Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 1
   A. The Seminary Community........................................................................................................ 1
   B. Areas of Formation and their Convergence in Conversion .................................................. 2
   C. Agents in Formation .............................................................................................................. 2

II. THE FORMATION PROCESS .................................................................................................... 3
   A. On the Way toward Priesthood .............................................................................................. 3
      1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................ 3
      2. Setting Goals ...................................................................................................................... 3
   B. The Role of the Faculty in the Formation of Seminarians .................................................... 5
      1. The Vice Rector for Human Formation ............................................................................ 5
      2. Formation Teams and Faculty Advisors ........................................................................ 6
      3. The Advisor’s Role ........................................................................................................... 6
      4. The Advisor as Liaison between Faculty and Seminarian, and Vice Versa: .................. 8
      5. Interactions of Advisors and Advisees ........................................................................... 8
      6. Formation Team Meetings .............................................................................................. 9
      7. Formation Workshops .................................................................................................... 10
      8. Spiritual Direction ........................................................................................................... 10

III. THE EVALUATION PROCESS .................................................................................................. 11
   A. Documentation for the Evaluation ...................................................................................... 11
   B. Raising Concerns about Students ..................................................................................... 12
   C. Components of the Student’s Evaluation ........................................................................... 12
      1. The Formation Advisor’s Evaluation ............................................................................... 12
      2. The Seminarian Self-Evaluation ...................................................................................... 14
      3. The Seminarian Self-Evaluation for Deacon and Priesthood Candidates ...................... 16
      4. Peer Evaluations ............................................................................................................. 17
      5. Field Placement Reports ................................................................................................ 18
      6. Summer Placement Evaluations ..................................................................................... 18
      7. Grades .............................................................................................................................. 18
      8. Faculty Observations ...................................................................................................... 18
      9. Celibacy Policy ............................................................................................................... 18
     10. Covenant Eyes Protocol ................................................................................................ 18
   D. Faculty Input / Formation Team Voting ............................................................................. 20
      1. Faculty Input: .................................................................................................................. 20
      2. Voting Options ............................................................................................................... 21
      3. Advancement Voting for Holy Orders ............................................................................. 21
      4. The Rector’s Letter of Recommendation .................................................................... 21
   E. Dismissal of Candidates from the Seminary ....................................................................... 22
      1. Dismissal through the Evaluation Process .................................................................... 22
      2. Grounds for Immediate Dismissal ................................................................................. 22
      3. Procedure for Immediate Dismissal .............................................................................. 22

Appendix A: Student Records ...................................................................................................... 23
I. Principles ................................................................................................................................. 23
II. Nature and Content of Files .................................................................................................. 23
   A. Directory Information ......................................................................................................... 23
   B. The Personal File ............................................................................................................... 23
   C. Academic Transcripts and other Academic Files .............................................................. 24

Appendix B: Canonical Requirements for Orders ....................................................................... 25
   A. Posting Names and Obligation to Report ......................................................................... 25
   B. Irregularities and Other Impediments .............................................................................. 25

Formation Advising Program ~ p. 0 ~ Seminarian Handbook
I. INTRODUCTION

The principles and norms of Mount St. Mary’s Seminary Formation Program are based on Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation, Pastores Dabo Vobis (PDV), and the Program for Priestly Formation, fifth edition (PPF) of the American bishops.

“Christians are made, not born.” With these words, Tertullian (Apol. xviii) points out something about becoming a Christian that also applies to becoming a priest. People do not arrive in the world as ready-made Christians, nor do men arrive in the seminary as ready-made priests. Baptism and Holy Orders both presuppose conversion and formation. The celebration of these sacraments marks the end of a time of preparation but opens out onto a lifetime of ongoing formation. Our configuration to Christ in Baptism must be followed by an ever greater conformity of ourselves to the Lord in the Spirit (Rom 8:29) until we grow to full stature (Eph 4:13). In the same way, the configuration to Christ the Head and Shepherd of the Church in Holy Orders requires the priest to enter into ever deeper friendship and communion with the Lord over the course of a lifetime (PDV 42). Neither the Christian life nor the priesthood is a vocation that we possess once and for all, but are rather gifts which must be actively and gratefully received each day anew.

A. The Seminary Community

The seminary can be responsible only for the initial process of formation leading up to the celebration of Holy Orders, the proximate preparation of candidates for the priesthood, but it views this in the broader horizon of life-long ongoing formation (PDV 42). The goal of the seminary is to instill in candidates for priesthood what a good professor tries to instill in his students: a desire to go on learning and growing in knowledge and wisdom long after formal schooling is ended.

The seminary can help a candidate for the priesthood only if he recognizes when he arrives that he is not ready-made, but needs formation, and that he continues to need it long after he leaves the seminary. A seminarian’s very first step in formation is recognition of his need for formation – a step that is reflected in an attitude of openness to the direction of those charged with his formation by his bishop.

The model for formation is the personal relationship which developed between Christ and his apostles. He called them apart to spend time with him, “to develop a relationship of deep communion and friendship with himself” (PDV 42), before sending them out on mission. Jesus calls his disciples “friends” (Jn 15:14-15), who enjoy a deep personal communion with himself and with one another (Jn 17:20-21). Since salvation depends on knowing “the only true God” and Jesus Christ who was sent by him (Jn 17:3), the disciples felt impelled to invite others to join their fellowship, so that all might be one (Jn 17:21; 1Jn1:3). Formation is therefore primarily about communion and mission: communion in the Lord in order to help carry on his saving mission. Evangelization and missionary zeal flow from the joy of friendship with Christ.

This Christological model of communion means that formation must be much more than a fulfillment of external requirements, which in turn implies that the seminary should be a “spiritual place, a way of life, an atmosphere that fosters and ensures a process of formation, so that the person who is called to the priesthood by God may become, with the sacrament of orders, a living image of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church” (PDV 42). Ideally the seminary should offer the “possibility of re-living the experience of formation which our Lord provided for the Twelve” (PDV 60). The seminary should be a true ecclesial community that is
built up as each puts his own gift at the service of others and as all gather to pray and worship together.

B. Areas of Formation and their Convergence in Conversion

While the seminary should be something like a continuation of the apostolic community gathered around Jesus (PDV 60), it is also unique in that it is “committed to formation, the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation of future priests” (PDV 61). The development of friendship and communion with Christ requires much more than a vague relationship with him. To be a living image of Jesus the Head and Shepherd of the Church demands certain specific qualities as a human being, a spiritual leader, a teacher, and a pastor. Wanting to follow in Jesus’ footsteps as a priest is not enough, though this desire is an important first step. The Church must also ensure that those whom she sends out to care for the Christian community and to preach the gospel are humanly, spiritually, intellectually, and pastorally prepared for this mission.

It is necessary to integrate human formation with the other three pillars of formation -- the spiritual, the intellectual and the pastoral. In the spiritual realm, grace builds on and perfects nature. Intellectually, a man must grow in the human functions of perception, analysis and judgment. Pastorally, a priest connects with and cares for others with his human personality (PPF 82). It is important to see the four pillars as different aspects of a more fundamental conversion of mind and heart, moments in a lifelong personal transformation. Hence, formation is not simply about acquiring skills or taking courses or fulfilling a rule of life but about utilizing these as means to an end -- the ever deeper configuration of a man to Christ the Head and Shepherd of the Church, so that he takes on the mind and heart of Jesus Christ and can say, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

C. Agents in Formation

The bishop and the local Church are ultimately responsible for the formation of priests, but the bishop entrusts the day-to-day formation of candidates for the priesthood to “the Rector, the spiritual father or spiritual director, the superiors and professors” of the seminary (PDV 66). The Rector alone has the ultimate responsibility for recommending candidates for advancement and sending seminarians’ evaluations to their ordinaries. He is assisted by the formation team, the academic faculty, pastoral placement supervisors, and many others in preparing candidates and reaching a decision regarding advancement and ordination.

The whole seminary community, as well as communities outside the seminary with which seminarians interact, all serve as agents of formation. Yet formation would always remain extrinsic if the candidate for ordination were not himself an active agent in his own formation. The formation process for priesthood is not merely the acquisition of skills but also entails a real change in one’s inner being. Though this interior transformation occurs primarily through the agency of the Holy Spirit, it also depends on the cooperation of the candidate, who is instrumental not only as the one being formed but also as an agent of his own formation. In the Holy Father’s words:

“Lastly, we must not forget that the candidate himself is a necessary and irreplaceable agent in his own formation: All formation, priestly formation included, is ultimately a self-formation. No one can replace us in the responsible freedom we have as individual persons.” (PDV 69).
Placing the weight of formation on the individual person is only proper in light of the vision of the priest as a living image of Jesus the Head and Shepherd of the Church.

II. THE FORMATION PROCESS

A. On the Way toward Priesthood

1. Introduction

If the individual candidate is ultimately responsible for his own formation, he must be able to formulate the specific goals he wants and needs to attain in the four areas of priestly formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. However, he does not perform this task in isolation or without help. The formation faculty, especially the advisor who is assigned to him as a mentor, assists and guides him in this task. In this section, the meaning of goal setting will be set forth, including the issues in each of the four areas of formation which should be considered in formulating goals. In the subsequent section, the role of the formation faculty and specifically the faculty advisor will be clarified.

2. Setting Goals

a. The Purpose and Meaning of Goals

The candidates for the priesthood arrive in the seminary with some pre-understanding of the priesthood, which comes from catechesis, the study of theology, the reading of Church documents like Pastores Dabo Vobis or the Decree on Priestly Life and Ministry from Vatican II, and the observation of priests with whom they have been associated. What is asked of all candidates is that there be a fundamental openness to deepening their understanding of the priesthood by learning from the Church’s rich tradition and from the wisdom and experience of those who have been entrusted with priestly formation.

Since no one arrives in the seminary a ready-made priest, the candidate must recognize his need for human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. This recognition first entails acknowledging areas of personal growth that entail not only a variety of skills necessary for priestly ministry but also, more importantly, specific ways that he will become more completely conformed to Jesus the Head and Shepherd of the Church. Though others will assist the seminarian in formulating appropriate goals that will address all four areas of formation, he must ultimately formulate and take responsibility for the goals himself for proper formation to occur. As the candidate matures, his understanding of priesthood and his own vocation will develop, and so his goals should also evolve.

b. Formulating Goals

The starting point for goals should always be a seminarian’s last seminary evaluation. He should address any areas of growth identified there. Seminarians who are new to seminary and lack such an evaluation should start with any areas of growth identified in the application process. The next points of reference for all seminarians should be the Four Pillars of Priestly Formation and the Year-by-Year Issues (see the Seminarian Handbook). Drawing on these sources, the seminarian should formulate his goals after careful reflection, prayer, and consultation with his spiritual director and faculty advisor.
Goals should bring about real growth in a person, so they should not be just isolated actions that can be carried out in a perfunctory or mechanical way and that do not really challenge one to conversion and self-transformation. In formulating a goal, one should ask, “Will this cost me something? Will it move me beyond where I am and challenge me?” Real growth requires a “pruning back” (John 15:2) and a discipline which can be painful but “in the end it yields for those who have been trained by it the peaceful harvest of an honest life” (Heb 12:11). To be able to see where we need to be formed presupposes a basic honesty and transparency to ourselves regarding what we lack and how we need to change for the better.

Seminarians are to write a brief statement of one to three goals that they wish to attain for each of the four areas of formation – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Seminarians are to present their statement in draft form to their advisors in the fall of each year after discussing their goals with him, and they should give their goal-setting statement to their advisors by the date indicated in the formation calendar. The goal setting statement will be an important component in the seminarian’s subsequent meetings with his advisor as well as with the faculty advisor’s yearly evaluation. Only matters in the external forum are treated in goal setting.

Effective goals have the following six characteristics:

1) **Specific**: Clarity in goal-setting fosters clarity of action that in turn fosters ultimate success; an inability to be specific about one’s goals almost guarantees that one will fail to attain them. A crucial element of this specificity is describing not merely what one will try to do but where, when and how one will try to do it. For example, “praying more” is a laudable goal that is much too vague to effect a real life change. A more effective approach would be to set a goal such as “to pray the rosary daily” or “to spend 20 minutes before Mass daily in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament meditating on the Mass readings for the day.”

2) **Measurable**: One form of specificity that deserves explicit treatment here is measurability. Goals that can be measured by some objective criteria are reachable; goals that cannot be measured objectively may be reachable in theory but virtually impossible for anyone to evaluate in practice, including the one striving for them. One way of promoting measurability is to formulate goals in terms of observable behavior. For example, “establishing good relationships with the seminarians in the house” is likely to remain a mystery even when a seminarian has a strong subjective sense that he has attained the goal. On the other hand, “establishing good relationships with the seminarians in the house by attending all house socials, sitting with different groups at meals, and spending at least an hour in the recreation room on Friday or Saturday evening” provides observable, objective criteria by which to evaluate the goal.

3) **Time**: Another form of specificity that deserves explicit mention here is time. What will be the frequency and duration of the observable behavior described in the goal? For example, a goal of “lifting weights and using aerobic machines at the university gym to lose 20 lbs.” is somewhat specific and highly measurable. However, as anyone who has developed a habit of physical exercise would attest, if one does not set aside specific blocks of time for exercise, it will not happen.
Similarly, those who have successfully lost weight recognize the value of establishing short-term goals directed to their ultimate target. Thus a better way to formulate the example would be “lifting weights and using aerobic machines at the university gym for at least 30 minutes a day, three times a week to lose 4 lbs. a month for the next 5 months.”

4) **Personal**: These goals are for the seminarian who is setting the goal, not for others. Goals involve actions that are within one's control for one's own growth; they do not ultimately depend on the response of others. For example, “raising my GPA” depends to a degree on the nature of one’s courses and the subjective judgment of one’s professors. A much better approach to this area of growth would be “to spend 3 hours a day studying for my courses except for Sundays.” Another common goal-for-others mistake is to set a goal something like, “to inspire my Hispanic religious education students to a greater love of Jesus.” Better to set the goal for oneself as follows: “I will try to be a better example of Christ’s love for my religious education students by learning all of their names within the first month of classes and spending three hours a week learning Spanish phrases and studying Hispanic cultures from the resources listed below.”

5) **Ministerial**: Though one’s personal interests and preparation for ministry will often broadly coincide, they do not always do so. Ultimately, to be conformed to Jesus the Good Shepherd, one must subordinate one’s own desires to the needs of the Church, even those desires that are thoroughly virtuous. Goals are directed towards priestly ministry, not towards one’s own ideas of self-improvement, and so goals in all four areas of formation – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral – always have some ministerial purpose. For example, is one’s goal of studying a particular language driven by a personal interest in some area of theology or by the ministerial needs of one’s diocese? For many goals the ministerial purpose is self-evident, e.g., goals pertaining to preaching, teaching or ministering to the sick. For others this purpose is not as readily evident, e.g., goals involving quitting smoking or improving one’s time management. Seminarians should formulate all goals with a ministerial purpose in mind, even when this purpose is not self-evident or explicitly stated.

6) **Realistic**: Finally, goals should be challenging but also attainable. Priestly formation is much more like a marathon than a sprint, and it often takes years of sustained effort and slow growth to cultivate priestly virtues.

c. **Issues by Year in the Formation Program**

To help guide goal-setting and ongoing assessment of a seminarian’s progress, issues in the four areas of formation for each year of the formation program are found online as an appendix to this section of the Seminarian Handbook.

**B. The Role of the Faculty in the Formation of Seminarians**

1. **The Vice Rector for Human Formation**

Delegated by the Rector, the Vice Rector for Human Formation oversees the formation and evaluation process. He is responsible for implementing the program approved by the Rector and faculty and for reviewing the various elements of the program each year with a view to
possible revisions. He is to help the faculty teams and advisors by providing them whatever information and materials they need. He and/or the Rector assign advisors to formation teams and to specific advisees. He meets with the formation teams throughout the year to discuss the students’ progress, and keeps the Rector abreast of these discussions. At the end of each academic year, he makes a report to the Rector on the formation advising program. Part of this includes an assessment of the effectiveness of each formation advisor, and the formation advisors receive a copy of this assessment.

2. Formation Teams and Faculty Advisors

At Mount St. Mary’s there is no clear-cut distinction between the teaching faculty and the formation faculty. All faculty members are engaged in some aspect of formation and have a vote in the annual evaluation and advancement of students. From within the faculty, some are assigned to formation teams that are responsible for following the progress of students in the four areas of formation. There are two such formation teams: one is responsible for Pre-theology and First Theology; the other is responsible for Second, Third, and Fourth Theology. Normally, a faculty member belongs to only one of these teams so that he can specialize in one stage of formation. Once a seminarian has entered Second Theology, he will always have a priest formation advisor. Therefore, Formation Team 2 will consist entirely of priests whereas Formation Team 1 will have both priests and lay people. The Vice Rector for Human Formation and the Vice Rector for Pastoral Formation serve on both teams.

Faculty members in turn function as advisors to a limited number of students from within their group. The advisor is responsible for following his advisee’s growth toward priesthood only in the external forum. Through regular meetings with the student, familiarity with reports made about the student, and discussion of the student in the meetings of the formation team, the advisor should get to know the student well enough to make an evaluation of his readiness for advancement in the spring semester.

In the spring of each year, students will be invited to indicate their choice of advisors for the next school year. They should ideally keep the same advisor if they are remaining in the same formation team, unless the advisor and/or advisee do not believe they can work well together. If at all possible, the student’s choice of advisor will be honored, but the Vice Rector for Human Formation or Rector may judge it opportune to assign a student to another advisor.

3. The Advisor’s Role

The advisor operates exclusively in the external forum, which means that though advisees have a significant degree of confidentiality with their advisors, ultimately the advisor must report anything pertaining to suitability for Holy Orders to the Rector and his delegates. While the advisor’s relationship with advisees does not have the same degree of confidentiality that exists in the internal forum of spiritual direction (see II.B.7. below), advisor and advisees should know each other well and should feel that they can be open to, and trusting of, one another. The advisor contributes to the student’s discernment of his vocation to the extent that he evaluates how well the student is fulfilling the expectations of the program for priestly formation. Using the objective criteria of the formation program for each year of formation as delineated in the Seminarian Handbook, the advisor reports to the faculty about whether a student is where he ought to be at his particular stage of
formation. He has to keep in mind the qualities and skills a student should possess for priestly life and ministry. The advisor and whole formation team evaluate how well the student has fulfilled the expectations of his particular stage of formation.

In meeting with their advisees, advisors assist them to understand and direct their development in the four areas of formation – human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. Advisors help their advisees formulate goals for each year and monitor their progress over the course of the year. Advisors also help the students identify strengths and weaknesses, and offer suggestions for ways of confronting and overcoming difficulties along the path toward ordination. Advisors help their advisees appropriately balance their efforts in each of the four areas and also help their advisees integrate these areas in order to appreciate formation as a unified development of the whole person. For example, integration helps an advisee understand that an ostensibly human goal of improving time management also has spiritual dimensions, in the self-discipline and generosity of self, required to spend time with tasks one might not readily desire to undertake. Such a goal also has intellectual implications by helping provide sufficient time for study and pastoral implications by developing organizational skills necessary for parish administration.

Though the advisor is responsible for evaluating advisees, his chief role is not evaluation but formation. The advisor is best understood as a mentor who provides guidance to students on the road to the priesthood. After working with a student throughout the year, the advisor’s goal is to provide as fair and objective an assessment of the student as possible. While this may take the form of critical observations, the advisee should know that these comments are made for his own growth. Advisor and advisee must both take the initiative to get to know one another. The student should feel at ease in speaking with his advisor about significant issues in his life, and the advisor should reflect back to the student in a timely, fair and honest way how he sees him. The advisee should have confidence that the advisor can speak knowledgably and fairly about him.

An extremely important task for the advisor is to verify that every advisee has reviewed archdiocesan policies governing the conduct of Church personnel and is committed to abiding by them. As a Catholic institution in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Mount St. Mary’s Seminary operates according to the policies enumerated in A Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth and the Code of Conduct for Church Personnel of the Archdiocese of Baltimore (both documents are contained in the cover pockets of the blue folder distributed to each seminarian). Each student must sign the supplied documentation signifying that he has read and is committed to abiding by both documents. These signed documents must be submitted to his advisor at the beginning of the fall semester to be included in the student’s formation advisor folder.

Formation advisors are also responsible for verifying the following items:

- That their advisees are meeting regularly with their spiritual directors. In doing so, advisors may not ask their advisees about the specific content of those meetings.

- That their advisees have read Appendix B of this section of the handbook, “Canonical Requirements for Orders,” and have informed the Rector of any impediments that affect them personally. In doing so, the advisee has no obligation to discuss the nature of the impediment with his advisor.
4. **The Advisor as Liaison between Faculty and Seminarian, and Vice Versa:**

The advisor has the responsibility of communicating to the formation teams how well the seminarian is engaging in the formation program and its various expectations, including the seminarian’s growth plan, feedback from various supervisors and pastors, and the seminarian’s approach to the special challenges he faces. The advisor also communicates to the seminarian the insights and recommendations of the formation team for his continued growth.

The advisor is responsible for providing a forum for ongoing reflection and assessment that aims at the growth of the seminarian in the four areas of formation. The individual meetings between advisor and advisee provide this forum.

5. **Interactions of Advisors and Advisees**

   a. **Individual Meetings**

   New students have their initial meeting with their advisor during orientation week. Then, during the first week of school in the fall, advisors meet with their advisees as a group to review any changes to the formation program and to establish a schedule for individual meetings.

   The advisor is to meet individually with his advisees at least three times each semester (more or less monthly) for approximately 50 minutes per session. More frequent meetings are encouraged in order to help advisors and advisees get to know one another well. These meetings focus on the student’s performance in the four areas of formation according to the specific issues previously delineated for each year of formation (see the individual “Issues by Year” appendices to this section of the Seminarian Handbook). For those aspects of formation that occur within the internal forum of spiritual direction, the advisor and the advisee share the responsibility of ascertaining in a manner appropriate for the external forum that sufficient growth is taking place. Advisors should keep a record of their meetings with advisees as well as notes on what was discussed.

   - **First Semester**

     **Meeting #1:** The first meeting takes place before the goals are due, so that the advisor can help the student draw up his statement. The advisor will approve the goals. There should be a discussion of the summer experience, particularly if any difficulties are involved, as well as discussion of each of the areas of formation, especially the field placement arrangement. This is also an opportunity to discuss the pastoral field placement contract.

     **Meeting #2:** The second meeting should review the student’s progress in fulfilling his goals in the four areas of formation, and discussion of any difficulties, e.g., deficiencies in courses. This meeting should also address issues related to ordination, including celibacy, obedience, simplicity of life and any difficulties surfaced by the formation teams.
Second Semester

Meeting #1: For ordination candidates, this meeting should focus on observations of the formation team on the candidates and review of the seminarian’s goals and Christmas break.

Meeting #2: For candidates for ministries and advancement, a review of possible goals for the next year; results of discussion of the faculty team; results of the peer evaluations for men in Pre-theology 2 and Second Theology, review of the year’s progress in meeting goals; summer plans.

For ordination candidates, a review of the year and an assessment of their seminary formation; ordination and First Mass plans, discussion of summer / long range plans; discussion of academic and pastoral evaluations.

b. Informal Settings

Opportunities for advisors and advisees to get to know each other better also occur in a variety of informal settings such as in the seminarian dining room during meals, at house socials, or in the university gym, to name a few. Advisors and advisees all benefit by cultivating such opportunities.

6. Formation Team Meetings

As designated in the formation calendar, each of the formation teams will meet on a regular basis to discuss the progress of the students in their respective groups. They are to bring to light both strengths and weaknesses of the candidates to help the seminarians know where progress has been made and where growth is needed. They are to discuss all candidates, not just those who are having difficulties. The advisor will report any observations or concerns to his advisees, and will be responsible for knowing his advisees well in order to represent them fairly at these meetings.

The Vice Rector for Human Formation will serve as moderator of both teams. His task is to convene meetings, moderate the discussion, keep accurate minutes and see that these minutes are posted on the shared network, to which all formation faculty have access.

The Vice Rector for Human Formation will keep the Rector informed of the deliberations of the teams, and he will notify the Rector in a timely fashion well in advance of the faculty vote if problems are anticipated with a student’s advancement.

Under certain circumstances, the Vice Rector for Human Formation will invite a student to attend a formation team meeting in order to discuss an issue directly with the team. Such circumstances include:

- The team has reached a consensus that such a discussion would be helpful.
- The team is considering dismissal or a delay in advancement.
- The student has requested the opportunity to discuss with the team a serious issue or grievance. Such requests must be made in writing and must clearly stipulate the reason for the meeting. The student should submit this written request to his formation advisor, who will present it to the team. The team will automatically grant such requests unless the seminarian has already been dismissed from the seminary by his sponsoring diocese or by the Rector. In these cases of dismissal, the team in consultation with the Rector will determine whether such a discussion is appropriate.
7. Formation Workshops

Each semester, formation workshops are held to provide the seminarians in-depth education in some fundamental area of pastoral ministry or personal development. The dates for these workshops are in the Seminary Calendar.

The fall workshops are designed to address important pastoral issues that arise at various stages of formation. Though some of the topics are covered in different theology courses, these topics are of special importance. Some of the workshops are in preparation for seminary studies, some are in preparation for the field education assignments of that year, and others are more general preparation for ordained pastoral ministry. Workshop themes for each year of formation are as follows:

- **Fourth Theology**: Parish financial administration; transition issues from seminary to priesthood
- **Third Theology**: Hispanic ministry; multi-cultural ministry
- **Second Theology**: Health care ministry; personal physical health
- **First Theology**: Catechetics
- **2nd Pre-theology**: Vocational discernment; Pre-Theology II Seminar (Fides et Ratio, etc.)
- **1st Pre-theology**: Study skills; time management

The spring workshops are attended by all the seminarians, irrespective of class year and focus on areas of personal formation appropriate for all levels of formation. The themes of these workshops are as follows on a five-year rotation:

- Vocation promotion as a parish priest
- Parish stewardship
- Addictions
- Friendships and boundaries
- Death, dying and grieving

8. Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction is also an important part of the faculty’s formation work. While any faculty member may be assigned to function as an advisor in a formation team, only priests may serve as spiritual directors.

A priest who serves as a seminarian’s spiritual director holds that relationship entirely within the realm of professional confidentiality as defined by the policies of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and the laws of the State of Maryland. Such confidentiality is generally referred to as the “internal forum,” which is distinct from the “seal of confession.” Exceptions to confidentiality in the internal forum are as follows (quoted from the Code of Conduct for Church Personnel of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, p. 13):

- If there is clear and imminent danger to the client or to others, those providing pastoral counseling, spiritual direction or guidance shall disclose the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm.
- Suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported to civil authorities in accordance with Maryland law.
Spiritual directors should discuss these limits of confidentiality with their directees in their first session together. Such exceptions to confidentiality in no way apply to the seal of confession, which conforms to the universal law of the Church. A spiritual director will keep information obtained solely through the Sacrament of Penance absolutely confidential under all circumstances. Spiritual directors may not speak about their directees or disclose any information they have received from their directees at faculty or formation team meetings, or in any other setting, except as delineated in the exceptions noted above. Priests may not vote on a candidate who is or has been their spiritual directee (PPF 134, 135).

Within the seminary context, seminarians are free to approach their own spiritual director, the house spiritual directors, or any of the adjunct spiritual directors or confessors for the Sacrament of Penance. Seminarians may not confess to other faculty priests whose responsibilities are in the external forum, and priest formation advisors may not hear the confessions of their own advisees. The seminary’s Director of Spiritual Formation serves both in the capacity of seminarians’ spiritual director and as resource person for the other priests involved in spiritual direction.

III. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

A. Documentation for the Evaluation

Faculty advisors, working with the members of the formation team, are immediately responsible for following their advisees’ personal and ministerial development and assessing.

The advisor is responsible for maintaining a file for each advisee with all the documentation needed for the yearly evaluation. It should contain the following documents:

- **Formation Advisee E-Binder**
  1. Autobiography; Essay on Priesthood
  2. Goals; Signed Statements for *A Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth* and the *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel of the Archdiocese of Baltimore*
  3. Field Education documents – Deacon Evaluations, Summer Evaluations, Theological Portfolios
  4. Memos – Faculty Observations, Peer Evaluation Composite, Admissions Committee Observations
  5. Grades and Deficiency Reports
  6. Reports concerning Academic Performance (Learning Center, Deficiencies)
  7. Self-Presentation of Deacons
  8. Faculty Advisor Reports
  9. Information for Faculty Advisor Report
  10. Record of Individual Meetings with Advisor and Personal Notes

The advisors will have access to an e-binder for each advisee at the first formation meeting of the year. The Rector’s Administrative Assistant is responsible for obtaining, scanning, and posting evaluations and other documentation on the student.
B. Raising Concerns about Students

To ensure that every student will have as fair an evaluation as possible, the faculty will observe the following guidelines:

1. When a faculty member has a specific difficulty with a student (e.g., something that has happened in class), the faculty member should speak with the student about it. The faculty member should report it to the advisor, either verbally or in writing, if he believes it to be serious enough.

2. The formation advisor should keep the student current on any concerns the faculty have about him. Faculty should be mindful of informing advisors of problems in a timely fashion so that there are no surprises at evaluation time. Students should also tell their advisor about problems as they arise.

3. The advisor is to bring to the formation team any concerns about the student that warrant the attention of the faculty as a whole because they bear on the student’s advancement toward the priesthood. The student should be aware of these issues and of the fact that the formation team is discussing him. Students may be invited to the formation team meeting to answer faculty concerns and present their viewpoint.

C. Components of the Student’s Evaluation

- **Rector’s Letter**
- **The Mount’s Year in Review**
- **Formation Advisor’s Evaluation**
- **Seminarian Self-Evaluation**

1. The Formation Advisor’s Evaluation

The Formation Advisor Evaluation is divided into four sections, corresponding to the four areas of formation delineated in PDV. It concludes with a recommendation for the next step, e.g., advancement, ordination, a pastoral year or leave of absence, etc. The advisor’s report is to reflect the consensus of the whole formation team, so the advisor must consult with the team, especially with respect to any areas of growth for the candidate. Thus, while this report should include the advisor’s personal evaluation of the candidate, it is to represent a convergence of opinion.

The Vice Rector for Human Formation will review each evaluation. If there is need for revision, he will return the report(s) to the advisor. When the reports (Advisor’s and Self-Evaluation) are in their final form and reviewed by the candidate (PPF 281), the student and advisor sign both reports.

If the student objects to anything in the Formation Advisor’s report, he should discuss the problem with the advisor who, in turn, will inform the Vice Rector for Human Formation of the student’s concern. Since the evaluation is a product of the whole formation team, the Vice Rector may consult with the team to see if there is warrant for modifying the original evaluation.
The Administrative Assistant to the Rector maintains the tally of the votes for advancement and this information is included in the Advisor’s evaluation.

**Criteria for Evaluation:** “The annual evaluation should include a well-founded judgment concerning the suitability of the seminarian for advancement to the next year of formation. The *evaluation* report should be detailed. The qualities listed in canon law as requirements for promotion to Orders should be considered at each stage of advancement: integral faith, right intention, requisite knowledge, good reputation, integral morals and proven virtues, and the requisite physical and psychological health. The evaluation should provide a *judgment* of the seminarian’s aptitude for priestly life and ministry as well as an *estimation* of his capacity to lead a chaste, celibate life. The stage or year in which the seminarian is currently in formation should be considered in assessing his readiness for advancement” (PPF 280). The following issues in each area of formation are to be considered and are to be applied, *according to the principle of gradualism*, at each level of formation:

**Human Formation:**
- The human qualities of truthfulness, respect for others, justice, humility, integrity, affability, generosity, kindness, courtesy, integrity, and prudence
- The capacity to relate to others in a positive manner and the ability to get along with others and work with them in the community
- Good self-knowledge, self-discipline, and self-mastery, including emotional self-control
- Good physical and mental health
- A balanced lifestyle and balance in making judgments
- Affective maturity and healthy psychosexual development; clarity of male sexual identity; an ability to establish and maintain wholesome friendships; the capacity to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships
- Skills for leadership and collaboration with women and men
- Capacity to receive and integrate constructive criticism
- Simplicity of life, stewardship of resources, and responsibility for financial obligations
- Mature respect for and cooperation with church authority
- Engagement in the community life of the seminary

**Spiritual Formation:**
- There should be accountability in the external forum for seminarians’ participation in spiritual exercises of the seminary and their growth as men of faith.
- Within the parameters of the external forum, habits of prayer and personal piety are also areas of accountability.
- Commitment to a life of prayer and the ability to assist others in their spiritual growth
- Abiding love for the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Holy Eucharist and Penance
- A loving knowledge of the Word of God and prayerful familiarity with that Word
- Appreciation of and commitment to the Liturgy of the Hours
- Fidelity to the liturgical and spiritual program of the seminary, including the daily celebration of the Eucharist
- Fidelity to regular spiritual direction and regular celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and a habit of spiritual reading
- A positive embrace of a lifelong commitment to chaste celibacy, obedience, and simplicity of life
- A love for Jesus Christ and the Church, for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints
- A spirit of self-giving charity toward others

**Intellectual Formation:**
- Love for truth as discovered by faith and reason
- Fidelity to the Word of God and to the Magisterium
- Knowledge of Catholic doctrine and adherence to it
- Interest and diligence in seminary studies
- Successful completion of seminary academic requirements
- Ability to exercise the ministry of the Word: to proclaim, explain, and defend the faith
- Knowledge of languages that will be necessary or suitable for the exercise of their pastoral ministry

**Pastoral Formation:**
- A missionary spirit, zeal for evangelization, and ecumenical commitment
- A spirit of pastoral charity, a quest for justice, and an openness to serve all people
- A special love for and commitment to the sick and suffering, the poor and outcasts, prisoners, immigrants, and refugees
- Demonstration of appropriate pastoral and administrative skills and competencies for ministry
- Ability to exercise pastoral leadership [effectively]
- Ability to carry out pastoral work collaboratively with others and an appreciation for the different charisms and vocations within the Church
- The ability to work in a multicultural setting with people of different ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds
- A commitment to the proclamation, celebration, and service of the Gospel of life
- Energy and zeal for pastoral ministry

2. **The Seminarian Self-Evaluation**
   (Deacon and Priesthood Candidates see III.C.3. below)

Beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year, the seminarian will be required to submit a four page written self-evaluation which will be reviewed with his Formation Advisor, co-signed, and sent to the seminarian’s Bishop. The report will be divided into six categories: **1) Introduction, 2) Human Formation, 3) Spiritual Formation, 4) Academic Formation, 5) Pastoral Formation, and 6) Conclusion and Signatures.** Because the Formation Advisor’s report (which will accompany the Seminarian Self-Evaluation) will be more evaluative, the seminarian’s self-evaluation will accurately report “activities,” be more “results” oriented and more focused on accomplishments. This evaluation will be written impeccably with correct grammar and will include activities and evaluative statements. If the Rector or Vice Rector for Human Formation deem the evaluation unfit for episcopal review, the report will be returned to the seminarian and re-written. This document will represent you, your progress and the seminary community. The evaluation will be exceptionally well done.
According to the Program for Priestly Formation, “A seminarian’s self-evaluation can be a valuable instrument. Seminarians should prepare such evaluations with an honest and candid examination of themselves in the areas of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation. They should recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and positive qualities as well as areas of needed growth. It is the responsibility of the seminarian to show positive qualities that recommend his advancement in formation. This self-evaluation is best done in consultation with a formation advisor/mentor” (PPF 276).

In addition to the self-evaluation, the seminarian’s Formation Advisor will submit his own evaluation of the seminarian and his progress. This report will be evaluative and less a reflection of activities, individual efforts and progress. The formation advisor will use information gained in your formation meetings, formation faculty meetings, unsolicited comments, peer evaluations, etc. to form his report.

The following guidelines will help form the seminarians self-report:

**HUMAN FORMATION**
- Annual review of goals
- Detailed personal assessment of success/failure/struggle with goals

*The seminarian might include:*
  1. Greatest area of growth as a result of the current year of formation
  2. Greatest area for growth in human formation
  3. Professional, spiritual, or social organizations to which the seminarian belongs and his personal involvement (e.g. Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary, Seminarians for Life, Jesus Caritas, etc.)
  4. Description of his contribution to the life of the seminary community (include House Jobs, Committees, special tasks) and his punctuality
  5. Description of his ability to make and keep healthy friendships within the seminary community
  6. Assess his current state of health; the seminarian’s commitment to healthy diet and consistent exercise (address weight, addictions, sleep patterns, diet, medical issues if necessary)
  7. Significant financial or legal issues which may be problematic
  8. Report the amount of time spent engaged on the internet and the type of activity engaged in while on internet
  9. Hobbies/recreation/activities and how these activities contribute to the seminarian’s maturity and development

**SPIRITUAL FORMATION**
- Annual review of goals
- Detailed personal assessment of success/failure/struggle with goals

*The seminarian might include:*
  1. Spiritual Discipline: Consistency with the Divine Office, attendance and participation in seminary liturgies, consistency with attendance at spiritual conferences
  2. The effectiveness of the year working with his spiritual director
  3. Description of his spiritual life (time spent in personal prayer, devotions, practices)
  4. Devotion to the Eucharist (Holy Hour) and the Blessed Mother
  5. Relate efforts at integrating Sacred Scripture into his prayer (i.e. *lectio divina*)
6. Include the spiritual reading and lessons learned from these texts
7. Assess how well have adapted to the spirituality specifically appropriate to diocesan priesthood/religious order
8. MANDATORY INCLUSION: Include three detailed and well-considered paragraphs describing how have grown and continue to grow in the a) virtue of chaste celibacy, b) the discipline of obedience, c) simplicity of life appropriate to the priesthood.

INTELLECTUAL FORMATION
- Annual review of goals
- Detailed personal assessment of success/failure/struggle with goals

The seminarian might include:
1. Detailed explanation of academic performance for the year
2. If applicable, explanation for missed academic deadlines or academic incompletes
3. Update on progress with regard to degrees pursued
4. Success or challenges associated with reading class material, including difficulties completing assigned readings
5. Extracurricular reading/writing ability
6. Progress report on Spanish language success or English as a second language work, including general level of proficiency
7. Work completed toward the Hispanic Ministry Certificate
8. Benefits received from participation in the seminary-sponsored summer immersion program in Guatemala
9. Description of some of the ways in which the seminarian is able to integrate academic work with the other areas of his formation

PASTORAL FORMATION
- Annual review of goals
- Detailed personal assessment of success/failure/struggle with goals

The seminarian might include:
1. Description of previous summer experiences, the nature of his work, the contributions these activities have made to his priestly formation
2. Detailed description of current pastoral placement (or volunteer pastoral activity) for both semesters, and name of supervisor, the nature of duties, including particular successes, challenges, disappointments
3. Description of his ability to work with various people: women, the divorced, minorities, the marginalized
4. Experiences with public speaking
5. Participation in evangelization
6. Expound on areas of pastoral skills which have been strengthened by this placement and an explanation of what he intends to do to further develop necessary skills
7. Description of interaction/relationship with supervisor in detail
8. Include results of the evaluation the supervisor provided in the final review

3. The Seminarian Self-Evaluation for Deacon and Priesthood Candidates
The process described here represents the “scrutiny” of the candidate required by Canon law. A seminarian who has received the ministries of lector and acolyte and has been received as a candidate generally petitions for diaconate several months prior to ordination
by the date indicated on the Seminary Calendar. Ordinations to the priesthood and diaconate take place in the seminarian’s home diocese as a rule, though the seminary can host these ordinations at the Ordinary’s request or with his permission.

When a seminarian petitions for ordination to the diaconate, he is to present his Seminarian Self-Evaluation to the formation faculty emphasizing his readiness for the reception of orders. The format of this report will follow the format provided above for the Seminarian Self-Evaluation which will include goals he has set forth for his personal formation, his human development, spiritual life, academic and intellectual formation, and pastoral ministry skills. It is the responsibility of the candidate to provide adequate evidence to the formation faculty in these final self-evaluation reports (3rd and 4th year) of his readiness in each of these areas. It is particularly important to include the issues of chaste celibacy, prayer, obedience, maturity and his readiness to assume priestly obligations at ordination. His self-evaluation should be a reflection upon his personal growth in each area since his entrance into seminary formation and should also identify areas of continued growth for the period of his transitional diaconate and into his priesthood. The self-evaluation should be at least five pages, double-spaced. It is due by the date indicated in the calendar and should be e-mailed both to his Formation Advisor and to the Administrative Assistant to the Rector. Again, his Self-Presentation will be included in the packet of information sent to the Bishop so it should be exceptionally well-done.

Checklist for the Self-Presentation:

- Growth in each of the four pillars since arriving at seminary describing goals in each area and fulfillment of those goals. Any significant formation issue should be addressed.
- Under the section on Spirituality, describe readiness to embrace the promises of chaste celibacy, obedience and prayer for the People of God in the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Address readiness to conduct oneself with professional conduct: awareness of personal boundaries, ability to cope effectively with loneliness, ability to recognize and address stress, capacity to live and work with challenging circumstances or people.
- Identify continued areas of growth during the time of transitional diaconate and beyond.

Seminarians must make certain the report is five pages, double-spaced and grammatically correct; checking it carefully. The seminarian is presenting himself to his bishop for the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

4. Peer Evaluations

Peer evaluations are recommended as helpful in the evaluation process... Seminarians completing peer evaluations should be exhorted to do so with honesty and in a spirit of charity. Positive or negative opinions concerning the suitability of a peer for advancement should be expressed clearly (PPF 277).

- Process of Peer Evaluation
  Peer evaluation provides the seminarian with insights from his fellow seminarians on his ability to live the Christian mystery within the daily demands of pastoral charity and on the ministerial skills which he has acquired or still needs to develop in order that he can effectively lead others to Christ.
The purpose of peer evaluation, like all other aspects of seminarian evaluation, is to enable the seminarian and the formation faculty to discern God’s will for the person who presents himself for Holy Orders.

Electronic peer evaluations are completed for seminarians in the last semester of Pre-theology and in the second semester of Second Theology. The Vice Rector for Human Formation will meet with each group to explain the procedure for peer evaluation. All students of the class are expected to participate in the written process, to evaluate their peers after prayerful reflection, and to maintain a spirit of fraternal charity. Even if a seminarian does not know a classmate well, he should indicate his initial impressions, since it is often on this basis that parishioners assess their priests.

a. Completed e-forms are compiled electronically and forwarded to Rosemary Mick, who will file them in the archives. The completed composites are then saved on the Shared Drive for the formation faculty to review.

b. The formation advisor presents an oral summary of the peer evaluation composite to each advisee and works with him on any issues that need to be addressed. The formation advisor’s annual report on the seminarian will include a summary of the peer evaluation results.

5. Field Placement Reports
Each student receives an evaluation from his pastoral field placement annually. The advisor draws on this evaluation to assess the student’s strengths and weaknesses for pastoral ministry.

6. Summer Placement Evaluations
The seminary encourages students to gain pastoral experience during the summer and expects an evaluation of the seminarian’s summer activities from the appropriate supervisor (PPF278). Some dioceses do not provide placements for their candidates, and so evaluations may not always be possible. However, advisors should explore with their advisees in this situation how they might profit most from the summer for their priestly formation.

7. Grades
Academic performance is an important indicator of a candidate’s ability to preach and teach the faith and to provide intelligent leadership in the Church.

8. Faculty Observations
When a faculty member wishes to report significant student’s strengths or weaknesses to the advisor, he should do so in writing and should send a copy to the Vice Rector for Human Formation. The advisor is to consider what individual faculty members have observed and to discuss the observations with the student.

9. Celibacy Policy
Students are expected to adhere to these guidelines (see the “Spiritual Formation” section, D.1.-2., of the Seminarian Handbook) and faculty are to use these norms for assessing a student’s ability to lead a chaste celibate life.

10. Covenant Eyes Protocol
In order to assist seminarians in developing good habits regarding the use of the Internet and to support their formation regarding chaste celibacy, seminarians will download the
Covenant Eyes program on their personal computers and other electronic devices. The software monitors how the Internet is used and sends a monthly report to the Formation Advisors and Spiritual Directors selected as Accountability Partners. Establishing this protocol is another way for each man to remain accountable to those in charge of his formation. This transparency helps seminarians to be more prudent and think twice about how they use the Web. Failure to abide by this policy will be considered a serious formation issue.

a. Who must download:

1) ALL NEW SEMINARIANS (ALL YEARS): A Covenant Eyes welcome email will be sent to each man. The program should be downloaded and in use by **the first Friday of September**. Covenant Eyes will send each man a username and password as well as instructions to guide them through the download process. Each man’s Formation Advisor will have been pre-selected as his Accountability Partner on his account. Those who have not installed the program by the above due date will have their names submitted to the Vice Rector for Human Formation.

2) ALL RETURNING PRE-THEOLOGIANS AND FIRST AND SECOND YEAR THEOLOGIANS The Covenant Eyes program should already be on the personal computers of these men. Each seminarian is responsible to update his own account when he changes Formation Advisor or Spiritual Director. He must log in to his account and change the names of his Accountability Partners.

3) ALL RETURNING THIRD AND FOURTH THEOLOGIANS The seminarians in these classes will have the OPTION of continuing Covenant Eyes on their electronic devices. They must let their Formation Advisors and Spiritual Directors know if they choose not to use Covenant Eyes. The Formation Advisor must send an email to the Rector concurring with this decision.

b. When a man selects a new Spiritual Director by September 8, **the seminarian** is responsible for adding that name as an Accountability Partner to his account. The seminarian also has the option of selecting additional Account-ability Partners if he so desires. Remember, whenever a seminarian changes Formation Advisor or Spiritual Director, **he** is responsible to make that change on his Covenant Eyes account and to keep his account up to date.

c. No student may uninstall the program without notifying his Formation Advisor and the Vice Rector for Human Formation. Failure to do this will be considered a serious formation issue.

d. The seminarian will continue to be held accountable to the Accountability Partners throughout his time in formation at Mount St. Mary's Seminary. Pastoral years, vacations and summer breaks are included.

e. If the seminarian does not own a personal computer, he should immediately inform his Formation Advisor and the Vice Rector for Human Formation.

f. The Accountability Partners will receive monthly Covenant Eyes reports and will hold the seminarian accountable for any inappropriate use of the Internet (gambling, pornography, etc.). If there are indications in the monthly report that visits have been made to inappropriate sites, the seminarian will be asked to give an explanation.
g. If, in the prudent judgment of the Accountability Partner, the nature or extent of the inappropriate Internet use warrants further intervention, a meeting will be held with the Rector or Vice Rector for Human Formation, the Formation Advisor and seminarian. If counseling is deemed advisable, the seminarian will be referred. The results of this meeting will be brought to the attention of the formation team and the vocation director. Without entering into a discussion, the Rector will inform the seminarian’s Spiritual Director so the matter can be addressed in the internal forum as well.

h. The seminary will assume the monthly cost of the Covenant Eyes software.

The use of the Covenant Eyes software extends to the priest faculty as well so that they can all give good examples to one another. Any questions on these matters should be addressed to the Rector. His interpretation of this policy is final.

D. Faculty Input / Formation Team Voting for Ministries, Candidacy, & Advisors’ Reports

1. Faculty Input:

Prior to the formation team voting on a candidate for any ministry, order or advancement, all faculty members will be notified electronically for positive or negative input on these candidates. These comments are e-mailed directly to the Vice Rector for Human Formation who shares them with the formation team prior to the vote. If a faculty member does not send input to the Vice Rector for Human Formation that is interpreted as a positive vote for that candidate.

If a faculty member or formation team member brings up an issue that has not yet been discussed with the student, that issue will be discussed with him prior to the formation team vote. The exception would be an incident that happened so recently that there was no time to discuss it with the student. Apart from such exceptions, a vote of “no” should always be preceded by a formation team discussion of the reasons for such a vote. The Administrative Assistant to the Rector maintains the tally of the votes and this information is included in the Rector’s recommendation to the bishop.

All faculty have access to the student’s formation advisor report on the shared network prior to their giving input on candidates for priesthood and diaconate. At the end of each year, all formation advisor reports are accessible on the shared network to all faculty, for advancement other than priesthood and diaconate.

Students typically petition for ministries and candidacy and receive them as follows:

- The ministry of lector in the spring of First Theology. This ministry is conferred in the seminary each April.
- The ministry of acolyte in the spring of Second Theology. This ministry is conferred in the seminary each April.
- Candidacy in the fall of third theology. Candidacy is conferred in the seminary each November.

Students will receive instructions on petitioning from the Administrative Assistant to the Rector several weeks before the petition deadline listed on the Seminary Calendar.

N.B.: Receiving the ministry of lector or acolyte is contingent upon being in good standing (i.e., the formation team is recommending the student for advancement to the next year) at
the time of the institution. If a student is not being recommended for advancement, they will not be permitted to receive lector or acolyte.

2. Voting Options

Formation team members have the following three options in casting ballots for ministries, candidacy, and advisors’ reports:

   a) **Yes** = In favor of conferral/advancement/ordination

   b) **No** = Opposed to conferral/advancement/ordination. A written explanation is required

   c) **Not Voting** = A completely neutral vote is to be used exclusively because you are or have been the candidate’s spiritual director. *This is not an option because of insufficient knowledge*. Unless the faculty member is confident of a vote based on the review of the candidate in formation faculty meetings, he should inform himself of the candidate’s suitability prior to the vote taken for advancement.

On such ballots, faculty members should not raise issues that have not been previously brought to the student’s attention. The exception would be an incident that happened so recently that there was no time to discuss it with the student. Apart from such exceptions, a vote of “no” should always be preceded by a formation team discussion of the reasons for such a vote. The Rector’s Administrative Assistant takes the tally of votes and reports the results to the Rector.

3. Advancement Voting for Holy Orders

The formation team will not vote on candidates for Holy Orders who have not been at least one full year in the seminary formation program. Dioceses may request that the seminary make observations, and faculty who feel they know the candidate well enough may submit observations.

When there is doubt about a student’s readiness for ordination, a time of probation away from the seminary should be considered (PPF 288). A common form of this is the pastoral year in the sponsoring diocese. The precise duration and issues that need to be addressed should be specified. If there are still doubts at the end of this period, the seminary should not welcome the student back. Some dioceses routinely require a pastoral year. In these cases, the pastoral year does not reflect any concern about the student’s suitability for ordination.

4. The Rector’s Letter of Recommendation

Using the advisor’s report and other materials in the student’s file, the Rector writes a letter of recommendation that he sends to the diocesan bishop. In this letter the Rector reports the formation team vote as well as his own observations to the diocesan bishop. The advisor’s report is attached to this letter.
E. Dismissal of Candidates from the Seminary

1. Dismissal through the Evaluation Process

After extensive consultation, a student who does not seem to have the qualities to be a priest should be advised to leave (PPF 287). According to the Roman congregations, this means that a “prudent doubt” exists concerning his suitability.

A majority of negative votes typically means that the student should be advised to leave the seminary.

“Seminarians not recommended for advancement should be notified as early as possible and in a constructive manner. In these cases, an opportunity should be provided for the seminarian to present his self-assessment; others who can speak on the seminarian’s behalf should also be heard” (PPF 287). Formation team meetings provide a forum for seminarians to air their viewpoint.

2. Grounds for Immediate Dismissal

The following are grounds for immediate dismissal of any seminarian from the Ordination Formation Program at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary:

- criminal activity;
- illegal use of and/or distribution of controlled substances;
- serious abuse of alcohol;
- sexual misconduct including any form of sexual abuse;
- flagrant immorality;
- plagiarism;
- any behavior which in the judgment of the Rector is seriously disruptive of seminary life

Anyone accused of any of the activities listed above will be given a fair hearing.

3. Procedure for Immediate Dismissal

Any dismissible offense must be reported immediately to the Rector, the Vice Rector for Human Formation or the seminary Dean of Students. The Rector or Vice Rector for Human Formation, in turn, must inform the appropriate civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Removal of the alleged offender from the grounds of Mount St. Mary’s Seminary must be in accord with the rule of law. Only the Rector may make the final decision to dismiss a seminarian. His decision is final.
APPENDIX A: STUDENT RECORDS

I. PRINCIPLES

Mount St. Mary’s University complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended (FERPA) regarding student education records. In general, students have the following rights:

A. to inspect and review their own education records;

B. to seek amendment of records the student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights;

C. to consent to disclosures of personally-identifiable information from the student’s records to third parties (subject to certain exceptions); for example, the student’s written consent is not required for disclosures:

1. to faculty and administrators of Mount St. Mary’s who have legitimate educational interests;
2. to certain government agencies and officials or as required by law; and
3. to other schools in which the student intends to enroll, upon written request by the student.

At the beginning of each academic year, after entering Mount St. Mary’s, the seminarian is required to give written consent for his bishop or the bishop’s delegate to review the seminarian’s records.

II. NATURE AND CONTENT OF FILES

A. Directory Information

1. Mount St. Mary’s maintains the following student “directory information”: name, room number, telephone, home address, date and place of birth, ethnic and racial background, sex, diocesan affiliation, clerical status (where applicable), dates of attendance at Mount St. Mary’s, degree program, degrees granted, previous educational institutions attended, e-mail address, photograph, and awards received. This information may be released by Mount St. Mary’s without specific prior authorization by the student. The student, however, has the right to require that all or certain portions of this information not be designated as directory information by so notifying the Administrative Assistant to the Rector.

B. The Personal File

1. The personal file of each student is kept in the office of the Administrative Assistant to the Rector. After a student’s departure, it is kept in secure file cabinets in seminary storage.

2. The personal file contains all the admissions materials received upon a student’s application to the seminary. In addition, it includes the student’s annual evaluations while a seminarian at Mount St. Mary’s as well as his composite peer evaluations, field education evaluations, summer evaluations, self-presentation, correspondence between the seminarian’s diocese and the seminary in his regard, and canonical
documents associated with the reception of ministries, admission to candidacy, and the reception of orders.

3. The Rector, Vice Rector for Human Formation, and the Administrative Assistant to the Rector have access to the information in the seminarian’s personal file. It may also be shared with the seminarian’s bishop and vocation director.

4. Admissions materials received upon a student’s application to Mount St. Mary’s Seminary that become part of his personal file are reviewed by members of the admissions committee. The seminarian’s formation advisor receives copies of his autobiography and essay. He also receives a written summary from the Admissions Committee of information from the admissions materials relevant to the seminarian’s formation.

5. The formation advisor receives copies of the seminarian’s summer evaluations, field education evaluations, composite peer evaluations, and diaconate self-presentation.

6. The medical and psychological records maintained by Mount St. Mary’s and kept in the seminarian’s personal file are governed both by FERPA and by applicable state laws pertaining to medical records. Copies of medical records are also sent to the Wellness Center of Mount St. Mary’s University. Seminarians may have access to their psychological evaluation and test results only through the medium of a qualified interpreter of such instruments.

C. Academic Transcripts and other Academic Files

The academic files of Mount St. Mary’s contain a transcript of the student’s academic records at Mount St. Mary’s as well as transcripts from previous educational institutions. These documents are kept in the office of the Registrar. Semester grades are routinely sent to the seminarian’s bishop, vocation director, and formation advisor.
APPENDIX B: CANONICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDERS

A. Posting Names and Obligation to Report

At least two weeks before evaluation, the Rector will post the names of seminarians petitioning for candidacy, lector, acolyte or ordination to the diaconate or priesthood. Any student who knows of any serious reason why another student should not be advanced or receive candidacy, the ministries, or orders, has a moral obligation to make this known to the Rector (Canon 1043).

B. Irregularities and Other Impediments

All seminarians are required to read and to be familiar with the canons from the Code of Canon Law that refer to the suitability of an individual to receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Please note especially the canons relating to:

- apostasy (a formal denial of the Christian faith or adherence to another religion)
- heresy (a formal rejection of a revealed dogma)
- schism (a formal act of membership in another church)
- voluntary homicide
- cooperation in the procurement of an abortion
- attempted suicide

Irregularities and impediments for Holy Orders should be discovered in the seminarian application process and should be addressed from the beginning of a seminarian’s formation. Any seminarian affected by any irregularities and impediments is absolutely required to make them known immediately to the Rector, even if the seminarian discovers them well into his seminary career, so that any necessary dispensations may be obtained and that the situation can be resolved, if possible.

Failure to disclose such impediments before receiving Holy Orders could result in being impeded from the exercise of those orders.

C. Code of Canon Law, Canons 1040-1049

Canon 1040

Persons who are affected by a perpetual impediment, which is called an irregularity, or by a simple impediment, are prevented from receiving orders; the only impediments which can be contracted are contained in the following canons.

Canon 1041

The following are irregular as regards the reception of orders:

1) a person who labors under some form of insanity or other psychic defect due to which, after consultation with experts, he is judged incapable of rightly carrying out the ministry;
2) a person who has committed the delict of apostasy, heresy or schism;
3) a person who has attempted marriage, even a civil one only, either while he was impeded from entering marriage due to an existing matrimonial bond, sacred orders or a public perpetual vow of chastity, or with a woman bound by a valid marriage or by the same type of vow;
4) a person who has committed voluntary homicide or who has procured an effective abortion and all persons who positively cooperated in either;
5) a person who has seriously and maliciously mutilated himself or another person or a person who has attempted suicide;
6) a person who has performed an act of orders which has been reserved to those who are in the order of episcopacy or presbyterate while the person either lacked that order or had been forbidden its exercise by some declared or inflicted canonical penalty.

**Canon 1042**

The following are simply impeded from receiving orders:

1) a man who has a wife, unless he is legitimately destined for the permanent diaconate;
2) a person who holds an office or position of administration which is forbidden to clerics by canons 285 and 286, and for which he must render an account until he becomes free by relinquishing the office and position of administration and has rendered an account of it;
3) a neophyte, unless he has been sufficiently proven in the judgment of the Ordinary.

**Canon 1043**

The Christian faithful are obliged to reveal impediments to sacred orders, if they know of any, to the Ordinary or to the pastor before ordination.

**Canon 1044**

The following are irregular as regards the exercise of orders already received:

1) a person who has legitimately received orders while he had an irregularity precluding his receiving orders;
2) a person who has committed a delict mentioned in canon 1041, n. 2, if the delict is public;
3) a person who has committed a delict mentioned in canon 1041, nn. 3, 4, 5, and 6.2.

The following are impeded from exercising orders:

1) a person who has legitimately received orders while he was bound by an impediment precluding his receiving orders;
2) a person who is afflicted with insanity or some other psychic defect mentioned in canon 1041, n.1, until the time when the Ordinary, after consultation with an expert, permits him the exercise of that order.

**Canon 1045**

Ignorance of the irregularities and impediments does not exempt from them.

**Canon 1046**

Irregularities and impediments are multiplied when they arise from different causes. They are not multiplied by the repetition of the same cause except in the case of the irregularity arising from voluntary homicide or the effective procuring of an abortion.
Canon 1047

1) A dispensation from all irregularities is reserved to the Apostolic See if the fact upon which they are based has been brought to the judicial forum.

2) A dispensation from the following irregularities and impediments to receiving orders is also reserved to the Holy See:
   a) from the irregularity arising from the public delict mentioned in canon 1041, nn. 2 and 3;
   b) from the irregularity arising from the public or occult delict mentioned in canon 1041, n. 4;
   c) from the impediment mentioned in canon 1042, n. 1.

3) Also reserved to the Apostolic See is a dispensation from the irregularities precluding the exercise of an order already received which are mentioned in canon 1041, n. 3, but only in public cases, and in canon 1041, n. 4, even in occult cases.

4) The Ordinary can dispense from irregularities and impediments not reserved to the Holy See.

Canon 1048

If, in more urgent occult cases, access to the Ordinary cannot be had, or when it is a question of the irregularities mentioned in canon 1041, nn. 3 and 4, access to the Sacred Penitentiary cannot be had, and if there is a danger of serious harm or infamy, the person who is impeded by an irregularity from exercising an order can exercise it, with due regard, however, for the responsibility of making recourse as soon as possible to the Ordinary or Sacred Penitentiary through a confessor and without mentioning the name of the person who has the irregularity.

Canon 1049

1) In the petition to obtain a dispensation from irregularities and impediments, all the irregularities and impediments are to be indicated; nevertheless, general dispensation is valid even for those which have been omitted in good faith with the exception of the irregularities mentioned in canon 1041, n. 4, or others which have been brought to the judicial forum; however, a general dispensation is not valid for those which have been omitted in bad faith.

2) If it is a question of the irregularity arising from voluntary homicide or from procuring an abortion, the number of the delicts is also to be mentioned for the dispensation to be valid.

3) A general dispensation from the irregularities and impediments to receive orders is valid for all the orders.