areas: the Office of Technology in customers served, Building and Grounds in energy usage, the library in resources used, etc. The ATS Questionnaires (Entering Student Questionnaire, Graduating Student Questionnaire, and Alumni Questionnaire) query student and alumni perceptions of a variety of seminary programs, services, and units. Some of this data is used for departmental improvement, some integrated into institutional surveys (IPEDS, ATS data collection) allowing for benchmarking, and some integrated in larger program or process evaluations.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.2 and 1.2.3
2007StrategicPlan.pdf with [2008StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2009StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2010StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2011StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf, 2012StrategicPlanUpdate.pdf]
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2014FY15_5YrProjection.xlsx
2014SampleDetailedFinancialStatement.pdf
2014StudentAdmissionsKeyMetrics.pdf

5.D.2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.
Luther Seminary uses performance data and our operational experience to make decisions and create strategies for improvement. The most significant "operational experience" is the financial and leadership crisis detailed above. While not a desired event, it has forced us to take a close look at the institution regarding finances, human resources, enrollment management,

technological infrastructure, academic programs, student housing, real estate, etc. Some decisions and improvement initiatives were fairly immediate: better budget data, reduction in staff and faculty, a new recruitment initiative, shared technological infrastructure with other colleges, suspension of the PhD program, sale of student apartments and other housing, etc. Each of these initiatives seeks to improve institutional effectiveness by focusing on our core capabilities and planning toward financial sustainability. A host of other learnings from our operational experience have formed the basis of our new strategic planning process outlined above.

Further documents and data:
ATS Standards: 1.2.3

Conclusion

Luther Seminary has deeply engaged the development of this self-study report over the past fifteen months. Key senior administrators, board members, faculty, and staff crafted early drafts that were then vetted by review teams representing cross-sections of the institution's constituencies, including students. These revised drafts were then subjected to the deliberations of the Self-study Team, revised again, and then submitted to key institutional governance committees (e.g., board, faculty, and staff) for final review.

The report and supporting documents underscore the many critical challenges facing theological and higher education today. In addition to those external challenges, this self-study was conducted during a particularly trying period within the life of the institution. While still recovering from the uncertainty brought on by our unexpected financial crisis, we innovated a new MA and MDiv curriculum under the leadership of an interim President, interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, and interim Vice President for Academic Affairs/Academic Dean.

This new curriculum boasts new, outcomes-based courses paired with a comprehensive assessment process that will create a more intimate and integrated learning experience for students while equipping faculty and administrators with better data for making ongoing educational improvements. Critically, the new curriculum and its embedded assessment processes are also newly attentive to the demands of financial sustainability. They rebuild and deepen long-standing virtuous habits of planning and evaluation, now allowing us to hold constituent needs, quality programing, *and* long-term sustainability in corrective tension. These habits will enable new, more strategic budgeting processes and property development agendas.

While the self-study was undertaken amidst great uncertainty and focused our attention on ongoing institutional challenges, the dominant perspective of the Self-study Team, the Self-Study Report, and the many contributors to the review process has been one of gratitude and confidence. Luther Seminary remains true to its core mission of educating leaders for Christian communities. And, because of this compelling mission, the institution and its constituencies successfully rallied to overcome serious financial challenges, restore equilibrium, and chart a sustainable course for the future. Luther has emerged from its time of crisis and interim planning and is now preparing to engage in a more formal and forward-looking strategic planning and budget alignment effort. With appropriate financial reporting tools now at its disposal and a renewed commitment to institutional assessment, the institution is equipped to realize that mission in a more sustainable manner.

Internal reviewers and stakeholders have consistently praised the Self-Study Report for its outstanding thoroughness and detail. Based on these judgments, we confidently commend the reaccreditation of Luther Seminary by the Higher Learning Commission.

Luther's clear and public mission to educate leaders for Christian communities guides operations—with integrity. The institution establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and procedures. It provides high quality education, wherever and however offerings are delivered. Robust and credible performance improvement processes ensure these quality educational programs, learning environments, and support services. Finally, Luther possesses sufficient financial, human, physical, and technical resources to fulfill its mission with increasing quality while also anticipating and responding to future challenges and opportunities. Luther Seminary now, more than ever, boldly but credibly plans for the future. Yet the self-study process also yielded the following new insights and opportunities that we have identified as priority areas for enhancement:

- Build a faculty and staff workforce and mission-focused culture that is dynamically attentive to the needs of our external constituencies, yet normed by new, long-term financial and performance expectations.

- Expand the deliberative process around institutional, administrative, and curricular planning and review.

- Refine the newly innovated first degree curriculum and embedded assessment processes based on the first year's experiences and feedback.

- Integrate First Degree (MA/MDiv) and Graduate Theological Education (MTh, DMin, and Phd) admissions into an overall enrollment strategy that identifies new audiences (and appropriate marketing tactics) in order to achieve moderate enrollment growth.

- Develop a campus real estate plan in relationship to this comprehensive enrollment strategy; link decisions regarding the use, rehabilitation and disposition of buildings and other property to the kinds of student and other stakeholder experience we hope to realize programmatically (and vice versa).

- Deepen and strengthen board governance, increasing diversity of skills and experiences in board members and assuring clear processes for strategic leadership as well as appropriate oversight of the seminary's operations.

In support of these broad strategic themes, the self-study process yielded an additional twenty-eight more particular recommendations:

1. Continue use of Luther Seminary's mission statement to shape priorities and planning throughout the institution. It informs the focus on leadership formation in the MA and MDiv programs, and in graduate theological education.
2. Bring a greater coherence to our resource management and lay the groundwork for a more extensive strategic planning process. Luther Seminary's planning and evaluation

process, while establishing a strong vision for the future, was insufficiently attentive to some areas, particularly our finances. Subsequent attention to questions of sustainability and alignment throughout the seminary has led to the development of the Strategic Alignment Proposal.

3. Enhance the planning and evaluation processes at Luther Seminary through creating systems of strategic planning and review at both the institutional and unit level.

4. Continue our strength in institutional integrity. We have been honest and appropriately transparent in our interactions with accreditors, government, ecclesiastic bodies, donors, students, employees and other constituencies, especially in navigating the financial crisis.

5. Improve diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture in hiring and enrollment. While Luther Seminary enjoys a strong international student presence and has done some significant work in creating conversations around diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture, we still have room for improvement. While hiring practices are already in place, the Enrollment Strategy Group will continue to develop new proposals for enhancement in this area.

6. Continue the innovative and creative work in implementing and improving the new MA and MDiv Curriculum. The redesign offers programs that are both centered and flexible, and suitable for both residential and distributed learning programs. The development of portfolios and cohorts of learners holds considerable promise for the future.

7. Leverage the clearer means of assessment being implemented in our new curriculum. The Assessment Committee and Learning Leader Team will and help integrate co-curricular activities and continue to monitor our work in this area.

8. Effectively coordinate efforts in study abroad, student/faculty exchanges, and global partnerships, in order to build upon our excellent track record with global engagement. A Global Dimensions of Theological Education Working Group has been tasked to study this.

9. Continue work in developing capacity for information literacy and lifelong learning among our students through the library's engagement with the curriculum, faculty within individual courses, and responsiveness to individual students.

10. Create processes and platforms to better capture and promote Luther Seminary's own intellectual output through establishing an institutional repository.

11. Update our faculty policies, hiring procedures, and culture to accommodate our diversifying models of faculty through use of both tenure and contract faculty.

12. Cultivate faculty strength and flexibility through implementing 5-year faculty reviews in addition to the various tenure and promotion reviews.

13. Develop faculty engagement with learning outcomes and assessment through all of our degree programs.

14. Fully integrate admissions for Graduate Theological Education (MTh, DMin, and Phd) into overall enrollment strategy.

15. Develop an overall enrollment strategy that identifies new markets for existing programs and marketing tactics with a plan for moderate enrollment growth.

16. Identify housing options and opportunities for our various student needs (full-time residential, international students, and distributive learning students).

17. Participate in shared governance with improved processes and systems for the work of individual committees and that of the Boards as a whole. Enhanced communication and collaboration between the Boards and the Faculty has resulted in mutual agreement around greater rigor in the sabbatical program; plans for more robust and regular reviews for tenured faculty; and much of the work that has become the basis for the Strategic Alignment Plan.

18. Continue to work toward achieving diversity of membership on the Boards, building upon the improved gender diversity in recent years. The Boards have begun a formal process to assess the diversity of capabilities and experience that will assure the Boards are competent to fulfill their fiduciary and strategic responsibilities.

19. Use the newly-established Presidential Support Committee to achieve the following: provide assistance and support in her leadership; annually review the President's performance and establish goals for the coming year; and work with the President in the performance appraisal, compensation planning and succession planning for the senior leadership team.

20. Build a faculty and staff workforce and culture that can thrive in a dynamic learning environment through collaboration, adaptability, and a relentless focus on our mission.

21. Implement best practices of financial planning and management, with a particular focus on aligning resource allocation with our strategic and tactical plans.

22. Steward our campus real estate holdings to enable learning communities of our students and others as articulated through the strategic plan; use that plan to drive decisions regarding the use, rehabilitation and disposition of buildings and other property.

23. Develop new strategies for scheduling courses and hosting campus-wide events to better account for the number of campus-based students with more complex scheduling needs.

24. Develop habits and practices of using the assessment of student learning outcomes for ongoing improvement and formal program reviews.

25. Build upon our successful Lifelong Learning programs to help the seminary adapt and respond to rapidly changing contexts of ministry.

26. Leverage the new curricula-required internship for the MDiv in order to develop and prepare new internship models.

27. Evaluate current and potentially new MA programs to be more competitive in meeting the needs and interests of our constituencies.

28. Explore and consider new models for the PhD program in light of the seminary's mission and the program's contribution to theological education.

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1996FoundationArticlesOfIncorporation.pdf	Luther Seminary Foundation Articles of Incorporation
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2003ATS_GSQ.pdf	ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire
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