

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To

St. Patrick's Seminary & University

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Robert Duke, Chair
Dean, School of Theology and Azusa Pacific Seminary, Azusa Pacific University

Meiling Tang, Assistant Chair
Associate Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness, Touro University California

Mike Cairns
Former Vice-President for Finance and Operations & CFO, San Francisco Theological Seminary

Teresa Shaw
Associate Vice President of Academic Planning & Institutional Effectiveness
Claremont Graduate University

Seta Khajarian
Associate Provost, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Pepperdine University

Barbara Gross Davis
WSCUC Vice President, Staff Liaison

The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History

St. Patrick’s Seminary & University (STPSU; St. Patrick’s; the Seminary; the institution), located in Menlo Park, California, is a Roman Catholic Nonprofit Religious Corporation which is sponsored by, affiliated with, and operated on behalf of the Archdiocese of San Francisco to educate and train men seeking priestly ordination.

The Seminary was incorporated according to the laws of the State of California in 1891 and is owned by the Archdiocese of San Francisco. In 1898, five Sulpician priests and 34 young men gathered in Menlo Park to inaugurate what was to become the preeminent seminary on the West Coast - St. Patrick’s Seminary. In 2015, the board of trustees revised the institution's mission statement to “St. Patrick’s Seminary & University (STPSU) is a Catholic educational community that forms priests of Jesus Christ who is teacher, priest, and shepherd.” From 1898 until 2017, the academic and administrative responsibilities of St. Patrick’s were under the direction of the Priests of the Society of St. Sulpice. In June 2017, the Society of St. Sulpice withdrew from St. Patrick’s Seminary & University, and the board of trustees appointed the Seminary’s first non-Sulpician president-rector. Due to tragic loss and health issues, there have been four different president-rectors since fall 2018. In February 2021, about a month before the team’s virtual onsite review, a new president-rector was announced. Despite the challenges and leadership instability in the last few years, faculty, staff, and the new leadership team are committed and dedicated to the mission and success of the Seminary.

St. Patrick’s has been experiencing a declining enrollment for a number of years. In fall 2020, there were 50 students enrolled at the Seminary. A multicultural, multiethnic, and international community exists within the Seminary. In 2019, 28% of the seminarians were of

Asian descent, 26% were Hispanic, 33% were white, and the remaining 13% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders and International Students. Since its dedication in 1898, St. Patrick's has educated more than 2,300 seminarians.

In 1971, St. Patrick's Seminary became accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (and the Association of Theological Schools to offer the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree. St. Patrick's has received WSCUC approval to offer a MA in Theology (1985) and a BA in Philosophy (2007). In 2005, St. Patrick's Seminary officially changed its name to St. Patrick's Seminary & University to reflect the additional degree offerings. The most recent WSCUC interactions with the Seminary included:

- In 2014, the Commission reaffirmed St. Patrick's accreditation for 7 years through June 2021, imposed a Formal Notice of Concern with regard to assessment, program review and strategic planning, and requested a Special Visit in spring 2016 to address the issues in strategic planning, program review, assessment, cultural competency, organizational structure and technological infrastructure.
- In 2016, after the Special Visit, the Commission decided to continue the Formal Notice of Concern and schedule a Special Visit in spring 2018 to address issues related to strategic planning, educational effectiveness, cultural competency and organizational structure.
- In 2018, after the Special Visit, the Commission removed the Formal Notice of Concern and required no further interaction with WSCUC until the scheduled Offsite Review in fall 2020 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2021. The Commission requested that STPSU respond to these issues in its reaffirmation review: expanding future strategic planning beyond 2019; making assessment systemic, valid, and comprehensive; adhering

to the program review timetable, self-study template, and schedule; and building on increased communication strategies.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The team began its Offsite Review by studying the Institutional Report and a variety of supporting documents provided by St. Patrick's in fall 2020. The team analyzed the available materials, conducted the review and provided the Lines of Inquiry (LOI) document to the Seminary. The LOI stated that the team would focus on issues related to organizational structure and governance, financial sustainability, student success and institutional effectiveness during the Accreditation Visit (AV).

The remote AV began on Tuesday March 23rd, 2021. During the three days, the team met via Zoom with a range of constituencies and individuals, including the board of trustees, the new rector, the leadership team, faculty, staff, students and alumni. The team learned more about the Seminary, its organizational structure, its values, and its faculty, staff and students. The review ended on March 26th, 2021 with a private meeting between the team chair and the rector followed by a public exit meeting during which the final commendations and recommendations were read. The team was grateful for St Patrick's responsiveness to the requests for additional documents and adjustments to the schedule and for organizing a smooth remote visit. It was clear to the team that STPSU conducted a thorough and thoughtful internal review with input from key constituencies. Despite the challenges of the format, the team was treated with great virtual hospitality and received outstanding support. All those the team met with were respectful of the accreditation process and candid in their answers to the questions.

C. Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

Despite the challenges and hinderances due to the COVID-19 closure of the Seminary and the leadership change in the last few years, St. Patrick's Institutional Report is a comprehensive, candid and well-written document, responsive to WSCUC requirements, and intentional in its reflection on challenges and opportunities. The quality of the report and the scope of the supporting evidence are high.

Based on conversations with the WSCUC steering committee, the team determined that St. Patrick's faculty, staff, and students were engaged in developing the Institutional Report. Feedback was collected from different groups. It is notable to the team that two seminarians were included in the steering committee, showing a great level of student involvement in the accreditation process. Both the report and the conversations at the time of the review indicated a strong commitment to self-reflection. The institution engaged in transparent and honest communication about its areas of strength, as well as areas of growth, both of which were supported by evidence.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

St. Patrick's was asked to respond to the following four issues for this AV:

Expand Future Strategic Planning Beyond 2019: St. Patrick's 2016-2019 strategic plan was set to expire in 2019 and a substantial number of activities had already been completed. The 2018 Special Visit team recommended that STPSU expand future strategic planning beyond 2019. At the board of trustees meeting in October 2019, a list of institutional initiatives for the new strategic plan was proposed by the new academic dean. In early February 2020, new objectives and action items that would be incorporated into the new strategic plan were discussed at a faculty meeting. With the input from faculty, staff, seminarians, trustees, and the rector's cabinet (the rector, vice rector, academic dean, director of formation integration, director of operations, director of advancement, director of marketing and communications, and two faculty members), the new visionary strategic plan, "Crossing the Threshold of Hope," was developed and approved by the rector's cabinet and Faculty Assembly. The plan contains long-term goals designed to increase the sustainability of the Seminary, along with short-term tactical steps and actions to accomplish the broader goals. With the new rector adopting the strategic plan, St. Patrick's is commended for beginning to develop action steps with metrics, timelines, and lines of responsibilities for realizing the plan.

Make Assessment Systemic, Valid and Comprehensive: The Special Visit team in 2018 noted that STPSU's assessment process appeared to be well-constructed but full implementation had not been complete. Since the time of the Special Visit, the Seminary has collected and analyzed assessment data for three cycles. Faculty has been using multiple methods and tools in the implementation of its assessment plan. Some assessment results have been used to make

programmatic and curricular changes which has led to student learning improvement. However, the team noticed that with the change of leadership, especially with the personnel changes in the areas of institutional effectiveness (IE), more systematic and continuous efforts in assessment and program review are needed.

Adhere to the Program Review Timetable, Self-Study Template, and Schedule: St. Patrick's program review process includes a self-study, written by the program chair with assessment of course-level student learning outcomes, student achievement data, and enrollment data imbedded. In addition, the process includes external reviewers along with their written report, a response by the academic dean, and a final response by the rector. Based on the program review recommendations, action plans were created and approved by the rector, academic dean, and the program chair. These recommendations usually lead to pedagogical and curricular changes. St. Patrick's developed a program review cycle, a self-study template, and a timetable for completion and these documents were submitted to the team. Based on the submitted materials and interviews with key stakeholders, the team determined that the program review process has been effective in identifying program strengths and areas for improvement.

Build on Increased Communication Strategies: The Seminary adopted an internal communication plan that encourages transparency and clarity by identifying key audiences, as well as means and frequency of communication. Formal meetings with various constituencies to share and discuss institutional successes and challenges are a regular occurrence. Employees can access the schedule of meetings on the STPSU Institution and Liturgy Calendar, which is updated regularly. The website, social media, and email have also improved for internal and external communication. The informal interaction has helped in building a stronger sense of community and fellowship at St. Patrick's. A process is in place to gather feedback for the

weekly rector's cabinet meetings, and it appeared very inclusive. Faculty and department chairs also hold bi-weekly meetings. The team learned that it is the new rector's top priority to revive the former relationships between St. Patrick's and surrounding dioceses, and also to start establishing new relationships with bishops. The team praised St. Patrick's transparent communication and the new protocols that have been put in place, such as the rector's open door policy and additional regularly scheduled meetings across different organizational levels.

Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

The team reviewed documents relevant to the institution's compliance with WSCUC Standards, federal requirements and the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI). Specifically, the credit hour and program length review form, the marketing and recruitment review form, student complaints review form, and the transfer policy review form were completed by the team and are shown in the Appendices.

Review under WSCUC Standards

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

Institutional Purposes: The team reviewed the evidence and statements related to Standard 1 on the Review Under WSCUC Standards Worksheet submitted by the institution.

St. Patrick's mission, published on its website and in numerous key publications and resources, is appropriate to and aligned with its purpose as a Roman Catholic seminary and university. The team found widespread understanding of the mission among faculty, staff, and students, and a deep commitment to the purpose of preparing seminarians for the priesthood through education and formation. (CFR 1.1) The institution's educational objectives are entirely consistent with the mission and purpose, and much of the student achievement data shared on the

institution's website directly addresses ordination outcomes. St. Patrick's acknowledges that, though the number of students is small and all students pursue the MDiv, there is a need to strengthen its resources, processes, and capacity for the collection and analysis of institutional data, especially student data. (CFR 1.2)

Integrity and Transparency: The team reviewed statements and policies affirming academic freedom and found them appropriate to a faith-based institution. (CFR 1.3) The team's conversations demonstrated that the St. Patrick's faculty and staff understand the diverse student body and the different needs and perspectives of the students. Nevertheless, there is not a specific diversity planning initiative, and the institution recognizes the need for a more intentional approach to diversity. The new strategic plan includes an initiative on multi-cultural engagement, and the team encourages St. Patrick's in this effort. (CFR 1.4)

St. Patrick's is supported by and aligned with the needs of the Church and regional dioceses in particular, and its board includes clerical and lay trustees. Its *Bylaws* explicitly delineate the academic oversight and authority appropriate for an academic institution. (CFR 1.5) The institution appropriately represents its programs, costs, and policies, including grievance policies, publishes audit reports, maintains financial records, and has communicated openly and transparently with WSCUC and with the review team. (CFRs 1.6-1.8)

Conclusion: The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that St. Patrick's has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with this Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

Standard 2. Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

Teaching and Learning: STPSU's degrees are appropriate in content, rigor, and staffed by qualified faculty. The MDiv program and Master of Arts in Theology are clearly defined in terms of entry requirements and curriculum. The Seminary does not advertise for BA

completion, but has a curriculum. St. Patrick's has clear graduation outcomes which align with the institution's mission. The degrees have differentiations in their expected outcome and are clearly defined. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.4, 2.5) Although the Seminary does have assessment plans, and it has developed rubrics and utilizes rubrics to assess learning, the team observed that not all faculty were aware of systematic program review that would naturally follow an assessment schedule. (CFR 2.7) The Institutional Report and its appendices provide language and evidence that plans are in place. The team strongly encourages STPSU to continue assessment activities with a more systematic cycle that builds on the established assessment timelines.

Scholarship and Creative Activity: STPSU defines expectations for scholarship and creative activities. The faculty handbook states scholarship and professional development opportunities for faculty. STPSU uses course evaluations, a faculty pedagogy worksheet and periodic classroom observation as a multifaceted faculty evaluation system to assess contributions to teaching and learning. St. Patrick's promotes appropriate linkage among teaching, assessment, student learning, and service, which is demonstrated through its policy for criteria for granting promotion. Teaching, scholarly and creative activity, service to STPSU, and service to the Church and community are reviewed and weighed. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9)

Student Learning and Success: Student learning and success is a high priority for STPSU. The institution has a well-developed and robust curriculum, and as stated in its Institutional Report all men complete their degrees in a timely fashion with strong evidence of student achievement results. (CFR 2.10) The Seminary also has an extensive co-curricular sport program and has recently created a Student Learning Center that provides customized student support for

its diverse student body. (CFRs 2.11, 2.12, 2.13) STPSU does not have a transfer program, but rather a completion program, which is clearly planned. (CFR 2.14)

Conclusion: The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that St. Patrick's has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with this Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

Faculty and Staff: St. Patrick's has a dedicated faculty and staff. Although employee policies, practices and evaluations are in place, the team learned that there is some unevenness in recent practice and a need to clarify roles and ensure consistent employee evaluation. The team recommends that STPSU review, revise, and create, as needed, job descriptions for employees to ensure a clear understanding of responsibilities/expectations and a culture of timely performance reviews that effectively apply human resources policies and procedures for performance management. (CFR 3.1, 3.2)

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources: St. Patrick's has embarked upon a five-year plan to increase its enrollment, improve its advancement function, strengthen financial sustainability, and develop diversified revenue streams. The institution recently hired a new rector and the team found that St. Patrick's leadership, board, staff and faculty were universally in agreement as to the priorities identified in the plan. (CFRs 3.4, 3.5, 3.8)

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes: With the hiring of the new rector the institution has improved the communication flow amongst its various constituencies. The rector has implemented several practices that promote good communication channels and is working on a plan to appropriately clarify accountability and responsibility for decision making, which is expected to be completed in May 2021. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7)

The quality of the programs and student success is of paramount importance to St. Patrick's and this was communicated to the team in a consistent and compelling manner by all constituents, from students to the board. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7)

A key consideration in determining the quality and sustainability of the organizational structures is an understanding of the ethos with which St. Patrick's was founded and remains true to today. Feedback from students and faculty spoke to the enduring quality and continuing relevance of STPSU's programs. (CFRs 3.7, 3.10)

The board provides oversight for St. Patrick's and conducted a national search before appointing the new rector. The board is aware of its fiduciary duties and the Finance and Development Committee provides effective oversight of fiscal matters. (CFR 3.9)

Conclusion: The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that St. Patrick's has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with this Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

Standard 4. Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

Quality Assurance: STPSU has a clear vision for the outcomes they seek for the students at the institution and is putting in place more robust strategies for realizing these outcomes. The institution was assisted tremendously by an outside consultant with expertise in assessment, evaluation and accreditation. The consultant conducted an "audit" of the institution's processes and made specific suggestions for improvement. It will take some time to fully implement the consultant's suggestions but the stakeholders showed enthusiasm and energy to strengthen instructional improvement procedures. (CFR 4.1 4.2) The team recommends that St. Patrick's build on its existing work and ensure more systematic and continuous institutional effectiveness (IE), by putting in place a solid IE infrastructure, clarifying IE roles and responsibilities, and

establishing policies for ensuring quality institutional research and continuity in IE when personnel changes occur. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5)

Institutional Learning and Improvement: St. Patrick's is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), which carefully and comprehensively evaluates student learning and formation. The Seminary also has in place its own procedures for assessment and program review, including a regular system of faculty evaluation that includes end of course questionnaires and periodic classroom observations. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4) Student work is also assessed and evaluated for pedagogical approaches and improvement. The team heard from faculty members how they use the approved Faculty Pedagogy Worksheet to improve syllabi and ultimately the classroom experience. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4) Educational programs are aligned with the needs of future employers and stakeholders. In fact, several members of the board of trustees could also be considered 'employers' of the graduates and practitioners in the field. (CFR 4.5) STPSU regularly consults with its constituents and governing board, faculty, and diocese to reflect and plan for improvement. Improvements in alumni engagement are also being discussed. (CFR 4.6) Finally, resource allocations are being considered that will make STPSU a desired destination for students and alumni. For example, improvements to facilities should attract and increase enrollment, elevate alumni engagement, and make STPSU a clear presence on the West Coast for Catholic theological education. (CFR 4.7)

Conclusion: The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that St. Patrick's has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with this Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

Compliance with Federal Requirements

St. Patrick's has published or has policies on student grievances and complaints, refunds, etc. The institution clearly defines credit hours and accurately identifies the type and meaning of the credit awarded. St. Patrick's marketing practices are fully transparent and really directed toward the sending bishops and regional diocese. St. Patrick's Transfer Credit Policy is clearly articulated on its website.

Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) was completed for the three programs: Master of Divinity, Master of Arts and BA Completion Degree/Pre-Theology program. These IEEI described student learning outcomes, assessment methods used to define student achievement, and how the results are interpreted, reviewed and used to improve student learning. The contents of the IEEI were supported by detailed evidence provided in the Institutional Report and supporting materials.

Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees

St. Patrick's primary degree offering is the Master of Divinity (MDiv), a professional degree that prepares men for the priesthood and ordination. All students enrolled at St. Patrick's pursue the MDiv. In addition, students may apply to the Master of Arts (MA) in Theology after initial enrollment. The MA is a research-based graduate degree that serves to develop the academic and research talents of about 20% of the MDiv population, through dedicated courses, a thesis, and a language research tool requirement. St. Patrick's also offers two very small programs intended to prepare students with little or no background in humanities, philosophy, and religion for the MDiv: the Pre-Theology Program (for those who already have a bachelor's

degree) and the BA Completion Program (for those without a BA) share a two-year curriculum. (CFR 2.2b)

The Master of Divinity curriculum, competencies, and outcomes align with at least three authoritative structures: The Program of Priestly Formation of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Gift of Priestly Formation (Ratio Fundamentalis), and the Association of Theological Schools' standards for the MDiv and MA. The team reviewed the Institutional Report and accompanying appendices, and observed that the curriculum for the MDiv is carefully structured to conform with these authoritative sources. Moreover, the curriculum is designed to build competencies, skills, and mindsets over the course of each term, in order to prepare the student for multiple components of the priest's role, including scriptural knowledge, theological understanding, pastoral duties, liturgical practice, and scholarly ability. Layered throughout the traditional coursework requirements, the MDiv at St. Patrick's includes an intensive practical training through the internship year and consistent and intentional attention to individual spiritual formation and discernment of individual suitability for the priesthood. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.5)

During the remote review, the team heard consistently, from students, faculty, and staff, a shared understanding of and commitment to the purpose of preparing students for the priesthood. This carries through every aspect of the student's experience, from academic support services and counselling, to course design and program structure, to recruitment strategies, outreach, and advancement goals, and to the physical campus environment and nutritional care. The team observed that in these ways the St. Patrick's faculty and staff commit to the meaning, quality, and integrity of the MDiv degree and the success of the students who pursue it. (CFR 1.2)

More formal structures to ensure the quality and integrity of degrees are also in place. St. Patrick's has conducted formal program reviews for the MDiv (2017), the MA (2018), and the Pre-Theology Program (modified due to Covid-19). Regional bishops and vocation directors, who are key stakeholders in the quality of St. Patrick's programs, attend annual meetings at the Seminary, and are regularly surveyed regarding the alignment of the curriculum and programs with the needs of parishes and vocational requirements of the priesthood. The team reviewed provided copies of the survey materials. Given the mission of St. Patrick's and its geographical region, the regular survey practice provides direct input on the impact of its degrees. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7)

During the remote review, the team heard in several contexts about the process for course approval and curricular revision, with some specific examples. The team noted a shared concern to maintain academic quality, evaluation of student learning and success, and conformity with both church directives and accreditation standards. The team observed and heard about a level of tension or uncertainty regarding the faculty voice (on the individual and collective levels) and governance role in the consideration and approval of course innovations and curricular change and revision. Contributing factors may be the changes in academic leadership and faculty turnover in recent years, but also some differing views of the nature of the institution and what the curriculum does. In addition, the team read about a revision in the faculty handbook that has been recently proposed and tabled. The team recommends that St. Patrick's complete the revision of the faculty handbook and the faculty governance structure to clarify the role of faculty in decision-making, particularly curricular improvements and changes. (CFRs 3.2, 3.7, 3.10)

Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation

STPSU has two major graduate degree programs: Master of Divinity and MA in Theology. For both of these programs, the institution has clearly established program learning outcomes which are posted on the website as well as in the academic catalog. The program requirements are clearly defined by number of credits and areas of study, and specify if programs are oriented towards practice of ministry or interest in pursuing teaching. The MDiv also has ordination requirements and sequence. The program outcomes are developed following requirements from the Catholic Church and Association for Theological Schools (ATS). (CFR 2.2b) The team also heard from faculty members that they have examined peer schools to see how St. Patrick's compares. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4) STPSU offers a bachelor's completion degree but does not recruit for this program and it is quite small (currently one student). Hence undergraduate core competencies are not assessed or addressed in the Institutional Report because the program is so small and tertiary to the graduate programs, but the Institutional Report does state that the bachelor's completion program has embedded core competencies and clearly-stated learning outcomes. (CFR 2.2) St. Patrick's, as stated in its Institutional Report, has established standards of performance and has communicated those standards through program learning outcomes. Assessment of those standards are periodic and annual. Most critical is at the end of the 5th year at the Seminary, when the men take a comprehensive oral exam. STPSU's assessment infrastructure includes curricula mapping, annual assessment of learning outcomes, and review of assessment results by faculty. STPSU utilizes mock confessions, exam questions, case studies, graded lector and liturgy to assess students learning. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.3)

St. Patrick's states that "All graduates who successfully complete programmatic requirements and fulfill the stated learning outcomes are ready to be ordained and to receive a

pastoral assignment.” The Seminary uses two metrics to measure its success: the percentage of graduates who are ordained within one year and the percentage of those who are still active in the ministry after five years.

The institution is working on developing benchmarks following three years of longitudinal assessment data. (CFR 2.6) STPSU has used assessment results to improve the quality of learning. This is stated in the Institutional Report with several examples of such activities, one being the removal of the non-thesis option in the MA in Theology program and the introduction of a new Program Learning Outcome (PLO). (CFR 2.7)

Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation

Through the development of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral skills and competencies as outlined in the Program for Priestly Formation, St. Patrick’s prepares men for the priesthood. If the Seminary has successfully prepared their graduates, those who earned the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree will become ordained Roman Catholic priests, usually within one year of graduation. St. Patrick’s tracks ordination data and perseverance in the priestly ministry as institutional metrics of student success. Both metrics are indicators of how well St. Patrick’s Seminary prepared the men for their vocation. (CFR 4.1) With an array of services and programs directly supporting student success, such as advising, spiritual guidance, new student orientation, academic preparation, psychological services, and student well-being, St. Patrick’s aims to provide a productive and meaningful experience for the seminarians. (CFRs 2.13, 3.5)

Although retention and graduation rates are critical student success indicators at traditional higher education institutions, this is not the case at the Seminary. Students attend St. Patrick’s for one reason - to discern if they are called to the priestly vocation. This is a difficult and rigorous process and oftentimes takes years. If a seminarian decides not to follow the

ordained life or if through the discernment process the Seminary or the home diocese decides the candidate is not well-suited for the vocation, the seminarian leaves St. Patrick's and follows another path. (CFR 2.6)

Student achievement metrics for the Master of Divinity degree at St. Patrick's are benchmarked at: (1) 90% of graduates will be ordained by the Roman Catholic Church within one year of graduating, and (2) 100% perseverance of graduates who were ordained to the priesthood will be active in priestly ministry five years post-graduation. For (1), from 2008-2018, the ten-year average percentage of St. Patrick's graduates being ordained by the Roman Catholic Church within one year of graduating was 92.7%. For (2), data from 2019 found that 100% of 2014 graduates who were ordained to the priesthood are still active five years post-graduation based on the directory information. (CFR 4.1) In preparing for the Institutional Report, St. Patrick's realized the challenge and difficulty in tracking the data. Issues discovered during the process included incomplete student enrollment data, inconsistent use of the student information system to track other descriptive information, no data collection on post-graduation success, an inordinately high number of curricular revisions in the last five years, the renumbering of courses nearly every year, and the improper care and management of academic records. All these problems led to significant data integrity issues in attempting to disaggregate student success data. There is an urgent need for the Seminary to continue improving its collection, analysis, and use of data. (CFRs 4.1, 4.3)

To effectively meet student needs, the Seminary must be able to examine its data on a regular basis to look for trends and areas needing improvement. This requires complete and accurate data being collected and analyzed. STPSU needs to build its institutional research capacity. Thus, the team recommends that St. Patrick's to continue to improve technological

systems and record-keeping functions that will help maximize data integrity, registrar functions, advancement, and alumni engagement. (CFRs 3.5, 4.1, 4.2)

Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence

Since 2017, STPSU has developed a new assessment plan, assessment timeline, and six new rubrics to assess student performance. The institution has started to use the assessment results to make improvements, such as changing a program requirement for the Master in Theology, and removing a non-thesis option. Another example is when SPSU introduced a new PLO as a direct result of the assessment results. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1)

The team noted from the Institutional Report and also observed during the interviews that STPSU spends considerable time and effort on formation of the whole man in four areas of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral growth. The institution uses the Program for Priestly Formation to inform decision making and student learning outcomes. In the process of seminary discernment, the institution stays true to its mission, and to prepare for true calling. (CFR 2.7)

STPSU uses program review to make changes. In 2015, following the Pre-theology program review, it was recommended that PLOs be revised, philosophy credits reduced from 39 to 33, but courses in spirituality, language, and writing be added. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4) In 2020, the pre-theology program review recommended additional modifications. Other program reviews in the MDiv program had recommendations to re-write PLOs and update course descriptions, add academic coursework during pastoral year and eliminate some electives. Resources were provided to carry out these recommendations. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, 4.4, 4.6)

STPSU has embraced assessment activities related to coursework and student learning, and uses data to improve programs and student outcomes. The institution has protocols in place

and timelines for these activities, including program review. These improvements encourage the Seminary, although a burden on the small faculty, to expand assessment to non-curricular areas. Yet the institution also recognizes their need to upgrade their institutional research capabilities and data management systems in order to utilize them effectively to inform its decision making, as per its Institutional Report (CFR 4.1). Its institutional research function is currently not structured or organized for sustainability, and the responsibility for overall institutional effectiveness has not been clarified within the organizational structure, policies, or planning. This was highly visible to the team during the review. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5)

Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment

St. Patrick's has not escaped the systemic disruption that has gripped theological educational institutions in the recent past resulting in overall decreases in enrollment across many institutions. However, St. Patrick's has managed to maintain a reasonable level of financial viability. It had an endowment of \$41 million (as of December 31, 2020) and a 42-acre campus in Menlo Park. (CFR 3.4)

As discussed earlier in the report, St. Patrick's has experienced significant turnover in its senior leadership over the past several years leading to a sense of instability and unpredictability. This had led to uncertainty among St. Patrick's various constituencies in terms of leadership, strategy and general direction. However, St. Patrick's recently appointed a new rector who, based on the team's conversations with stakeholders during the review, has inspired confidence in the St. Patrick's community. In many meetings, the team noted recurring comments viewing the new rector as having the vision, drive and relevant skills and experience to move St. Patrick's forward and develop a sustainable future with stability and continuity.

St. Patrick's has a strategic plan that was developed before the new rector was hired. It appeared there was some uncertainty as to whether the strategic plan as previously written would need revising when the new rector started. As a result, the school had not made significant progress toward implementing it. Recently, the rector announced he was adopting the plan as his own and work has begun to implement it. The priorities, as related to financial sustainability and articulated by the rector, the board and the senior leadership, in separate meetings, are to:

- Reintegrate St. Patrick's back into the regional catholic community by reestablishing relationships with bishops and others within the regional dioceses.
- Increase enrollment and advancement revenue.
- Broaden relationships with community members such as the Order of Malta and develop new funding / revenue streams.
- Focus on facilities: in order to increase enrollment, certain deferred maintenance issues need to be addressed before facilities can accommodate additional students in an acceptable environment.

Financial Viability: In fiscal year 2020 St. Patrick's had a net reduction in net assets of \$3,337,992. The net loss was primarily due to losses experienced in the endowment investment portfolio in early 2020, when financial markets overall saw a steep decline. This led to insufficient investment income to cover the draw and excess draw. As of June 30, 2020, St. Patrick's endowment was \$2.5 million less than it was at June 30, 2019. However, in the six months ending December 31, 2020, St. Patrick's investment portfolio increased by \$5 million to \$41 million, due again to the overall financial market recovery. For the first six months of fiscal 2021, St. Patrick's generated a net increase in net assets of \$6,522,096, due to financial market returns.

In fiscal year 2019 St. Patrick's had a net reduction in net assets of \$256,239. In fiscal year 2018 St. Patrick's had a net increase in net assets of \$5,956,797. This was due primarily to a \$6.6 million gain on the sale of a portion of the campus property. Despite a history of uneven operating results, St. Patrick's has significant resources. As of December 31, 2020, its investment portfolio, which comprises primarily unrestricted assets but has been designated as an endowment by the board, was \$41 million. In addition, St. Patrick's owns a 42-acre campus in Menlo Park. A review on *Realtor.com* found a 0.43-acre lot in Palo Alto for sale for \$5,800,000. This lot is within 6 miles of St. Patrick's property and would thus imply a value in excess of \$500 million, depending on zoning and other use restrictions, for St. Patrick's 42-acre campus. Thus, St. Patrick's has sufficient resources to ensure its long-term viability. (CFR 3.4)

However, from an operating perspective, St. Patrick's leadership are well-aware of the financial challenges facing St. Patrick's and have a five-year plan to become operationally self-sustaining. The team was pleased to note that the board understands the issues, are well versed in their oversight role and have a good understanding of what St. Patrick's needs to accomplish to address the challenges at hand. In the team meeting with the board of trustees the team explored how the board reviews and approves draws from the endowment that are in excess of those in the draw policy. The team was pleased to note that the board members reviewed in detail the need for the excess draw prior to approving it and in fact articulated the strategy of investing in certain infrastructure upgrades as necessary to increase enrollment, and as noted above, this a strategic imperative. St. Patrick's plans to reduce the need for the excess draw over the next five years, eliminating it completely by the conclusion of that plan.

The team heard a consistent theme in its discussions with various participants about the strategic plan and the actionable steps that are underway to invest resources and implement

certain new initiatives that should lead to an increase in enrollment and fundraising revenue. The team recommends that St. Patrick's continue to diligently pursue these initiatives to ensure that the institution can operate sustainably with a balanced budget.

The initiative to reintegrate St. Patrick's into the regional catholic community and re-establish relationships with the bishops and vocational directors of the regional diocese is intended to help the regional bishops see the value of sending their seminary students to St. Patrick's. STPSU has implemented a robust discernment process where they partner with the sending diocese and share information for up to a year regarding a potential student's preparation for seminary. This process has led to improved retention among students. Several of the regional diocese do not currently send students to St. Patrick's. As a rule, the bishops in each diocese decide which seminary their students will attend. The sending diocese pays the students tuition to the seminary. Improving relations with each of the regional sending bishops is intended to help increase enrollment.

Enrollment: St. Patrick's enrollment has been declining for several years but appears to have stabilized, in fall 2019 it was 49, and in fall 2020 it was 50. St. Patrick's community is well aware of how important increasing enrollment is. The team heard consistently in every meeting that increasing enrollment was a necessary and major priority. The institution has a five-year plan and strategy with a goal of 103 active students by the 2025-26 academic year. Of the 103 active students, 82 are planned to be on campus, with the remaining 21 serving their pastoral year. When asked what the optimal enrollment might be for St. Patrick's the answer the team uniformly heard from every respondent was "between 80 and 100." The consistency of this response demonstrated to the team how aligned the organization is toward meeting the enrollment goal.

For academic year 2020-21 St. Patrick's had 27 applications of which 17 seminarians were ultimately accepted and enrolled. The team learned that the outlook for fall 2021 is looking slightly stronger, with 27 applications to date. The enrollment strategies employed by the Seminary include reengaging with regional dioceses and consistent branding and communications messaging across social media and blogs. Ultimately, enrollment is dependent on the sending bishops and the relationship that the institution maintains with them.

Advancement: Strengthening the advancement function is another key priority. To that end St. Patrick's recently hired its Director of Advancement an individual with strong relationships with St. Patrick's donor community through association with St Patrick's and several years of volunteer work with it. STPSU is actively engaging with alumni, local churches and communities. The social media presence discussed above also assists the advancement efforts by increasing donor awareness of ongoing activities at St. Patrick's.

During this fiscal year St. Patrick's has already surpassed its annual appeal goal and is raising funds to pay for the facilities renovations necessary to facilitate increased enrollment. The team explored how St. Patrick's is considering developing additional revenue streams. At the time of the review, the team heard several ideas but there did not appear to be any firm plans. To better prepare for the future and a sustainable financial situation, the team recommends St. Patrick's develop additional revenue streams that will have a positive impact on net assets. St. Patrick's has done an admirable job of incorporating up to date technology into its operational paradigm. It has adopted Populi as its student information system, which includes a Learning Management System. Populi is a software as a service (SAAS) system with a monthly per student cost which incorporates upgrades, patches and hosting. Thus, it does not require IT maintenance or infrastructure and its cost is variable based on the number of registered students.

However, the team did hear quite consistently that there is a need for further technological upgrades such as in the advancement and marketing/communication areas and recommends that St. Patrick's continue to make such investments where the benefits outweigh the costs and improve its operational efficiency.

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

The team reviewing STPSU is grateful for the professionalism and organization of the entire visit. There were additional requests for meetings once the review started, and the institution accommodated these requests with efficiency and eagerness. The spirit of this review was one of open and honest dialogue with a frank acknowledgement of the challenges STPSU has faced in the past few years and the needs that are jointly shared by the various stakeholders. St. Patrick's appears positioned to meet its goals, in part because of the unique relationship between the institution and the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the complete support at all levels of the institution of the appointment the new rector.

The commendations and recommendations listed below provide a framework for maximizing the strengths of STPSU while addressing the needs. It is evident to the team that the collaborative nature, institutional history, and leadership ability of the new rector will help to continue what the institution is already doing quite well and to address its challenges. The plans for improvement have much to do with the need that STPSU has had for many years for stable leadership. One of the students shared that during his time at the Seminary, four different leaders had served in the role of rector. This constant turn-over in senior leadership is a challenge for any institution, but especially for a smaller institution with much interconnectedness among the roles of administration, faculty, and staff. The intentional formation of students in line with the institution's mission allows a much closer relationship between students and

faculty/administration than is often seen at other higher educational institutions. Thus, the need for all to have stable senior leadership will serve the institution in very tangible and intangible ways.

The team submits this report with confidence that STPSU will respond with eagerness to address its challenges. It is the perspective of the team that the institution will be a model training site within the Catholic tradition as the instructional, financial, and physical plant goals articulated during the visit come to full fruition.

SECTION III – COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team has been very aware of the challenges that STPSU has been faced within the few years preceding the visit. The commendations highlight this. The openness and frank conversations experienced by the team at all levels, also helped to shape the recommendations in ways that should elevate and realize the goals that STPSU has set for itself.

Commendations: The team commends St. Patrick's for:

1. Facing the future with shared confidence and optimism from all stakeholders under the new rector. The institution has shown strength and resiliency in light of difficult institutional challenges and tragic personal losses.
2. Adopting the Strategic Plan and beginning to develop action steps with metrics, timelines, and lines of responsibilities for realizing the plan.
3. Instituting transparent communication and developing new protocols such as the rector's open door policy and additional regularly scheduled meetings across different levels.
4. Its collegial faculty with a strong commitment to support student learning and spiritual formation, and to provide a curriculum that prepares students to thrive in their vocation.

5. Its dedicated staff committed to the institution's mission and their support for the success of the men.
6. Its senior leadership with shared values and goals for improving the institution in the areas of outreach, advancement, enrollment, and facilities.

Recommendations: The team recommends that St. Patrick's:

1. Maintain a balanced budget, diversify revenue streams, increase enrollment, and reduce/eliminate excess draw on the endowment over the next five years. (CFR 3.4)
2. Building on existing processes and procedures, ensure more systematic and continuous institutional effectiveness (IE), by embedding an IE infrastructure into St. Patrick's operations, clarifying IE roles and responsibilities across the institution, and establishing policies for ensuring quality institutional research (IR) and continuity in IE when personnel changes occur. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5)
3. Continue to improve technological systems and record-keeping that will help maximize data integrity, registrar functions, advancement, and alumni engagement. (CFR 3.5)
4. Review, revise, and create, as needed, job descriptions for employees at St. Patrick's to ensure a clear understanding of responsibilities/expectations and a culture of timely performance reviews that effectively apply human resources policies and procedures for performance management. (CFRs 1.3, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2)
5. Complete the revision of the faculty handbook and the faculty governance structure to clarify the role of faculty in decision-making, particularly curricular improvements and changes. (CFRs 3.2, 3.7, 3.10)

APPENDICES: Federal Compliance Forms

CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where is the policy located? On the website, under the academics menu.
	Comments: The policy is easy to find and clearly states how STPSU complies with the federal definition of a credit hour.
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: STPSU has a Periodic Compliance Review of Credit Hour Policy located on the same web page as the Policy on Credit hours. This is a new policy adopted in February 2020. The credit hour policy is also included in the academic catalog.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: In 2019 – 2020 the academic calendar stated that both semesters were 16 weeks long and class meetings for 3 credit classes were twice a week for 75 minutes.
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed?
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)?
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)?
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? one
	What kinds of courses? MDiv supervised individual work
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Theology
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample program information (catalog,	How many programs were reviewed? Two
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Theological Degree

website, or other program materials)	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Theology
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

Review Completed By: Mike Cairns
Date: March 25, 2021

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: St Patricks admits only those students who are actively discerning for the priesthood.</p>
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: Time to complete MDiv degree = 4 years MA degree is enrolled concurrently with MDiv STB 3 years</p> <p>Tuition and fee information is on page 16 of the academic catalog.</p>
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments: The institution is a catholic seminary, its graduates enter the priesthood.</p>

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

**Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: Mike Cairns
 Date: March 25, 2021

STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s student complaints policies, procedures, and records.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	<p>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where? Academic Appeals and Grievances page 18 of academic catalog Grade Appeals page 23 of academic catalog</p> <p>Comments:</p>
Process(es)/ procedure	<p>Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, please describe briefly:</p> <p>Students who want to make a complaint about any academic aspect of the institution should file a written statement with the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will respond within one month of receipt. If the student is not satisfied with the response from the Academic Dean they may submit a statement to the President for a final decision. (page 18 academic catalog)</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: There have been no formal student complaints during the Academic Dean’s tenure. However, there have been several informal complaints and suggestions. The Academic Dean maintains a file of such complaints and suggestions and shared its contents with me. I reviewed the file and noted that each informal complaint was resolved on a timely basis.</p>
Records	<p>Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? The academic Dean maintains the record of student complaints.</p> <p>Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: The academic Dean maintains a file folder in his office. It is effective due to the low number of complaints because of the low number of students.</p> <p>Comments: As mentioned above the Academic Dean maintains a file. Given the relatively small number of students and the fact no formal complaints have been made during his tenure, this method of tracking is effective.</p>

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Mike Cairns

Date: March 25, 2021

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publically available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? On the website under the Academic menu.
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

- (1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and
- (2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Mike Cairns
Date: March 25, 2021