The primary mission of Mount St. Mary’s Seminary is the formation of men for the Roman Catholic diocesan priesthood in the service of the Kingdom of God. The Program of Priestly Formation at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary does this through four inter-related components (or pillars) of priestly formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. As the USCCB Program of Priestly Formation (PPF) tells us in #73:

“Human formation is the foundation for the other three pillars. Spiritual formation informs the other three. Intellectual formation appropriates and understands the other three. Pastoral formation expresses the other three pillars in practice.”

HUMAN FORMATION

Purpose

As the foundation for the other three pillars, human formation is the necessary foundation with which to begin. “The human personality of the priest is to be a bridge and not an obstacle to others in their meeting with Jesus Christ, the redeemer of the human race.” (PDV #43) The seminary provides solid human (personal and interpersonal) formation so that seminarians become balanced men, affectively mature, capable of relating well to others, of giving pastoral care within different cultural contexts, and of living celibacy in a healthy manner. This happens in a three-fold growth in self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-gift, done in the light of faith, with the purpose of more perfect conformity to the perfect humanity of Jesus (PPF #80).

Goals / Expected Outcomes

The human formation of candidates for the priesthood is directed towards fostering growth in them as described below (PPF #76):

1. A free person: free to be who he is in God’s design, capable of solid moral character, with a finely developed moral conscience and who demonstrates the human virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice, humility, sincerity, patience, good manners, and truthfulness.

2. A prudent and discerning man with a capacity for critical observation so that he can discern true and false values, with good communication and public speaking skills.

3. A man with deep relational capacities, capable of genuine dialogue and friendship, open to others and available to them with a generosity of spirit. A man in whom the various dimensions of being a human person (the physical, the psychological and the spiritual) converge in affective maturity, which includes human sexuality and the capacity for chaste celibacy, capable of living well with authority and able to deal productively with conflict and stress.

4. A man who respects, cares for, and pays appropriate attention to his physical well-being so that he is able to accomplish the ministerial tasks entrusted to him. A man who relates well with others, both men and women, including those of diverse cultural backgrounds.
5. A man who is a good steward of material possessions, is able to live a simple lifestyle and is generous with his earthly goods to the poor. And finally, a man who can take on the role of a public person in service of the Gospel and represent the Church.

Program Components

As the foundation for the other three pillars, human formation is treated first and foremost and it is considered the integrating pillar of priestly formation.

1. The **Seminarian Handbook** provides a detailed description of the formation and evaluation program, with clear expectations for daily life in the seminary and for the behavioral and attitudinal expectations regarding formation in celibacy.

A measure of a student's personal maturity is his willingness to be fully engaged in the formation program and his ability to be faithful to the community's rules.

2. **Individual Formation Advising**: Each student meets regularly with a designated faculty member who guides him in the development of personal goals in light of the recommendations of the Admissions Committee, the expectations of the Church, and the sequence of goals as identified in the **Seminarian Handbook**. Together they deal with any concerns in human formation that need to be addressed and identify ways to help the student grow further.

Faculty formation teams, which meet under the direction of the Vice Rector for Human Formation on a regular basis, discuss the seminarians’ personal strengths and weaknesses and recommend to them, through their formation advisors, areas where they need further growth.

3. **Formation Conferences and Rector’s Seminars**: The weekly community formation conferences and the Rector’s formation seminars address many issues of human formation, especially with regard to affective maturity, sexual integration and preparing for the life of celibacy. Besides celibacy, these Rector’s seminars include leadership skills, parish administration and transition issues into parish life. They are offered on a regular basis, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theology Year</th>
<th>Fall (13 sessions)</th>
<th>Spring (13 sessions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I*</td>
<td>Living Celibacy Well</td>
<td>Theology of the Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>The Priest as Public Person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Priest as Servant Leader in a Parish Setting: Issues in Authority and Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Transition from Seminary to Parish: Issues &amp; Strategies in the First Assignment</td>
<td>Transition from Seminary to Parish: The Good Confessor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Second pre-theologians are required attend the First Theology Formation Seminars

4. **Formation Workshops**: Fall workshops treat issues of transition into seminary, study skills, pastoral formation (such as teaching, hospital visitations, etc.), working with women, multicultural ministry and personal health. The spring workshops center more on human formation with issues like friendship, boundaries, celibacy and sexuality, substance abuse and development of human social skills, manners and leadership skills.

5. **Seminary Life**: Human formation happens informally in the interaction of seminarians among themselves, with the faculty, the wider university community, and with the people they serve in their field education placements. Their participation in social events, athletics, student government, university sports team chaplains, seminary house jobs, campus ministry and
class activities helps them develop friendships and social skills. All seminarians are expected to actively engage in seminary life.

6. **Counseling and Spiritual Direction:** Human formation issues are treated in the internal forum both in spiritual direction and, if necessary, in counseling. The seminary employs a counselor who sees students in-house several days per week. Formation team minutes (external forum information) are shared with all spiritual directors and the counselor for the purpose of a more integrated human formation. This enables the internal forum faculty to work in cohesion with the external forum faculty.

7. **Peer Evaluations:** All students in second pre-theology, second theology and fourth theology are asked to confidentially evaluate their classmates in the spring semester. The goal is to give each student a deeper insight into himself and how he is being perceived by others. These peer evaluations are tabulated and the composite is given to the formation advisor. He shares this information with the student and the formation team.

8. **Semester Meeting with the Rector:** Every seminarian has a meeting with the Rector at least once per semester just to discuss his personal formation and growth areas. Since the Rector attends all formation team meetings, he is kept apprised of each seminarian’s strengths and weaknesses in the area of human formation.

9. **Community Dinners:** The entire seminary community comes together each Wednesday evening for a community dinner. At least one faculty member and a deacon sit at every student table for the purpose of fostering non-class faculty-student interaction and growth in human formation skills such as table manners and conversation skills.

10. **Priesthood Integration Assessment:** A comprehensive examination given to Fourth Theologians focusing on the *pastoral* application of the theological and canonical courses the seminarian has already successfully passed. The PIA is a 30-minute oral assessment given before the Rector and two other priest faculty members with broad parish experience. The questions of the Assessment address cases which may confront a newly-ordained priest during his first year in the parish. During the discussion of the cases with the priest assessors, the seminarian must prudently apply the theological and canonical knowledge he is already presumed to possess to these pastoral cases. It involves aspects of dogmatic, scriptural, moral, sacramental, canonical and psychological issues faced in a normal parish setting. The Fourth Theologians are provided a Study Guide with these questions to help them prepare for the exam.

**Evaluation and Assessment**

1. There are two formation teams who watch over the formation of the students. The first team cares for pre-theology I, pre-theology II and first theology. The second team, which is composed entirely of priests, cares for the students in second, third and fourth theology. These teams give regular feedback to the Vice Rector for Human Formation and Rector.

2. Self-evaluations are presented by each student to his respective formation advisor at the end of each year, detailing his understanding of his human formation strengths and growth areas.

3. Peer evaluations are conducted at the end of pre-theology and second theology so that seminarians have some appreciation of how their peers perceive them.

4. Summer evaluations and field education evaluations often point out areas of human formation strengths and weaknesses.

5. The final evaluation is an extensive end-of-year report which is written by the formation advisor using the student’s self-evaluation, summer evaluations, field education evaluations and the notes from their many meetings. This evaluation is sent to the Rector and forwarded on to the student’s Bishop and Vocation Director.
6. Formation workshops are presented twice a year and evaluations from these workshops are reviewed by the Executive Committee of the seminary.

7. In the exit and alumni polls, students and alumni are asked to offer their evaluation of the human formation program, and new students each year are asked to evaluate their formation before entering the seminary.

8. The ongoing assessment of the human formation program includes comparison of the seminary with peer institutions, faculty in-service sessions, participation in formation programs for formators, and participation in conferences, such as those given by the National Catholic Education Association/Seminary Division.

9. The Vice Rector for Human Formation assesses the formation advising program and the human formation program each year in light of the program goals in an annual written report to the Rector.

Planning

Based on the results of the evaluation and assessment of its programs, the seminary engages in strategic planning. Each year, the seminary develops action plans in each area of formation, including human formation. Goal revisions, program changes, and new initiatives in programs and activities may be proposed. Planning in the area of human formation proceeds in the following way:

The Executive Committee discusses the evaluation data each year. Since the Vice Rector for Human Formation has primary responsibility as administrator in the area of human formation, his input is particularly significant. The Executive Committee draws up draft action plans in this area, which are then discussed by the full faculty and also by the Seminary Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Seminary Student Government Association may also be involved in the discussion. The action plans are then presented to the Mount Council for endorsement and finally to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Human formation strategies are also included in the five-year Mount Plan. The formation of these strategies follows the same wide consultative process as annual planning, though it would involve more far-reaching discussions and more thorough examination. These five-year strategies are also used as sources in the development of the annual action plans.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Purpose

The spiritual formation program strives to establish a foundation within the seminarians for a lifetime of priestly ministry within the Church. This foundation is an intimate relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son through the Holy Spirit, a relationship nourished by prayer, Scripture and Tradition, celebrated in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and marked by a sincere devotion to Mary, the Mother of God and Mother of the Church. To this end, the spiritual formation program challenges seminarians to live in intimate communion with God through lives of celibacy, obedience, and simplicity of life to seek Christ in faithful meditation on the word of God and in active participation in the sacred mysteries of the Church, especially the Eucharist, Penance, and the Liturgy of the Hours; and to love and reverence the Blessed Virgin Mary (PPF, 107).
Goals / Expected Outcomes

1. Seminarians are to be men of prayer. They will form a habit of daily personal and liturgical prayer flowing from the celebration of the Mass, and including the Liturgy of the Hours, prayerful meditation with the Scriptures (lectio divina), and a filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (PPF, 110).

2. They will incorporate into their personal spiritual lives the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and regular spiritual direction (PPF, 110).

3. As men discerning the call to celibacy “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 19:12) and as a stimulus to pastoral charity, they will manifest an ability to live chastely in mature relationships with others (PPF, 110; PDV, 50).

4. They will be humble and obedient men of the Church (PPF, 110).

5. In imitation of Christ who came to serve and not to be served, seminarians will value a simple way of life (PPF, 110, 269).

Program Components

Spiritual formation in the seminary seeks to lay the foundation for a lifetime of priestly ministry. During the years of seminary formation the aim is to establish the attitudes, habits and practices of the spiritual life that will continue after ordination (PPF, 110, 111). With that purpose in mind the spiritual formation program at Mount St. Mary's includes the following elements:

1. The Eucharistic Liturgy is the source and summit of Christian life and therefore the wellspring of priestly formation. Daily participation at Mass is expected of all seminarians. Ordinarily seminarians participate in the seminary community Mass, which gives expression to the richness of the Roman rite as well as the diversity of our ethnic traditions (PPF, 110, 116).

2. The Liturgy of the Hours sets the daily rhythm of prayer for priests. Seminarians pray Morning and Evening Prayer on a regular basis as a community. The men are expected to have acquired the habit of praying the entire daily Office by their second year of theology. They are encouraged to pray the Office (Daytime Prayer and/or Night Prayer) as a class, or in small groups, and with their fellow diocesan seminarians (PPF, 110, 117, 119).

3. Seminarians who one day will be ministers of the Sacrament of Reconciliation must themselves learn to make fruitful and regular use of this Sacrament. The Sacrament is available at regularly scheduled times throughout the week, as well as by personal request. Communal celebrations of the Sacrament are planned and celebrated during Advent and Lent as well as during the annual retreat and weekend of recollection/Forty Hours Devotion (PPF, 110, 120).

4. Spiritual direction is a special opportunity for ongoing discernment, formation in prayer, and integration of personal, moral and spiritual growth. Seminarians are required to meet at least every three weeks with an approved priest spiritual director of their choosing in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. Spiritual direction is one of the foundational components of spiritual formation for all seminarians (PPF, 110, 127-135).

5. Retreats and days of recollection provide the time and place for sustained prayer, silence and solitude which are necessary for men to listen intently to the Word of God and grow in personal intimacy with the Lord. The seminary's schedule includes an annual five-day retreat for all seminarians at the beginning of the spring semester; a weekend of recollection with
Forty Hours Devotion at the beginning of the fall semester; a day of renewal in November; and periodic “desert days” of silence and abstention from electronic communication and entertainment (PPF, 110, 121, 122).

The Fourth Theology Holy Land Pilgrimage and Retreat is a requirement from which a man is exempted only at the request of his diocese or by the Rector for a serious reason. The retreat takes place over Christmas break and counts as their canonical retreat.

6. **Formation for a priestly way of life in imitation of Jesus Christ** will guide seminarians in learning the value, practice and cultivation of celibacy, simplicity of life, obedience, and pastoral service. These and other relevant topics are addressed through regular conferences by the Rector and the Director of Spiritual Formation, as well as through homilies, spiritual direction, retreats, formation advising, and formation workshops (PPF, 110, 122).

7. For seminarians to seek to draw closer to Christ and live in intimate communion with Him, they must draw *daily nourishment from the Sacred Scripture*. Seminarians are encouraged in conferences and individual spiritual direction to form the habit of daily prayerful meditation on the Word of God (*lectio divina*). In addition, for several weeks at the beginning of the fall semester, new seminarians meet in small groups with the Director of Spiritual Formation to examine the basics of prayer, *lectio divina*, and the value of spiritual reading, as well as other topics related to the cultivation of the spiritual life (PPF, 110, 123).

8. In order to foster personal devotion and love for the Eucharist, seminarians are encouraged through conferences and retreat days to spend one hour before the Blessed Sacrament, with the expectation that they will eventually adopt it as a lifetime habit of devotion. The seminary provides the opportunity for such prayerful devotion in the daily hour of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with Benediction (extended hours every Thursday evening), as well as during the monthly devotions to the Sacred Heart and at other suggested times throughout the year (PPF, 110, 124).

9. Seminarians are expected to foster a **personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary** in keeping with her unique role in the economy of salvation as Mother of God and Mother of the Church. In addition to a regular communal recitation of the rosary and weekly Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, men are encouraged to join the seminary’s *Legion of Mary*, the *Militia Immaculata* (both of which are groups dedicated to prayer and learning more about the Blessed Virgin Mary and the work of evangelization), as well as to consider the annual opportunity to make a personal consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary through the spiritual counsels contained in St. Louis de Montfort’s *True Devotion to Mary* (PPF, 110, 125).

10. The seminarians must develop a profound appreciation for the **richness of our spiritual and liturgical traditions**. Instruction in the history and theology of liturgy, the spiritual life, and an introduction to spiritual classics is provided through courses in the core curriculum (PPF, 118, 119).

11. Opportunities for seminarians to **gather for fraternal support**, faith sharing, prayer and evangelization are available. In addition to the *Legion of Mary and Militia Immaculata*, these voluntary associations include *Jesu Caritas* fraternities, the *Knights of Columbus*, charismatic prayer groups, and the youth retreat *Mount 2000* (PPF, 110, 114).

12. In the external forum, **formation advisors** also guide seminarians in the setting of their spiritual goals. In their report to the formation team, formation advisors hold seminarians accountable for their overall participation in the seminary’s program of spiritual formation. This report addresses what is observable in the external forum such as whether the seminarian has an approved spiritual director with whom he meets regularly, his attendance at house spiritual
exercises; his understanding of the Church’s expectations with regard to priestly celibacy, his manifesting of a personal prayer life in general and especially with regard to setting aside time for private prayer as well as the Liturgy of the Hours, his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary; his understanding of and readiness to receive the ministries of Lector, Acolyte, admission to Candidacy, and finally Holy Orders.

**Evaluation and Assessment**

The evaluation and assessment of the spiritual formation program is conducted in the following manner:

1. **Entrance, Exit and Alumni Polls:** These survey instruments are used to gather information from students for use in assessing and evaluating the needs and progress of seminarians as they enter and complete their formation at the seminary and again five years after ordination. The Director of Spiritual Formation presents a summary and commentary of the results of these polls to the Executive Committee and to the full faculty.

2. **Liturgy and Spiritual Life Committee:** This committee is composed of representatives from each class, the head Master of Ceremonies, the head Sacristan, the Liturgical Ministries Scheduler, as well as the Coordinator of the Liturgy, the Director of Spiritual Formation, the seminary Director of Liturgical Music, and the Professor of Liturgy. It meets monthly to review recent liturgies, to plan the logistics of upcoming liturgical celebrations and seasons, as well as to assist the Director of Spiritual Formation in reviewing and evaluating house retreats, days of renewal, weekends of recollection, and other components of the spiritual formation program.

3. **Program Evaluation Surveys:** Retreats, weekends of recollection, days of renewal, and desert days are regularly evaluated by the seminarians by means of survey instruments which are administered by the Director of Spiritual Formation. The Executive Committee and Liturgy/Spiritual Life Committee review the results.

4. **Evaluations of the Director of Spiritual Formation / Coordinator of the Liturgy:** Annual evaluations of the Director of Spiritual Formation / Coordinator of the Liturgy are conducted by the Rector in accord with the Governing Documents.

5. **Faculty Input:** Faculty input is solicited at meetings of the full faculty and the Executive Committee. There is periodically a more focused emphasis during which different areas of the entire formation program are reviewed by the faculty.

6. **Assessment of Students:** Student assessment in the area of spiritual formation is conducted through several means. The annual evaluation (treating all four areas of formation) is written by the formation advisor in consultation with the formation team and is signed by the student. This evaluation is based on goals set by the student under the direction of his formation advisor and spiritual director. Each seminarian also writes a regular self-evaluation to be shared with his formation advisor. This evaluation, without violating the confidentiality of the spiritual director/directee relationship, addresses the aforementioned program components (regular spiritual direction; attendance at house spiritual exercises; understanding of the celibate commitment; life of prayer, including the LOH and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary; readiness to receive Lector, Acolyte, admission to Candidacy, and Holy Orders) as well as the goals set by the seminarian.

7. **Spirituality Course Evaluations:** Courses in spirituality are evaluated under the procedures approved by the Academic Committee and faculty.
8. **Assessment of Individual Spiritual Directors**: The seminarians must select a priest spiritual director from a list approved by the Rector acting on behalf of the Chancellor, the Archbishop of Baltimore. Ongoing informal assessment is conducted by the Director of Spiritual Formation with each seminary spiritual director.

9. **The Director of Spiritual Formation** assesses this program each year in a written report to the Rector made in light of the program goals. The report includes a review of the year's programs including spiritual directors' conferences, retreats, and other special events. It is appropriate that this report also include planning recommendations either for the improvement of the spiritual formation program or refinement of its goals.

**Planning**

Based on the results of the evaluation and assessment of the spiritual formation program, the seminary develops action plans each year in the area of spiritual formation. Goal revisions, program changes, and new initiatives, programs and activities may be proposed. Planning in the area of spiritual formation proceeds in the following way:

The Executive Committee discusses the evaluation data each year. Since the Director of Spiritual Formation has primary responsibility as administrator in the areas of spiritual formation, his input is particularly significant. The Director of Spiritual Formation draws up draft action plans in this area, which are then discussed by the full faculty and also by the Seminary Committee of the Board of Trustees.

**INTELLECTUAL FORMATION**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the intellectual formation program is that seminarians grasp the Catholic intellectual and liturgical tradition, are able to proclaim and teach the Gospel of Christ and to communicate the mystery of God to people today, and are equipped for the continuing pursuit of truth (PPF, 139).

**Goals / Expected Outcomes**

The intellectual formation program equips seminarians to be:

1. **Hearers of the Word**: to know the scriptural texts and biblical theology in accord with sound exegetical methods faithful to magisterial teachings. “The proper understanding of Sacred Scripture requires the use of the historical-critical method, though this method is not totally sufficient. Other methods that are synchronic in approach are helpful in bringing forth the riches contained in the biblical texts” (PPF, 198-200).

2. **Proclaimers of the Word**: to preach the Word of God in accordance with sound principles of biblical interpretation and sound catechesis as well as the practical skills of preparing and delivering homilies (PPF, 138, 200).

3. **Catechists**: to understand, proclaim, and expound the faith to others grounded in an in-depth understanding of the Creed, its biblical, historical, and dogmatic richness, and particularly our belief in one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. “The doctrinal, educational, catechetical, and apologetical aspects of a candidate’s training are to prepare the
4. **Followers of Christ**: to have a sure knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the words and deeds, indeed the person, of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the revelation of God to all men and women (PPF, 137).

5. **Faithful to the Church**: to distinguish the normative function of the Magisterium from the ecclesial role of the theologian, the truths revealed by God and contained in the deposit of faith from their theological mode of expression. "The education of a priest is never seen in isolation from the Tradition of the Church" (PPF, 139).

6. **Culturally Aware**: to grasp and teach others the truth about the Church and its role in the world as well as to understand the world, the signs of the times, in which the message of Christ is preached, especially the increasing diversity of cultures in the US ministerial context and the increasingly global context of the ministry and theology (PPF, 228).

7. **Historically Aware**: to appreciate and help others to grasp the rich history of the Church through its 2000-year existence, to understand its efforts of evangelization, its sad divisions and controversies, its famous and infamous figures, and how it has come to assume its current position in the world and, in particular, in the USA (PPF, 210).

8. **Ministers of the Sacraments**: to understand the identity of the priest as a sacramental representation of Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church (PDV, 15), and, having a thorough knowledge of liturgy and sacramental theology, law and practice, to be prepared to celebrate the liturgy as ministers of Christ through the Holy Spirit on behalf of the Church (PPF, 214).

9. **Promoters of Marriage and Family**: to minister to those seeking marriage with professional competence in Canon Law, well prepared and delivered marriage preparation, thorough familiarity with the Rite of Marriage, and a solid and persuasive presentation of the Church’s teaching on the vocation and moral responsibilities of marriage and family (PPF, 218).

10. **Moral Teachers and Guides**: to explain faithfully and persuasively, and to defend effectively, the Church’s teaching on the moral life; and to assist in the formation of conscience and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (PPF 204-7).

11. **Advocates of Justice**: to understand and promote the Church’s teaching on social justice and the Church’s role in the struggle for justice, peace, and the inviolable dignity of human life; to understand and promote Church teaching regarding medical ethical issues especially concerning the beginning and end of human life. (PPF, 208, 229).

12. **Ecumenically Sensitive**: to have a critical and fair evaluation of the teaching of other churches and religions (PPF,) as well as a practical understanding of ecumenism and of the *Ecumenical Directory* in particular (PPF, 216, 224).

13. **Motivated for Ongoing Intellectual Formation**: to have the habit of reading theology and theological reflection, the capacity for a critical reading of theological materials, and a recognition that “continuing education after ordination is a necessity” (PPF, 138, 227).

**Program Components**

Intellectual formation embraces four distinct programs:

1. The **pre-theology program** curriculum provides the requisite 30 credits of philosophy and 12
of undergraduate theology as described in detail in the PPF, 152-56, 188, and 158. In addition, the pre-theology curriculum includes the study of Latin (PPF, 189), Greek, and appropriate liberal arts courses (PPF, 162).

2. The ordination program curriculum provides an eight-semester array of courses and pastoral field education requirements designed to qualify candidates for priestly ordination according to the expectations of the PPF, (191).

3. The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree program offers a fully-accredited graduate degree whose requirements meet national accrediting associations’ (Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Association of Theological Schools) standards for preparation for professional church service. All priesthood candidates are expected to meet and exceed these requirements. A certificate program in Hispanic Ministry is offered in conjunction with this degree program.

4. The ecclesiastical degree of Bachelor in Sacred Theology (STB) is offered through affiliation with the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception (Dominican House of Studies), Washington, DC. Seminarians may earn this degree as part of a dual-degree program with the Master of Divinity.

5. The Master of Arts (theology) degree program is a fully-accredited graduate academic degree whose requirements set expectations of academic excellence in research and scholarship in the study of theology (ATS, Standard D). Four areas of concentration are offered: Sacred Scripture, Moral Theology, Systematic Theology, and Church History. Seminarians may earn this degree as part of a dual-degree program with the Master of Divinity.

Evaluation and Assessment
1. Evaluation of Students: Student performance is evaluated according to published “Academic Norms” in the Seminarian Handbook. The grading scale is included in the norms and is standard across the theological curriculum. The “Academic Norms” also contain policies for deficiencies and academic probation that involve the student, professor, formation advisor, and Academic Dean (as well as Learning Services when necessary). M.A.(theology) degree candidates are evaluated for their three-fold research portfolio and the comprehensive examination. S.T.B. degree candidates are evaluated through a two phased (oral and written) comprehensive examination. Faculty may make observations to the Academic Dean, formation advisor, and/or formation team regarding student performance. Students are evaluated informally when they preach, give reflections on the saint of the day at Evening Prayer, etc. The pastoral formation feedback often includes an evaluation of the student’s ability to teach, preach, etc.

Monitoring the evaluation: The formation advisor monitors the students’ overall program performance and also assists them in the setting of personal intellectual formation goals. Grades, deficiencies, term and overall G.P.A. are kept on file in the Registrar’s office, and they are provided to the sending diocese, and to the student and formation advisor (with a copy to the Rector and Vice Rector for Human Formation). The Writing Center, the Learning Center, and the ESL professors are sometimes asked to evaluate particular students (through the office of the Academic Dean). The Academic Dean receives reports from the ESL professors and the Director of Learning Services.

2. Faculty members are evaluated by students (current/alumni), by peers, in self-evaluation, and by the seminary administration.

a. Student course evaluations are compiled and tabulated by the Seminary Registrar each
semester for every course. The professor is given a typed compilation of the results, and a copy is retained by the Academic Dean and Rector. In addition, student evaluation is solicited at meetings held each semester of the class academic representatives with the Academic Dean. This feedback is brought to the Rector, the Executive Committee and full faculty in summary form, and to individual professors as appropriate. Student input is required for the faculty dossier for promotion and rolling contract. Student input is also sought through the exit poll of graduating fourth year students as well as the alumni survey. The Rector gains student input in his regular interviews with each student.

b. Faculty are evaluated by peers through faculty involvement in the hiring process, recommendations made in the promotion process by individual faculty members, by the seminary Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) and the campus wide Tenure and Rank Committee (TRAC), by the mentoring provided by senior faculty and department chairs, and in a less formal way by discussions within departments. Faculty members also face peer review in application for faculty summer grants and sabbaticals (through the FAC). All syllabi are posted for review of any faculty member. Finally, faculty are subject to peer review in a wider sense through publications, professional presentations, activities in learned societies, professional church activities, participation in campus and off campus academic life, and the like. On occasion, the Rector, Academic Dean, or Department Chair may provide feedback directly to the faculty member.

c. Faculty present self-evaluations in their dossier for promotion and contract, in the process of contract review described in the “Faculty Handbook” of the Governing Documents, and in their contributions to “Faculty Register of Activities.” At their annual individual meeting with the Rector and Academic Dean, faculty members have the opportunity to state their professional goals, particular achievements, etc.

d. The Academic Dean reviews syllabi, conducts classroom observations (often including the Department Chair or other peer), and includes in his annual report to the Rector an update on each faculty member including committee work, grading, professional activities, classroom observations, library book orders, student course evaluations, grants and follow up from grants, and the like. The Academic Dean and Rector are involved in faculty hiring, promotion, retention, and review according to the process described in the “Faculty Handbook” of the Governing Documents which also specifies the role of the President, Chancellor and the Board of Trustees.

3. Programs are evaluated by students (current and alumni), by faculty (individually, in committee, as a full faculty), by the administration, and by the Board. Programs include the ordination, M.Div., M.A.(theology), and S.T.B. degree programs, as well as the summer Spanish Immersion program in Antigua (Guatemala) and the Hispanic Ministry certificate program, the M.A.P.S. (Master of Arts in Philosophical Studies, overseen by the university’s Department of Philosophy), and the ESL program.

a. Student government, specifically the class academic representatives, meet each semester with the Academic Dean. Students complete exit and alumni polls which, together with course evaluations, address the effectiveness of the intellectual formation program. Student enrollment (particularly in the two dual degree programs), retention, and graduation statistics are a form of evaluation of those programs. Students in the M.A.(theology) program have the opportunity to meet with the faculty in their area of concentration for more informal input.

b. Faculty are organized in departments to facilitate ongoing evaluation of the department and program as a whole. Department chairs guide discussion of the achievement of departmental and course goals; and are members of the seminary’s Academic Committee...
The AC is a consultative body that is primarily concerned with facilitating faculty participation in the development, amendment, and revision of the curriculum programs (pre-theology, ordination, M.Div., M.A./theology, S.T.B.) in the published components of the seminary intellectual formation program (“Seminary Catalog,” “Seminarian Handbook,” “Academic Norms,” and “Faculty Resources”). Full faculty meetings are held to discuss amendments to these documents.

c. The Academic Dean reviews all syllabi, department minutes, faculty meetings, semester grades and course evaluations, the input of the student academic representatives, and the faculty Academic Committee. He sees to it that the entrance, exit, and alumni poll are administered and tabulated, and presents an annual report to the Rector which includes the annual report of the Seminary Registrar. He presents his analysis of the survey data to the Executive Committee, as well as to the faculty. The Academic Dean reviews our “peer profile” as well as reviews the catalogs of our peer institutions. The Seminary Registrar maintains these records and provides the annual data demanded of the accrediting agencies. The Academic Dean also meets with the Dominican House of Studies representative who serves on the S.T.B. examination board.

d. The Rector evaluates applications, evaluates seminary faculty for promotion and retention, meets with faculty individually each year, and is privy to all the assessment information mentioned above. He reports to the Mount St. Mary’s University Board of Trustees, the Seminary Committee, the Chancellor, and the President. In a less formal way he gives a report to the alumni.

4. Program resources are evaluated by students (current and alumni), by faculty, and by the administration. Resources include the Phillips Library, the Potter-Gormley Reading Room, the Practica lab, Information Technology, Learning Services, and the Writing Center.

a. Student evaluation is solicited through the class academic representatives, through survey instruments at the spring registration, and through follow up by the formation advisors of students making use of these services. Students have representation on the university-wide Technology Advisory Committee (TAC).

b. Faculty are represented on TAC and Library Committees (both standing committees of the university).

c. Exit and alumni surveys provide some evaluation of these program resources.

5. The Academic Dean assesses the intellectual formation program each year in light of the program goals in an annual report to the Rector. It is appropriate that this report also include planning recommendations either for the improvements of the intellectual formation program or refinement of its goals.

Planning

Based on the results of the evaluation and assessment of the intellectual formation program, the seminary develops action plans each year in the area of intellectual formation. Goal revisions, program changes, and new initiatives in programs and activities may be proposed. Planning in the area of intellectual formation proceeds in the following way:

Any external review (Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Association of Theological Schools, the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception, Vatican visitation, and the like) are discussed in the Executive Committee and appropriate action is mandated by the Rector. In addition, the Executive Committee discusses the evaluation data each year. Since the Academic Dean has primary responsibility as administrator in the area of intellectual formation, his
input is particularly significant. The Academic Committee also may give significant input in regards to the academic programs and curriculum. The Executive Committee draws up action plans in this area, which are then given to the Rector who may bring them to the full faculty for further discussion, to the Seminary Committee, or to the Board of Trustees. The seminary Student Government Association, especially the class academic representatives, may make suggestions at any point to the seminary administration. Any resulting action plans are presented by the Rector at the cabinet level as required, and given by the Rector to the Executive Committee and the full faculty. The Rector reports on the accomplishment of action items to the seminary board and university administration, as appropriate.

Intellectual formation strategies are broadly included in the long-range planning of the university as a whole.

PASTORAL FORMATION

Purpose

The pastoral formation program prepares seminarians to become shepherds imbued with the charity of Christ, filled with a missionary spirit, possessing pastoral competence and pastoral skills which are developed through formative, supervised educational ministry experiences that include social service ministry, teaching, ministry to the sick and needy, evangelization, promoting vocations, developing administrative skills, and the ordained ministry of the transitional deacon.

Goals / Expected Outcomes

Sequenced settings provide the arena for the acquisition of a pastoral personality and a set of pastoral competencies to be developed: catechetical ministry, ministry to the sick and needy, and evangelization. Placements for the transitional deacon continue this pastoral formation within a parish and rectory context. Special opportunities are offered for experiences in Hispanic Ministry. In each area seminarians are to show they can teach, collaborate, evangelize, administrate, and lead. They are to develop a sense of themselves as authorized ministers performing their service in the name of the Church. They are to develop the skills demanded of this service. They are to be appropriately aware and responsive to different social classes, races and cultures, age groups and genders, with a special loving concern for the poor. They are to share the mind of the Church regarding the ecumenical dimension of pastoral ministry. They are to be men who, in keeping with “Pastores Dabo Vobis,” possess a comprehensive pastoral character (PPF, 237; PDV, 44)

Upon full compliance with the pastoral formation program at Mount St. Mary’s, all seminarians should demonstrate a competence in the following areas of pastoral ministry obtained through supervised pastoral experiences year by year as follows:

1. **Pre-Theology** - Various placements: Seminarians shall have a sense of self as servants of the People of God and begin to see how pastoral ministry is integral to priestly formation. This year offers an opportunity for seminarians to integrate social teachings of the church into concrete acts of charity and corporal works of mercy while orienting the man to pastoral activity, basic skills development, and the beginning of theological reflection (PPF, 225).

2. **First Theology** - Teaching Ministry: Seminarians shall have a sense of self as part of the tradition of authorized teachers of the faith, a working knowledge of the role of religious education in the pastoral mission of the Church, a competence for catechesis on the elementary school level, and a basic knowledge of faith development and age appropriate lesson planning. These men will also learn the complexities experienced by teachers and therefore develop compassion for their particular mission in the Church. They will learn how, as
future priests, to assist the mission of Catholic education through parochial schools and religious education programs.

3. **Second Theology** - Health Care / Social Justice Ministry: Seminarians shall have a sense of self as extending the charity of Christ to the sick, elderly and those with special needs. They will develop personal interactive skills required for effective listening, an effective pastoral personality and ability to manifest genuine pastoral charity. Seminarians should develop pastoral compassion, while learning how they, as future priests, will assist those who minister in hospitals, prisons, nursing homes and institutions that provide special care for the sick and suffering.

4. **Third Theology** - Evangelization Ministry: Seminarians shall have a sense of self as heralds of Christ, the personal skills required to relate to a diverse population, and an increasing capacity for pastoral leadership and collaborative ministry. In this year, seminarians may have an opportunity to learn how to promote vocations, work with professional institutions that serve other pastoral needs, and even have an opportunity to serve in a parish, prior to diaconate ordination, in order to cultivate personal qualities that they and their formation advisor determine would be helpful before they are called to ordination as transitional deacons (PPF, 239).

5. **Deacon Placement** - Parish Ministry: Deacons shall have a sense of self as servant leaders in the Church, developing their competence in the *diaconia* of the Word, of the liturgy, and of charity. They will have an opportunity to learn parish administration skills, learn what it means to be part of a pastoral team, assist in appropriate liturgical settings, and develop an understanding of what it means to be a pastoral leader.

**Program Components**

The central component of the pastoral formation program involves active participation and engagement in a cycle of ministry, which includes supervised ministry under a specifically designed syllabus, theological reflection, regular evaluation, and an annual pastoral workshop for supervisors and seminarians. The Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation conducts an on-site visit for an evaluation while also affording an opportunity to evaluate the supervisor’s experience of the program itself.

1. The pre-theology pastoral formation provides introductory supervised experiences with the hungry, the homeless, the sick, and the marginalized, and other opportunities for service and evangelization (PPF, 254)

2. Supervised ministry in teaching occurs primarily in Catholic schools and parish based religious education programs. A workshop on teaching methods is offered to assist in the ministry of catechesis and conveying the faith to various members of the ecclesial community (PPF, 239)

3. Supervised ministry in health care/social justice allows for ministerial opportunities in hospitals (private and military), nursing homes, geriatric / psychiatric centers, correctional facilities, homeless centers, ministry to persons with AIDS, campus ministry and immigration services. A workshop is provided yearly on health related issues (PPF, 239).

4. Supervised ministry in evangelization involves parish ministry, secondary education and counseling, diocesan tribunals and vocation offices, campus ministry, RCIA, correctional facilities, evangelization ministries, and other support experiences to assist a man to grow in any areas needed prior to ordination to the transitional diaconate. A workshop on pre-nuptial marriage preparation is offered (PPF, 239).
5. Transitional deacons are required to serve at approved parish placements on assigned weekends. The seminary cooperates with local dioceses in the supervision of deacon placement in order to provide each man an opportunity to integrate his ordained ministry with practical learning opportunities, all the while developing a sense of what it means to be a spiritual leader and evangelizer (PPF, 239).

**Evaluation and Assessment**

1. **Students**: Student performance in pastoral field education is assessed through several evaluative instruments including: summer evaluation reports, supervisor’s field education reports, on-site observation report completed by the Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation, deacon evaluations, preaching evaluation forms, and written theological reflection papers.

2. **Placements and Field Education Supervisors**: Students are given the opportunity to provide data to the Vice Rector for Human Formation and evaluate placements and supervisors. As part of the on-site visit, the Vice Rector also assesses the placement and the supervision. The annual report of the Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation also includes appropriate comments on the reliability of the supervisor’s assessment of the students.

3. **Small Group Workshops**: Small group workshops are coordinated by the Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation in order to provide seminarians an opportunity to hear a presentation by a fourth theology student, engage in conversation about his experience, and discuss his experience with that of other students. A report about what was discussed and how this discussion assisted the seminarian is part of the requirements to receive an academic credit for the PFE. This workshop also provides pre-theology students an opportunity to begin theological reflection. However, pre-theology seminarians are not required to write theological reflections and they do not receive an academic credit.

4. **Theological Reflection**: This provides seminarians an opportunity to reflect on how their PFE experiences can be integrated along with the rest of their seminary experience. As part of the requirement to receive a passing credit, each first, second, third and fourth year seminarian must submit specified theological reflections described in the syllabus.

5. **On-Site Evaluations**: Evaluation forms are used to assess students while on assignment at field placements. On-site evaluations address the issues related to the major goals of each yearly sequence of the placements as stated above.

6. **Exit and Alumni Polls**: The exit and alumni polls provide data to assess whether or not graduates have acquired the targeted pastoral competencies for ministry. Poll questions are designed programmatically and follow the designated sequence of the pastoral formation program and their respective outcomes. The Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation presents a summary and commentary of this data to the Executive Committee and the full faculty.

7. **Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation**: By completing an end-of-the-year questionnaire, students are given the opportunity to evaluate the Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation. The Rector also evaluates this Vice Rector annually.

8. **Pastoral Field Education Program Assessment**: The Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation assesses this program each year in a written report to the Rector and Executive Committee made in light of the program goals. It is appropriate that this report also include planning recommendations either for the improvements of the pastoral formation program or refinement of its goals.
Planning

Based on the results of the evaluation and assessment of the pastoral formation program, the seminary develops action plans each year in the area of pastoral formation. Goal revisions, program changes, and new initiatives in programs and activities may be proposed. Planning in the area of pastoral formation proceeds in the following way:

The Executive Committee discusses the evaluation data each year. Since the Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation has primary responsibility as administrator in the area of pastoral formation, his input is particularly significant. The Executive Committee draws up draft action plans in this area which are then discussed by the full faculty and also by the Seminary Committee of the Board of Trustees. The seminary Student Government Association may also be involved in the discussion. The action plans are then presented to the Mount Council for endorsement and finally to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Pastoral formation strategies are also included in the five-year Mount Plan. The formation of these strategies follows the same wide consultative process as annual planning, though it would involve more far-reaching discussions and more thorough examination. These five-year strategies are also used as sources in the development of the annual action plans.