

## Section I. Executive Summary

### ***Pastoral Integration through Theological Reflection on the Four Dimensions of Formation***

The 2017 Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology (NDS) Quality Enhancement Plan is entitled, *Pastoral Integration through Theological Reflection on the Four Dimensions of Formation*. This topic is meant to highlight the desired student learning outcomes, represented in *Pastoral Integration*, as well as the methodology by which such programmatic improvement can take place, through the implementation of *Theological Reflection on the Four Dimensions of Formation*.

The focus upon this specific area of student learning was developed through engagement with a broad range of constituencies: the most recent Synod of the Archdiocese of New Orleans; feedback obtained from seminarian pastoral ministry, or field experiences; input from the Board of Trustees; and surveys and discussions held with the faculty, the seminarians, and alumni. A clear consensus on the need to better prepare seminarians for pastoral ministry in terms of the new evangelization emerged.

The methodology chosen reflects current research and convictions about how to best improve the Master of Divinity program, especially in terms of the fields of experiential learning, and Theological Reflection. This research was meant to ensure that the knowledge, skills, and dispositions acquired in the classroom could best manifest themselves in seminarian field experiences, providing for a fruitful learning spiral.

Based upon the programmatic analysis of constituent feedback and the subsequent research, student learning outcomes thus focused upon growth in pastoral integration of the four dimensions of priestly formation: pastoral, spiritual, intellectual, and human. Moreover, this growth in integration was to be facilitated and assessed by the use of the newly designed integrated Theological Reflection model which encouraged critical analysis of pastoral experience in terms of the four dimensions of formation.

By “integration” is meant the disposition to determine pastoral action on the basis of the synergistic unity of all four dimensions of formation. Any one dimension, without the support of the others, is ineffective because it is not true to the Gospel preached by Christ. Ministry must be based on the truths of doctrine, but it is made dynamic and effective only when perfected by prayer and virtue, and lived out in the pastoral ministry of the disciple. It is for this reason that integration is both crucial to our educational mission and the standard by which our success is measured.

This Theological Reflection model, using the human and financial resources of the institution, will be integrated throughout the curriculum: in field experiences, in the Capstone project, and in course pedagogy and course-based assessments. With these tools in hand, Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology seeks to build upon its previous work and to better form priestly missionary disciples for the new evangelization.

**Contact Information:** Accreditation Liaison, Dr. Rebecca S. Maloney, [rmaloney@nds.edu](mailto:rmaloney@nds.edu)