Master of Theological Studies Program Review
Spring 2008
(Revision of 2007 MTS Program Review document)

I. Program Vision Statement and its Relation to St. Norbert College Mission and Core Values

The mission statement and the core values of St. Norbert College state that it is a Catholic liberal arts college in the Norbertine tradition and that it seeks to provide a superior education that is personally, intellectually, and spiritually challenging. The goal of the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) Program is the education and formation of students for creative ministry in the church and world. The program emphasizes the central Norbertine values of community and service rooted in the witness of the transformative love of God as embodied in Jesus of Nazareth. The core courses of the program provide students with foundational biblical, historical, systematic, and ethical knowledge of Christian theology. Courses in concentration areas build on this knowledge and present additional theological, historical, and practical background coupled with skill development in six specific areas of ministry (Catechetical Ministry, Faith-Based Management, Liturgy, Pastoral Ministry, Spirituality, and Youth Ministry). For a detailed description of the MTS program with a list of all core and specialization courses, see the MTS website at http://www.snc.edu/mts. A regular rotation of courses is now maintained at both sites.

The desired student outcome of the MTS Program is to develop knowledgeable, competent, and caring individuals with the capacity of bringing a creative theological and pastoral approach to the many problems that affect the local church community, and society. Through its core and specialization courses, the MTS Program provides students with opportunities for both intellectual challenge and integrative reflection. This student outcome aligns perfectly with the St. Norbert College mission and core values.

The Master of Theological Studies program was established in 1987 at the urging of the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay. The program evolved over time as it attempted to respond to the changes in theology, Church, society, and the student body. Three changes are significant to note. First, in 1998 the program responded to an invitation from the New Mexico Council of Churches (NMCC) and established a graduate degree program in Albuquerque. Second, the curricular program has recently been thoroughly reviewed and revamped in congruence with the student outcomes delineated in the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation, April 2003). This document identifies the key learning objectives for Parish Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministry Leaders, Pastoral Associates, and Parish Life Coordinators. Third, the program is expanding its marketing efforts and student and faculty recruitment to other area mainline Christian ecclesial communities. This effort includes distribution of materials to various congregations, the establishment of an ecumenical advisory board, and special scholarship possibilities. Each of these developments reflects the expansion of the original mission of the program to educate knowledgeable, competent leaders in the church.

The MTS program is overseen by the Director and the MTS Policy Committee at St. Norbert College in consultation with the Religious Studies discipline. (See Appendix A for the description and function of the Policy Committee). The New Mexico site is monitored by an Associate Director and an advisory committee. All recommended changes from the New Mexico site are reviewed and evaluated by the Director and the MTS Policy Committee at St. Norbert College, the Religious Studies discipline, the HFA Associate Dean, and the Dean of the College.
II. Program Demographics

A. Faculty

All Religious Studies faculty are candidates to teach in the MTS program. All core courses at the De Pere site are taught by full-time faculty from St. Norbert College. In Albuquerque, all core courses are taught by individuals with terminal degrees (i.e., Ph.D, STD, DTM). In addition, several St. Norbert College faculty from Communication and Media, Sociology, and Leadership Studies teach courses in specific specializations both in De Pere and Albuquerque. Additionally, faculty at both sites are drawn from the local community and have the required credentials and/or equivalent professional qualifications to teach at a masters level. All prospective faculty candidates are vetted initially by the MTS Policy Committee. Only the faculty candidates who pass this initial vetting are given to the St. Norbert College Religious Studies faculty for its review and final approval.

Current Faculty
(See Appendix B for abbreviated vitae of Core Course Faculty)

Director of MTS: Ebert, Howard Ph.D.
Bauman, Betsy, Ph.D*
Bolin, Thomas, Ph.D.
Burke Ravizza, Bridget, Ph.D
Lukens, Michael, Ph.D.
Wadell, Paul, Ph.D.
*Betsy will be teaching her first graduate course (Scripture and Biblical Interpretation) in spring 2009.

Complete Vitae of the following adjunct faculty for both sites are on file it the MTS Office.

Part Time/Adjunct Faculty
Bayer, Mary Ann, MTS
Bostwick, John (1991), M.A., Th.M.
Ciferni, Fr. Andrew, O. Praem, Ph.D.
Cortez, Carol, Ph.D-Communications
Demkovich, Fr. Michael, Ph.D
Faase, Thomas, Ph.D-Sociology
Fostner, Fr. Jay O.Praem, Ph.D-Psychology
Krautkramer, Sr. Geraldine, MRE
Martos, Joseph, Ph.D-Religion and Philosophy
Pichler, Tony, MTS
Wimmer, Diann, MA

Albuquerque Adjunct Faculty
Brown, Rev. Charles, MA-Sociology
Ciferni, Fr. Andrew, O. Praem, Ph.D.
Demkovich, Fr. Michael, O.P., Ph.D
Huggins, Rev. Kay, D.Min
Dupont Sandoval Joanne, Ph.D.
Ford, Rev. Wallace, D.Min
Huth, James, Ph.D
Steenson, Rev. Canon Jeffrey, Ph.D
Todd, Judith A., Ph.D
Wagner, Gunter, Ph.D
B. Number of majors

Nearly all students in the MTS Program are pursuing the same degree, the Master of Theological Studies. Within the program, students are differentiated based on an area of specialization. This information is presented in the chart under the next section “C. Number of Graduates by Area of Specialization and Location.” There are two exceptions to this statement. One, there are students who enroll for a course or two for enrichment or to meet specific renewal criteria (e.g., Pastoral Associate Certification from the diocese). Few students (i.e., approximately five a year, counting for no more than seven course enrollments annually) fall into this category. The second exception are students who enroll in the certificate program. In the past five years, five students received the Certificate of Theological Competency.

Since the early 1990s, the MTS program has offered two certificate programs: the Certificate of Theological Competency and the Certificate of Specialization. The requirements for each certificate were contained in the program’s handbook. Upon completion of the requirements, the student received a letter/certificate from the MTS Director stating that the individual had met the criteria. This procedure, no matter how inadequate, was deemed appropriate until the faculty passed a resolution detailing the requirements for all certificate programs in 2006. Consequently, the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee in last year’s program assessment, correctly noted that the current procedure for MTS certification is out of compliance. The certificates have been removed from the website until proper approval for the certificate program is received. Accompanying this revised program review is a request to reinstate the Certificate of Theological Competency, and in so doing formalize the certificate procedure so it can be documented on the student’s transcript.
## C. Number of Graduates by Area of Specialization and Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>De Pere</th>
<th>New Mexico</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 2001</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
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<td><strong>May 2002</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cert. of Theological Competency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>May 2003</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cert. of Theological Competency</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>May 2005</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cert. of Theological Competency</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 2006</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Religious Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 2007</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Religious Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 2008</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Ministry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## D. Ratio of Gradates to Majors

The ratio of graduates to majors varies significantly every year. For instance, at the De Pere site in 2004, the program had two graduates with an approximate student enrollment of forty while in 2001 there were eight graduates with approximately the same enrollment figures. In 2005, the New Mexico site did not have any graduates with an approximate student enrollment of fifteen, while in 2004 there were five graduates with roughly the same enrollment. The variance in ratios is due to the fact that nearly all MTS students hold full-time jobs while in the program. While some students manage a heavy course load, in addition to work responsibilities, others can accommodate only a single course per semester.

## E. Ratio of Majors to FTE Faculty

There is no full-time faculty member assigned to the MTS program. Typically one full-time Religious Studies faculty member teaches one graduate core course in the fall and spring semester in De Pere. For this teaching assignment, the faculty member is released from one undergraduate course. The other core courses are taught by the full-time faculty outside the regular academic calendar (i.e., J term and summer school). They receive a separate contract for these services. The MTS Director does not receive any released time for the position but is instead compensated with a stipend. Adjuncts or SNC full-time faculty outside regular contract time teach all core and specialization courses in New Mexico. Given these present staffing practices, one calculation of the major/FTE ratio is 60/.16.
F. Course Enrollments

As the chart below indicates, course enrollments in the program over the last five years remain relatively constant with the exception 2002-03. In that year, enrollments in De Pere and New Mexico dropped significantly, resulting in the cancellation of several courses and further decreasing the total enrollment number. In response to this troubling enrollment dip, the MTS Program Director, along with the Program Coordinator and Policy Committee, put together a marketing plan. The plan consisted of updating the MTS website, working with the Office of Communication to improve the appeal and availability of promotional material (e.g., brochures, bookmarks, etc.), and meeting with leaders from the Green Bay Diocese and other mainline Christian Churches to promote the program. Similar efforts to market the program occurred in New Mexico (e.g., meeting with area religious leaders, holding introductory lectures and receptions for the community). Greater flexibility in course scheduling was also introduced (e.g., courses were spread out more evenly throughout the year). As the numbers indicate, these efforts have resulted in increased enrollments.

**Total Number of De Pere Enrollments per Academic Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>35</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>85.5</td>
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Total Number of New Mexico Enrollments per Academic Year

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<td>2007-08</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To Review Enrollments by Academic Year, Semester, and Course see Appendix C

The chart below contains the grade distribution from the fall of 2005 to the 2008 J-Term. Grade distribution information for previous years is not currently available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. While the grade distribution is high compared to undergraduate work, it is in line with graduate school expectations. At a graduate level, a grade of B (3.0) indicates appropriate work. Also careful screening of potential students greatly minimizes the likelihood of a person who is incapable or unmotivated being accepted into the program.

Three additional notes about grades: One, “CT” indicates that students are continuing in the program. They have finished their course work but have not yet completed their thesis project. This designation was initiated to track students who are nearly finished and to offer a financial incentive (i.e., savings of $100.00) for them to finish their degree. Two, “S” is the grade now given to indicate successful completion of exams and thesis courses. Three, “NR” for the fall and J Term indicates students who should have registered for CT credit but have not yet been recorded. This issue is currently being addressed with the Registrar’s Office.
G. Average Class Size

Over the last five years, as reported in the 2007 Program Review, the average class size in De Pere was 7.48 students for core courses and 5.00 for specialization courses. For the same time period in Albuquerque, the average class size was 7.73 students for core courses and 9.1 for specialization courses. Over the past two years (2006-07, 07-08), the average class size in De Pere was 9.11 students for core courses and 3.97 for specialization courses. Over the same two year period in Albuquerque, the average class size was 7 students for core courses and 8.3 for specialization courses.

These averages indicate an increase in enrollment in De Pere and stable enrollment in Albuquerque in core courses. The increase is evident in the number of new students entering the program that has resulted in a record enrollment of eighteen in MTS 504 (Christian Ethics) this spring (2008). Albuquerque’s higher averages for specialization courses reflects their restriction of course offerings to two areas of concentration (i.e., Catechetical Ministry and Religious Education). De Pere’s lower average in specialization courses does not indicate fewer students but more options. Several years ago, Spirituality was added as a sixth concentration, in hopes of drawing additional students to the program. It was acknowledged that there was a risk of spreading enrollments out across more offerings instead of attracting a significant number of new students to the program. This risk was mitigated, in part, by cross-listing several courses. While it is too early to judge this strategy defective, the decreasing averages in specialization courses requires constant monitoring and evaluation. Two responses are possible if the trend continues: one, discontinue undersubscribed concentrations; or two, mount a more aggressive marketing strategy to attract students.
Students

Students in the MTS program are typically non-traditional students with more than half in their 40’s and 50’s. The program is seeing an increase in students applying to the program who are in their 20’s and 30’s (currently at 13). The program has five students in their 60’s and one in her 70’s. As mentioned above, most students are working adults who participate in the program while working full-time.

The MTS program utilizes and advertises an open enrollment policy which allows students to enroll in the program at any time. Students have up to eight years to complete the program. The majority of students complete the program in three to five years.


The open enrollment component of the program works very well as students are inquiring into the program year round. Student enrollment is sporadic and fluctuates greatly every year. However, the overall enrollment average for both programs over the past five years has been at about forty for De Pere and twenty for Albuquerque.

H. Advising Load Per Full-Time Faculty

The MTS Director serves as the primary advisor for all prospective and enrolled students. This is possible because the MTS curriculum is standardized, straightforward, and clear. Consequently, time spent on academic advisement is minimal. The MTS Policy Committee advises the MTS Director regarding course substitution and course equivalency requests.

The MTS Director, along with a representative from the Policy Committee, interviews each incoming student prior to registration. There is a discussion of the program structure, requirements, areas of specialization, and course rotation. (This rotation is also on the MTS website). The Director also visits core courses on occasion to answer questions and sets up individual meetings with students upon request. At the De Pere site, the Director traditionally is the instructor for MTS 510 (Integrative Colloquium) which is a pivotal course in which the student prepares his/her thesis project. In Albuquerque, the Associate Director visits the colloquium on several occasions during the term. While full-time faculty are not formally assigned advisees, a great deal of informal advisement and mentoring occurs in the core courses. All faculty are required to fill out a short evaluation on each student’s academic and personal performance in the course. These evaluations are reviewed by the Director in consultation with the Policy Committee. Two full-time Religious Studies faculty members sit on this committee. If serious concerns are noted, students are required to meet with the Director and a member of the Policy Committee. When students complete fifteen credits, the Policy Committee and the Director review their GPA and evaluation to determine whether or not they will be offered formal acceptance into the program.

I. Percent of Course Sections Taught by Part-Time Faculty

In De Pere, approximately 1/3 of the courses are taught by adjuncts. These adjuncts are highly qualified and teach only in specialization courses. In Albuquerque, only a very few courses are taught by St. Norbert full-time faculty. Four faculty members in Albuquerque who teach regularly in the program have received formal adjunct assistant professor status. This designation was granted after review and recommendation of the Religious Studies faculty.
III. Teaching and Learning, Scholarly/Creative Efforts and Service

Teaching effectiveness is evaluated through various means: review of syllabi, student written evaluations, and student interviews. The most extensive assessment data on teaching effectiveness is student written evaluations. The evaluation form (see Appendix D) that has been used since the early 1990s was one constructed by Father Richard Ver Bust in light of evaluation forms used by comparable programs (e.g., St Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, WI). The form was revised this year in response to the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee’s (CEPC) request that the undergraduate SOOT forms be used in graduate courses. The impetus behind this request was to gather data that could be normed within a larger pool. Consequently this past year, the program has used two evaluative forms: the undergraduate (SOOTS) form and a revised form asking questions that are relevant to graduate courses and nontraditional students (See Appendix E). This hybrid approach will have to be reviewed to see if pertinent information is still being obtained.

With that said, student written evaluations are extremely useful in supplying student feedback to both the Director and instructor on specific instructional items: instructor knowledge, instructor preparation, quality of student interaction, organization of class time, encouraged interest, allocation of time, balance between theory and practice, response to needs. Evaluations are distributed for every course and reviewed by the Director. Instructors receive copies of their evaluations often with an accompanying note highlighting significant patterns.

As is clear from the chart below, overall, students rate faculty very highly. Two areas of concern for the De Pere faculty are (1) organizing class time well and (2) keeping discussion on track. These concerns are listed predominantly for two instructors. Both have been alerted to this concern. New Mexico student evaluations are very strong and reflect the strength of the adjunct faculty pool in Albuquerque. Finally, only in a few rare instances, student criticism was substantial enough to warrant the individual not being invited to return to teach. These instances occurred only with instructors in the specialization courses.

A. Indicators of Teaching and Advising Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SNC CORE FACULTY-De Pere</th>
<th>(142 evaluations)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Instructor:</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Has command and knowledge of the subject</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Was well prepared to discuss, relate, contrast various points of view</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Encouraged student interaction</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Organized class time well</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 Stimulated further interest and discussion</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 Was able to keep discussion on track and open to all</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 Allotted sufficient time for class discussion</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8 Balanced and informational and pastoral approach to the subject matter</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Student:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9 Appreciated the course as responsive to his/her needs in preparation for pastoral ministry.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ADJUNCT FACULTY-De Pere**
(73 evaluations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Instructor:</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Consistently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Has command and knowledge of the subject</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Was well prepared to discuss, relate, contrast various points of view</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Encouraged student interaction</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Organized class time well</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 Stimulated further interest and discussion</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 Was able to keep discussion on track and open to all</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 Allotted sufficient time for class discussion</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8 Balanced and informational and pastoral approach to the subject matter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Student:**

| Q9 Appreciated the course as responsive to his/her needs in preparation for pastoral ministry. | 0% | 0% | 1% | 27% | 72% |

**ADJUNCT FACULTY-Albuquerque**
(160 evaluations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Instructor:</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Consistently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Has command and knowledge of the subject</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Was well prepared to discuss, relate, contrast various points of view</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Encouraged student interaction</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Organized class time well</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 Stimulated further interest and discussion</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 Was able to keep discussion on track and open to all</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 Allotted sufficient time for class discussion</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8 Balanced and informational and pastoral approach to the subject matter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Student:**

| Q9 Appreciated the course as responsive to his/her needs in preparation for pastoral ministry. | 0% | 1% | 5% | 14% | 80% |

Syllabi for every course are reviewed by the Director prior to the term. In numerous cases syllabi were modified and revised in light of the review.

The program recently began surveying students once they complete the program. (See Appendix F.). This evaluation asks students to rate certain aspects of the program such as the application process, staff (director and coordinator), and faculty. The evaluation also asks students their opinion about the program strengths and weaknesses.
The initial program evaluation inadvertently did not contain a rating scale for the questions. We have since revised the evaluation to include a rating scale of 0-4. This revised evaluation will be distributed to approximately ten students sometime in late May, 2008.

**B. Scholarly/Creative Efforts**
(This information is directly from the Religious Studies Program Review dated February 20, 2006.)

Given the amount of teaching and service borne by Religious Studies faculty, the amount and quality of published research produced by the discipline is nothing less than remarkable. Religious Studies faculty have been recognized for their contributions as scholars by both the College community and national organizations of peers.

*Publications*
1) Three published books, one of which earned an award from the Catholic Press Association
2) One edited volume
3) Six book projects presently in press awaiting publication or under contract
4) Seventeen articles in refereed/peer-reviewed journals
5) Twenty-four papers given at academic conferences

*Grants*
Nine grants awarded for research purposes.

*Awards & Achievements*
1) The Donald B. King Award for outstanding scholarship, 2002 (Paul Wadell);
2) Four faculty granted academic tenure;
3) One faculty promoted to full Professor.

**C. Collegial and Community Service**
(This information is directly from the Religious Studies Program Review dated February 20, 2006.)

The faculty/academic staff dedicates time and effort to serving the profession, the College, and the community. Howard Ebert and the MTS program as a whole are members of:

- AGPIM (Association of Graduate Schools in Ministry)
- NALM (National Association for Lay Ministry)
- NAGP (National Association of Graduate Professionals).

In addition, our full-time RS faculty who regularly teach in the program are members of various organizations such as:

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1 Discipline = full-time, tenure-track faculty who began at the College anytime in the years 2000-2004 and are still at the College: Thomas Bolin, Bridget Burke Ravizza, Howard Ebert, Michael Lukens, Tom Reynolds, and Paul Wadell. Not included are one retired faculty member, a faculty member who was hired in 2002 but who left in 2004 for another institution, and a faculty member hired in 2005. Inclusion of these three individuals would increase the numbers of publications, specifically books and peer-reviewed articles.
The MTS program also utilizes adjunct faculty who bring to the program their outstanding reputations in their specialized areas of theological education. These instructors are members of such respected associations as:

- New Mexico Conference of Churches
- College Theology Society
- American Academy of Religion
- Catholic Theological Society of America
- Association for Religion and Intellectual Life
- National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers
- Catholic Biblical Association

Service to the College:
(This information is directly from the Religious Studies Program Review dated February 20, 2006.)

Faculty/academic staff have provided many hours of service to St. Norbert College. The significant amount of service provided by members of the Religious Studies faculty attests both to their commitment to the common good of the College as well as the regard in which they are held by their colleagues and administrators.

**College-Wide Committees**
Religious Studies Faculty have served on twenty-two different College-wide committees. Because more than one Religious Studies faculty member has served on the same committee, the discipline’s actual service is equivalent to twenty-eight College-wide committees.²

1) Faculty Personnel Committee (3)
2) Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee
3) General Education and Honors Committee (2)
4) International Education Committee
5) Assessment Committee

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² Numbers in parentheses designate how many RELS members have served on that particular committee.
6) Harassment Resource Committee (3)
7) Campus Master Planning Committee
8) Student Life Committee
9) College Community Relations Board
10) Enrollment Management Committee
11) Designated Gifts Committee
12) Humanities and Fine Arts Advisory Council (2)
13) Faculty Advisory Council
14) Peace & Justice Advisory Council
15) Leadership Studies Advisory Council
16) IBLAS Advisory Council
17) Women’s and Gender Studies Advisory Council
18) Library Advisory Council
19) Mission and Heritage Advisory Council
20) Office of Faith, Learning and Vocation Advisory Council (2)
21) Strategic Planning and Resources Allocation Advisory Council
22) Board of Trustees Mission & Heritage Committee

Task Forces & Search Committees
1) General Education Task Force
2) Revenue Enhancement Task Force
3) Search Committee for Academic Dean and Vice President
4) Search Committee for an Associate Academic Dean
5) Search Committee for President

Administrative Positions Held by Religious Studies Faculty
1) Dean of the College & Academic Vice President
2) Humanities & Fine Arts Divisional Chair/Associate Dean
3) Director of Faculty Programs in Lilly Grant Program in Faith, Learning & Vocation

Committees Requiring the Participation of Some All Religious Studies Faculty
1) Heidgen Chair Committee on the Center for Catholic & Norbertine Studies*
2) Killeen Chair of Philosophy & Theology*
3) Master of Theological Studies Policy Committee

Other Collegial Activities
1) Guest lectured in eight different class meetings
2) Participated on nineteen different panels
3) Gave twenty-five presentations in various College fora
4) Organized two panel discussions

Service to the Community:
(This information is directly from the Religious Studies Program Review dated February 20, 2006.)

The faculty/academic staff have not limited their efforts to the profession and the college. They have accepted widely varied responsibilities to serve in the local community. These include:
Presentations at Area Churches/Synagogues

3 Asterisk denotes committee on which all members of the discipline sit.
Fifty-eight presentations at twenty-three different churches/synagogues, representing seven different faiths.

*Teaching for the Diocese of Green Bay*
Ten presentations for various Religious Education programs of the Diocese

*Other Presentations*
Nine different presentations made in various religious and secular venues.

*Membership on Service Boards*
Family Service Board  
Ecumenical Commission of the Green Bay Diocese  
St. Vincent Hospital Ethics Committee  
St. Mary’s Hospital Ethics Committee

In addition to the extensive record of the Religious Studies Faculty’s collegial and community service, it is noteworthy for the present review to note that Professors Howard Ebert and Paul Wadell have given numerous presentations for participants in the MTS programs both in De Pere and Albuquerque.

**IV. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

Two years ago a rubric was designed to assess the quality of thesis projects. The rubric was based on the learning outcomes adopted by the MTS program from the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers*. This rubric was utilized by an outside evaluator to assess recently completed thesis projects. The thesis project was the first item chosen for comprehensive assessment because it serves as the culmination of the student’s program and has received the most specification and elaboration of requirements. The Director and the MTS Policy Committee is currently reviewing the pool of questions for the qualifying exams and will also construct a rubric for them. This task is timely because qualifying exams are now transcribable. Below is a description of the learning outcomes, the results of the outside evaluator, and the steps that are being taken to respond to areas of concern.

**A) Viable Assessment Plan**

The following learning outcomes of the MTS Program are based on the objectives outlined in the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation, April 2003). This document identifies the key learning objectives for Parish Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministry Leaders, Pastoral Associates, and Parish Life Coordinators.

1. Students will identify and, when appropriate, apply the distinctive knowledge, skills, and methods from the disciplines of scriptural studies, systematic theology, historical theology, Christology, Christian ethics, and ecclesiology.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to use reflectively and critically the resources of scripture, tradition, reason, and contemporary knowledge to address pastoral issues.
3. Students will identify significant theological differences within the Christian tradition and the impact of these differences upon the history and practices of the Christian Church, especially the Roman Catholic ecclesial community.
4. Students will recognize and identify the dialectic relationship between the Christian Church and the world.
5. Students will reflect on and articulate the relationship between the art of theology and their experience of faith and ministry.

**Source of Evidence**

There are three sources of evidence for program assessment: (1) the thesis project; (2) programmatic evaluation in light of national benchmarks; and, (3) Qualifying Exam.

Master’s Thesis Project: Students submit a Master’s thesis project requiring extensive research in their area of specialization. The purpose of the thesis project is to analyze a significant pastoral issue or concern and to propose a response. Both the analysis and response need to be grounded in a theologically sound approach. This approach must be informed by critical, focused, coherent reflection and must include appropriate resources from scripture, from the Christian tradition, from ecclesial documents, and from contemporary experience and culture. (Students are expected to follow the essential components of theological reflection and their interrelationship as outlined in the Whitehead's book, *Method in Ministry*.)

Programmatic Evaluation: The program itself, specifically the specializations, continues to be assessed as to its relevance and success in developing creative leaders. Each specialization was recently reviewed (2004-06) by the MTS Policy Committee in light of the outcomes identified in the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation, April 2003).

Qualifying Exam: The qualifying exam is taken after all or most coursework is completed. The exam includes questions in six areas reflecting the learning outcomes stated above. Students answer three of the six questions, based on their specialization. The examination seeks to determine if students have a grasp of the basic theological material and if they are able to apply that knowledge to a specific pastoral question. Again, the pool of questions for the exam are currently being re-evaluated and a rubric will be constructed after the revision.

**B) Direct Evidence**

The most systematic and direct assessment of the program has occurred in the areas of programmatic and thesis project evaluation. The faculty is currently reviewing and revising the qualifying exams. This revision is necessary in light of recent changes in course offerings and in specialization requirements. (See Appendix G for the former program requirements and the website, snc.edu/mts, for the new program structure). These revisions reflect both the recommendations of diocesan personnel and the benchmarks established by in the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation, April 2003).

Dr. Karen Koenig conducted a systematic and detailed evaluation of seventeen MTS final thesis projects (ten from De Pere students, reviewed in 2006; seven from Albuquerque students, reviewed in 2007; see Appendix H for CV). While Professor Koenig taught several undergraduate courses at the College, she had no connection with the MTS program. She was not personally acquainted with any of the authors of these theses. Therefore, her evaluation can be understood to be both anonymous and disinterested. Professor Koenig’s evaluation utilized a rubric constructed by the MTS Policy Committee based on the proposed learning outcomes of the program (See Appendix I). Below is a summary of her assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis projects. Please note that
each of Professor Koenig’s noted weaknesses has been considered by the MTS Policy Committee. The concerns, as well as the means for addressing each concern, are described below. The listed responses formally demonstrate the first round of “closing the loop” of assessment for the MTS Program.

**Strengths**

Dr. Koenig described the strengths of the papers this way:

The seventeen theses represent a wide range of subject matter in addition to some difference in ability and sophistication. In general, the theses are original and thoughtful. Almost all of them demonstrated enthusiasm on the part of the authors for the chosen subject. In every case it was clear that the topic grew out of a personal commitment to the theological issues on the part of the author. In almost every case, the author was able to support his or her personal position without relying too heavily on opinion and emotion. The theses were, on the whole, well-researched and well-argued. Clearly, the process by which each student discerns his or her thesis topic is working well and should be commended and continued.

Authors were able to synthesize secondary source material and to build upon the theological foundations of others in order to construct a new argument.

**Weaknesses**

1. **Uniformity (Albuquerque & De Pere)**
   
   **Evaluator noted:** There is a lack of uniformity with regard to format (including margins and font,) and citation method. The evaluator recommended that the MTS program adopt a set of guidelines for the students to adhere to with regard to form and presentation.

   **Program response:** Beginning in the spring of 2006, the MTS program officially adopted MLA as the style all students must follow in their writing. This style has been adopted not only for the final thesis, but for all research papers written by students in the MTS. In addition, students are now required to have their thesis projects approved by the Coordinator of Library Services before the thesis discussion. The librarian reviews both for uniformity as well as usage of the MLA format, and contacts the MTS Coordinator in cases where there are significant problems. The Coordinator of Library Services reviews the thesis again before the final copy is printed and bound.

2. **Dialectic between Church and the World (De Pere)**
   
   **Evaluator noted:** The majority of theses did not explore the dialectic between the church and world, but rather explored issues internal to the life of the church.

   **Program response:** The Policy Committee determined that issues internal to the life of the church are appropriate topics for MTS thesis projects. Therefore the language of the assessment rubric has been changed. The former wording was: “Ability to identify and explore the dialectic between the Christian church and the world.” The wording adopted by the Policy Committee in January 2007 is: “Ability to identify and explore the relationship between the Christian church and the historical cultural context.”

3. **Social Scientific research methods and practices (De Pere)**
   
   **Evaluator noted:** There was evidence that students were not utilizing ethical standards in relation to subjects, particularly by violating standards of anonymity.

   **Program response:** The MTS director has contacted Professor Ray Zurowski, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, for assistance in addressing this concern. Professor Zurowski has agreed to prepare or to present guidelines for research protocol and ethics. This information will be incorporated into the Integrative Colloquium (510). Students who plan on utilizing an extensive or
sophisticated social research strategy will be referred to a member of the social science faculty or the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. These referrals will be on an individual basis and at the discretion of the instructor of the Integrative Colloquium.

4. **Proofreading/editing (De Pere)**

   **Evaluator noted:** In some cases the thesis papers suggested the need for another draft, either for the sake of clarity of ideas or for purposes of simple proofreading.

   **Program response:** In reviewing the evaluator’s comments, the Policy Committee affirmed that the Thesis Director’s role is **not** that of editor. In January 2008 the Policy Committee recommended revisions to the Guidelines for Thesis Directors. In the newly revised guidelines, it is made clear that it is the student’s responsibility to turn in drafts to their Thesis Director that do not contain typos, grammatical errors, etc. Thesis Directors are informed that they should return to the writer any drafts containing significant errors. In addition, Thesis Directors are encouraged to put students in contact with the Writing Center or to recommend a religious studies student who might be hired as an editor. Finally, as mentioned in #1 above, the role of the Coordinator of Library Services is proving helpful in identifying the need for proofreading or editing.

5. **Incorporation of opposing viewpoints (Albuquerque)**

   **Evaluator noted:** “The inclusion of competing ideas and forces would have improved the majority of these works, making the arguments of the authors both stronger and more convincing.”

   **Program response:** It bears noting that the outside evaluator used the new rubric adopted in January 2007 for her work evaluating the Albuquerque thesis papers. In addition to the revised wording mentioned above in #2, the January 2007 rubric also includes an added item. That item reads: “Ability to demonstrate awareness of alternative viewpoints/criticisms and address them appropriately.” The MTS Director met with the instructor for the capstone in Albuquerque, and the Associate Director in early March 2008 and discussed this concern. This requirement will be highlighted in the Integrative Colloquium and the criteria contained in the rubric will also be discussed.

6. **Broader contextualization (Albuquerque)**

   **Evaluator noted:** Students over-generalized their experiences and findings, and need to better situate their arguments “within the wider body of theological reflection and discourse.”

   **Program response:** The MTS Director met with the instructor for the capstone in Albuquerque, and the Associate Director in early March 2008 and discussed this concern. The Associate Director agreed to alert faculty teaching in the program of this concern and encourage them to address the problematic nature of over-generalization. This concern will be noted in the Integrative Colloquium and highlighted in responses to thesis project proposals.

7. **Scriptural foundations (Albuquerque)**

   **Evaluator noted:** With a single exception, the Albuquerque thesis papers lacked sufficient scriptural exegesis and analysis.

   **Program response:** The MTS Director met with the instructor for the capstone in Albuquerque, and the Associate Director in early March 2008 and discussed this deficiency. The Associate Director agreed to alert faculty, especially those teaching MTS 503 (Scripture and Biblical Interpretation), of this concern. Inclusion of the use and importance of scripture and scriptural interpretation will be listed as one of the learning outcomes for MTS 503.
C) Indirect Evidence

The success of our students is a clear indicator of the program’s effectiveness. Graduates of the program currently hold such positions as Pastoral Associate, Liturgist, Hospital or Hospice Chaplain, Director of Administration at the Diocese of Green Bay, Parish Director, Director of Religious Education, Campus Minister, Deacon, Religion Teacher, Associate Editor of the Compass, Director of Evangelism and Worship at the Diocese of Green Bay, Director of Youth Ministry, Business Administrator, Director of Music, Catholic High School Teachers, and RCIA Director. The positive comments by students on their evaluations and by graduates about the program are additional indirect indicators of the program’s success.

V. Other Indicators of Program Achievement and Contribution

A) Quality of Entering Students
All entering MTS students have a Baccalaureate or equivalent recognized degree from an accredited institution with a minimum 3.0 GPA (or previous graduate work with a 3.25 GPA). Entering students must provide transcripts, three letters of recommendation, a 500 word essay, and a personal interview with the MTS Director and one member of the Policy Committee.

B) Contributions to General Education and Other College Programs
As a graduate program, MTS does not regularly contribute to General Education at St. Norbert College. The program has, on very rare occasions, allowed undergraduate, senior religious studies majors to take, or to sit in on, a graduate level theology course. Additionally, the MTS does have a small library budget. Many books that are ordered through the MTS budget are also used by the undergraduate program.

C) Use of Technology
The use of technology is not required as an enhancement in the learning process of an MTS degree. However, in the J-term of 2004, the program offered a video-linked course between the two campuses (De Pere and Albuquerque). There were fourteen students enrolled. The students on both campuses were pleased overall with the concept of a video link despite a few technological difficulties. The connections were lost at times and the sound quality was occasionally poor. The student and instructor (Fr. Andrew Ciferni, O.Praem.) evaluations were very positive.

The only other negative aspect of this type of course is the cost involved. The phone costs alone were $150 per hour and the Albuquerque campus had to rent a room off campus that had the technology to link to the campus. The De Pere classroom site was at the Kress Inn, which is not the best venue for classroom instruction.

D) Uniqueness/distinctiveness of program
One, the MTS Program began as a collaborative effort between the Diocese of Green Bay, Silver Lake College and St. Norbert College. Such collaboration, though recently threatened, is both unique and healthy. The Commissioned Ministry Program run through Silver Lake college is seen as a feeder system for the MTS program. This extensive array of educational opportunities for
ministry is impressive. It is noteworthy that having program graduates at several of the highest levels of diocesan leadership has been very beneficial for the relationship between the College and the Bishop.

Two, the MTS program is conceived as a synthesis between academic rigor and a pastorally attentive approach. In order to combine these two approaches, a model of practical theology was developed in the mid 1990’s. This synthesis is not without its drawbacks as prospective students are often drawn to less rigorous or ideologically focused programs.

Three, the MTS program, especially in Albuquerque, is intentionally ecumenical. In fact the initial requesting body was the Ecumenical Institute of Ministry (EIM) which was the educational arm of the New Mexico Conference of Churches (NMCC). While the results have been somewhat mixed in recruiting students from other mainline Christian Churches, both programs have moved toward more diverse religious representation among students and faculty.

E) MTS Contributions to Diversity Goals

Currently the MTS program does not contribute to ethnic and racial diversity goals. There are ongoing conversations with the Diocese and the Norbertines to recruit first generation Hispanic, Hmong and Native Americans to both the College’s undergraduate and graduate programs.

F) Accreditation Status

The MTS program in De Pere was accredited in 1987 and the Albuquerque site in 1998 by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

G) Evidence of Strategic Planning Progress

The MTS Strategic Plan was filed on December 17, 2003 (See Appendix J). The strengths and weaknesses of the program as outlined in that document are current with two notable exceptions. One, in 2003 the program lacked an assessment plan. This is no longer the case. Two, also in 2003 there was uncertainty about how to expand the program even though funding had been obtained through the Lilly Grant for that purpose. Since that time, the MTS Director, MTS Policy Committee and the Director of the Lilly Program worked to establish and implement a plan. The plan is twofold: (1) Review and revise the current curriculum in light of the learning objectives outlined in the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers and (2) begin an aggressive marketing plan. The first part of the plan was completed in the Fall of 2006 and currently marketing is being done for the revised program. Marketing has included an updated website, printed bookmarks and brochures, and attendance at various diocesan functions by the Director to talk about the program.

Four goals from the 2003 Strategic Plan continue to need attention. The Program has not yet extended association with major academic and professional societies. The Program staff has begun the work of formalizing the appropriate budget and respective responsibilities for the Albuquerque program. A formation component is not yet fully developed, though the Director of the MTS and the Director of The Program of Faith Learning and Vocation have met with MTS students on this issue, and several pilot events were offered this academic year. Finally, the MTS Policy Committee has begun to discuss with diocesan representatives marketing methods that can increase enrollments, thus addressing enrollment questions.
H) Efforts to Attract Grant Funding
The primary focus of Part B of the grant obtained from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. in December 2000 was to broaden the MTS Program through a redesign of courses and development of sessions with a focus on lay ministry training. This redesign was based on national standards. The grant also included funding for a market study and for the development of a market plan. In the most recent proposal for a sustainability grant from Lilly, there is money allocated to address the formative components of the program.

I) Peer and Aspirant Institutions
Of the eleven peer institutions, two have graduate programs in Theological Studies: Loras College and St. John’s University. One of the aspirant institutions, St. Michael’s College, has a graduate program in theology. Below are brief descriptions of the three programs.

General Information from the Loras College
The Archdiocese of Dubuque and Loras College have joined in a cooperative mission designed to meet the developing ministry needs of the regional Catholic Church and provide opportunities for continuing education and degree study. While dioceses and religious orders have made substantial investments in the education of priests and sisters for service in the church, there are increasing numbers of laity who are now assuming many new duties. Therefore, there is a corresponding need for new levels of training for the laity as the church continues to move in the direction of professional lay ministries.

At Loras, the Pastoral Education Program (PEP) offers graduate courses designed to meet professional needs. The PEP provides individuals with the chance to explore the opportunities and challenges of ministry, both as a special interest or as a degree program. Among those who could make use of the program are: directors of religious education; family and marriage ministers; liturgical ministers; members of boards, councils and committees; ministers in Christian initiation; pastoral administrators; pastoral associates; permanent deacons; social ministers; teachers of religious education; and youth ministers.

The Loras program uses online components in order to meet the needs of those who live a distance from Dubuque, and whose jobs and families limit their available time for class meetings. Each course is designed for 3 class meetings of 5-6 hours each, preceded by two to three weeks of work on one’s own and online.

Master of Arts in Theology at St. John’s University in MN
Through a study of the sources and methods of theological investigation and through an examination of the contributions of both the tradition and contemporary scholarship, students develop a critical, historically-rooted approach to theology. The students become aware of their social location and the context within which they engage in theological discussions. The six areas of concentration provide opportunities for more directed study in Scripture, Liturgy, Systematics, Church History, Spirituality, or Monastic Studies.

Theology and Pastoral Ministry at St. Michael College in Vermont
The Graduate Theology and Pastoral Ministry program offers our diverse student body with a wide selection of courses taught by internationally recognized scholar-teachers. The Program
emphasizes the development of the whole person in the context of a Christian community. Theological studies, liturgy and prayer and recreational activities are all integral elements of the program. During the summer months, the faculty members and most students reside on campus, and this contributes to the atmosphere of friendship, hospitality, and community for which Saint Michael’s is well known.

Analysis

All three programs distinguish between certain core areas and areas of specialization, as does the St. Norbert MTS program. The three program areas also have distinctive features reflecting their particular traditions and locations (e.g., monastic studies at St. John’s University). Requirements for admission and for graduation are very similar. It is noteworthy that both Loras college and St. John’s University offer online courses.

J) Success Indicators for Career Preparation

This topic is covered within C)” Indirect Evidence” and V)” Other Indicators of Program Achievement and Contribution.”

K) Other Indicators of Program Quality

The MTS Program’s excellent academic reputation in the area is indicated by the number of faculty asked to give presentations in the local community.

L) Response to Previous Program Review or Other Assessments

Below is a chart containing basic financial and budgeting information about the MTS program. With the exception of FY 07, the program has generated positive revenue. The net gains are underestimated up to $18,000 because under current practice, the Finance Office does not record scholarship money as revenue. Please note that his is not a discount, but real endowed scholarship money. Heather Kaminski is in conversation with the Finance Office to change this practice. The drop of revenue from FY 03, 04, 05 to 06 is to a large extent, the result of the discontinuation of the Lily grant.

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Note: De Pere and Albuquerque orgs were combined in FY08.