

July 20, 2018

Father George Schultze
President and Rector
St. Patrick's Seminary and University
320 Middlefield Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025-3596

Dear President Schultze:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning St. Patrick's Seminary and University (SPSU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 27-29, 2018. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to SPSU March 20-23, 2018. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by SPSU prior to the Special Visit and the institution's May 14, 2018 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and ALO Jon Kirwan. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on:
 - a. Strategic Planning
 - b. Educational Effectiveness
 - c. Cultural Competency
 - d. Organizational Structure
2. Remove the Notice of Concern
3. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2020 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2021

Commendations

The Commission joins with the Special Visit team and commends St. Patrick's Seminary and University for the following:

1. The renewed commitment and dedication of the board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students to the mission and values of the institution;
2. Strengthening and stabilizing the institution's administration, decision-making processes, and planning through shared governance;
3. Improving the engagement and structure of the board of trustees including the addition of independent members who diversify and add to the skill sets that will enable the institution to move forward;
4. Developing an effective and systematic assessment infrastructure that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum to improve student learning;

5. Designing and implementing a comprehensive and robust program review process, and completing reviews of all its degree programs, resulting in pedagogical and curricular changes;
6. As part of the process for evaluating seminarians, developing, with student/faculty input, and putting into place the “Faculty Advising--Transparency Policy”; and
7. Clarifying the meaning and role of cultural competency in the formation of seminarians, and establishing ways to measure student success in achieving this outcome.

Recommendations

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues for its next reaffirmation:

1. Expand future strategic planning beyond 2019 to include: (CFRs 4.5-4.7)
 - a. input from multiple constituencies and ownership by the community;
 - b. linkages to budgeting and decision-making processes;
 - c. metrics and data drawn from institutional assessment; and
 - d. long-term goals designed to increase the sustainability of the institution, along with the short-term tactical components.

The Commission appreciated hearing that work has already begun on the strategic plan including setting timelines, identifying milestones, and determining lines of responsibility.

2. Continue the current path of making assessment systemic, valid and comprehensive. Ensure that students consistently meet standards of performance and levels of proficiency in curricula and co-curricular programs. (CFRs 2.2, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 4.3, 4.4)
3. Continue to adhere to the program review timetable, self-study template, and schedule, seeking input and participation of faculty and students. (CFRs 2.7, 4.3, 4.4)
4. Build on increased communication strategies, and, after stakeholders have had the opportunity to provide appropriate input into decisions, ensure that important matters are shared with the community in a timely manner. (CFRs 3.2, 3.6, 3.7)

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of St. Patrick’s Seminary and University’s governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the SPSU website and widely distributed throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission’s action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that St. Patrick's Seminary and University undertook in preparing for and supporting this review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/ bgd

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Jon Kirwan, ALO
Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
SPECIAL VISIT

To. **St. Patrick's Seminary University**

March 20 -23, 2018

Team Roster

Chair: Dr. Riess Potterveld, President, Graduate Theological Union, CA

Assistant Chair: Dr. Lisa Bortman, Associate Provost of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness,
Accreditation Liaison, Pepperdine University, CA

Team Member: Dr. Dorothy Wills, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, California State Polytechnic
University, Pomona

Team Member: Ms. Dawn Dirksen, Vice President for Finance and Operations, Providence Christian
College, CA

WSCUC Staff Liaison: Dr. Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President

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 the Institution, its Accreditation History, as Relevant, and the Visit

St. Patrick's Seminary and University (SPSU) is a graduate school of theology located in Menlo Park, CA. SPSU prepares men for the Catholic priesthood and is owned by the Archdiocese of San Francisco. It was incorporated according to the laws of the State of California in 1891; up until June 2017, it was under the direction of the Priests of the Society of Saint Sulpice. In June 2017 the relationship with the Sulpician Order ended, and six faculty members and the president/rector left the university. A nationwide search was conducted for a new president/rector and for additional faculty members and all positions were filled by fall 2017.

In 2014, SPSU was placed on Notice of Concern. After a Special Visit in 2016, the Commission continued the Notice of Concern. The seminary has been actively working to address the areas that put the institution on Notice of Concern: strategic planning, educational effectiveness, and organizational structure.

The mission of the institution is stated as, *“St. Patrick’s Seminary and University is a Catholic educational community that forms priests of Jesus Christ who is teacher, priest, and shepherd.”* The vision is stated as *“St. Patrick’s Seminary and University seeks to serve the Roman Catholic Church in the ministerial context of the Pacific Region of the United States by forming priests whose lives are configured to the sacrifice of Jesus, rooted in His Word and Sacrament, and dedicated to serve the people of God with the pastoral charity of Christ.”* The Core Values of SPSU flow from the Mission and Vision: *“Holiness, Fidelity, Wisdom, Evangelization, Resilience, Compassion, Spiritual Fatherhood.”*

Degrees

The standard professional degree offered by SPSU is the Master of Divinity, MDiv. It is earned by the successful completion of the regular SPSU academic and pastoral curriculum requiring 118 units of credit. SPSU also offers a Master of Arts in Theology (MA), which prepares students for research and/or teaching, and a Roman Ecclesiastical degree, the Bachelor of Sacred Theology (STB). The latter degree builds upon the civil degree (MDiv). The institution also offers a non-degree "pre-theology" program for men already possessing a bachelor's degree in a field other

than philosophy or theology and an undergraduate degree completion program in philosophy that prepares students to enter the Master of Divinity or Master of Arts programs at SPSU.

Faculty

The seminary has about thirty faculty split fairly evenly between full and part-time instructors.

Enrollment

The University historically served just over 100 students; enrollment is currently 53, only a few of whom are undergraduates. This past year the entering class increased significantly from the previous year's 12 with 22 students admitted.

Accreditation History

SPSU was initially accredited by WSCUC on June 30, 1971 and has reaccredited at regularly scheduled intervals. Past Commission letters have identified issues for the institution to address including educational effectiveness, academic and administrative planning, financial sustainability, and technology.

Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) 2012

The 2012 CPR team noted that the institution was caught in a cycle of "planning to plan," and found that SPSU, "Did not collect and analyze aggregated and disaggregated student data (CFR 2.10); lacked a process for systematic program review (CFR 2.7); and had little in the way of institutional research capabilities (CFR 4.5)." Broadly speaking, "the team was unable to confirm that SPSU has in place an identifiable system of quality assurances for capacity issues that is aligned with mission and educational purpose." The Commission Action Letter of July 9, 2012 confirmed the team findings.

Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) 2014

The July 2014 letter issued by the Commission after the EER visit granted SPSU re-affirmation for seven years with an Offsite Review in fall 2020 and an Accreditation Visit in spring 2021. The letter also issued a Notice of Concern due to serious concerns about the lack of institutional progress St. Patrick's had made in six critical areas that would be reviewed in a Special Visit in

spring 2016. These six key areas included: Strategic Planning, Program Review, Assessment, Cultural Competence, Organizational Structure, Technological Infrastructure. The Special Visit in spring 2016 would be the opportunity to determine the degree to which the areas were being adequately addressed and if the Notice of Concern should be removed. The institution was notified that if issues identified in the Notice of Concern were not successfully addressed by spring 2018, a sanction could be imposed.

Special Visit 2016

SPSU compiled an institutional report addressing all six areas, and a visit was conducted in March 2016. The Commission met in June, 2016, and decided to continue the Notice of Concern and schedule a second Special Visit in spring 2018 to address Strategic Planning, Educational Effectiveness, Cultural Competence and Organizational Structure. The seminary was commended for making progress in these areas as well as investing in technological infrastructure, but concerns still existed about high administrator, faculty and staff turnover and the adequacy of SPSU's progress.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The Special Visit team reviewed the institutional report and supporting materials, Commission Action Letters, documents from the 2016 Special Visit, and the supplemental materials requested. The team was provided with a very functional meeting room and found the institution's staff to be hospitable and responsive to requests for information. During the Special Visit the team toured the campus, reviewed communications sent to the confidential email account, and met with multiple constituencies to explore further the issues raised in the institutional report.

C. Institution's Special Visit Report: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

SPSU presented a well-organized institutional report that responded to the issues identified and recommendations made by the WSCUC Commission since the Notice of Concern was issued in July 2014. The institutional report provided an abbreviated history of WSCUC Commission actions interrelated to changes and disruptions taking place in the institution, including the significant turnover at the level of senior administrators and the sudden departure of the Sulpician Order from its historic involvement in the seminary. The report is a candid recitation of

facts and actions taken during this period accompanied by brief explanations of reasons why events unfolded as they did.

The initial report provided the requisite information on the whole range of issues, and the review team requested and received additional data both prior to the onsite visit and during the onsite visit. Most of the additional data were actual examples of redacted assessment documents (such as assessments by field education supervisors, student self-evaluations, and institutional annual evaluations of its students in terms of academic performance, spiritual formation progress, and a host of other categories that the school evaluates on an annual basis). These requests enabled the team to see the assessment plan and its products, for example, how the assessment model could differentiate and produce high evaluations or low evaluations of students at the conclusion of a year of field education.

The report and materials satisfactorily addressed all required issues and recommendations and provided requisite data and materials necessary to this review.

SECTION II – TEAM’S EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS

- A. Issue: Strategic Plan (3.4,4.1,4.5,4.6)**
 - a. Completing those goals and objectives with deadlines of December 2017 or earlier**
 - b. Working toward achieving a sustainable enrollment**
 - c. Establishing a realistic development plan**

During the past years since the 2014 WSCUC Commission action, SPSU has concentrated its attention on developing an overall institutional strategic plan, with components that address key areas such as fundraising, marketing and enrollment, and other areas marked for attention in Commission actions. Key to strategic planning success has been: the stability in the president/rector and other key administrative personnel (CFR 3.8) and faculty positions after an extended period of turnover and disruption, and the early inclusion in 2015 of administration, faculty, staff, and members of the board in identifying key strategic issues and goals and in prioritizing those initiatives. Also contributing to the success of the strategic plan(s) was the development of new mission and vision statements by the board of trustees in February and May 2015 (CFR 1.1). This was followed by an extended SWOT analysis by faculty and staff in

2016 focusing on high priority areas to be addressed in strategic planning (CFR 4.5). The SWOT analysis identified a number of areas in need of attention: increasing low enrollment; renovating the physical plant; upgrading technology; limiting faculty turnover; and achieving financial stability. These are addressed in the school's current strategic plan, which was approved by the board of trustees in February 2016.

Structurally, the strategic plan works off the mission and core values that provide guidance to SPSU's overall aspirations and goals (1.1). There is much in the plans that demonstrate that the school is taking account of its particular context and forging adaptations to leverage that context. For example, in respect to recruitment, it is clear that Bishops are key to SPSU's ability to grow enrollment, and yet data suggest that Bishops are prone to send students either to the seminary they themselves attended or ones that reside in the Bishop's region. Both of these factors could be impediments to SPSU's ability to increase its enrollment. To secure growth the school has concluded that Bishops must be actively persuaded to consider sending candidates to SPSU through personal visits made by the SPSU president or by inviting Bishops to campus for exposures to the newly designed educational and spiritual formation programs developed by SPSU. The involvement of the president/rector is key and the seminary believes that its prior steep decline in enrollment was in part due to the lack of direct involvement of previous rectors in recruitment. The plan sets forth a map for these labor-intensive contacts in the realization that productive relationships with Bishops will require multiple and sustained personal contacts and follow-up. The developing plan schedules a set number of such visits per year and integrates the work of the recruitment and admissions office, the Bishops on the board of trustees, and the office of the president/rector. Seven such visits in recent months have already resulted in an increase in enrollment, including pledges to send students from dioceses that had previously withdrawn. The plan in its next iteration will need to add estimated budgets for these visits and also provide a method for evaluating which recruitment activities turn out to be the most productive in terms of student enrollment and improved relationships with dioceses and Bishops. The strategic plan would be strengthened throughout by tying these costs to the budgeting process and by calculating whether or not current staff can sustain these activities or whether additional staff will be required. The board of trustees also indicated their increasing attention to the role of Bishops on the board in communicating the new educational and formation programs at SPSU to their network.

Since the chief development officer is relatively new, the one-, three-, and five-year plans for fundraising are currently focused on standard annual fundraising activities, attention to foundation grant writing opportunities, and events that the school has relied upon historically for significant financial support (goal \$500,000). The school is banking on having hired an individual with experience in Catholic education fundraising, but it is too early to know whether the activities outlined in the strategic plan can be accomplished by the FTE staff hired to date. The president/rector is considering the hiring of an assistant in the advancement office to handle back office responsibilities such as database entry, donor records and gift acknowledgement, and other details. While the seminary currently has \$40 million in endowment, it has significant deferred maintenance to fund and has a student body just over one-half of its ideal enrollment size. As noted in past reviews, SPSU has not had a strong development program but recognizes, in its strategic planning, the need to create a well-functioning office and program in development.

SPSU reports to the board of trustees at each of its three meetings per year to track developments and accomplishments in the strategic plan and this should provide the board with a continuing dashboard of the progress made on key strategic goals (CFR 4.5). At the suggestion of past Commission letters, SPSU moved to one board which has added eleven independent members (lay members) and established functioning committees and sub-committees. While the board took a more active management role during the period of disruption and the withdrawal of the Sulpician Order, it espoused trust in the current senior management's leadership.

The strategic plan currently spans the time period until 2019 and contains a substantial number of activities that are already completed. The next iteration of the plan will need to reflect the participation and thinking of all SPSU departments and be thoroughly vetted across the many constituencies of the school to ensure that it addresses their highest priorities and reflects the best thinking of those responsible for carrying out this work. The improved communication across the institution has increased the sense of participation by stakeholders and the strategic planning process remains an important tool in developing common goals and agendas that drive the institution towards united effort and broad-based assessment.

Team Recommendation

- 1. Expand future strategic planning beyond 2019 to include: (CFRs 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)**
 - a. input from multiple constituencies and ownership by the community;**
 - b. linkages to budgeting and decision-making processes;**
 - c. metrics and data drawn from institutional assessment;**
 - d. long-term goals designed to increase the sustainability of the institution, along with the short-term tactical components.**

- B. Issue: Educational Effectiveness (CFRs 2.3,2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)**
 - a. Designing assessment tools for department or program level outcomes that measure whether students achieved competency on the outcomes**
 - b. Aligning course level and program level outcomes with SPSU's mission and vision**

St. Patrick's investment into educational effectiveness includes structural changes since 2015 with the hiring of a new Accreditation Liaison Officer (who is also director of strategic planning), the appointment of a new academic dean, and the development of two key committees: the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) and the Program Review Committee (PRC).

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is a permanent standing committee with responsibilities for strategic planning, program review, assessment, faculty development, and operations. This committee also oversees the assessment of the program learning outcomes and the core competencies. The IEC members include the president/rector, dean, ALO and meets on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. This was confirmed through interviews with administrators. The team learned during its interviews that the committee's inception was in response to the institution being placed on Notice of Concern and IEC provided a mechanism for efficient and fast change focusing on academic and faculty issues. The Rector's Cabinet, with the addition of the Directors of Development and Finance, focuses on broader institutional issues. (CFR 4.3)

SPSU has developed an infrastructure for assessment that includes curricula mapping, annual assessment of learning outcomes and opportunities for faculty analysis and curricula improvement based on assessment findings. The process appears to be well constructed but full implementation will not occur until this spring when course embedded assessment

will occur. Meeting with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee the team learned that the seminary chose to conduct comprehensive program reviews prior to beginning a formal program of annual assessment. The reviews began with the MDiv and MA programs, which now have revised outcomes and comprehensive annual assessment plans. When faculty and the Program Review Committee members were asked about this strategy, they explained that the comprehensive program review provided opportunities to gather foundational data, examine the program from a historical perspective, develop program learning outcomes and plan a thoughtful assessment process. Faculty reported buy-in to this process (CFRs 1.1, 2.2b 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3).

In addition to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, SPSU has also developed a Program Review Committee to oversee the review process. The PRC is made up of program directors and department chairs who currently hold responsibility for assessment and program reviews. Sponsored workshops and other opportunities for professional development in the area of assessment have helped to incorporate more faculty into the process. Although program review has been the responsibility of the department chairs, it is stated in the Special Visit institutional report and confirmed by the team that the assessment infrastructure is developed with the ability to actively engage faculty. During faculty interviews, faculty confirmed that they have been involved in the program review process and annual assessment process. Assignments are currently being collected and scored this spring and will then be analyzed over the summer.

Key assignments include a mix of direct and authentic assessment (CFR 2.4). Department chairs and faculty affirmed the significant progress that has been made in the assessment of student learning as well as the use of data to improve the educational experience of students. They also confirmed that assessment now has buy-in from the faculty and that they fully support the initiative. Based on the assessment documents and supported by interviews with administrators and faculty, the team concluded that the assessment infrastructure aligns and supports the mission and values of the institution and will allow for evidence based decision making (CFRs 2.2b, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7).

The team reviewed a document entitled Assessment Plan (developed and approved by the faculty council, September 25, 2017.) This document is a compilation of various assessment materials including an assessment timeline, procedures for the review of annual assessments, MDiv program learning outcomes with assessment plan, Cultural Competency Program material and various assessment rubrics.

The Assessment Plan will be fully implemented this spring with data collected and then analyzed over the summer. The results will be shared with faculty next fall prior to the start of the semester. Faculty interviews confirmed that this plan is widely accepted and moving along as stated (CFR 4.1).

The final step in the assessment process was stated in the Assessment Plan: academic dean submits report to president/rector summarizing faculty evaluations, learning outcome assessments, and departmental, library, and English Language Center annual reports (July 15).

Review of the annual assessment plan for the Master of Divinity revealed six program learning outcomes with assessment plans for the evaluation of student learning. As an example: PLO 1, *Explain the Catholic Faith as revealed in Sacred Scripture and Tradition and historically developed by the Magisterium* is being assessed using a comprehensive exam and a rubric scored by an independent assessment group serving as direct assessment. The second data point for the PLO is an assessment during the seminarian's field experience serving as a form of authentic assessment. This plan serves as a multimodal assessment strategy. The assessment of PLO 5, "Demonstration of spiritual fatherhood" occurs during the Pastoral Year. This assessment also serves as assessment for the MDiv and Pastoral Year assessment. A rubric was developed for this outcome. It is reported that the Pastoral Year advisor, Pastoral Year site supervisor, vocation director of the diocese, and Pastoral Year Committee perform the assessment. Their assessments are provided to the Formation Advisor.

Material for 2017 assessments were reviewed including syllabi, annual reports, samples of course assignments and rubrics. Most of the course level assessments submitted for review

were measuring student learning through course embedded techniques such as exams or papers using rubrics to establish levels of knowledge attainment. Since assessment data are just starting to be collected, the team was unable to determine if standards of performance were established but the IEC and PRC both stated that plans were in place to develop benchmarks and standards of performance (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7).

The assessment infrastructure includes input from field placement supervisors and the director of field placements. Student involvement currently consists of self-evaluations and annual surveys. Plans are in place to establish standards of performance once adequate longitudinal assessment data have been collected (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.5). The assessment plan developed for the MDiv is being adapted for use in the other degree programs and Pre-Theology.

The Self-Study of the English Language Program (now Center) reflects effective use of assessment protocols and procedures. The Center has already adopted some of the revisions and new approaches that arose from the findings and recommendations of the study. In an informal conversation, the director of the ELP noted that there is considerable buy-in to the new model from faculty teaching across the curriculum, one of the essential elements for its success.

Seminarian education provides rich opportunities to assess direct, indirect and authentic assessment. Students from the start of their education integrate their learning from the classroom into ecclesiastical settings, with practicing clergy contributing to their evaluation and learning. Although the total infrastructure has not yet been fully implemented, there is every indication that the assessment will be both systemic and systematic and produce rich and valid results.

In summary, SPSU has embraced the concepts of educational effectiveness and quality assurance. It has developed plans for conducting assessment to improve student learning and the curriculum. Students, alumni, and external constituents have been successfully integrated into program reviews. The infrastructure to

ensure academic rigor and standards of performance for program level assessment needs time for the collection of assessment data and analysis to occur but is progressing as planned (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 4.1, 4.3).

c. Adhering to the established schedule for program review

According to the program review schedule appended to the institutional report, the MA (Theology) degree program is under review in this AY 2017/18. The program review timetable also indicated that the program should be in Phase II of the review process, which means the program is getting ready to submit its self-study. A draft of the self-study submitted to the team included these sections: Introduction, History of the MA (Theology) Program, Description and Analysis, Assessment of SLOs, Recommendations, and Appendices. This adheres to the template format submitted to the WSCUC team, and which has thus far been employed in every program review self-study. The Introduction includes:

- a. A very clear description of the MA, as distinguished from the other two graduate degrees offered by SPSU, the Master of Divinity and the Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology. It also offers a lucid discussion of the overlap and relationships among these programs, the MDiv being the signature and primary degree the institution grants.
- b. Special questions identified for review:
 1. Given SPSU's new MDiv curriculum (an outcome of its own program review), if we are to continue with the MA (Theology) degree, what is the best option for an MA Program Curriculum?
 2. Given the needs of our seminarians, the trends at other seminaries, and also the availability of our STB degree, does an MA Program make sense for SPSU?

The history, description and analysis sections shed light on the complex interweave of curriculum, faculty, and purposes among the three programs. MA students are few (7 graduates in 2017), but the enrollment trend for them is comparable to that of the overall enrollment (that is to say, it is down from a few years ago, but stabilizing, judging from the numbers in the current and following classes). It is easy to see the importance of careful advising in the complicated mix of required and elective courses in the degree programs, considering their interrelatedness. However, the existence of the thesis option in the MA

compels that kind of advising, since the student is under the supervision of a thesis director once he has declared this option (the other is a coursework option, in which the student is supervised either by the academic dean or the program director). The Special Visit team found evidence of strong advising throughout the academic and formative programs, in which the spiritual director, formator, and, in the case of the MA thesis, the thesis committee and director are fully engaged with the student; the department chairs and program directors, academic dean, and even rector and vice rector are likewise engaged with groups and classes of students. While SLOs are deployed in the assessment of the MA program alongside traditional grading, comprehensive exams, and thesis evaluation (pass with honors; pass; fail), programmatic assessment is not yet a reality. To this end, the self-study recommends a cycle of assessment be implemented that can lead to program modifications resulting from evaluation of evidence. In addition, the self-study offers a proposal of a slimmed-down, thesis-focused program with two new assessment tools.

The Spirituality Dimension is scheduled for review in 2018/2019. Pre-Theology will be reviewed the following year. The English Language Program (now Center) and MDiv/STB were reviewed on schedule, both conforming to the self-study template.

Faculty Role in Program Review

Though the faculty members have been commended for their contributions to program review and the other educational effectiveness issues, both by external reviewers (in the cases of the MDiv/BST External Review, the ATS Institutional Evaluation Report, and the WSCUC Special Visit Report of 2016) and in the SPSU Self-Study, they have also been described as “reluctant [*sic*] ... to see the value of assessment” (WSCUC 2016: 8) and “uneasy [*sic*] with the additional requirements of assessment.” These views were expressed in earlier surveys by a faculty that served prior to the significant change over. Faculty were interviewed and asked about their willingness to participate in assessment and if they found any value in it. There were a variety of responses, but no one stated any objection to conducting assessment, showed a failure to understand it or see its relevance to the formation of seminarians, or rejected the need for periodic, consistent program reviews. Rather, their concerns centered around the decision-making process (still rather top-down), occasional lack of timely communication from leaders, lack of opportunity to

confer with each other and department chairs/program directors on questions of process or resources, and pressures coming from students and external stakeholders (especially in the Field Education and Pastoral Year experiences) (CFR 4.4).

The team found that faculty did not yet have complete ownership of the assessment and program review processes. It was the responsibility of the department chairs and higher academic officers to set the schedule and timetable, conceive the basic parameters and devices of the action at hand, and bring that to the faculty. Department chairs reported in interviews that this model resulted in vigorous discussion, in which they were open to suggestions for changes and new ideas, and well-crafted, useful documents. Faculty interviewed echoed this sentiment, stating that the chairs came to them with ideas, and they worked through them together. In another cycle or two of this practice, the faculty will be coming with ideas of their own. There is unanimity of dedication and spirit among faculty, staff, and administrators. They all want to make a difference with the students. They want to know whether what they have taught was learned, was meaningful and valuable. They want to know how well or ill their curriculum and academic and formative programs are accomplishing their and the students' objectives. A few faculty members stated that "curriculum mapping suddenly makes sense," and they ascribed it to faculty development (CFR 4.4).

There were many successful features of the program reviews conducted of Pre-Theology and MDiv/STB that displayed the faculty's willingness and competence to do them. SPSU remarks in its faculty hiring plan that it would like to bring on board scholars who are already accustomed to assessment, program review, strategic planning, and so on. This could reduce the pool of potential new faculty. It appears that the current in-service workshops, orientation, and department meetings are adequate for inculcating the kind of attitudes and pro-active, collaborative engagement the institution wants to see in its faculty, as evidenced in the quotation above from a faculty member.

The faculty survey appended to the MDiv/STB Self-Study is an interesting example of research on faculty as part of program review. If the survey was experienced by the faculty as a debut effort to reach out to them for input *via* polling, a double purpose was served: obtaining their opinions on all sorts of university policies and major degree program

elements; and including them in the decision-making group. This survey would benefit from further follow-up on most of the questions. The small population of nine respondents seem to be all over the place on many of the questions, exhibiting little consensus in terms of the Likert-scale answers (five choices from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). Questions on “appropriate electives”, “sufficient differentiation between MDiv/STB and MA classes,” and acceptable “credit-hour policy” have at least one “strongly disagree,” and one or more “disagree,” neutral, and “agree” with no “strongly agree.” There are lots of “disagree” and “strongly disagree” on questions about whether the course load is heavy, appropriateness of the 16-unit field education, one-year pastoral assignment, and whether the field education experience is integrated into the curriculum. The faculty in the program have very different perspectives (at that time). They need to work together more or more intensively to produce a shared set of goals, methods for achieving them, and ways of knowing whether their methods are working. The revised goals of the program appear excellent to the team, and if they have been fully shared with the faculty and the latter agreed to them, the lack of consensus must be coming from the methodology. A more targeted, perhaps differently designed follow-up survey would be useful. This pattern of highly disparate responses to survey and interview questions appears in all contexts of current institutional research. In interviews, the leaders and committees responsible for collecting and making sense of this input acknowledged its uneven, norm-less distribution. They attributed it to a) the university in transition from an institution where little or no systematic assessment was done, nor regular policies and practices established for everything from hiring and recruiting to academic and fiscal management, and b) the multitude of factors of formation they cannot control (in the dioceses, in the Church, in the priestly vocation, in higher education). Many faculty, administrators, and staff also suffered from lack of knowledge of how modern, prosperous universities are conducting their affairs so as to stay afloat and attract students in the surrounding sea of change. The review team concurs with this analysis. The team concluded that at SPSU progress in assessment has been significant and the seminary is stabilizing, systematizing, and improving communication and decision-making. In addition, program review is now in good hands.

Furthermore, efforts to strengthen faculty participation in planning, assessment and program review included trainings of the academic dean, the department chairs, an in-

service conducted by the ALO, and a faculty in-service workshop “dedicated to a study and discussion of the unpublished Assessment Workbook from the Seminary Department of the National Catholic Educational Association” (SPSU Special Visit Report 2018: 7). These actions are credited with taking the faculty from “significant resistance to accreditation” in 2015 to “wide-scale faculty acceptance and a clear sense that widespread and significant institutional progress is being made,” along with the establishment of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The team was provided with evidence that program reviews conducted of Pre-Theology and MDiv/STB followed up on program review/assessment findings and incorporated these into their improvement plans (CFR 2.2b, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7).

Student Role in Program Review

The Special Visit report of 2016 observed that the student evaluation “process was driven more by the quality of the individual relationship with the formator than by the achievement of any criteria, and some felt that a casual encounter in the hallway with a faculty member who was not their formator could produce an anecdotal piece of evidence that worked significantly against them” (page 10). On the other hand, the instrument developed for evaluation of student progress is based on the four pillars of priestly formation, which strikes the team as a particularly powerful approach. The four pillars can be used as integrative of program curriculum or to distinguish specific stages of mastery or dimensions of courses. The Special Visit report of 2016 advanced basically the same idea, recommending the institution “implement relevant assessment practices such as articulating clear expectations and criteria for each pillar, some element of scoring or evaluative rating, and a system of multiple evaluators so that inter-rater reliability might be explored. Finding ways to connect the assessment findings from the four pillars to program learning outcomes could further enhance the holistic development of the student” (2016: 10). According to members of the Institutional Effectiveness and Program Review Committees, this approach has been adopted, and is working. Seminarians were not specifically asked about the four pillars, but their holistic view of their formation as having interlaced components of spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, and human development was evident in interviews with them. The synthesizing experiences of Field Education and Pastoral Year are problematic for some of them, from the standpoint that they encounter a kind of shock in moving from an environment of “routine and structure” to one that is

neither structured nor predictable. If they can be oriented more thoroughly and connected to the vocation directors where they are placed, the *Jesu caritas* committees they will work with, and whoever else the seminary knows there, the four pillars can come into open play.

Students get evaluated a lot at SPSU, by their advisors, teachers, committees, spiritual directors, field supervisors, Pastoral Year director, and so on. They get on-the-spot and periodic feedback from these evaluations, though a few complained that they did not always get timely and cogent responses to grievances, complaints, and other input. The departments and institution now have a wealth of knowledge of these fledgling pastors and scholars, from before they enter the institution (when they are known by their diocese and parish officials) to every course and activity they undertake while there, into their alumni lives. What is less well known is the other half of the equation for their happiness and success: the characteristics of the environments and communities through which they move and grow. That is a challenge to all educational institutions (CFRs 2.5, 2.6).

An interesting example of student assessment was a survey in connection with the English Language Program (ELP) self-study. Ninety-three percent of students responding to the questionnaire were confident that their English language skills were adequate at the time of entering the university; 100% felt so on exit. By contrast, the faculty counterpart survey results showed that only 21% believe that students have adequate skills upon entering SPSU, and only 43% think students have adequate skills when they exit. These divergent estimations underscore the tension at the center of that program: it is being asked to be 1) a traditional English academic program, offering composition, oral expression, and the like; 2) a remedial program for native speakers or others who need support with academic writing, grammar, and usage; and 3) an ESL program for non-native speakers that teaches spoken and written English at various levels for use in university classes. There seems to be a lack of information on the part of students regarding the nature and purposes of the ELP (according to the student survey), although they know the topics available. Perhaps this is why faculty suggested the program would be improved by increasing accountability of students (i.e., a level of seriousness equal to their attitude to their other classes – though this is not explicitly defined).

d. Developing a template for the program review self-study

English Language Program (Center), Master of Divinity/Sacred Theology Baccalaureate, and MA Theology reviews have now been completed. An early effort for the Pre-Theology program was undertaken in 2015-2016, so the next, assessment-ready review will take place in 2019/20. Spiritual Formation or PPF is scheduled for next year, 2018/19.

SPSU has come a long way in the last six years.. In 2012, the Capacity and Preparatory Report team report found, among other things, that it “lacked a process for systematic program review” (CFR 2.7). Improvements in assessment, program review, and institutional research were targeted in the subsequent Educational Effectiveness Review in 2014. By 2015, considerable effort had been directed to the development of an institutional praxis vis-à-vis these operations, involving the establishment of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, the Program Review Committee, assessment workshops for faculty, and a more coherent, robust approach to academic planning. The program self-study template designed and used for the first comprehensive program review (Pre-Theology 2015) produced successful documents, in terms of their readability, transparency, thoroughness, and organization. (This program is scheduled to be reviewed again, on schedule, in 2019/20.) The quality and utilization of data (where collected) are superior to previous practices. In some cases, there needs to be more evidence of follow-up (for example, annual student surveys, field education surveys, Pastoral Year surveys, meetings with university leaders, assessments of PLOs, assessments of intercultural competencies, have led to suggestions, but are not all connected to specific changes.)

The MDiv and English Language program reviews also employed the self-study template successfully. Thus far, it appears the university has held to the program review schedule, developed a standard set of questions for self-study (template), and used them productively to review an academic support program (ELP), a preparatory program for a degree (Pre-Theology), and a dual-purpose degree program (MDiv/STB). The 2016 Special Visit team report also recommended “integrating program review findings into budgeting and strategic planning” (CFRs 2.7, 4.3, 4.4). From conversations with the director of strategic planning and academic dean, with higher officials of the university, and Program Review and Institutional Effectiveness Committees, the team concluded that there is both awareness of this as a basic institutional agenda and commitment to making it happen, which is in the early stages

of greater sharing of information vertically and horizontally. The new, improved strategic plan did not show how it would feed assessment data, for instance, into priorities and strategies, but those responsible for initiating the next iteration of the plan were enthusiastic about making it more connected to budget, program review, and assessment .

Recommendations of Program Reviews

The team reviewed the recommendations from completed program reviews: English Language Program (2016), MDiv/STB (2017), and Pre-Theology (2018). Overall the team concluded that the recommendations were appropriate and the seminary provided evidence that implementation of the recommendations tended to occur immediately after the program review was completed.

e. **Improving the annual evaluation of students by making process more consistent and transparent (CFRs 2.3,2.4,2.6).**

Assessment of the seminarian falls under student life and the dean of men. The institutional report and 2016 Special Visit team report both stated that in the past the student evaluation process was not consistent, clear or transparent. Student interviews confirmed this and they went on to explain that during their Pastoral Year students might not receive periodic feedback and only know how they did at completion of the field work through the end of the year evaluation. Some students reported that they were negatively surprised by the findings of the site supervisor. This issue became a priority for the university's new administration. Through a process that involved students, faculty, formation advisors and administrators, a new Faculty Advising - Transparency policy was developed and implemented on October 9, 2017. The new policy states: "The decision regarding who is suitable for ministry ultimately rests with the diocesan Bishop (Can. 1029). Nonetheless, the seminary faculty plays an indispensable role in both guiding the seminarian along his "journey of faith" as well as advising the Bishop on his suitability for ministry (Can. 1051)." The policy clarified the importance and responsibility in providing feedback to seminarians from all involved in seminary formation. Interviews with advisors and students confirmed the new policy and practice that can now be found on the website and in the student handbook (CFRs 2.5, 2.6).

Students participate in two field experience programs. Each program has an SPSU director. The Field Education program occurs each semester and assignments are made by the SPSU director. The Pastoral Year experience occurs during their second year of education, and assignments are made by the diocese. Each field experience has a detailed handbook that serves as a syllabus, detailing the requirements.

PASTORAL YEAR (Website): The Pastoral Year is normally a ten-month (September-June), full-time, parish-based experience of pastoral ministry in the student's own diocese, under the direction of the seminary. Supervision, evaluation, theological reflection, complemented by a spiritual program, are the essential elements of the pastoral year. Six units of Field Education credits are granted for the successful completion of the Pastoral Year.

Students participating in the Pastoral Year develop a learning contract identifying their goals and outcomes. This contract is reviewed by their formation advisor, Pastoral Year director and site supervisor. It was reported that at each site a committee is formed of practitioners from the site and they are an additional source of feedback for the students.

An evaluation of the Pastoral Year is referred to as the Annual Evaluation. The reviewed copies of these evaluations during the onsite visit. The evaluations are completed by their Formation Advisor and use multiple sources of data:

1. Pastoral year supervisor's evaluation: Form S-PS (spring supervisor evaluation)
2. Pastoral year self-evaluation: Form S-S (spring student self-evaluation)
3. Pastoral year committee evaluation: FORM S-PC (spring committee evaluation)
4. Pastoral year Internship Final Evaluation

The evaluations reviewed were narratives examined by a committee of the faculty for a final decision. The final decision is made through a vote of a faculty committee with the decision resulting in allowing the seminarian to move forward in his program of study or work with his advisor on remediation or in the worst case dismissal from the seminary. Students are provided an opportunity to respond to the decision and concerns as well as to develop a plan for remediation. This was confirmed through faculty meetings. It is the faculty formation advisor's responsibility to "accurately convey to the seminarian the faculty's feedback regarding his suitability for ministry."

SPSU appears to have adequately addressed the issues with the evaluation of seminarians. The program had a long-standing process for evaluation of seminarians, but the process previously did not have the needed structure and opportunities for ongoing evaluation and feedback during the process to ensure consistent quality among the different experiences that it now has. The Pastoral Year still has the challenge of not having autonomy in assignment of their seminarians, but that is a policy they must adhere to based on the requirements of the dioceses. Interviews with the different committees showed how the Pastoral Year and Field Education evaluations serve as data points for assessment of student learning outcomes (CFRs 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.12, 4.1).

Team Recommendations:

Continue to adhere to the program review timetable, self-study template and schedule, seeking input and participation of faculty and students. (CFRs 2.7, 4.3, 4.4)

Continue the current path of making assessment systemic, valid and comprehensive. Ensure that students consistently meet the standards of performance and levels of proficiency in curricula and co-curricular programs (CFRs 2.2, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 4.3, 4.4).

C. Issue: Cultural Competency (CFRs 1.4, 2.3)

- a. Defining and assessing the attitudes or skills needed by seminarians to serve “the Roman Catholic Church in the ministerial context of the Pacific Region”**
- b. Identifying where in the curriculum, the co-curriculum, and pastoral year seminarians receive training in these attitudes or skills**

The Commission letter in 2014 highlighted the need for the school to develop greater clarity about what was meant by cultural competency, the rubrics by which this competency would be evaluated, and the process through which systematic assessment of student learning outcomes would take place. The seminary chose to spend time evaluating and revising the MDiv curriculum first, since cultural competency was understood as a central component of the curriculum and would need to be addressed in multiple ways within the curriculum. That curriculum revision was completed in fall 2017 and has been followed by significant work on the school’s approach to cultural competency (CFR 1.4).

The first major step was to adopt the definition of and approach to intercultural competence developed by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) and which has been adopted as a standard by many other Roman Catholic seminaries in the US. The curriculum is to provide “training for pastoral work in culturally diverse pastoral settings.” SPSU defines cultural competence as “the knowledge, virtues, and pastoral skills required to engage the church’s evangelizing mission to preach, teach, and witness to the Gospel in various cultural contexts” (page 18 of SPSU report).

As the faculty and administrators stress, SPSU graduates will be serving for the most part in parishes or ministry settings where the congregation will represent multiple ethnic cultural backgrounds and the priests must be prepared to minister effectively to all of these persons. This diversity is also represented in the majority of field education sites.

Key to developing these skills in students are the field education placements, which cover 6 to 8 semesters depending on the degree program and which involve student engagement in social ministry, teaching ministry, and specialized ministry, and diaconal ministry settings (CFR 2.11). In addition, required courses such as The History of American Catholicism and Pastoral Counseling delve into these issues and provide information and theory that integrate with the practical learning associated with field education placements.

The school has developed appropriate learning outcomes and rubrics for cultural competency, and assessment takes place through examination papers and written evaluations by field education supervisors at the conclusion of the student’s year-long placement (CFR 2.3). At the request of the review team, SPSU provided redacted samples of these assessment documents that included the contribution of supervisors and self-assessment of students (CFR 2.5).

Students suggest that the success of a field education placement is often dependent on the involvement of the priest mentor in the ministry setting. The school has begun to evaluate the mentors in terms of their mentorship and also to offer training to the mentors so that

they will enter into the agreement to receive field education students with a clearer knowledge of what is expected and how better to aid student learning.

The school also contends that its student body, with two-thirds having been born outside the US, is already a diverse community where students learn to navigate cultural differences and communicate with people who have experienced the church from a variety of cultural perspectives. In the past few years, the administration and faculty have added liturgical celebrations drawn from multiple ethnic traditions to ensure that students are exposed to practices beyond their own personal experience. This gives the faculty yet another domain to evaluate students' progress over time in their ability to achieve cultural competency as understood at SPSU.

The predominant language emphasized in SPSU, other than English, is Spanish, and there are numerous ways for students to improve their Spanish language skills through classes and immersion experiences. The school also has put in place programs that strengthen English language skills for international students.

The faculty itself is also increasingly intercultural and therefore ensures that in the classroom setting there will be a variety of lenses and pedagogical styles presented to students over the course of their study.

Because SPSU just recently adopted the USCCB approach, data have been gathered but there is not yet a full assessment cycle in place. The school has robust information on individual students but has not yet completed a comprehensive review of the entire initiative, integrating what can be learned from multiple years of student field education in multiple settings, courses that embed cultural competency material within their student learning outcomes, and longitudinal evidence drawn from formation outcomes.

The faculty, because of their advisory roles with students, are familiar with the rubrics that have been developed and apply them in evaluating student performance in their field education reviews. This enables faculty to see patterns between learning outcomes and the

performance of individual students but these assessments of individuals still need to be assessed across the entire student spectrum.

All of these efforts have provided clarity about what the institution means by intercultural competency, the way that it is taught, the expected student learning outcomes, and the assessment procedures that support institutional evaluation. The school has made admirable progress and needs to continue on its current pathway to create a complete assessment loop in the area of cultural competency.

D. Organizational Structure (CFRs 3.2, 3.6, 3.7)

a. Delegating authority to administrative leaders to enact changes in their area of responsibility

b. Designing clear communication and transparent decision making process

The Commission letter of 2016 highlighted the need for SPSU to improve upon the new organizational structure by empowering administrative leaders to enact change in their areas of responsibility and by designing clear communication and transparent decision-making processes (CFRs 3.2, 3.6, 3.7). In the time since, and after an extended period of turnover and institutional disruption with the exit of the Sulpicians, SPSU has begun to directly address these issues by reorganizing the administrative leadership structure and enacting an effective internal communications plan.

The 2016 WSCUC team report suggested that, “it may serve SPSU well to reflect on some of the specific assignments found in some of its position descriptions as these roles become more clearly defined by the work needed to be done. As an example, the vice rector/academic dean position description seems to be thin in the areas of program development, program review, and assessment.”

In August 2016, SPSU appointed an existing (since 2013) full-time faculty member as academic dean, assigning full responsibility for oversight and leadership of the academic program, including program development, program review and assessment (CFRs 3.6, 3.7). This new appointment, in addition to the existing director of strategic planning and accreditation, who

was hired in July of 2015, has enabled the institution to make great progress in moving the institution forward in the areas of concern.

Furthermore, the departure of some faculty and staff in 2017 who offered significant resistance to accreditation and the necessary work to ensure compliance with the Standards, provided the needed opportunity for the new leadership team to enact the changes necessary to respond to the concerns of the Commission. This included the hiring of the new president/rector in February of 2017, and the hiring of new high-quality faculty.

Further positive additions to the administrative leadership team are the new director of development, hired in November 2017, and the director of finance and operations, who was hired in December 2017. The team encourages the institution to fully integrate these experienced individuals into the administrative leadership team, which will enhance the effectiveness of the team, allowing the president/rector to more fully dedicate himself to the important work of enrollment and fundraising, as well as contribute to better and more systematic communication throughout the institution.

The director of finance and operations, who acts as the chief financial officer, was hired after the search for a business manager (CFR 3.8). The higher level of professional experience of this individual led to the increased responsibility, including oversight of finance, accounting, facilities and some human resources. However, the primary human resource function resides with the human resources manager, who reports simultaneously to the president/rector and the director of operations on personnel matters. The human resources office of SPSU is also significantly supported by the professional human resource office of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, providing training, guidance and legal support. With the addition of these new administrative hires, the team urges the administration to further clarify the roles and responsibilities, particularly with regard to human resources, and communicate these things to the broader community. Additionally, the team suggests that the employee handbook, last revised in 2014 and currently in the process of being updated, be reviewed for policy currency and legal compliance, and that the handbook and its policies be shared with the employees, both with verbal orientation and electronic access so that the most current policies are easily accessible. This will further enhance the ethos of transparency within the institution.

Throughout the visit, the team was able to confirm that administrators not only have been empowered with appropriate authority to enact change in their areas of responsibility, but they have actually enacted change. This is evidenced by the accomplishment of the majority of tasks of the strategic plan, the admirable progress in program review and assessment of student learning, the hiring of high quality faculty and administrators who are not only a good institutional fit, but who also support the important work of ongoing institutional improvement. The team was also impressed with the transparency and engagement of the administration with the board of trustees, noting how inspired the board is with the information they are being provided regarding the ongoing operations of the institution and the accountability measures that are in place to ensure the institution continues to move forward (CFRs 3.6, 3.7). Observing the new-found stability of the institution and the strong leadership team that is now in place, the team encourages the board of trustees to continue to operate at an appropriate level of oversight, delegating the operational work to the administration (CFR 3.9).

Team Recommendation: Build on increased communication strategies and after stakeholders have had the opportunity to provide appropriate input into decisions, ensure that important matters are shared with the community in a timely manner. (CFRs 3.2, 3.6, 3.7)

E. Organizational Operations: Improve upon the new organizational structure by empowering administrative leaders to enact change in their areas of responsibility and by designing clear communication and transparent decision-making processes (CFRs 3.2, 3.6, 3.7)

The 2016 Special Visit team report suggested that the need for better communication and decision-making strategies could be contributing to the significant employee turnover. Based on interviews by the 2016 team with SPSU staff, there was a desire for better and earlier communication regarding institutional decisions (reference change of mission and vision) and a desire to feel engaged and be heard before new strategies, assignments, and policies are determined and announced. The 2016 team identified as a critical task the need to create clear strategies and inclusive systems to facilitate a decision-making process that will be embraced by the SPSU community.

In fall 2017, SPSU hired an outside communications consulting firm to perform a “communications audit” of the institution, mostly consisting of recommendations for external communications, but also addressing some aspects of internal communications. The communications audit report also included recommendations with several different budget levels for funding so that SPSU could identify a solution that fit the budget and available resources. SPSU has continued to strengthen organizational operations “by the adoption of an internal communications plan that encourages transparency and clarity by identifying key audiences, as well as means and frequency of communication.” The internal communications plan includes weekly email updates for the internal community (seminarians, faculty, and staff), weekly and monthly meetings, and other occasional community events and interactions. SPSU indicates that the results of the execution of the internal communications plan have been extremely encouraging. Through meetings with members of the SPSU community, the team has confirmed that this is the case among the administration and faculty, and that SPSU has made good progress in addressing the “silo mentality” environment that existed in the past at the upper levels of the institution. However, additional work must be done to ensure this effort permeates fully throughout the institution. One of the recommendations of the audit report was to “Organize and schedule Town Hall forums & feedback loop for internal communications.” The team encourages SPSU to follow this recommendation, which could serve to meet the needs and desires for communication and feedback by the levels of the institution that are still lacking (CFRs 3.6, 3.7).

The audit report identifies the director of public relations, who left the institution in November 2017, as the one staff member upon whom much of the new communications plan execution relied. The SPSU institutional report indicates that her departure allowed SPSU to search for and hire an experienced and qualified director of development who was hired November 2017. The team encourages the administration to provide the necessary support for the effective work of this important office and revenue stream, as well as intentionally identifying a person or persons upon whom the internal communications responsibilities can be placed (CFRs 3.2, 3.6, 3.7).

Additionally, while good progress has been made with regard to involvement of the broader community in decision-making processes, such as faculty involvement in the revision of curriculum, work between the board and administration, and the establishment of the

president/rector’s cabinet, the team observed that in some cases, the delivery of information via internal communication was confused with actually providing opportunities for members of the SPSU community to provide input into the decision-making process and that the communication loop was not closed with follow-up communications after decisions were made. The team suggests that the existing internal communications plan be more fully developed and additional recommendations implemented, such as the Town Hall meeting and feedback loop, and that the president/rector’s cabinet determine the most appropriate ways to give the members of the community within their areas of oversight the opportunity to provide feedback into appropriate institutional matters.

The team appreciated the “open door policy” that was adopted by the members of the administrative leadership team and that it was well-known among and used by the members of the community. It is clear that there is a new institutional ethos of transparency and that additional steps taken will allow it to permeate throughout SPSU to the members of the community (CFR 3.6).

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE

None

SECTION IV –COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW

The team commends St. Patrick’s Seminary and University for:

1. A renewed commitment and dedication of the board, administrators, faculty, staff and students to the mission and values of the institution.
2. Providing compelling evidence of significant progress in the areas identified by the Commission in the last WSCUC review: strategic planning, educational effectiveness, cultural competency, and organizational structure.
3. Strengthening and stabilizing the institution’s administration, decision-making processes, and planning through shared governance.
4. Improving the engagement and structure of the board of trustees including the addition of independent members who diversify and add to the skill sets that will enable the institution to move forward.

5. Developing an effective and systematic assessment infrastructure that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum to improve student learning.
6. Designing and implementing a comprehensive and robust program review process, and completing reviews of all its degree programs, resulting in pedagogical and curricular changes.
7. As part of the process for evaluating seminarians, developing, with student/faculty input, and putting into place the “Faculty Advising--Transparency Policy.”
8. Clarifying the meaning and role of cultural competency in the formation of seminarians, and establishing ways to measure student success in achieving this outcome.

Recommendations:

The team recommends that St. Patrick’s Seminary and University:

1. Expand future strategic planning beyond 2019 to include: (CFRs 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)
 - e. input from multiple constituencies and ownership by the community;
 - f. linkages to budgeting and decision-making processes;
 - g. metrics and data drawn from institutional assessment;
 - h. long-term goals designed to increase the sustainability of the institution, along with the short-term tactical components.
2. Continue the current path of making assessment systemic, valid and comprehensive. Ensure that students consistently meet standards of performance and levels of proficiency in curricula and co-curricular programs. (CFRs 2.2, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 4.3, 4.4)
3. Continue to adhere to the program review timetable, self-study template, and schedule, seeking input and participation of faculty and students. (CFRs 2.7, 4.3, 4.4)
4. Build on increased communication strategies, and after stakeholders have had the opportunity to provide appropriate input into decisions, ensure that important matters are shared with the community in a timely manner. (CFRs 3.2, 3.6, 3.7)