

The Renaissance Priest: Cultivating An Apostolic Faith in Seminarians for a Dynamic Missionary Priestly Ministry

Put out into the deep. (Luke 5:4)

Introduction

Notre Dame Seminary was established on September 18, 1923 by Archbishop John W. Shaw to form and provide the Church with priests who would be capable of carrying out the mission of the Church in their dioceses and religious communities. The board of trustees, administration, faculty, and staff of Notre Dame Seminary are committed to providing seminarians the resources and programming required in preparing future priests who are competent, effective, joyful, and loving ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Notre Dame Seminary follows the governing documents on priestly formation namely norms established by the *Code of Canon Law*, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, and the *Program of Priestly Formation*.

Mission

From its establishment as a free-standing seminary in 1923 by the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Notre Dame Seminary has as its primary mission the preparation of men for the ministerial priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. The seminary, through an integrated and balanced program of priestly formation, seeks to prepare competent pastors for the Church in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. Additionally, in order to foster a broader outreach in service to the needs of the local Church, the seminary offers educational and formational opportunities to other applicants.

As a graduate school of theology, the seminary offers those preparing for the priesthood a Master of Divinity degree program of study. A pre-theology program is also offered to prepare seminarians for entry into this graduate theology program. Additional degree programs are offered to applicants seeking to deepen their understanding of the Catholic intellectual tradition for leadership in the Church.

While primarily preparing men to serve as priests in the southern region of the United States, Notre Dame Seminary participates in the missionary activity of the Church by promoting a spirit of mission among its candidates for priesthood and by assisting certain missionary dioceses in other areas of the world

Community

Like any community, Notre Dame Seminary understands the organic nature of community life and therefore discerns on a regular basis all aspects of community life to determine the viability and credibility of all programs and resources employed to administer the priestly formation program. The Chancellor of Notre Dame Seminary, who is the Archbishop of New Orleans, the board of trustees, the rector-president, and the faculty all discharge their duties and responsibilities accordingly to support the mission of Notre Dame Seminary. This strategic plan reflects the collaborative efforts of the board of trustees, administration, and faculty of the seminary community who serve the seminarians and students by providing a formation program of the highest caliber.

Notre Dame Seminary houses the School of Theology, the Master of Divinity degree program, and two pre-theology programs for seminarians discerning and preparing for priestly ministry; the Bachelor of Philosophy (Philosophy for Theological Studies); and, the Master of Arts (Philosophy for Theological Studies) degree programs. The seminary also houses a Master of Arts (Theological Studies) Degree Program, a Master of Arts in Pastoral Leadership degree program, and the Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry to prepare lay people and those in consecrated life for leadership in the Church. Academic formation is also provided for those discerning and preparing for the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

The Planning Horizon

Fall 2017 – send surveys to all bishops, vocation directors and alumni, faculty, staff, and seminarians to learn the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the seminary

Fall 2017 – the steering committee will compile the survey results and create a committee structure to develop goals to meet the needs identified through this process

Spring 2018 – committees will meet and share their findings with the faculty council, the priestly formation board, academic board, as needed

Summer 2018 – a draft strategic plan (goals and action steps) will be created

Fall 2018 – the draft strategic plan will be edited and voted upon by NDS committees

Fall 2018 – the strategic plan goals will be submitted to the board of trustees for approval

Fall 2018 – once approved by the board of trustees, the NDS Strategic Plan will be put in place for the Fall 2018 – Spring 2023 academic years

Steering Committee

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee has reviewed and analyzed data gathered from the surveys that were distributed to members of the NDS community in the following categories: alumni; Board of Trustees members; faculty; lay students; administration and staff; pastors; Supervisors of Field Experiences; seminarians; and Vocation Directors. Using conclusions drawn from this data, previous survey data, and data from institutional effectiveness processes, the committee created a structure for the strategic plan goals which will provide the direction for the next five years. The strategic goals are divided into three broad categories: Formation; Temporalities; and, Internal Organization. Each of these categories are further divided into areas in which goals will be written by committees that will represent each area included in the plan.

It is important to note that this Strategic Plan is not a static document. Rather, NDS will continue to review and update the plan as needed to conform to the upcoming new edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* (expected in 2020).

NDS Strategic Goals Fall 2018 – Spring 2023

A. Formation

1. Strategic Goal: Human Formation

The Human Formation Committee will delineate thresholds and their benchmarks for the human formation expectations of seminarians at different levels of formation, that are congruent with the NDS mission and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, by Fall 2020. Implementation of guidelines and expectations of the 6th Edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* (expected in 2020) will follow its release.

2. Strategic Goal: Spiritual Formation

To form Pastors in the Spirit of Jesus the Good Shepherd (*NDS Mission Statement*) in accordance with the Five Key Themes of the New *Ratio Fundamentalis*. The five key themes are (1) Relationship with Jesus; (2) Integration of Spiritual Life with the Other Dimensions of Formation; (3) Accompaniment of Seminarians at all stages of formation; (4) Forming Missionary Disciples; and (5) Integration of Seminarians into the Formation Community.

3. Strategic Goal: Intellectual Formation

To produce an updated curriculum structure based on *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* for the Master of Divinity program by Fall 2020. To produce updated curricula by Fall 2021 for each of the existing degree programs and the Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry that are congruent with the NDS mission, the Program for Priestly Formation, and accreditation guidelines.

4. Strategic Goal: Integration of Formation into Pastoral Ministry

In accord with the New *Ratio Fundamentalis* and the NDS Quality Enhancement Plan, the following three goals have been developed to enhance the seminarians' integration of the four dimensions of formation into their pastoral ministry: (1) Develop the ability of the seminarians to integrate the four dimensions of formation into their pastoral ministry through intellectual, pedagogical, and practical training; (2) Embed the NDS Theological Reflection model into intellectual and pedagogical training to guide the seminarians to properly integrating the four dimensions of formation in their pastoral ministry; and, (3) Incorporate the use of the NDS Theological Reflection model after pastoral ministry experiences, as a tool to ensure the seminarians have properly integrating the four dimensions of formation in their pastoral ministry.

B. Temporalities

1. Strategic Goal: Facilities

To assure that NDS is acting as a good steward of its financial and physical resources, the administration will identify and develop a capital maintenance plan that addresses the temporal needs of the community while supporting the mission, vision, goals, and programs of the seminary.

2. Strategic Goal: Finances/Development

The Development Office will expand the seminary's fundraising efforts beyond event-based fundraising, to include: an Annual Appeal and Phone-a-thon; care and cultivation of all donors; qualifying donors with capacity for Major Gifts; soliciting Major Gifts; consistent communication of Planned Giving opportunities to donors; increasing the Endowment; continuing to provide high quality biannual printed newsletter and monthly e-blasts; continuing to provide effective event fundraisers; and, maintaining up-to-date alumni and donor database.

C. Student Services

1. Strategic Goal: Student Services

The Director of Institutional Effectiveness will coordinate the evaluation of all aspects of student services at NDS to include: a review of administrative services; all areas of formational services; and, student support services.

2. Strategic Goal: Services for International Students

The English as a Second Language Tutorial Program (ESL) program will continue to augment the broader formation program of the seminary and to help the men, through the ESL program itself, to be as St. Paul and to "become all things to all men" as they embark into priestly ministry in the United States.

Strategic Goals

A. Formation

1. Strategic Goal: Human Formation

The Human Formation Committee will delineate thresholds and their benchmarks for the human formation expectations of seminarians at different levels of formation, that are congruent with the NDS mission and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, by Fall 2020. Implementation of guidelines and expectations of the 6th Edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* (expected in 2020) will follow its release.

Operational Imperatives to Achieve Strategic Goal	Timeline
The Human Formation Committee will study the documents and outline the human formation expectations for all seminarians.	Fall 2018
The Human Formation Committee will delineate thresholds of formation. The Human Formation committee will delineate criteria for assigning the various expectations to those thresholds.	Spring 2019
The Human Formation Committee will assign the various expectations to the thresholds of formation.	Fall 2019
The thresholds and their respective benchmarks will be presented to the Faculty Council and the Priestly Formation Board for approval.	Spring 2020

2. Strategic Goal: Spiritual Formation

To form Pastors in the Spirit of Jesus the Good Shepherd (*NDS Mission Statement*) in accordance with the Five Key Themes of the New *Ratio Fundamentalis*. The five key themes are (1) Relationship with Jesus; (2) Integration of Spiritual Life with the Other Dimensions of Formation; (3) Accompaniment of Seminarians at all stages of formation; (4) Forming Missionary Disciples; and (5) Integration of Seminarians into the Formation Community.

Operational Imperatives to Achieve Strategic Goal	Timeline
The Spiritual Life Committee will review the Spiritual Rule of Life and Seminary Spiritual Practices in light of the Key Themes of the <i>Ratio Fundamentalis</i> .	Fall 2018 – Spring 2019
The Spiritual Life Committee will revise the Spiritual Rule of Life and Seminary Spiritual Practices to reflect the Key Themes of the <i>Ratio Fundamentalis</i> .	Fall 2019 – Spring 2021
The Director of Spiritual Formation and Director of Institutional Effectiveness will meet to determine if revisions to the Spiritual Rule of Life and Seminary Spiritual Practices constitute substantive and efficacious changes in the Spiritual Formation Program.	Fall 2021

The Spiritual Life Committee will adjust the Spiritual Rule of Life and Seminary Spiritual Practices, as needed, on the basis of the lived experience of program changes.	Spring 2022 – Spring 2023
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3. Strategic Goal: Intellectual Formation

To produce updated an updated curriculum structure based on *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* the for the Master of Divinity program by Fall 2020. To produce updated curricula by Fall 2021 for each of the existing degree programs and the Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry that are congruent with the NDS mission, the Program for Priestly Formation, and accreditation guidelines.

Operational Imperatives to Achieve Strategic Goal	Timeline
The Academic Dean will meet with program directors to discuss the review of their curricula	Fall 2018 – Spring 2019
The program director will oversee the review of their curricula by a committee	Fall 2019 – Spring 2022
The program director must meet with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to determine if the revision(s) constitute a substantive change	Spring 2022
The updated curricula will be presented to the Faculty Council and the Priestly Formation Board for approval. Programs with substantive changes must be approved by the BOT	Fall 2022

4. Strategic Goal: Integration of Formation into Pastoral Ministry

In accord with the New Ratio Fundamentalis and the NDS Quality Enhancement Plan, the following three goals have been developed to enhance the seminarians’ integration of the four dimensions of formation into their pastoral ministry: (1) Develop the ability of the seminarians to integrate the four dimensions of formation into their pastoral ministry through intellectual, pedagogical, and practical training; (2) Embed the NDS Theological Reflection model into intellectual and pedagogical training to guide the seminarians to properly integrating the four dimensions of formation in their pastoral ministry; and, (3) Incorporate the use of the NDS Theological Reflection model after pastoral ministry experiences, as a tool to ensure the seminarians have properly integrating the four dimensions of formation in their pastoral ministry.

Operational Imperatives to Achieve Strategic Goal	Timeline
Provide training to the seminarians how to properly integrate the four dimensions of formation using the skills of listening and synthesizing the pastoral concern of others, and then articulating aspects of faith and revelation that are connected to the pastoral concern in a way that the other person can understand and utilize in their life journey and call to holiness.	August, 2017 – August, 2021

Provide training for the seminarians in the use of the Theological Reflection model throughout their curriculum. This training will be repeated each fall for the incoming T1 students.	August, 2017 – August, 2021
Introduce the use of the Theological Reflection model into pastoral formation and field experiences. This presentation will be repeated each fall for the incoming T1 students.	August, 2017 – August, 2021
Introduce the Theological Reflection model into courses in the Master of Divinity curriculum. Professors will add the following objective to their syllabi: <i>Apply the Theological Reflection model to examples of pastoral experience by focusing on specific content applicable to this course.</i> The integration of this model will continue throughout the lifetime of the QEP.	August, 2017 Integrate each semester 2017 - 2022
Introduce the Theological Reflection model into course-based assignments embedded in the Master of Divinity curriculum. The integration of this model will continue throughout the lifetime of the QEP.	August, 2017 Integrate each semester 2017 - 2022
Institute the Capstone Project and accompanying assessment process. This project will be continued throughout the lifetime of the QEP.	August, 2017 Assign each fall 2017 - 2022
Annually aggregate and analyze collected data. The QEP Implementation Director will work annually with selected professors and staff to aggregate and analyze the collected data. They will also recommend changes that should be implemented to improve student learning through the QEP.	May, 2018 – May, 2022
Complete a project review and produce a QEP Impact Report which will be submitted with the Fifth-Year Interim Report due in March, 2023.	2021 – 2022 Academic Year

B. Temporalities

1. Strategic Goal: Facilities

To assure that NDS is acting as a good steward of its financial and physical resources, the administration will identify and develop a capital maintenance plan that addresses the temporal needs of the community while supporting the mission, vision, goals, and programs of the Seminary.

Operational Imperatives to Achieve Strategic Goal	Timeline
Complete Renovation of Lourdes House [new roof, HVAC, code] (\$2 million) Repair of the Main Outdoor Steps to Shaw Hall (\$12,000) Installation of Outdoor PA System (\$2,000) New Furniture for Lourdes House	2018

Upgrade of electrical panels in Shaw Hall Drainage repair/installation in back lot near tennis courts	2019
Renovation of the Student Recreation Area (\$50,000)	2020
Upgrading of 3 Priest Faculty Suites (\$10,000) New Balcony Flooring (\$30,000)	2021
Replacement/New Slate for Shaw Hall	2022
Refurbishment of Faculty Dining Room (\$10,000)	2023

2. Strategic Goal: Finances/Development

The Development Office will expand the seminary’s fundraising efforts beyond event-based fundraising, to include: An Annual Appeal and Phone-a-thon; Care and cultivation of all donors; Qualifying donors with capacity for Major Gifts; Soliciting Major Gifts; Consistent communication of Planned Giving opportunities to donors; Increasing the Endowment; Continuing to provide high quality biannual printed newsletter and monthly e-blasts; Continuing to provide effective event fundraisers; and, Maintaining up-to-date alumni and donor database.

Operational Imperatives to Achieve Strategic Goal	Timeline
Create Annual Appeal mailing pieces, logistics for implementation of annual appeal/phonathon.	Each Summer 2018-2022
Annual Appeal last week of September	Fall 2018
All donors will receive more personalized attention: handwritten thank you’s from seminarians for gifts to NDS; personalized acknowledgement from NDS for every gift, every amount; phone calls from DD; condolence letters; in the news/good news notes/calls from DD; personal invitations to daily Mass or lunch; invitations to select community events.	Fall 2018 - Spring 2022
Update & Research past fiscal year giving history to identify top 250 donors; Identify major gift prospects from 250, determine ask amount for specific programs; make the ask.	Each September 2018-2022
Redesign “Ways to Give” section of Website to include Planned Giving opportunities. Devote one page in every NDS printed newsletter for planned giving information. Work with Catholic Foundation to connect donors with our mission and to consider Planned Gifts.	Fall 2018-Spring 2022
Increase endowment to goal. Goal = 20% of NDS revenue to come from endowment.	Beginning Fall 2018 – July 1, 2023
Determine focus of newsletter; seek articles; edit; layout; proof.	Production each December and May 2018-2022.

C. Student Services

1. Strategic Goal: Student Services

The Director of Institutional Effectiveness will coordinate the evaluation of all aspects of student services at NDS to include: a review of administrative services; all areas of formational services; and, student support services.

Operational Imperatives to Achieve Strategic Goal	Timeline
Evaluate all administrative staff through self, peer and supervisor evaluations using Administrative Staff surveys. These surveys are distributed annually to all administrative staff in the Spring of each academic year. The results are aggregated and analyzed by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and shared with appropriate members of the NDS community.	Spring 2019 – Spring 2023
Evaluate all dimensions of formational services at NDS using 4 Pillar surveys. These surveys are distributed annually to all seminarians in the Spring of each academic year. The results are aggregated and analyzed by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and shared with appropriate members of the NDS community.	Spring 2019 – Spring 2023
Evaluate all student support services at NDS using Student Satisfaction surveys. These surveys are distributed annually to all seminarians in the Spring of each academic year. The results are aggregated and analyzed by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and shared with appropriate members of the NDS community.	Spring 2019 – Spring 2023
Work with the Academic Resource Center and the NDS Library to create the best possible synthesis of the principles of academic study and the existing resources that NDS possesses, and how to train the men to create and/or access a solid body of resources for their priestly ministry, also focusing on how to use those resources well.	Fall 2018 – Spring 2023
Provide workshops on the Four Aspects of Study (found on the nds.edu website under the Academic Resources page) — Study Skills, Reading and Research, Writing, and Prayer in Study for students through the Academic Resource Center.	Fall 2018 – Fall 2022

2. Strategic Goal: Services for International Students

The English as a Second Language Tutorial Program (ESL) will continue to augment the broader formation program of the seminary and to help the men, through the ESL program itself, to be as St. Paul and to “become all things to all men” as they embark into priestly ministry in the United States.

Operational Imperatives to Achieve Strategic Goal	Timeline
Provide dual level classes, tutorials, theological classes and seminars covering almost all the academic classes to those identified as ESL.	Fall 2018 – Spring 2023
Improve the evaluation of men for accent training in the latter years of formation to prepare them for preaching to American congregations.	Fall 2018 – Spring 2019
Create broader exposure of this program to dioceses and religious orders.	Spring 2019 – Spring 2023