

NDS Statement of Institutional Effectiveness

Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology (NDS) measures its effectiveness through the use of sustainable, institution-wide assessment processes which measure the extent to which each department and program is achieving its stated outcomes. In accordance with its mission, NDS has traditionally offered two graduate degree programs: the Master of Divinity and the Master of Arts (Theological Studies). In 2014, NDS was approved by SACSCOC to offer three new programs: a post-baccalaureate Bachelor of Philosophy (Philosophy for Theological Studies), a Master of Arts (Philosophy for Theological Studies), and a Master of Arts in Pastoral Leadership. All of the master's degree programs at NDS are approved by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

Each of these degree programs must complete annual Institutional Effectiveness Plans which show how the student learning outcomes are being met using both direct and indirect data. This annual review of data allows the faculty to examine the effectiveness of the individual programs and development program improvements based on the data. However, to document the institution's success with respect to student achievement, the specific goals of each program must be taken into consideration.

Master of Divinity Degree

As the primary mission of Notre Dame Seminary is the preparation of men for ministerial priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church, the seminary offers those preparing for the priesthood the Master of Divinity degree program of study. Two measures used to document the program's success with respect to student achievement are enrollment numbers and percent of graduates who are recommended for ordination. Enrollment in the Master of Divinity program grew from 83 in the 2013 – 2014 academic year to 124 seminarians in the 2015 – 2016 academic year. In addition, in the past three years (2013 – 2016), 100% of the 48 graduates were recommended for ordination to the priesthood.

Master of Arts (Theological Studies)

The Master of Arts (Theological Studies) degree is offered to non-seminarian applicants preparing for leadership and catechetical roles in the Church and to anyone seeking to deepen his or her understanding of Catholic theology. Two measures used to measure the student achievement in this program are enrollment numbers and percentage of students who gain employment in fields related to the degree. The Master of Arts in Theological Studies program declined from 54 students enrolled in the 2012 – 2013 academic year to 43 students enrolled in the 2015-2016 academic year. Over the last four years (2013 – 2016), the program has produced 33 graduates, and of these, 88% have succeeded in realizing their career intentions in fields related to the Master of Arts in Theological Studies Degree.

Master of Arts (Philosophy for Theological Studies)

The Master of Arts (Philosophy for Theological Studies) program is offered to give more academically oriented seminarians in the Pre-theology program a deeper exposure to philosophy in preparation for graduate theology studies; it is also open to non-seminarians who

are interested in the study of philosophy, especially those whose professions would benefit from refined critical thinking and logical reasoning skills. This two-year program was accredited in the 2014-2015 school year, and so has relevant data from one class of program completers. Two criteria used to measure the success of the program are enrollment, reflecting the general attractiveness of the program, and the graduation rate. Of the inaugural class, 4 students enrolled in the program initially, out of a total Pre-theology class of ten (40%), reflecting a desire among the students for more rigorous studies in philosophy. The second year class had three out of a total Pre-theology enrollment of 13 (23%), which is again a good sign of interest. With respect to graduation for the inaugural class, one of the students had left the seminary prior to completion, and so all three remaining students completed the program (100%) and are going on the graduate theology studies. Despite the normal difficulties experienced in initiating a new program, the data point to success; it is noted we have yet to attract non-seminarian students, but we are working on recruitment for that cohort.

Bachelor of Philosophy (Philosophy for Theological Studies)

The Bachelor of Philosophy (Philosophy for Theological Studies) program is offered to college graduates who need to transition into seminary life and complete the undergraduate academic courses in philosophy, theology, and Latin required by the USCCB's Program for Priestly Formation. This program, therefore, aims to prepare men to study theology at the graduate level in preparation for ordination. Two measures for assessing the success of this program are enrollment, which shows how well the program attracts interested students, and the percentage of men who go on to continue priestly formation at the graduate level. The introduction of the B.Phil. degree program witnessed a notable increase in enrollment: in 2013-14, prior to being accredited to offer the degree, there were 10 students enrolled in the two-year program; during the 2014-15 year in which students were grandfathered in, enrollment was 15; and, in 2015-16, when the program was advertised to dioceses, enrollment rose to 21. Therefore, in two years, enrollment has increased 110%. Similarly, the retention rate for program completers has been good: over the last three years, 16 of 18 program completers, or 88%, went on to graduate theology studies (though we note that 6 students discerned out of the Pre-theology program before completing it during those years). On both these counts, the program appears to be successful.

Master of Arts in Pastoral Leadership

The Master of Arts in Pastoral Leadership degree program is composed of students who have completed the Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry (ILEM) Commissioning program and wish to take additional theology courses to earn a master's degree. ILEM is committed to educating and forming men and women in the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions of lay ecclesial ministry. Through the ILEM formation process, candidates will continue to discern their call to ministry in service to God and his Church, cultivate a Catholic understanding of lay ecclesial ministry, be formed in the life of Christian virtues and deepen their grasp of the Catholic Faith through theological studies. Candidates who successfully complete ILEM will be commissioned by their bishop as lay ecclesial ministers. The MAPL degree program is available to those participants, who by taking on additional courses and assignments, wish to

receive such a degree. This degree would then serve to provide additional graduate-level competence for future lay ecclesial ministers. Although approved to begin accepting students in the Fall 2014 semester, the program did not actually begin to accept students until the Fall 2015 semester. Two criteria used to measure student achievement in this program are enrollment numbers and percentage of students who gain employment in fields related to the degree. There are 3 students currently in the program, and no program completers.