

A **BOLD** and Faithful Witness

Keeping the Promises
of Our Mission

2008–2009 Update



The Strategic Plan of Luther Seminary

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October 15, 2007

Dear Friends,

“As the first decade of the 21st century comes to a close, we confess that the Holy Spirit is calling and sending the church of Jesus Christ into apostolic mission for the sake of God’s world.”

So begins “**A Bold and Faithful Witness: Keeping the Promises of our Mission,**” Luther Seminary’s strategic plan for the years 2007-2008 and following. You hear the conscious echoes of the opening declaration of “Serving the Promise of our Mission,” the seminary’s plan for the years 2000-2005. This new plan re-affirms the commitments of the earlier plan, even as it challenges us to become a dynamic, learning organization deeply embedded in the congregations and Christian communities we serve.

What kind of leadership—from both Luther Seminary and its graduates—is needed for this high calling? Luther Seminary equips evangelical public leaders for apostolic witness. “Evangelical” is a word that has been used and abused in the popular culture. Yet, at its core, it bears a message of hope, of good news. We intend to re-claim this word.

What do we mean by “**evangelical public leaders for apostolic witness**”? Much is packed into this short phrase:

- The call to carry out the charge first placed by Jesus upon his earliest disciples to share God’s good news with those of every nation.
- A commitment to be biblical, confessional and missional.
- A vision of leadership that lifts up a public office and responsibility to share our gifts with the world God loves.
- An emphasis on both “justification” and our “vocations” or callings in the world.
- A life and a ministry deeply rooted in Scripture.

In order to carry out God’s specific call to Luther Seminary, **five goals will focus our energies over the next few years:**

- **Goal 1:** Luther Seminary’s graduates will be prepared to lead the church in apostolic mission.
- **Goal 2:** Luther Seminary will attract and support people with the character, capacity, and commitment to accomplish the seminary’s mission.
- **Goal 3:** Luther Seminary will transform its facilities to advance the teaching, learning, and community that take place on campus and around the world.
- **Goal 4:** Luther Seminary will foster a culture that promotes our common mission.
- **Goal 5:** Luther Seminary will be a responsive learning organization strengthened by a culture of assessment and accountability.

The world is changing rapidly. The church must hold fast the good news of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, and it must continue to learn how to share that good news in new ways for new times. This plan commits Luther Seminary to learning and reformation; that is, to teach and model adaptive leadership for the purpose of fulfilling our mission. We recognize that we must learn how to listen, especially to local congregations, so that we can support changing leadership needs across the church. Our ultimate objective is to equip leaders to live and proclaim a gospel that is genuinely good news in whatever culture or context they find themselves.

Today we face an important fork in the road in the unfolding story of congregational ministry in North America. Which way will we go to be truly salt, light and leaven in the world? Different notions of how to do church in a world of many cultures and religions are vying for the heart of congregations. Change is rocking the foundation of every ministry. The environment in which ministry is done today has become more difficult in significant ways. Choices abound. The corpses of failed congregations litter every neighborhood. The marketplace of religious life isn't tame. Ministry, at times, can appear scary!

Within this context, we recognize:

First: We are called to be servants of evangelical renewal.

We need leaders with the Christian imagination to see the Spirit at work and the promise of God's activity in their churches and neighborhoods. For this to happen, leaders must learn to be captured by an evangelical imagination for ministry.

Second: We are called to be heralds of hope.

Because we serve a God who promises new life and resurrection, we live in hope, we preach hope and we commit ourselves to educate leaders of hope. Our high calling is to encourage our church's leaders, present and future, with a vision of the future full of promise.

Third: We are called to be catalysts for change and mission.

A commitment to evangelical renewal brings with it a call for change and continuous reform which are essential dimensions of our reformation heritage.

This strategic plan is Luther Seminary's response to the challenges that face our church and world. These pages are filled with expectation and hope. The Spirit is at work renewing our church. Our desire is to move forward on this path with bold humility. By focusing on our callings as servants, heralds, and catalysts, our prayer is that we keep the promises of our mission.

O Lord, bless our efforts, forgive our failings and continue to guide us to will and do your good pleasure. Amen.



Richard H. Bliese
President

Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities
+ called and sent by the Holy Spirit
+ to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ
+ and to serve in God's world.

I invite you to download copies of this document and share it with your congregation (http://www.luthersem.edu/strategic_plan).



If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved... But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?... So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

—Romans 10:9, 14-15, 17

Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities called and sent by the Holy Spirit to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ and to serve in God's world.

—The Mission Statement of Luther Seminary

Called *and* Sent

1.1 God's Call and Our Calling

As the first decade of the 21st century comes to a close, we confess that the Holy Spirit is calling and sending the church of Jesus Christ into apostolic mission for the sake of God's world.

Apostolic Mission

The church is apostolic as it bears confident witness, with the apostles, that in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the love and mercy of God have been poured out for the world (Luke 24:45-48).

The church is apostolic as it faithfully confesses, with the church of all ages, the nature and work of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as defined in the Apostles' Creed.

The church is apostolic as it is "sent" (*apostellō*) by the holy Spirit into all the world to participate in the mission of the triune God.

This call comes at a time of significant cultural change that presents the church with distinct challenges and opportunities. Among these, two were named by our constituencies as particularly important for Luther Seminary to address: (1) the lack of clarity about the relevance of the Christian message and (2) the growing search for spirituality, community, and intimacy.

Other pressing challenges were also identified, including the plurality of belief systems that offer competing claims to truth and meaning; the deterioration of structures that have traditionally taught the Christian faith; the radically altered nature of the communities and world in which our graduates will serve because of patterns of worldwide immigration and the globalization of the economy; threats facing the environment; and the worsening

physical and emotional health of many of our trained leaders of the church. In this changed and ever changing context, the "old, old story" of the gospel must be interpreted anew for the sake of the world, as we prepare students for ministry and as graduates enter into ministry, for while the times may have changed, God's call to apostolic mission remains constant.

In this changed and ever-changing context, the "old, old story" of the gospel must be interpreted anew for the sake of the world.

Luther Seminary responds to this call in at least three ways:

- members of the seminary community respond through their congregations and as individuals, carrying out their witness and their vocations in the world as people of God;
- the seminary community itself bears witness to the mission of God in the world through its work and worship, its convictions and confession, and its life together in the spirit of the gospel;
- as its primary work, the seminary, through the cooperation of faculty, staff, students, boards, and supporters, educates leaders for Christian communities called into apostolic mission.

As disciples of the crucified and risen Lord, and committed to the distinct vocation entrusted to us, we believe that God has blessed Luther Seminary with the gifts and commitments to educate leaders to serve God's church and world. We also recognize that though we may hear God's call, we cannot know with certainty the path ahead, and so we are eager to learn from any who will teach us how best to offer in this time and context a lively confession of the hope that has been given to us in the gospel. Accordingly, we acknowledge that we do not do this work alone, but in essential partnership with others committed to the mission of the church and the seminary: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its synods; the Western Mission Cluster of the ELCA; the Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools; the ecumenical agencies and church bodies increasingly present among us as supporters, students, and teachers; our partner seminaries and other academic institutions throughout the world; and the congregations, pastors, and leaders of the church who send us students and support us with prayers, counsel, and gifts.

Relying on the mercy of God, confident of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and thankful for our partners in this work, we offer this strategic plan in order to make plain our response to what God has called us to do. Building on the curricular, institutional, and strategic commitments of the last two decades, this plan is divided into two sections. The first outlines our vision for mission by sharing the vocational identity and convictions that underlie our sense of mission and lead to the enduring institution-wide goals to which we are committed. The second section outlines our plans to implement our vision by amplifying our goals, naming our long-term strategies, and identifying concrete action steps that will be revised annually. A constant thread throughout this plan is the commitment to listen—to congregations, to graduates, to partners and allies, to constituents and supporters, and to the needs of the world—and a willingness to change in response to what we learn for the sake of greater fidelity to God's calling.

A public evangelical leader is one who is called by the church to provide leadership for Christian communities by giving voice to the gospel of Jesus Christ

1.2 Identity and Convictions

Identity

Luther Seminary is a community that understands itself called by God to prepare public evangelical leaders to respond to the challenges of the day and witness boldly to the gospel and the work of God in the world.

Public Evangelical Leaders

A public evangelical leader is one who is called by the church to provide leadership for Christian communities by giving voice to the gospel of Jesus Christ (the "evangel"), by teaching and confessing faith in the triune God, by entering into God's mission and service in the world and leading others in that work, and by demonstrating the skills needed to gather a community around this mission.

Among the institutions of the church, a seminary—this seminary—is called to think theologically about gospel and church, witness and mission, God and world, and to teach students to do the same. Three adjectives in particular define and describe our theological identity as a seminary in the evangelical Lutheran church:

Biblical

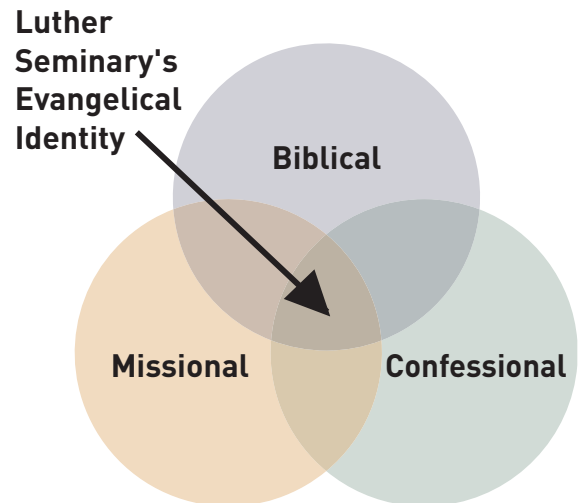
First and foremost, we recognize that we are called to listen carefully and attentively to God’s word of law and gospel in the Scriptures. We are, at heart, a community created and sustained by the word, and we believe that our hopes will be realized and fidelity measured to the extent that we attend to that word. We acknowledge the canonical Scriptures to be the written word of God, the source and norm of our faith and life; most important, **the Scriptures point to God’s living Word, Jesus Christ, the center of our proclamation, teaching, and life together.** We commit ourselves to diligent reading and careful study of the Bible as we plan the work of Luther Seminary, and we affirm our call to teach students to do the same in order that they might lead communities in discerning who God is calling them to be and what God is calling them to do in this day and age.

Confessional

Our reading of Scripture and practice of ministry is shaped by the Lutheran confessional writings and the ecumenical creeds and faith they affirm. At the heart of this theological heritage is the good news that in and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we have been justified by grace through faith and set free to love and serve our neighbor and the world. Because of the centrality of this confession to our mission, **we attend carefully to the insights of the evangelical Reformers so that our current confession in word and service may be informed and guided by their witness.** Toward this end we commit ourselves to teaching, learning, and scholarship that harvest the riches of the past in service to the future to which God is calling us. We commit ourselves further to interpreting and confessing the work of God in the world today and to teaching our students to do the same, as the Spirit gives us the ability.

Missional

The biblical and confessional heritage we receive and confess leads us, under God, to participate in the mission of the triune God in and to the world: to preach and teach, to heal and serve, to create and sustain, to love the neighbor and confront evil, to promote peace and justice, to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to announce the forgiveness of sins and the possibility of abundant life in Jesus’ name. To prepare students for this work, we attend carefully to the heritage that forms us, to the multiple contexts in which we find ourselves, and to the needs and conditions of the world, always with the intent to discern the means by which to bear witness to Christ and the work of God in a manner that is both relevant and persuasive. Faithful responsiveness to the current context for the sake of proclamation is the evangelical impulse that informs our teaching and drives all reform. Toward this end, we commit ourselves to sensitive and thorough engagement with our contemporary settings and cultural contexts, to ongoing dialogue with partners from around the globe who can best teach us about the needs of the world, and to a willingness to assess and adapt our efforts in service to greater fidelity to the gospel of God.



Convictions

Ethos of Excellence

We cultivate an ethos among faculty, staff, and students that pursues excellence, integrity, truth, and authenticity in everything we do for the sake of effective teaching and honest proclamation of the gospel.

Transformative Learning

We value a rigorous and stimulating teaching and learning environment, the lifelong pursuit of intellectual and faith-filled inquiry and innovation, and the imaginative ideas that arise from cross-disciplinary theological dialogue, all making us better equipped to respond to God's call in service to neighbor and world.

Fellowship and Communion

We strive to nurture a community that is grounded in and modeled on Christian fellowship, forgiveness, and reconciliation; a community made possible through our gathering around word and sacrament and nurtured through regular worship, prayer, and the breaking of bread together. Experiencing the joys and strengths, as well as the strife and conflict, of any human community, we seek opportunities for mutual encouragement, support, and appreciation, as well as other means to live more fully into the way of Christian discipleship.

Hospitality and Friendship

We regard the gift of intentional hospitality as a mark of a compassionate community grounded in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who revealed God's mercy and grace for the world. With generosity and mutual love, we strive to welcome all as Christ would welcome them.

We embrace all brothers and sisters in Christ as full participants in our shared community of faith and as true friends in the body of Christ.

Diversity and Openness

Recognizing the diversity of God's world and church, we celebrate the gifts, perspectives, and experiences of all God's children. We are committed to encouraging an environment that rejoices in a vibrant and diverse community of faith, where different voices are recognized and respected as strengthening this seminary's response to God's call. We seek diversity in the seminary community that reflects God's church, strengthens Christian fellowship, and equips graduates to serve in the diverse communities to which they are called.

Thanksgiving and Stewardship

We give thanks to the God of grace and love—made manifest in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—for all we have been given and for all that has been entrusted to us. We embody this gratitude in benevolent response by being faithful stewards of God's mysteries. We seek to mirror God's abundant gifts of love, life, salvation, time, talent, and treasure by caring for God's creation, for ourselves and our resources, and for one another.

1.3 Institution-Wide Goals

This sense of our mission, identity, and convictions leads us to adopt the following institution-wide goals. While they surely do not name everything we may undertake over the lifespan of this strategic plan, they nevertheless set a clear direction for the seminary and provide useful criteria by which to evaluate any and all opportunities and decisions:

- Goal 1:** Luther Seminary's graduates will be prepared to lead the church in apostolic mission.
 - Goal 2:** Luther Seminary will attract and support people with the character, capacity, and commitment to accomplish the seminary's mission.
 - Goal 3:** Luther Seminary will transform its facilities to advance the teaching, learning, and community that take place on campus and around the world.
 - Goal 4:** Luther Seminary will foster a culture that promotes our common mission.
 - Goal 5:** Luther Seminary will be a responsive learning organization strengthened by a culture of assessment and accountability.
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Implementation

2.1 Background and Rationale

These goals enable us to ... respond to God's call ... realize our vision for mission ... enable us to see opportunity, abundance and hope.

The five goals named above work together to enable us to respond to God's call and to realize our vision for mission. The first goal clearly identifies the overarching aspiration and reason-for-being of this community. The second through fourth describe the particular means by which we will achieve the first goal. The fifth goal names our unswerving commitment to listen, learn, adapt, and change in order to be faithful to the promise of our mission and in this way enable us to achieve the other four goals.

Taken together, these five goals enable us to see our current situation in terms of opportunity rather than threat, in terms of abundance rather than scarcity, and in terms of hope rather than despair. Taken together, they orient us to the future God is preparing by building on a tradition of faithful learning and adaptation that has taken shape in three distinct phases at Luther Seminary over the last two decades.

Curricular Revision: In 1993, the faculty adopted a curriculum that recognized the church's need for leaders capable of purposeful action in service to evangelical mission. It is an incisive and innovative curricular strategy that leads from learning the Christian story to interpretation and confession and then to leading in mission in order to strengthen Christian discipleship. This curriculum continues to serve as the foundation for the seminary's teaching and learning.

Mission Statement: In 1995, the seminary adopted a mission statement affirming the curricular strategy of the faculty by highlighting Luther Seminary's primary calling to "educate leaders for Christian communities." Through its Trinitarian shape, this statement also recognized and affirmed the centrality of witness to the gospel and of service to God's world. The mission statement continues to stand at the center of the seminary's self-understanding.

Serving the Promise of Our Mission: In 2000, the seminary adopted a groundbreaking strategic plan that focused the resources of an entire institution on preparing leaders for apostolic mission in an age of many faiths and cultures. It outlined ambitious goals and standards and led to a number of significant and strategic initiatives that continue to shape decision-making at all levels.

The present strategic plan stands as an affirmation of the impulses and insights represented in these closely connected events and is designed to keep the promises and realize the potential they embody. At the same time, this plan also represents an eagerness to learn from those positioned best to teach us—our graduates, constituent congregations, partners and supporters, and others we do not yet know—about how best to accomplish our calling to prepare public evangelical leaders for a church in apostolic mission. The plan seeks therefore to:

- **anticipate the needs of the church and world** and devote our best efforts to meeting those needs;
- **listen attentively to those we serve and encounter** with regard to the outcome of our best efforts; and also
- **be willing to reconsider our assumptions and practices** in light of what we discover and adapt our efforts accordingly.

These goals enable us to... respond to God's call ... realize our vision for mission ... enable us to see opportunity, abundance and hope.

Establishing and maintaining this continuous cycle of listening and response is the only way, we believe, to continue to grow in our fidelity to the trust God has placed in us.

Assessment

Given the emphasis in this plan on assessment, it is important to name briefly the impetus for and the mechanisms of our evaluation:

- externally, our partners and constituencies press us to prepare graduates up to the task of mission in the present world—leaders who can preach and teach, serve and guide, lead worship and provide pastoral care, counsel and administer faithfully and well, foster the faith and vocations of the laity, envision and lead transformational processes; accrediting agencies increasingly demand the ability to demonstrate such accountability;
- internally, the Reformation principle of *semper reformanda* (“always reforming”) pushes us continually to reexamine every aspect of our work for the sake of faithful and effective witness to the gospel, recognizing that it will never be sufficient simply to repeat past tradition and accepted practices but that the tradition must always be made new and practices must always be retooled to meet the challenges and opportunities of changing contexts;
- assessment will inevitably mean specific evaluation, using graphs and numbers, percentages and demographics; we will employ the best tools available to enter into this process completely and well;
- assessment is finally not primarily about numbers, since the things we regard as most important [mission, gospel, faith, service] are not quantifiable; thus, for a seminary, assessment requires honest mutual conversation and public accountability, transparent to one another and open to the Spirit; we will join this conversation fully, humbly, and expectantly.

2.2 Strategies and Action Steps

The institution-wide goals we have named are ambitious, and we do not undertake them lightly. We recognize that the challenges facing us in accomplishing them will be significant and that missteps and failures are inevitable. But faith that the God who creates out of nothing and raises the dead to life is active even in such everyday affairs as seminary planning gives us the ability to face obstacles with confidence and hope. We are called to plant and to sow, breaking new ground or plowing long familiar fields as the Spirit leads, trusting always in God for a harvest.

We turn now to amplifying our understanding of these goals and identifying the long-term strategies and annual action steps we will employ to achieve them.

The institution-wide goals we have named are ambitious, but we are called to plant and to sow... trusting always in God for a harvest.

Goal 1: *Luther Seminary's graduates will be prepared to lead the church in apostolic mission.*

Single-minded focus on our primary mission to educate leaders will draw us into new ventures, partnerships, and practices.

Luther Seminary will seek out, develop, educate, and equip persons to be leaders of Christian communities, witnesses to and participants in God's ongoing work to love, bless, and redeem the world. As evangelical public leaders, graduates will persuasively articulate the relevance of the Christian message in light of the distinct challenges and opportunities of today's world. All who study here with commitment and diligence will gain the theological acumen and the necessary ministry and leadership skills to serve as leaders in the various places and contexts to which they are called.

The primary means by which we achieve this goal is through the curriculum developed and employed by the faculty. The three inter-related movements of the curriculum, viewed within the seminary's overarching curricular commitment to foster discipleship to Jesus Christ, work together to educate leaders for Christian communities. The first movement of the curriculum, ***"learning the story,"*** immerses students in the biblical witness, the history of the church and its doctrine, and the story of Christian practices through the centuries. The second movement, ***"interpreting and confessing,"*** prepares students to interpret the Christian story in light of both tradition and contemporary context in order to confess it anew. The third movement of the curriculum, ***"leading in mission,"*** equips students to think theologically in light of their distinct ministry context in order to employ classic and contemporary arts of ministry toward purposeful action for the sake of the gospel. Taken together, these three interrelated curricular movements not only serve as the primary means by which to accomplish our mission but also provide internal criteria by which we assess and evaluate our progress.

In addition to these curricular criteria, we also recognize the need for outcome-based measures. As a part of this strategic planning process, the faculty identified several capacities it desires all graduates possess. These capacities provide us with an initial set of outcome-based criteria by which to assess and adapt our teaching and curricular strategies in light of the actual results we observe in the ministry of our graduates. We therefore publicly articulate the aspiration and commitment that Luther Seminary's graduates who serve in congregations and other Christian communities will strive to:

- proclaim God's saving work in Jesus Christ persuasively and compellingly;
- faithfully interpret the Scriptures and equip those they lead to do the same;
- listen deeply to the context and thoughtfully confess the Christian faith in the public arena;

- think theologically about life and ministry and equip those they lead to do the same;
- lead congregations through change with wisdom and courage for the sake of God’s mission; and
- pursue physical, spiritual, and vocational health.

Undergirding these criteria and commitments is the pledge to support faculty and staff in their efforts to achieve our goals. Faculty and staff development; support and celebration of research, scholarship, and service to the church; and promoting our resources and publications for the sake of mission and the wider church are a central part of this pledge.

Single-minded focus on our primary mission to educate leaders will draw us into new ventures, partnerships, and practices.

Long-Term Strategies Toward Goal 1

1. Develop criteria and assessment processes for the formation of evangelical leaders in apostolic mission for each of the five educational processes (education leading to ordained clergy, education leading to lay professionals, graduate theological education, lifelong learning, and professional development of faculty and staff) (2007-2009).
2. Develop processes for the continual development of the curriculum in order to form evangelical leadership in apostolic mission in response to ongoing assessment and feedback with local congregations and the systems that serve them (2008-2010 and ongoing).
3. Develop the lifelong learning and contextual educational programs into ongoing feedback and assessment processes that form learning communities with and among local churches (2008-2010 and ongoing).
4. Address the nature of discipleship and vocational formation for the development of evangelical leaders in apostolic mission (2008-2009).

2008–2009 Revised Action Steps for Goal 1

Luther Seminary’s graduates will be prepared to lead the church in apostolic mission.

Time frame	Action Step	Leaders
July 2008– August 2009	Clarify and refurbish the identity, goals, status and practices of Discipleship/Vocational Formation.	Dean of Students; Academic Dean; Seminary Pastor
September 2008	Update faculty on Master of Divinity program assessment plan.	Academic Dean; Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees
September 2008	Assemble Parish Evaluation/Redesign Team and develop evaluation/redesign process.	Academic Dean; Dir. of CLI
September 2008	Update faculty on course evaluation plan, including plan to gather and analyze feedback from students, faculty, and design staff.	Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees; Dir. of Learning Design and Technology

September–October 2008	Implement the refurbished Discipleship/Vocational Formation program, set the stage for evaluation and develop an evaluation design.	Dean of Students; Academic Dean; Seminary Pastor
September–October 2008	As part of Master of Divinity program assessment, research best practices for portfolio use in assessing theological curriculum and engaging students in assessment-as-learning.	Program Coordinator for First Theological Degrees
October 2008	Solicit feedback from faculty on content of course evaluation tools. Revise as needed.	Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees; Dir. of Learning Design and Technology
October 2008	Create a database container for initial review of excellent examples of Master of Divinity student work in the four curricular movements.	Associate Dir. for Institutional Research and Assessment
October–November 2008	CLI Staff in conversation with Internship supervisors design assessment process and survey for evaluation of the goals, strategies and outcomes of internship.	Academic Dean; Associate Dean for First Degrees; CLI
October–November 2008	Data gathering with congregations, faculty, students and staff to inform teaching parish evaluation/redesign.	Academic Dean; Dir. of CLI; Evaluation/Redesign Team
October–December 2008	Administer revised course evaluation tools.	Dir. of Learning Design and Technology
November 2008	As part of Master of Divinity program assessment, recruit faculty and students for work groups to refine capacity outcomes in each of the four curricular movements.	Academic Dean; Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees
November–December 2008	Solicit student and faculty submissions of exemplary student work in the four learning outcome areas. Gather artifacts from each phase of the Master of Divinity program.	Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees
November 2008–January 2009	Data analysis and initial stages of redesign of Teaching Parish Program	Academic Dean; Dir. of CLI; Evaluation/Redesign Team
December 2008	Mid-term assessment of Discipleship/Vocational Formation. First survey and focus groups.	Dean of Students; Academic Dean; Seminary Pastor

December 2008– January 2009	2008–2009 Internships are evaluated at mid-term.	Academic Dean; Associate Dean for First Degrees; CLI
January 2009	Data analysis of mid-term Discipleship/Vocational Formation assessment.	Dean of Students; Academic Dean; Seminary Pastor
January 2009	Gather faculty for debrief of course evaluation experience and analysis of information gathered.	Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees; Dir. of Learning Design and Technology
January– February 2009	Learning outcomes work groups read submissions to glean common elements and develop criteria for portfolio contents in each phase of the Master of Divinity program.	Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees
February 2009	Begin system-wide Living our Callings conversations utilizing lessons learned from Discipleship/Vocational Formation assessments.	Dean of Students; Academic Dean; Seminary Pastor; Research Team
February–July	Use information gathered in fall term course evaluations to revise online courses toward improved learning outcomes.	Dir. of Learning Design and Technology
February– April 2009	Complete Teaching Parish redesign and field test emerging models.	Academic Dean; Dir. of CLI; Evaluation/Redesign Team; Dir. of Contextual Learning
February– April 2009	Internship survey information analyzed and worked into the CLI system at the curricular and procedural level, including both PLTS and Luther.	Academic Dean; Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees; CLI
March 2009	Demonstrate to faculty and students a Master of Divinity portfolio model that includes information about contents, processes for student and faculty review, and a statement of how regular collection and review of materials will improve learning outcomes. Solicit feedback.	Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees; Program Coordinator for First Theological Degrees
April 2009	Revise Master of Divinity portfolio model in light of feedback. Re-circulate portfolio plan to develop a high level of interest among students and faculty.	Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees; Program Coordinator for First Theological Degrees

April– May 2009	Run second survey and focus groups regarding Discipleship/Vocational Formation; continue Living our Calling conversations.	Dean of Students; Academic Dean; Seminary Pastor; Research Team
May– June 2009	2008-2009 Discipleship/Vocational Formation survey and focus group data analyzed; decisions made regarding academic year 2009-10.	Dean of Students; Academic Dean; Seminary Pastor; Research Team
May– July 2009	Choose design and begin implementation of 2009-10 Teaching Parish program.	Academic Dean; Dir. of CLI; Evaluation/Redesign Team; Dir. of Contextual Learning
May–July 2009	Develop and test portfolio materials collection tool with pilot population from each phase of the Master of Divinity program.	Associate Dir. for Institutional Research and Assessment; Dir. of Learning Design and Technology
September 2009	Launch Master of Divinity program portfolio. Introduce students to portfolio collection tool and its use to facilitate assessment-as-learning.	Associate Dean for First Theological Degrees; Program Coordinator for First Theological Degrees

Goal 2: *Luther Seminary will attract and support people with the character, capacity, and commitment to accomplish the seminary's mission.*

We are only as good as our people.

Our human resources stand as our major asset and are critical to fulfilling our mission. Building on and continuing to nourish and support our strong and committed faculty, staff, and board, and in the hope of bearing witness to the gospel of God to all people, we will identify, attract, develop, and retain excellent colleagues who represent the diversity of gifts, Christian traditions, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds that will advance our mission. Similarly, building upon the strength of our student body, we will recruit, enroll, and educate a diverse and talented group of women and men to serve as capable, passionate, and dedicated evangelical leaders.

Our commitment to mission leads us to two commensurate commitments:

1. We are committed to excellence. God calls us to offer the best of our intellect, abilities, and passion to the proclamation of the gospel and service to the world in Christ's name. For this reason, we are committed to attracting, developing, and supporting the most capable people we can find as we seek to bear witness to God's ongoing work in the world. Through our compensation and scholarships, faculty and staff development, student recruitment, recognition of achievement, and the culture and ethos we promote, we commit to creating and sustaining an environment that will attract the finest faculty, staff, and students.
2. We are committed to diversity in service to a common confession and mission. God calls us to witness to the gospel to all people and in all the world, and God calls our graduates to serve in communities that are increasingly ethnically and ecumenically diverse. For this reason, we are committed to attracting, developing, and supporting women and men from a variety of ecumenical, theological, and ethnic backgrounds who, sharing the mission we have described here, can help us prepare leaders for the Christian communities graduates will be called to serve.

Behind this commitment to diversity stands the recognition that to be a community of the crucified and risen Christ is to welcome all who come into our community as brothers and sisters for Christ's sake. This means moving beyond treating newcomers as guests or visitors to demonstrating a genuine hospitality that seeks to include the gifts, perspectives, and experiences all persons bring and a willingness to invite all to participate in and shape our shared community.

Historically, Luther Seminary has been strengthened by a diversity of theological viewpoints bound by a common confession of the triune God and of the crucified and risen Christ. More recently, we have made significant strides with regard to calling and developing women and persons from a broad ecumenical spectrum of Christ's Church as our students, faculty, and staff, and we are committed to persisting in these efforts. We continue to strive to attract persons of diverse ethnic backgrounds to be full partners in the mission of this seminary, and we commit to intentional progress in this area through our recruitment strategies and by creating an environment that recognizes and welcomes the contributions all Christians can make to responding to God's call to bear witness to the gospel to all nations.

Long-Term Strategies Toward Goal 2

1. Develop and implement an aggressive recruitment plan leading to a diverse and talented student body of 1000 by 2011-2012 (2007-2008 and ongoing).
2. Attract, retain, and develop an excellent faculty and staff whose education, experience and diversity strengthen our ability to prepare evangelical leaders in apostolic mission (2007-2010 and ongoing).

3. Develop financial resources for scholarship assistance to students and for support for faculty and staff adequate to achieve strategies one and two (2007–2008 and ongoing).
4. Identify and communicate a truthful, powerful and compelling public identity for Luther Seminary that enhances the seminary's ability to attract and support the students, faculty, staff, and friends it needs in order to fulfill its mission (2007–2008 and ongoing).

2008–2009 Revised Action Steps for Goal 2

Luther Seminary will attract and support people with the character, capacity, and commitment to accomplish the seminary's mission.

Time frame	Action Step	Leaders
July 2008– June 2009	Develop an institutional brand and implement its use in seminary planning and communications.	President; VP for Seminary Relations
July 2008– June 2009	Raise \$2 million in scholarships. Identify new resources for personnel needed to support the achievement of enrollment goals.	VP for Seminary Relations; VP for Administration and Finance; Dean of Students
July 2008– June 2009	Raise \$36.5 M in cash and promises toward the Bold and Faithful comprehensive fundraising campaign.	VP for Seminary Relations
September– October 2008	Review and modify goals with regard to attracting faculty, staff, and students to represent the diverse world and communities to which our graduates are called so that the goals are meaningful, measurable, and challenging.	Academic Dean; VP for Administration and Finance; Dean of Students
September– October 2008	Review and revise as warranted the enrollment targets for each degree program for 2009–2010.	Dean of Students; Dir. of Admissions
September 2008– April 2009	Solicit feedback from faculty teaching online on content of evaluation tools. Revise as needed.	Academic Dean; VP for Administration and Finance
October– November 2008	Review and monitor a compensation and benefits plan for staff that is equitable and fair, and which reflects the goals of the strategic plan.	VP for Administration and Finance
October 2008	Design the enrollment strategy for 2008–2009.	Dean of Students; Dir. of Admissions

November 2008– February 2009	Create a faculty development plan in conversation with the Divisions, the Standing Committee on Diversity, and the Educational Leadership Committee in order to respond to enrollment targets and curricular strategies, paying special attention to issues of race, gender, ethnicity, ecumenical and theological breadth, as well as resources required to implement the plan.	Academic Dean
November 2008	Evaluate staffing and departmental structures, aligning all to serve the goals of the strategic plan.	VP for Administration and Finance
November 2008	Provide resources for aggressive M.Div. recruitment efforts (staffing communications and scholarships as designated in the enrollment strategy).	Dean of Students; Dir. of Admissions
December 2008	Create a professional Office (or Service) of Human Resources.	Create a professional Office of Human Resources
January– February 2009	Build a comprehensive plan to promote the vocational and professional education and development of staff.	VP for Administration and Finance
January– February 2009	Build a comprehensive plan to promote the vocational development of faculty, giving special attention to the creation of a vocational development plan for each member.	VP for Administration and Finance
March 2009	Develop and set into practice a policy for using background checks for all newly hired staff and faculty and a plan for seeking such background checks for current employees.	VP for Administration and Finance
April 2009	Explore and give a report on a sabbatical and/or leave policy for staff.	VP for Administration and Finance; Academic Dean; Dean of Students
July 2009	Meet the enrollment goals and admissions targets for each degree program. (See enrollment matrix for enrollment targets.)	Dean of Students

Goal 3: *Luther Seminary will transform its facilities to advance the teaching, learning, and community that take place on campus and around the world.*

The right facilities promote excellence in teaching, learning, and our life together; extend the reach of our faculty and curriculum; and support leaders in apostolic mission.

Our facilities provide the primary environment in which we carry out our mission. In light of our strategic commitments and the changing realities of theological education, we will transform our facilities in order better to support the preparation of leaders. Recent and anticipated technological changes, increasing demands for distributed learning, Luther Seminary's expanding global reach, and a desire for spaces that reflect our commitment to hospitable community and concern for God's creation require many different types of facilities. These improvements may include a new library building, transformed student housing, and the development of the lower campus. The vision and rationale for reshaping our facilities is described in the Facilities Master Plan developed in light of and along with this strategic plan.

All plans and decisions made with regard to our facilities will conform to three overarching commitments: (1) to foster community and hospitality, (2) to create an environment conducive to sound and lively teaching and learning for residential and distributed students, and (3) to model intentional and effective stewardship of God's creation.

Long-Term Strategies Toward Goal 3

1. Develop and implement a campus facilities master plan that responds to identified educational and administrative needs (2007-2008 and ongoing).
2. Develop our imagination, commitment, and technological capacity and infrastructure to support residential and distributed learning (2007-2009 and ongoing).
3. Renovate existing facilities identified as strategic priorities to accomplish our mission in accord with the commitments named above (2008-2012).
4. Prepare for the building of new learning center space and/or new living space (circa 2012 or as financial resources become available).

2008–2009 Revised Action Steps for Goal 3

Luther Seminary will transform its facilities to advance the teaching, learning, and community that take place on campus and around the world.

Time frame	Action Step	Leaders
August–October 2008	Hire architect and builder for upper campus, Phase 1.	VP for Administration and Finance
August–October 2008	Prepare preliminary design and construction budget for Phase 1, Bockman Hall	VP for Administration and Finance
August 2008–January 2009	Develop capital construction financing plan.	VP for Administration and Finance; Dir. of Finance

September 2008– June 2009	Audit existing technological capacities, and make recommendations for increased functionality for providing distributed education and identify needs (e.g., personnel, hardware, software, other infrastructure).	Associate Dean; VP for Administration and Finance; Dir. of Learning Design and Technology
September 2008– August 2009	Raise \$10M in cash or promises.	VP for Seminary Relations
September– October 2008	Gather input from faculty, staff and students regarding Bockman designs and features.	VP for Administration and Finance
October 2008	Board approves Eustis Street development plan.	VP for Administration and Finance
October 2008– May 2009	Prepare budget and timeline for Phase 1 construction.	VP for Administration and Finance
October 2008– May 2009	Develop communication plan regarding regular construction updates and status reports to boards, faculty, staff, students, and constituents.	VP for Administration and Finance
November 2008	Release RFP for potential development of Eustis Street property.	VP for Administration and Finance
January– December 2009	Gather input from faculty, staff and students regarding other Phase 1 designs and features.	VP for Administration and Finance
February– September 2009	Develop, implement and communicate construction logistic plan.	VP for Administration and Finance; Facilities Manager
February 2009	Review Eustis Street proposals and make recommendation to Board for approval.	VP for Administration and Finance
February– May 2009	Negotiate Eustis Street development contract and continue conversations with potential commercial partners.	VP for Administration and Finance; Facilities Manager
March– December 2009	Prepare for the build-out of OCC, NW and Gullixson.	VP for Administration and Finance
March– October 2009	Revise budgets and timelines for upgrading technology and identify resources.	Associate Dean; VP for Administration and Finance; Dir. of Network Technology

Goal 4: *Luther Seminary will foster a culture that promotes our common mission.*

The character of our life together influences the quality of leaders we send out.

In order to educate women and men who can lead in apostolic mission, the culture of Luther Seminary needs regular attention. This community includes faculty and staff, along with residential, commuter, and distributed learners. The seminary is committed to fostering an environment that is inviting, hospitable, and conducive to learning. The widespread search for authentic spirituality, community, and intimacy that was discovered in our listening is not only a phenomenon of the wider culture, but characterizes our own community as well. By tending to the culture of Luther Seminary, we model the forms of Christian leadership which foster healthy communities characterized by bold and faithful witness to the gospel and service in God's world.

"Culture" is never a static thing, but is always being shaped and formed. For this reason, we must constantly deliberate the question of what kind of community we desire to be. Among the many aspects of our culture that we want to affirm and promote is a recognition that we live and minister in a global context. Building on strong international partnerships and a history of hosting students and faculty from churches around the world, we seek, therefore, to foster a culture and community that is hospitable to Christians from all over the globe in order to enrich and deepen our understanding of and commitment to God's mission to proclaim the gospel to all the nations.

Long-Term Strategies Toward Goal 4

1. Initiate and sustain institution-wide conversation about our shared convictions and commitments in the service of our lives together in mission (2007-2008).
2. Support a diverse seminary community that shares a common identity as confessional Christians (2007-2008 and ongoing).
3. Strengthen and deepen relationships with partner institutions throughout the world and promote the possibilities these partnerships afford among faculty, students, and staff.
4. Learn from others how to create a culture and ethos that supports the shaping of apostolic leaders in apostolic mission in a changed and changing world (2007-2008 and ongoing).
5. Ensure that all personnel searches and assessment processes attend to issues of culture and ethos (2007-2008 and ongoing).

2008–2009 Revised Action Steps for Goal 4

Luther Seminary will foster a culture that promotes our common mission.

Time frame	Action Step	Leaders
September 2008– May 2009	Continue the work of the Values and Convictions Task Force. Propose recommendations to the Cabinet for future activities and responsibilities.	Seminary Pastor
September 2008– May 2009	Carry out two community-wide conversations engaging values and convictions in the fall and spring.	Seminary Pastor
September 2008– June 2009	Support the work of the Standing Committee on Diversity in achieving their five goals of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Building an organizational structure to carry out diversity work for Luther Seminary. 2) Create a framework for an integrated plan/strategy for diversity. 3) Keep the momentum going. 4) Put the resources in place to execute the plan. 5) Clarify our vision, goals and our branding vis-à-vis diversity throughout the year. 	President
September 2008– January 2009	Resource the GMI office adequately so that it can fulfill its mission to both the international and the whole Luther Seminary community.	Academic Dean
October 2008– May 2009	Lead a wide-ranging conversation about the role of worship within the community.	Academic Dean; Seminary Pastor
November 2008– March 2009	Carry out one community-wide inventory on diversity as part of the Making Connections Lilly Grant on recruitment.	Dean of Students

Goal 5: *Luther Seminary will be a responsive learning organization strengthened by a culture of assessment and accountability.*

At Luther Seminary, we have a lot to teach—and a lot to learn.

To accomplish our mission, we must become a responsive learning organization that actively and consistently anticipates the needs of the church and world, assesses our efforts to meet those needs, monitors change in the church and society, and adapts and responds faithfully to what we learn about ourselves and the world in light of our mission. We will, therefore, promote such practices as internal and external listening posts, focus groups, and regular conversations about our work in order to enlarge our circle of conversation partners and gather concrete data about our performance, and we commit ourselves to revise and adapt our practices based upon what we learn.

Long-Term Strategies Toward Goal 5

1. Focusing on the formation of evangelical leaders in apostolic mission, develop a comprehensive and systematic plan to cultivate a learning community through experimentation and innovation in Luther Seminary and among its constituencies (2008 and ongoing).
2. Develop a process for integrating this learning into the life and work of the seminary (2008-2009 and ongoing).
3. Develop a program that engages congregations in measuring student/graduate learning (2008-2009 and ongoing).
4. Develop an academic and institutional administrative structure to support the thriving of such a learning culture (2008-2009).

2008–2009 Revised Action Steps for Goal 5

Luther Seminary will be a responsive learning organization strengthened by a culture of assessment and accountability.

Time frame	Action Step	Leaders
July 2008– March 2009	Work with consultant to engage assessment committees—Academic and Institutional—in developing a first draft of an assessment dashboard.	President; Academic Dean
July 2008	Search for appropriate persons to serve as support for the assessment process.	President; Vice President for Administration and Finance
August 2008– April 2009	Design and staff the Institutional Research office creating a budget for this ongoing work of assessment.	President; Cabinet
November 2008– April 2009	Design a process whereby culture/ethos/spirituality on the Luther Seminary campus is measured.	Mission Measurement consultants
February– April 2009	Organize a task force to design a process whereby faculty gather data on graduates and congregations “on site.”	President; CLI Dir.; Lifelong Learning Faculty Lead

We do not yet know where this kind of listening and learning will lead us. Believing that it is God’s Holy Spirit that leads us, we trust that the comprehensive assessment at the heart of the following strategies will enable us to discover what is working and can be strengthened, what is not and must be adapted or drawn to a close, and what we have not anticipated. Equipped with this kind of feedback, we then can create and tend an environment in which innovation and experimentation will lead faculty, students, staff, and partners to new insights, commitments, and practices.

Conclusion

Grounded in the witness of the Scriptures, and strengthened by the fidelity of previous generations of committed Christians, we believe that Luther Seminary is well positioned to answer God's call to prepare those who will lead the church in apostolic mission in the twenty-first century. As we move toward this goal and future at Luther Seminary, we do so humbled by and grateful for all those who have confessed Jesus Christ before us and mindful of our calling to take our stand in this time and place, for the good of the communities and people we serve. Therefore, it is with trust in God's grace, hope in the future to which God has called us, and belief in the gospel of God for the sake of the world that we put forward this Strategic Plan of Luther Seminary. Thanks be to God! *Soli Deo Gloria!*



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