

STARR KING SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY

Self-Study Report

Prepared for The Association of Theological Schools
in the United States and Canada

Comprehensive Site Visit
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Introduction and Executive Summary

For over one hundred years, Starr King School for the Ministry has demonstrated a commitment to progressive educational methods and liberal religious values. Founded by Unitarians in 1904, the School educates people for Unitarian Universalist ministry and for progressive religious leadership in society.

The School first received accreditation from The Association of Theological Schools in United States and Canada (ATS) in 1978. Accreditation then, and now, is “by virtue of participation in the Graduate Theological Union” whose common library, The Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, serves all the member schools and whose cross registration system assures the full complement of course offerings and academic subjects needed for Starr King’s degree programs. The most recent accreditation review was in 1998, which resulted in re-affirmation of accreditation for ten years, with no notations. The visiting team strongly affirmed Starr King’s educational excellence and gave the School valuable collegial advice and recommendations with respect to the need to formalize policies and establish a professional staffing infrastructure. These recommendations have been implemented. As requested by the Commission, the School reported back by April 15, 2001, on the completion of a written faculty handbook.

During the decade from 1998 to 2009, the School experienced important successes and significant challenges. The School diversified its educational offerings, reached out to new student constituencies, introduced improvements to its educational practices, and established a professional staff. In 2002 the School petitioned the ATS for permission to offer the Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change. Preliminary approval was granted in 2002 and continued in 2005. From 2001 to 2006 the School conducted a comprehensive Centennial Campaign, surpassing its \$7 million goal to raise \$8.2 million in cash, pledges, grants, and planned gifts. During this decade the School struggled to move forward in its commitment to be an anti-racist, counter-oppressive, multi-religious institution while simultaneously embracing the changes that came with having a professional staff. Financial crisis in the aftermath of the 2001-2003 downturns in the U.S. economy impacted the School beyond what increased fundraising and enrollment could address. In spring 2005, the Board declared financial exigency and retrenched the School’s operations, reorganizing and reducing the size of the faculty and staff.

This self-study began in the aftermath of retrenchment, in a period of uncertainty, stress and questioning: What would be the best path for the School’s future following retrenchment? How could the School be faithful to its mission and vision and be sustainable, both financially and humanly? How should it respond to the challenges generated by its priority of counter-oppressive, anti-racist, multi-religious education? How should its educational programs be further refined, improved or redefined? Given the urgency of these questions, the School formally requested and was granted permission by the Association of Theological Schools to focus its self-study on strategic planning and to change the date for the next comprehensive visit from spring 2008 to spring 2009---which the Association then postponed to fall 2009, due to a heavy schedule of visits.

This self-study marks the emergence of a new phase in the life of the School. Through this self-study process, Starr King School for the Ministry has taken definitive steps to address its financial challenges; has established a clear and hopeful direction for its future; has clarified its mission, identity and vision; and has created a strategic plan which the School is in the process of implementing.

The Process of Self Study

The formal self-study process began in the spring of 2007 and concluded in June 2009. The School's Director of Faculty Services and President co-chaired the Self Study Steering Committee which was comprised of faculty, staff, students, graduates, and trustees. Dr. Vic Klimoski---from St. John's University School of Theology and Seminary---served as consultant. The Dean of the Faculty worked closely with the co-Chairs, meeting weekly with them for much of the process. The Steering Committee divided the work into six sub-committees. The sub-committees reviewed specific areas of the School's life in light of the ATS Standards, made recommendations for improvements, and began formulating strategic plans. The process was designed to model the School's pedagogical commitments to shared decision-making and respect for the expertise and wisdom that all members of the community—students, staff, faculty, adjunct faculty, trustees, graduates, and friends—bring to the life of the School. Nearly fifty people were involved in the sub-committees. Making use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, they reviewed goals established by the board and faculty and assessed outcomes of plans. They gathered data, conducted interviews, scrutinized policies, handbooks, reports, and noted their findings.

The first draft report was completed in December 2007 and was published on the School's website for public comment and discussion. More than a hundred pages of written comments were received from individuals (including students, donors, graduates, and denominational leaders) and from focus groups hosted by members of the Steering Committee.

In January 2008, the Starr King Board met in retreat for three days with the School's core faculty and key staff members. At the retreat, the School's leaders reflected on the findings of the self-study draft and set a strategic course for the future, identifying four goals. In the Spring of 2008, the Steering Committee organized its work into four task-groups, each charged with a) revising a section of the self-study in light of the extensive input received, b) conducting further data analysis and surveys as needed, and c) drafting detailed objectives and action plans to create a comprehensive strategic plan in response to the direction and goals set by the Board.

By fall 2008, a revised draft of the self-study report was approved by the Board of Trustees, and four strategic goals were in the process of refinement and initial implementation. During the spring of 2009, the self-study was edited for clarity and focus and submitted to the Board, which granted its final approval in June.

Organization of This Report

This self-study report reflects on the life of Starr King School for the Ministry in light of the Association of Theological Schools' accreditation standards. Its chapters offer a considered statement on the School's mission, identity and context (chapter 1), governance, planning and evaluation (chapter 2), its educational philosophy, practices, programs, faculty and students (chapters 3-7), and its human, financial and physical resources (chapters 8-10). An index helps the reader to find specific responses to each ATS standard. The appendix includes key documents and reports that provide additional texture and detail. The appendix also presents elements of the School's comprehensive strategic plan, with conceptual frameworks, action plans and timelines organized around goals established by the Board of Trustees.

Requests to the ATS Site Visit Team

Starr King requests that the Association of Theological Schools:

1. Reaffirm Starr King School for the Ministry's accreditation for the next ten years, by virtue of its participation in the Graduate Theological Union.
2. Approve Starr King School for the Ministry's M.Div. degree, by virtue of its participation in the Graduate Theological Union.
3. Affirm Starr King School for the Ministry's participation in the GTU Common M.A. program, by virtue of the GTU's accreditation of that program.
4. Grant final approval for Starr King School for the Ministry's Master of Arts in Religious Leaders for Social Change (M.A.S.C.), by virtue of its participation in the Graduate Theological Union.
5. Grant preliminary approval to Starr King School for the Ministry for its on-line distance learning approach which allows M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students to earn up to one-third of their credits through graduate level online courses offered through Starr King or other member schools and institutes of the Graduate Theological Union.

Additionally, the School seeks collegial advice from the visiting team regarding:

1. The School's strategic fiscal and fundraising plans.
2. The School's strategic new educational model, which integrates online learning, residential learning at Starr King and the GTU, and non-residential learning through fieldwork, internships, CPE's and immersions, along with All-School symposia and cohort groups.
3. The School's strategic recruitment and marketing plans.
4. The School's strategic plans for empowering and revitalizing the board of trustees.
5. The School's relationship to its denominational context in a time of shifting patterns of denominational support for theological education.
6. Further ways to move forward the School's commitments to counter oppressive, multi-religious education.

Chapter 1: Purpose and Identity

*Wherever the oppressed are congregated, there Christ is present—
and not on the side of power.*

--Thomas Starr King

For over one hundred years, the core mission of Starr King School for the Ministry has remained steady. From its beginning, the School has had a two-fold commitment to preparing people for the liberal ministry (especially Unitarian Universalist ministry) and to educating lay religious leaders who will bring liberal religious values to society in a variety of professional capacities. The School achieves its mission by developing theological understandings that are grounded in Unitarian Universalist approaches to religious life and knowledge, while also responding to contemporary developments and focusing on communities in the midst of social justice struggles. In all of its educational practices, the School seeks to embody the best of Unitarian Universalist values in the way it educates, as much as in its explicit curriculum.

The School's current Statement of Purpose was formulated through an inclusive process of reflection among trustees, faculty, students and staff meeting throughout this self-study process. It was formally adopted by the Board of Trustees in April 2009.

Statement of Purpose

The mission of Starr King School for the Ministry is to educate people for Unitarian Universalist ministry and for progressive religious leadership in society.

Starr King School's distinctive educational approach is rooted in the Unitarian Universalist values of countering oppressions, cultivating multi-religious life and learning, and creating just and sustainable communities.

Starr King School aims to educate the whole person in the service of love, compassion, and justice, through:

- Teaching by who we are and what we do
- Student-centered participatory learning
- Excellence and depth in religious studies
- Formation in the arts of religious leadership
- Service with congregations and communities
- Active membership in the Graduate Theological Union
- Deepening self-awareness and cultivating spiritual practice
- Striving to live in right relationship with self, others, and the earth

Founding Principles and Educational Values

Starr King's student body President began his opening remarks to the 2008 entering class by reading the words of the School's founding President, Earl Morse Wilbur, describing the School's approach in 1904:

First, complete mental freedom in religion, rather than bondage to creed or confessions; second, the unrestricted use of reason in religion rather than reliance upon external authority or past tradition; third, generous tolerance of differing religious views and usages rather than insistence upon uniformity in doctrine, worship or polity.

The student body President went on to comment, "I am proud that the founding principles of the School continue to this day, but not in this form. They have been examined, reexamined, revised, deepened, expanded and 'complexified.'"

Starr King's educational values—an evolution of the School's founding principles of reason, tolerance, and freedom—are captured in its statement "Educating to Counter Oppressions and Create Just and Sustainable Communities," which was reviewed and revised in a comprehensive process during the 2005-2006 year. The statement concludes:

We seek to educate in ways that:

- trust in an empowering and liberating grace that is larger than ourselves,
- call forth the full, authentic presence of people,
- welcome silenced knowledge, feeling and experience,
- under-gird human wholeness, integrity, interdependence and agency,
- foster self-awareness and self-respect,
- strengthen relational capacities and the ethics of community,
- deepen knowledge and wisdom arising from engagement with primary texts and primary experience,
- embody an ongoing practice of inquiry, study, action and reflection

The School now understands "education for freedom" to require educational practices that counter historic silences in scholarship and ministry, graced by the "spirit of life"—a transcendent and immanent source of inspiration that instigates prophetic change. The "use of reason" in religion now requires methods of study that pragmatically integrate action and reflection, and that critically engage primary texts and experiences. The embodiment of "tolerance" in the School's educational work now reaches towards fostering "the ethics of community" in which authenticity, diversity, and interdependence are manifest. This includes religious diversity, as well as diversities of race, gender, sexual/affectional orientation, abilities, and economic class. These educational values permeate the School's approach to theological education.

Educating Unitarian Universalist Ministers

Starr King School for the Ministry's focus on Unitarian Universalist ministry is evident in the School's statement of purpose, in the values and commitments of its graduates, in the make-up of its student body, in the religious identities and interests of its faculty, in

its progressive educational practices, and in its vision for where Unitarian Universalism should go in the twenty-first century. As one of only two Unitarian Universalist seminaries, the preparation of religious leaders for vital work in Unitarian Universalist congregations and the broader community is at the heart of the School's work.

A recent study on ministerial excellence in Unitarian Universalism conducted by Harvard Divinity School revealed that, while Unitarian Universalists are educated at over seventy different seminaries, those identified by peers and denominational leaders as exemplary ministers were most often graduates of Starr King School. Starr King graduates serve as ministers in some of the fastest growing and largest Unitarian Universalist congregations. Graduates also serve in major leadership roles within the Unitarian Universalist denomination, including President of the Association of Congregations (UUA); President of the Ministerial Association (UUMA); national and district directors of key programs such as gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgender ministries, the ministerial credentialing, the Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns and the Office of Accessibility.

Starr King is intimately connected to congregational life through its network of student interns serving in over a dozen congregations across the continent each year. During the Centennial Campaign for the School, over thirty congregations invited the President and the School's advancement staff into their pulpits, churches, fellowships and homes to advance the mission of the School and to raise funds for faculty and students. Starr King also builds relationships with Unitarian Universalist community ministries and non-profit agencies. Students engage in community field placements at sites such as Faithful Fools (an education and advocacy organization focused on homelessness and poverty in San Francisco's Tenderloin), the Jericho Road Project (which promotes high-impact volunteerism for suburban professionals committed to social justice in Concord, MA); and the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Sacramento, California.

Starr King has also been a leader in engaging Unitarian Universalism's rich and diverse past. It houses the Earl Morse Wilbur Rare Book Collection, which contains primary texts for the study of Unitarian history dating back to the Reformation. It offers scholarly resources on the history of Universalism through its website. The School has promoted new considerations of Unitarianism's historical connection to Islam and has creatively advanced Unitarian and Universalist theological traditions. The School's history colloquia have added forgotten voices to the study of Unitarian and Universalist history. For example, in January 2001, the School hosted a reunion of members of Unitarian Universalism's Black Empowerment movement from the 1960's in "Black Empowerment Confronts the Unitarian Universalist Association: 1967-1971," a four-day oral history project. Fifteen leaders who were active in the Black Affairs Council (BAC) of the 1960's and 1970's gathered at Starr King to talk about that time and their experiences. The results were published as "In Their Own Words."

Starr King's courses and curricular activities give attention to enabling students to prepare for the specific realities of Unitarian Universalist ministry. The School builds upon Unitarian Universalism at its best, and introduces students to the primary theological tool of critiquing the traditions and contexts in which the School is rooted and

probing the religions and communities it serves. The School shapes its curriculum with awareness of Unitarian Universalism's "growing edges"—its places that need strengthening if all that is best is to thrive. To creatively advance Unitarian Universalist ministry the School works to:

- Strengthen the ethics of community and covenantal life and stewardship, countering tendencies of anti-institutionalism that sometimes weaken the capacity of Unitarian Universalism to build and sustain institutions which embody and extend its values.
- Broaden Unitarian Universalist identity to include diverse racial and cultural expressions of Unitarian and Universalist values, countering a history of Unitarian Universalist enmeshment with white privilege and economic privilege that limits Unitarian Universalism's accessibility and hospitality to many for whom its strengths could be life-giving.
- Deepen appreciation and critical engagement with Unitarian Universalism's own Christian roots, countering the allergic reaction to its own heritage that sometimes disrupts its theological grounding and muffles its voice in the public sphere.
- Balance respect for the individual with respect for communities, countering a tendency in Unitarian Universalism towards hyper-individualism to the point of self-absorption, narcissism, "counter-dependence," and poor capacity for solidarity, accountability or respect for earned authority.
- Promote the articulation of Unitarian Universalist theologies and its religious humanism, with a positive regard for their distinctiveness and importance, countering habits in Unitarian Universalist of insecurity about itself, manifesting in the tendency to doubt itself rather than holding itself accountable to its own best values.
- Advance Unitarian Universalist approaches to multi-religious community and through new scholarly approaches that address habits of misappropriation of other religious traditions

Starr King aims to be a leader in these areas so that graduates can be successful agents of change within the Unitarian Universalist movement and in the larger world.

A Contested and Deepened Sense of Mission

The School's sense of mission and identity has developed and deepened over the last decade, especially with respect to its counter-oppressive and multi-religious commitments. Countering oppressions and fostering wholeness and liberation are at the heart of the Unitarian Universalist faith heritage. In the required seminar on Educating to Counter Oppressions (ECO) taken by all entering M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students, students study how this commitment reaches back to early nineteenth century theological developments in Unitarianism and Universalism. Students explore how the School's namesake, Thomas Starr King—a Unitarian and a Universalist—embodied his religious values in public activism during the latter half of the nineteenth century, especially during his ministry in California.

Though the School sees its counter-oppressive and multi-religious commitments as integral to its mission as a Unitarian Universalist theological school, these developments have been contested by leaders within the Unitarian Universalist movement, by influential graduates, by donors who have withheld funds, and within the board of trustees, the faculty and the student body. Working through the contestations and conflicts has brought a deepened understanding; struggle has honed the School's resolve.

Opposition to these commitments exposes ways that Unitarian Universalism has been a predominantly white, privileged denomination. The School's commitments challenge the denomination to transform itself based on its underlying religious values. Such transformation is never a comfortable process. Beginning in 1995, with the first hire of a person of color to Starr King's previously all white faculty, critics claimed that the School did not care about training people for Unitarian Universalist ministry. The subtext of this story was that Unitarian Universalist ministry should not be shaped by those with "marginal" identities. While some white ministers and graduates affirmed the teaching skills, creative worship styles and significant congregational ministries of the School's Unitarian Universalist professors of African descent, others objected when professors of African descent were hired *instead* of white ministers who had served large congregations, most of whom were male. The School was asked to provide assurances that people preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry could study with "mainstream" mentors. This, in effect, asked the School to ensure a white (and preferably white *male*) normativity for Unitarian Universalist ministerial identity.

Starr King has spent significant energy on this dialogue over the last ten years. The School's faculty, staff, students and trustees have stepped up to speak on behalf of the School's commitments. At times, the public efforts put into *defending* the importance of a racially and culturally diverse faculty seem to overshadow the consistent, significant and effective achievements made in *attaining* that diversity. This has led to frustration—especially for faculty, staff, and students of color who have devoted themselves to working in a Unitarian Universalist context.

Some have also contested the School's deepening commitment to multi-religious theological education as a threat to the School's Unitarian Universalist identity. In the years following September 11, 2001, the School increased its attention to Islam, offering courses, hosting cultural and scholarly events, and providing leadership for the creation of a Center for Islamic Studies at the Graduate Theological Union. The School's leaders viewed this work as an important response to the growing violence and hatred directed toward Muslims in the United States and globally, as well as an extension of Unitarian Universalism's affirmation of "wisdom from the world's religions" as stated in the denomination's "Principles and Purposes." However, some Unitarian Universalist constituents found the work controversial. They criticized the School for working to create a Center for Islam instead of Judaism or Buddhism, not recognizing that such centers already existed within the Graduate Theological Union of which Starr King is a part. Objections came from within the School's own faculty when some began to express concern that Unitarian Universalist students were being displaced by the School's attention to Muslims.

Conflict erupted in 2004 when a disgruntled student circulated a letter intended to provoke the removal of the President and the School's Professor of Islamic Studies, who also served as the Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The letter criticized the School's Islamic studies work as a distraction from the School's Unitarian Universalist mission and identity. Starr King's Board responded by affirming the leadership of the President and Dean. The School's leaders stepped up again a few months later when the School received threatening hate mail directed against its Professor of Islamic Studies and his family. At the recommendation of the Berkeley police, the School increased security and hosted a public rally decrying hate and affirming the School's commitment to counter-oppressive, multi-religious education. The President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Chair of Starr King's Board, the President of Starr King, student representatives, and the President of the GTU all spoke at this rally the week the School celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary.

Starr King believes that Unitarian Universalism's heritage of commitment to multi-religious engagement and counter-oppressive work is increasingly important—especially given religiously-sanctioned and/or religiously-targeted violence. Religious leaders for the twenty-first century must be conversant in multiple faith traditions and engaged in interfaith dialogue and discourse. The next generation of religious leaders will be called upon to speak to and serve people and institutions from many diverse paths. They must be prepared to live into a peaceful future while also remembering the complex past. Communities of faith have always impacted each other in varied locations and moments. In order to guide and sustain congregations, organizations and people during life's most poignant moments, religious leaders must be literate in a wide range of religious languages, practices, histories, desires, hopes and fears: Lives depend on it.

Through its website and its online and print Journal, the School has published papers and articles that articulate the Unitarian Universalist theological and historical foundations for the School's counter-oppressive commitments and its dedication to multi-religious theological education. These interpretive efforts are among several ways that the School has responded to the challenge that its commitments are in conflict with its denominational identity and mission. The School is deeply rooted in its Unitarian Universalist theological heritage and will continue to articulate how this is so – understanding that such articulation involves separating Unitarian Universalism from an uncritical alliance with white-privilege, male-privilege, and religious parochialism.

Ecumenical and Multi-Religious Theological Education

Starr King School for the Ministry embraces a joint calling to educate *both* Unitarian Universalists *and* progressive religious leaders from many faith traditions. The School's context as a member school of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) affirms and supports this call. The GTU is ecumenical and increasingly multi-religious. Starr King students are expected to complete a significant portion of their coursework at schools and centers around the GTU, including Christian denominational seminaries, the Richard S.

Dinner Center for Jewish Studies, the Institute for Buddhist Studies, and the recently formed Center for Islamic Studies—which Starr King played a key role in founding.

Starr King’s Unitarian Universalist identity makes a distinctive contribution to the Graduate Theological Union. The School’s non-doctrinal pedagogy and culture of hospitality make it a place where multi-religious theological education can occur. This leadership role has increased over the past decade as Starr King’s Professor of Cultural Studies and Islamic Studies was sought out by the GTU President to lead a task force to establish the Center for Islamic Studies. Enduring relationships have formed with multiple Muslim communities in the Bay Area; conferences have been held and courses offered; and the new Center for Islamic Studies has come to fruition. Recently, Starr King has also been called upon to provide assistance with the Institute for Buddhist Studies’ offering of online classes.

Students from other religious traditions are drawn to Starr King because they are inspired by the School’s dedication to the real work of ministry, to its progressive approaches to teaching, learning and scholarship, and to education that counters oppressions, creates just and sustainable communities, and fosters multi-religious understanding. The School offers a unique multi-faith curriculum with teachers from the world’s diverse religious traditions, and practices an educational creativity that allows for individually designed programs that serve people with many different vocational callings.

Starr King’s educational practices make it an institution with “permeable” walls, rather than a place cloistered and isolated from the world. Teaching, learning and class projects engage the outside world. Persons from many different walks of life, academic disciplines, religious traditions and social movements regularly visit and contribute to classroom and overall campus experiences. So too, are the walls between religious traditions permeable.

The School’s established track record around multi-faith engagement calls it to develop its heritage and values in a direction that will mark it as a leading innovator in multi-religious theological education. Over the last ten years, Starr King has widened its outreach to include the preparation of progressive religious leaders for society from multiple faith traditions and cultural locations. While students with an identity other than Unitarian Universalist are a small percentage at present (less than ten percent of the student body), going forward, the School hopes that this dimension of its mission and identity will continue to expand in relevance and vitality, and that enrollment growth will be helped as the School builds intentional relationships with a diversity of faith communities.

Chapter 2: **Governance, Planning and Evaluation**

We live in urgent times. It's no longer sufficient for us to just tack on the sexualities-unit or the race-unit or the class-unit. There is no such thing as perfection, as arriving at the point where the work is finished. We can only continue to do the work, continually discovering new dimensions of it.

--Ibrahim Farajaje'

Sophia Fahs Lecture, 2001

Starr King's institutional culture and governing authorities place a high priority on planning and evaluation. This chapter explores the main governing bodies of the School, and the major *institutional* planning directions that those bodies have taken over the last decade. Assessment of the School's *educational* programs will be covered separately in chapters three through seven. Further details of the plans and their evaluation are evident throughout this self-study and in the appendices that are attached.

Starr King is self-defined as a Unitarian Universalist school. This definition is secured in the School's articles of incorporation, bylaws and mission statement. The School is not owned or operated by its denomination, and the Unitarian Universalist Association has no formal structure for affiliation with Unitarian Universalist theological schools. The School does have a formal relationship with the Unitarian Universalist Association's Panel on Theological Education. The School is supported financially by funds the Panel oversees and the School regularly reports to the Panel which makes occasional site visits to the School

Starr King is a member school of the Graduate Theological Union and operates within the governance of the union. A "Common Agreement" describes the obligations of membership in the Union and the patterns of shared governance and work. Starr King's President serves on the GTU Council of Presidents, the GTU Board, and the GTU Finance Committee. The Dean of the Faculty serves on the GTU Council of Deans. Starr King faculty members serve on the Core Doctoral Faculty, on Doctoral Area Committees, the GTU Library Committee, and on advisory committees for the Center for Islamic Studies and the Certificate Program for Women's Studies in Religion. Advancement, communications, student services and administrative staff share information and strategies with their colleagues in other schools, and serve on joint committees to support the consortium's overall work.

In recent years, the School's well-developed commitment to counter-oppressive education has enabled important collaboration between Starr King and other member schools. For example, a group of student representatives on Starr King's educating to counter oppressions committee met jointly with student representatives from Pacific School of Religion's dismantling racism committee to share strategies for countering racism within and beyond the campus. Starr King faculty members are key contributors to the areas of women's studies, Islamic studies and the justice collaborative.

In light of financial challenges for the GTU and a number of its member schools, the GTU “Alternative Futures Task Force” is strategizing future developments for the consortium that will improve the fiscal sustainability for all involved as well as the educational excellence of the Union’s shared work. Starr King, through its President, faculty and Board is involved in this process, and Starr King’s strategic planning is proceeding in relationship to the plans for strengthening the Graduate Theological Union.

The Board of Trustees

Starr King School is governed by a Board of Trustees, which makes the final decisions about the direction of the institution, including its mission. The Board holds itself accountable to that mission and seeks to have its membership represent the interrelated set of communities and institutions that the School’s mission calls it to serve. The Board consists of fifteen trustees elected by the Board itself, as well as ex officio trustees (with vote) which include the President, a faculty representative appointed by the Dean of the Faculty, two student representatives elected by their peers, and the President of the Graduate Association. Additionally, representatives of Starr King’s sister school, Meadville Lombard, and of the Unitarian Universalist Association have been invited to attend some meetings (with voice but no vote). The Board strives for a membership that represents Unitarian Universalist ministers, Unitarian Universalist lay people, academics, people of color, queer people, and people from diverse religious heritages. The diversity of the Board’s makeup shifts over time. At present, the Board’s membership includes a variety of ethnic identities but does not include any elected-trustees of African descent. The Board has become more conscious of the multiple possibilities of diversity and strives to live out this goal more fully.

The Starr King Board of Trustees operates within the framework established by the by-laws of the School, which set out the number of trustees, length of service, officers, committees, finances and business management, faculty, meetings, degrees and seal. Policies regarding individual responsibilities and conflicts of interest are in place. The Board meets twice per year (in November and April.) Meetings follow a standard order---beginning on Wednesday evening with social time---and with the business part of the meeting from Thursday morning through Friday afternoon. The Board regularly assesses its role in relation to the President, staff, faculty and students. Trustees review the meeting agenda and complete written evaluations at the end of all meetings. The Board has a process observer for each section of the meeting to evaluate the quality of its work. An intentional focus on “ECO” Process Observing” includes explicit observations about the Board’s attention to countering oppressions and creating just and sustainable communities.

The Board operates with a sense of collegiality and civility. Members of the Board voice strong commitment and support for the School and its mission. Despite the high volume and complexity of issues placed before it in recent years, the Board has generally responded in a timely and responsible fashion. As one Board member has said, “I think there has been courage in our leadership, determination, an ability to be nimble.” That

said, a number of recent Trustees, in an informal survey, described the Board as not being sufficiently engaged. That is a sentiment that has been heard from some staff members at the School as well. Although the Board contributed significantly to the success of the recent \$8.2 million Centennial Campaign, the School's professional campaign consultant has observed that the Trustees need to be more confident and clear about their role in the area of fundraising. It is recommended that the Board more fully consider the criteria of philanthropic skills, contacts and means when recruiting new Trustees and that on-going training in fundraising be integrated into the work of the Board.

The Board has been attentive to critical functions regarding mission and vision. It has focused primarily on policy and entrusted the day-to-day operations of the School to its administration and faculty. The Board has become increasingly conversant in the Educating to Counter Oppressions work of the School and has begun to embrace this goal as central to its own work. As the Board solidifies its leadership with respect to the School's counter-oppressive, anti-racist, multi-religious work, this self-study recommends that trustees increasingly define themselves as champions of the School. At a recent Board meeting, the Board's championing role was summarized in three imperatives: *speak well of the School, raise money, and recruit students.*

The Board has worked hard to define its work in relation to the President of the School, who is beginning her twentieth year of service. The President is often seen as the one who has primary responsibility for articulating the vision of the School but the Board strives to have a larger role in conveying the School's mission. It is recommended that the Board continue to seek greater clarity around its role, particularly in relation to the President and the administration.

The Board has diligently focused on financial issues and led the School through several crisis periods. In 2005, the Board led the School through the declaration of financial exigency, the process of eliminating two core faculty positions, and the reduction and reorganization of the School's staff. The leadership of the Board has helped resolve conflicts within the faculty and has participated in needed but controversial faculty searches. The Board also led the School through a process to consider a merger with Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, the other Unitarian Universalist seminary. The merger did not go through but the discussion helped the Starr King Board determine which essential parts of its mission, vision, and educational values must be preserved.

All of these issues, often inter-related, have caused significant upheaval in the life of the School. The Board has, at times, been caught up in this turmoil; but these events, particularly the merger conversation, also helped the Board focus on the School's core commitments moving into the future. These commitments include the following: a presence in the ecumenical and interfaith environment of the Graduate Theological Union; a Unitarian Universalist presence on the West Coast; a commitment to education for justice, manifested in its work to educate to counter oppressions; and a commitment to a pedagogy that values the individual goals of each student.

In order for the Board to function more effectively, this self-study recommends that the role of the executive committee be changed to more effectively steer and focus the work of the Board. It should meet more often—perhaps every other month by conference call—and should handle matters that the whole board does not need to spend time processing. The executive committee should take on some critical functions currently dispersed ineffectively to other committees. The Board Chair's main role should be to lead the executive committee. Beginning with its November 2008 meeting, the Board began a process of reorganizing itself to create an effective alliance with the School's strategic goals. The Board is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the charges to its executive committee; re-constituting its finance, investment and audit committees; adding an academic affairs committee. The by-laws are being revised accordingly.

Faculty, Staff and Student Roles in Governance

The overall administration of the School is led by the President who meets regularly with the President's cabinet. The cabinet includes the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Advancement, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, the Dean of the Faculty and the Dean of Students. This body provides a context for consultation among the administrative and educational leaders of the School. It coordinates the implementation of the School's strategic goals and the embodiment of the School's values and commitments. The President and the cabinet officers regularly provide written reports on their work to the Board of Trustees which exercises final oversight over the School's mission, values, and strategic priorities.

The School's educational programs are led by the Vice President for Academic Affairs who carries the provost responsibilities at the School. In close consultation with the President, the VP for Academic Affairs guides the implementation of the School's educational goals and coordinates the work of the Dean of the Faculty and the Dean of Students and their respective staffs.

The faculty's role in governance is clearly outlined in the faculty handbook and in the School's by-laws and is carried out through regular meetings of the faculty and its committees. The Dean of Students is present at all faculty meetings, with voice but without vote. The faculty's standing committees include: 1) the curriculum committee -- which selects, supports, supervises and evaluates the adjunct faculty and student teaching fellows; 2) the chapel committee--which guides the worship life at the School in its role as a laboratory of learning as well as in its spiritually centering function; and 3) the ECO steering committee--which attends to the evaluation and implementation of the School's commitment to counter-oppressive, anti-racist education. The faculty convenes ad hoc committees to conduct faculty searches and reviews of faculty members for promotions and long-term contracts as needed. The membership of these committees is guided by criteria as presented in the faculty handbook which provides for the presence of faculty members from other schools, graduates, and trustees as appropriate to the search or the review.

One important change over the past decade has been the shift of primary responsibility for faculty searches from the Board of Trustees to the faculty. Before the adoption of a written faculty handbook in 2000, which clarified and established the processes for faculty appointments, Starr King conducted faculty searches through board-level search committees and without written guidelines on practices and procedures—as if every faculty search were a presidential search. The change to faculty searches being led by the faculty brings Starr King into alignment with generally accepted practices of faculty governance, and has helped create a more appropriate relationship between faculty and board governance roles. The Board retains final authority to hire and promote faculty and to establish long-term contracts for faculty members at its discretion, but it now does so in response to recommendations from the President---based on faculty-conducted searches and evaluations for promotion and/or long-term contract.

The faculty carries primary governance responsibility for educational policies, for curriculum development and review, and for design and assessment of degree programs and educational practices. The core faculty designs and plans curricular improvements for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), the Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change (M.A.S.C.) and online courses. The Master of Arts (M.A.) is governed in common by the Graduate Theological Union Council of Deans and Academic Dean. All degree programs have been approved by the Starr King faculty and Board, and by the ATS.

In a long-standing departure from common practice, Starr King's Board of Trustees, rather than its faculty, sets admission criteria, reviews admission applications, admits students, and awards financial aid. This work is carried out by the Board's standing committee on admissions and scholarships, which is chaired by a Trustee and includes faculty and student members. This practice has been in place for at least the last three decades. This self-study recommends that the practice be reviewed as the Board reorganizes its work in alignment with the strategic plans, and that consideration is given to shifting this responsibility to the faculty.

The work of the School's staff, especially with respect to daily operations, is headed by the Vice President for Finance and Administration, who convenes monthly meetings of the whole staff, along with faculty representatives, to coordinate, support, and guide the life of the staff. Staff members act as vital partners in the governing and planning process. They practice the School's values on a daily basis, and provide significant leadership to the School's educational, financial and fundraising plans.

The School's fundraising and communication work is headed by the Vice President for Advancement, who leads and coordinates the staff in these areas and facilitates the involvement of the Board of Trustees and volunteers in the School's fundraising work.

Twice a year, the faculty and staff meet together for a day long joint retreat. At these retreats, the faculty and staff work together on their professional development with respect to the School's commitments to multi-religious, counter-oppressive life and work.

They also provide an occasion for the faculty and staff to plan, evaluate and celebrate their shared work on behalf of the School's strategic goals.

As the School moves to more fully embrace students from many religious traditions, it is recommended that particular attention be given to multi-religious representation in all decision making bodies. The School's administration includes individuals from many faith traditions that contribute to the vision of the School. However, becoming multi-religious beyond the superficial acknowledgement of difference and tokenizing of non-Unitarian Universalists will take time and considerable effort.

The student body is fully represented in the School's governance, electing two members to the Board of Trustees. Students serve on the faculty and Board committees which guide the School's curriculum, worship life, admissions and scholarships, and counter oppressive work. The President of the student body meets monthly with the faculty to share concerns, and plans the all-school meetings with the Dean of the Faculty. The student body governs itself, through student adopted by-laws, student-elected officers, and student-led student body meetings. The student body initiates and leads a variety of projects and activities that strengthen the School, maintains a revolving loan fund for students, sponsors receptions for the Unitarian Universalist ministerial credentialing body, and hosts monthly fellowship gatherings for students and their families.

Authority to Lead: Systemic Challenges and Changes

Over the past decade, the School has transformed decades-old systemic issues regarding the power and authority of the Offices of the President and the Dean of Faculty. These systems-issues took on special significance when the School began calling women and people of color into leadership.

A long history shaped Starr King's culture to be one that contended authorized power: In 1982, the President of the School stepped down and the Board appointed him Dean of the Faculty, a position that he held for over fifteen years, extending through the subsequent tenures of one interim President and two new Presidents. Regardless of the personal goodwill of the individuals involved, having the former President serve in the office of Dean presented challenges for the healthy functioning of the system. In effect, the Dean carried an excess of power to bless or curse the President's leadership. Faculty members loyal to the former President would look to him for the nod on whether or not to support the current President's proposals. A pattern of undermining the President's leadership developed. The faculty became accustomed to operating with a system in which change could be stalled by division between the President and the Dean. The pattern was heightened in 1990 with the calling of a white woman President—one of the first women presidents of an ATS accredited school. For the first eight years of her tenure at the School, while the former President continued as Dean, she had to negotiate her right to lead—beginning with asking the Board to establish the right of the President to receive more compensation than the Dean.

Systemic change moved up a pace in 2002 when the faculty elected an African-American man to serve as Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of the Faculty. The new Dean intentionally and consistently supported the President's authority to lead. The President and Dean both placed accountability to the School's stated mission and educational priorities at the center of their approach to leadership, and exercised responsibility for their distinctive roles. This respectful collegiality and solidarity was echoed in the relationship between the President and new administrators hired to fill newly established staff positions in finance and administration and advancement.

These changes altered a long-standing dysfunction at the leadership level. Not all faculty members reacted well to these changes in the system and a period of conflict in the faculty ensued. Faculty members challenged the right of the President and Dean to define expectations of faculty members, to set agendas for meeting, to exercise oversight of faculty-led projects, or to delegate tasks to administrative assistants. The Board of Trustees became concerned when some faculty members drew them into the conflict. Representatives of the Board met with the faculty to assess the conflict and offer guidance on its resolution. In conjunction with this intervention, an Alban Institute systems consultant was engaged in the spring of 2004. To ease tensions, the President and Dean gathered input and implemented recommendations from the faculty, making changes the faculty desired with respect to meeting agendas and communication practices. With the support and guidance of trustee leaders and the Alban consultant, the President and Dean established a more formal annual review process by which faculty members would be held accountable to the School's mission, educational priorities, and lines of authority. Appropriately, at the same time, the Board developed a more formal process for evaluating the President.

As the School has embraced the leadership of people whose identities have been historically under-represented—women, people of color, and LGBT folk—the healthy and clear authorization of power has taken on critical importance. Systemic habits of sabotage, combined with patterns of gender privilege, white privilege, religious chauvinism, and heterosexual privilege have required vigilant attention. The School's goals to improve compensation (discussed in Chapter 9) and address unsustainable work loads are intimately tied to these challenges. Leaders, including the President, Dean of Faculty, and Board Chairs, have been called on to exercise exceptional stamina, courage, insight, and spiritual grace. Systems analysis, consciousness-raising, patience with conflict, clear structures and habits of accountability have strengthened over the decade. These remain on-going tasks of leadership for the President's cabinet, the Board of Trustees, the faculty and the staff. This self-study recommends that the Board give on-going attention to its authorization, support, and celebration of leaders from historically under-represented communities.

Planning and Evaluation 1997-2005

The Board of Trustees, working in close collaboration with the President, the faculty, and the staff, takes the lead at Starr King in long-range planning and evaluation.

Following the successful 1997 ATS self-study and site visit, the Board appointed a Study and Planning Committee to guide the preparation of a new long-range plan. Comprised of representatives from the Board, faculty, student body, and Graduate's Association, the Study and Planning Committee assessed the progress that had been made on the goals of the existing long range plan which aimed at strengthening the School's educational work in four areas: 1) Renewing historical consciousness, 2) Connecting the School more effectively to congregational life, 3) Nourishing the relationship between religion and the arts, and 4) Educating to counter oppressions. The Study and Planning Committee reported to the Board on the successes that had been achieved with these commitments, noted where further work was needed, and engaged the Board and the faculty in a process of identifying where the School felt called to go in the future as it furthered its mission.

In November 2001, the Study and Planning Committee presented a "Future Sketch for Starr King School" that outlined major priorities and goals for the following five years, and identified resources (financial, space, human, processes and programs) needed to meet those goals. The Board approved the plan. The plan outlined the following:

Priority Commitments

Starr King is committed to the public character of religious leadership.

We recognize that the public vocation of ministers and congregations needs to be renewed in the Unitarian Universalist movement and elsewhere in American church life.

Starr King is committed to Unitarian and Universalist educational values

These values direct us to:

- Educate for wholeness and liberation, countering oppressions, advancing as a multicultural, multiracial learning community
- Foster the intellectual and scholarly life of our students and faculty and to engage more fully in our academic context, the Graduate Theological Union
- Renew our commitment to religion and education and the importance of ministries to children and youth
- Provide multiple ways for people to engage in Starr King's educational programs so the mission of the School can be accessible to a greater diversity of people

Goals

To advance these commitments we will:

1. Focus and strengthen our M.Div. degree, with special attention to public ministry.
2. Develop and sustain new educational programs that extend Unitarian Universalist theological education to a more diverse student body including to the laity, to students at non-Unitarian Universalist schools, and to ministers seeking continuing education

3. Appoint new faculty members who will join our current faculty in advancing the school's commitments and educational initiatives
4. Support increased productive scholarship by faculty and students.
5. Maintain good financial management and improve the School's financial position.
6. Fully establish an adequate staffing infra-structure
7. Conduct a successful \$7 million Centennial Campaign for faculty and student support.

For the next seven years, the School diligently pursued these goals, working out specific action plans, and delegating the tasks to the appropriate committees and bodies. Regular reports to the Board of Trustees by the President, faculty leaders and administration allowed the Board to monitor their success. The School's leaders have stayed on task through changing circumstances and challenges. As a result, the School can report that its intentional planning and focus have resulted in the following outcomes:

- New protocols and practices have been implemented that improve the M.Div. degree, including new approaches to student assessment
- A new degree program has been established: the Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change, with a special focus on public ministry
- A new faculty position has been established: the Director of Studies in Public Ministry; which has resulted in the development of the Poverty Initiative
- Visiting faculty members have been called and appointed who advance the School's commitments to student-centered, counter-oppressive, multi-religious education
- Online courses have been developed and expanded to serve Unitarian Universalist students in non-Unitarian Universalist schools and ministers seeking continuing education
- The School designed and implemented a pilot project in theological education for the laity, "Seminary for the Laity"
- Funds are being raised to establish the Til Evans Professorship for Religion and Education which will enhance faculty expertise in children and youth , as well as life-long adult learning
- Faculty members have received sabbaticals and research grants, and have produced, as a result, an award-winning documentary film and several books. Student papers have been presented at academic conferences
- The School has helped advance the academic excellence of the Graduate Theological Union by leading the efforts to establish the Center for Islamic Studies and a new certificate program in Women's Studies in Religion
- The School developed a staffing plan and has succeeded in establishing six professional staffing positions that did not exist before 2001. (Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President for Advancement, Dean of Students, Donor Relations Director, Faculty Services Director, Online Education Director)
- The School planned and implemented a successful Centennial Campaign.

Intensified Planning and Evaluation

In 2004 and 2005, two issues required intensified planning and evaluation: 1) The School's commitment to educating to counter oppressions and 2) The School's goal to maintain good financial management and improve the School's financial position.

Assessing the "ECO" Work

After nearly a decade of work on its priority to "Educate to Counter Oppressions," the School's experience of progress, struggle, and conflict warranted review. The opportunity to conduct a formal review came when the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations requested a report detailing the School's progress towards becoming an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural environment. Starr King embraced this request, embarking on a complete assessment of the School in relationship to its counter-oppressive commitments.

The assessment was conducted by the newly-established ECO Steering Committee appointed by the President, consisting of four students, three faculty members, one staff person, and one educational consultant. Qualitative assessment metrics included individual and group interviews, written questionnaires, and reviews of the School's reports and policies as well as other archival documents. Information and feedback were solicited from the student body, core and adjunct faculty, staff and work-study students, trustees, and school-wide committees.

The assessment identified and made recommendations in six school-wide areas of focus:

- Sustainability (personal, spiritual, and economic; institutionalization of ECO)
- Permeable Walls (engagement with broader communities beyond Starr King)
- The Gifts of ECO (celebrating the commitment; willingness to engage in conflict)
- Intersecting Oppressions and Privileges
- Conversation Stoppers / Conversation Starters (challenges and opportunities)
- Evolving Our ECO/Educational Philosophy (changes needed to embody ECO)

The ECO Assessment evaluated and made recommendations relating to under-represented communities, race and gender, diversity, and insularity/globalization, which are called for in the Association of Theological School's standards. It confirmed and strengthened the School's commitments. The assessment yielded valuable data about the experiences of people of color, women, and transgender people in institutional life. It revealed how oppressions and privileges intersect with complex issues of identity and power and the ways in which the School might move beyond a black and white model of race and increase its outreach and accountability to Hispanic, First Nations and Asian/Pacific Islander communities. It also provided recommendations for the student body, staff, faculty and trustees, as well as the committees for the curriculum, admissions and scholarships, and chapel. Each group reported on their progress after one year. These follow-up reports were publicized to the wider community to ensure accountability.

Financial Planning

Over the past decade, Starr King's financial life has required intensive planning and close monitoring. At the beginning of the decade, the School articulated a set of financial strategies to support its goal of fiscal sustainability:

- Focus the use of resources, including accumulated reserves from the economic high of the late 1990's, to advance the priority goal of building a professional staffing infrastructure, improve compensation, and provide the faculty needed to support the mission and new educational initiatives of the School.
- Increase operating revenues from tuition – through developing new educational offerings, growing the number of students served, and raising tuition to keep pace with inflation.
- Achieve a seven percent average growth rate in operating revenues from gifts and grants—through effective advancement work including a comprehensive Centennial Campaign.
- Grow the School's endowment—through reducing the endowment draw to five percent and conducting a successful Centennial Campaign to secure planned gifts, pledges and cash gifts to endow faculty positions and student financial aid.
- Hold or cut expenses as needed to operate with balanced budgets, keeping in view a horizon of five-year projections of income and expenditures.

Over the past decade, these strategies have been implemented, monitored, and adjusted as needed. The strategies exist, at some points, in dynamic tension with one another. The School's administration and trustees have negotiated their way through these tensions—even when doing so required difficult choices.

Changes in the outside environment negatively impacted the School—most particularly the economic downturn of 2001-2003. The School responded assertively, facing the necessity of deep cuts and aggressive fundraising efforts. In November of 2004, the treasurer reported to the board of trustees that the School was facing a \$200,000 structural deficit in its operating budget. Five-year financial projections showed growing deficits. The School's expendable reserves had been spent down in the years following the 2001-2003 downturns in the U.S. economy, and the value of the School's endowment had dropped by nearly thirty percent. Fundraising success and steady enrollment were not sufficient to make up for these difficulties. The coming year's budget could not be balanced without further personnel reductions.

In February, 2005, the executive committee of the Board concluded that the Board had to consider declaring financial exigency and retrenching its operations, including reducing its faculty. The School consulted and followed the ATS guidelines on retrenchment. To begin the process, written communications from the Chair and Treasurer of the Board, as well as the President, were sent to trustees, staff, students and faculty announcing the need to consider declaring financial exigency. A series of open informational meetings on the School's finances was held for staff, faculty and students. The Vice President for Finance and Administration met individually with each staff member and the Board Vice President met personally with each member of the core faculty, soliciting their concerns and suggestions. The President submitted the School's financial data to two outside

reviewers: an Auburn Institute specialist on seminary finances and a member of the Graduate Theological Union Finance Committee with financial and legal expertise. Their assessments were presented to the Board.

In April 2005, the Board of Trustees formally voted to declare financial exigency and directed the President to prepare a retrenchment plan using criteria established by the Board. The Board's motions were communicated in writing, orally (at the Board meeting), and through follow up public meetings with students, faculty and staff. The Treasurer of the Board met with faculty members individually to discuss their futures and to propose approaches that would provide transition support if their jobs were eliminated. The President asked an academic administrator from another institution to review the proposed transition packages for faculty to assure that they met basic standards of fairness. The consultant affirmed the justice and generosity of the proposals.

In June 2005, following these conversations and consultations, the President presented a retrenchment plan to the Board, which was approved. The full text of the retrenchment plan is in the appendix. The retrenchment plan released two core faculty members from their contracts: the Professor of Pastoral Theology, and the Professor of Church History. It also reduced hours and laid off staff. It dramatically reorganized the work loads of the faculty and staff that remained, shifting administrative responsibilities that were formerly carried by faculty onto staff, and allowing faculty members and the President to focus again on teaching and educational programs.

The plan provided generous transition support for faculty members whose employment was terminated. It also sought new ways to meet the needs of students, including reliance on adjunct, visiting, and Graduate Theological Union faculty and courses. Grants from the Arthur Vining Davis and Luce Foundations helped provide much-needed short-term assistance with faculty needs.

The plan cut costs by \$200,000 annually, and allowed the School to adopt new financial strategies and policies, including balancing the budget with a five percent draw on endowment, creating a tuition reserve policy, establishing a three percent contingency in the president's office budget, and raising tuition and continuing fees.

A New Strategic Plan

Following the 2005 retrenchment, the School embarked on a three-year interim plan, which allowed time to consider its best options for the future. Starr King requested and received permission from the ATS to focus its self-study process on strategic planning.

The School conducted an extensive investigation of three options for its future: merge, downsize further, or grow. At the request of the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the School spent over a year considering the possibility of consolidation or merger with fellow Unitarian Universalist seminary Meadville Lombard in Chicago. Ultimately, it was decided that there were neither financial benefits nor a shared vision to make the plan a reality. The School next explored the possibility of further downsizing to

become a house of studies at Pacific School of Religion. Trustees carefully considered this option, but ultimately decided that Starr King's educational practices and counter-oppressive, multi-religious and Unitarian Universalist commitments couldn't be adequately preserved and advanced through this option. These commitments were too important to give up. The Board put the House of Studies option on the back burner as a fallback only---if no feasible plan for growing the School could be formulated. It remains the School's contingency plan.

With these options considered, the School embarked on a strategic planning process to grow, building on the advantages the Graduate Theological Union afforded for shared academic resources. Initial planning culminated in a re-covenanting conversation between the President and the Board at the April 2007 Board meeting. At that meeting, two Harvard Business School volunteer consultants presented a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to the Starr King Board based on interviews with denominational leaders, donors, and graduates. The President proposed a vision for the School's future that drew together the key ideas that had emerged through a year of brainstorming, analysis and planning by faculty, staff, and trustees. The Board spent two days in closed-door discussions with the President, carefully assessing the proposed vision in light of the SWOT analysis. Discussions culminated in the unanimous adoption of a working draft vision statement. After consultation with graduates, the vision was publicized on the School's website:

Starr King's Vision

We are dedicated to advancing Starr King as a gem of educational imagination and excellence, with a resource base sufficient for the importance of the School's mission.

We know that we embody Unitarian Universalist values in the way we do education, as well as in the content of our curriculum, and this will deepen as a hallmark of our educational excellence.

We know that the distinctive educational values of Starr King School make it a key resource for Unitarian Universalism's future, for the vitality of our ministers, for the life of our congregations, the education of our laity, and for the contributions we can make to the common good. We envision our future M.Div. graduates leading thriving congregations whose ministries touch the heart, enliven the mind, and advance justice, equity and compassion in society.

We are engaged in theological education that fosters multi-religious understanding, counters oppressions and creates just and sustainable communities. We envision our efforts expanding to offer resources to congregations and other educational institutions.

We affirm that it is time to further widen our outreach to include the preparation of progressive religious leaders for society from multiple faith traditions and

cultural locations, through our Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change. We envision our future MASC graduates embodying progressive religious values in ministries of grace and courage that bless the world. We embrace our both/and identity. We are both Unitarian Universalist and committed to progressive religion in its diverse expressions.

We recognize that it is time to creatively re-imagine our educational work to integrate online courses, non-resident learning in the field, and the community of residential learning and scholarship in Berkeley and the Graduate Theological Union in some new ways. We'll be engaged in this re-imagining over the course of the coming year.

With this vision in place, Starr King's formal self-study process for the Association of Theological Schools began in the spring of 2007. The process included detailed planning for how the School could re-imagine its curriculum in accord with this vision. This included careful identification of staff and faculty organization; consideration of necessary technology and space requirements; and a time-line for implementation. Five year income and expense projections that modeled different scenarios were prepared and analyzed. Compensation improvement was factored in. The study of scenarios revealed that the financial investment required was daunting, but the "New Educational Model" showed promise for improved fiscal sustainability over the long haul.

In January, 2008, at a special retreat for trustees, faculty and staff, which included student representatives, the School's leadership reviewed the first draft of the self study and formulated the outlines of a strategic plan. The Board adopted the following strategic goals, to support the vision:

The Strategic Goals

- 1. Design and implement a new educational model that will advance Starr King's educational excellence, open the School to a larger enrollment by providing greater flexibility and accessibility for students, and make more effective use of teaching staff, educational resources, and new educational technologies.*
- 2. Design and implement short-term and long-term financial and fundraising plans.*
- 3. Design and implement a recruitment and marketing plan.*
- 4. Reorganize and revitalize the Board of Trustees to successfully achieve the School's mission, vision, and strategic goals.*

Immediately following the January 2008 retreat, the School received strong affirmation of its direction in the form of a challenge gift of \$500,000 in cash from a committed donor. Matching gifts and pledges of \$120,000 followed swiftly. The goal of \$1 million in cash by the end of the next academic year was met in record time, with the help of the

Luce Foundation which approved a second grant to support Starr King's work on multi-religious theological education.

In the Spring of 2008, the ATS Self-Study Steering Committee organized its work into four task-groups, each charged with a) revising a section of the self-study in light of the extensive input received, b) conducting further data analysis as needed, and c) drafting detailed objectives and action plans to create a comprehensive strategic plan in response to the direction and goals set by the Board. Additionally, an extensive online survey of graduates from the last twenty years was conducted, with 143 graduates (approximately 50%) responding.

At the April 2008 Board meeting, Trustees spent an afternoon reflecting on lessons learned over the past decade. Former Board Chairs and Trustees were invited to offer their insights and hopes. The President and Dean from Goddard College—a historically Universalist school with similar educational practices to Starr King's—met with the Board to offer guidance to Starr King on institutional change. The Starr King Board garnered insight and encouragement from Goddard's positive experience of implementing a new educational model that has proven to be financially successful.

By fall 2008, a revised draft of the self-study report was presented to the Board of Trustees, and the strategic plan was in the process of further refinement and initial implementation. The final version of the self-study was approved in June 2009. The outlines of the new educational model have been communicated through the School's website and through a power-point presentation called "Starr King School: The Next Generation" which has been shown to donors, graduates, and potential students at the annual General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The most recent iteration of this plan and its supporting documents can be found in the appendix and the power-point can be viewed at www.skism.edu.

Chapter 3: Teaching, Learning, and Research: **The New Educational Model**

The true end of education...is to unfold and direct aright our whole nature. Its office is to call forth power of every kind—power of thought, affection, will and outward action; power to observe, to reason, to judge, to contrive; power to adopt good ends firmly and to pursue them efficiently; power to govern ourselves and influence others; power to gain and spread happiness.

-- William Ellery Channing

Introduction to the New Educational Model

Starr King's New Educational Model advances Starr King as a school with "permeable walls" and opens the School to enrollment growth by making the School's programs more flexible. In keeping with the School's long heritage of student-centered education, it places the student at the center and offers each the close and committed guidance of a faculty mentor-advisor. Within a framework of individually-designed courses of study, it asks each M.Div. and M.A.S.C. student to engage in three modes of learning: on-line learning, residential learning, and immersion learning. The new model fully integrates into all aspects of the curriculum the School's commitment to education that counter-oppressions, creates just and sustainable communities and fosters multi-religious life and learning; and it guides and assesses student learning within a framework of eight "Thresholds" in which students must develop competence in order to graduate.

This chapter introduces and discusses Starr King's New Educational Model. It begins by grounding the model in the School's history as a progressive educational institution; then it describes and assesses the School's approach to teaching and learning, research, and ministerial formation as embodied in the components of the New Model.

Nearly every aspect of the New Educational Model is already in place, *and* every aspect is in the process of further development based on the strategic plans this self-study has formulated. The penultimate section in this chapter describes the additional educational structures the School plans to establish in order to fully implement the New Model. The final section offers an assessment of what Starr King teaches through the very way it does its educational work—the implicit curriculum of the New Educational Model.

A Living Tradition

Starr King's New Educational Model is deeply rooted in the School's heritage—such that the new model is not a radical break with the past but an evolution of the School's living tradition. That tradition dates back to the theological anthropology and educational theories first articulated by nineteenth century Unitarian theologian William Ellery Channing and the educators he inspired: Elizabeth Peabody (founder of the kindergarten movement), Margaret Fuller (innovator in women's education), Horace Mann (advocate

of free public education for all children), and Bronson Alcott (innovator in child-centered religious education). These progressive educators regarded each human being as created in the image of God, endowed with powers of the soul to be called forth and developed through education. Their belief in the divine spark in each person fired their active engagement in social movements such as abolition and women's rights. They created a powerful practice of education as both spiritual development and social transformation.

John Dewey's philosophy of education evolved from this heritage. In the 20th century, Starr King, along with a small group of colleges such as Goddard, Sarah Lawrence, and Antioch applied Dewey's theories in experimental, progressive ways. In the late 1940's, Starr King's innovative Dean, Dr. Josiah Bartlett, introduced a set of educational practices that remain at the heart of the School today. These included: individually designed programs of study, faculty as guides to students' self-directed learning, trust in students' agency and capacity to function as mature adults, contextual immersion in sites of ministry and hands-on experiential learning, student-participation in a democratically run-school. In the 1970's, the School built on these educational practices by adding don-rags (a once a semester meeting of each student with the whole core faculty) and a non-residential quarter, during which students were expected to get out of Berkeley and into the world for first hand learning through travel and research or fulltime field work. Although don-rags and the non-resident quarter are no longer formal practices at the School, the New Educational Model carries forward the educational values these practices embodied.

The School's heritage of educational imagination and innovation is a distinctive strength and a resource for new work. In the changing environment of theological education, the cloistered residential model---wherein students come to a school for three or four years to complete a course of study within the "cloister" of the academy---is becoming less and less viable financially. It requires an intensive focus of resources on housing, buildings, library, faculty, and financial aid that is prohibitively expensive for all but the largest or best endowed schools. Such a model assumes a student body of people who are highly mobile, with few family obligations that might tie them to places far away from the residential school, and/or young enough and part of a wealthy enough extended family that will help them, to be able to incur considerable educational debt. Beyond these practical difficulties, the implicit curriculum of the cloistered model tends to form ministers best suited to sanctuary spaces, to enclosed walls where life is structured and ordered. In fact, ministry and religious leadership take place "where cross the crowded ways of life" (as an old Social Gospel hymn expresses it) and theological education must always find ways to move into the world.

Starr King's New Educational Model responds to the need for learning beyond the "cloistered model." While retaining the importance of residential learning, it stretches (in keeping with the School's long heritage of progressive education) to integrate on-line learning and to advance immersion learning as aspects of the School's approach---because these methods of teaching and learning support the outcome the School seeks. The educational outcome the School aims for is ministers and religious leaders who are religiously-grounded, engaged activists---people present to life as creative respondents

with a capacity for critical investigation and hands on immersion in life's realities. Religious leadership requires engagement with life in all its messy complexity. It calls for inner direction, responsible agency, spiritual depth, and the capacity to learn with and from life experiences and cultures other than ones own. And, religious leadership must make use of new technologies for the construction and dissemination of knowledge, and the creation of communities.

The Student at the Center

Starr King's model begins by placing the student at the center. Through individually-designed programs in its M.Div. and M.A.S.C. degrees, the School meets students where they are, recognizes their needs and potentials, and guides them towards educational resources and opportunities that will strengthen their development. The School offers each student close personal attention and intensive advising; it regards the teacher/student relationship as one of 'power with', not 'power over'. The advisor-mentor works with each student to discern their vocational call and to plan a course of study that responds to the questions that arise in the context of the student's life and communities of accountability. Students are asked to bring all aspects of themselves into their educational planning; the School considers the students' whole life experience during seminary as an integral part of their studies. Significant life events—major illness, the death of a close family member or friend, the loss of a job or falling in love and entering into committed relationships—are all moments for reflecting on core religious questions, learning about ministry, and planning approaches for deeper theological learning.

This method of education understands teaching to be an act of attentive guidance. The teacher accompanies the learners in their encounter with life and directs the learner, through an interactive process of inquiry, reflection, suggestions and challenges, to prepare for their vocation and to develop their knowledge and their capacities—"to unfold and direct aright all the powers of the soul." The learners must pay attention to what is going on with themselves, with their communities, and in the world; to listen for "the call" of the spirit within the heart of life; to recognize places in themselves that need spiritual development and to confront realities in the world that call for compassionate or courageous response. They must become aware of their social location, of the history and cultural development of their own spiritual and theological traditions; at the same time, they are challenged to develop the skills to critique the presuppositions that may keep them from engaging with ideas and experiences that differ from their own. With all this in mind, the learners must exercise their agency in designing their educational program; they must choose, act, engage, and then reflect on their learning.

Starr King's individually-designed academic programs accommodate the diverse research interests of students. For example a student intending to incorporate yoga in her ministry was able to study Sanskrit in the South Asian Studies department at the University of California, Berkeley. Another, interested in religion, queer theory and popular culture, worked with his advisor to develop and present his research paper at the annual meeting of American Academy of Religion. Another did independent research on poverty and

class issues that manifest within Unitarian Universalism and used that research to give life and direction to the Poverty Initiative at the GTU.

In working with their advisors, students may create reading or independent courses to explore special topics. These include the creation of an individual tutorial with a specific faculty member around a pre-arranged reading list; meeting regularly with a small group of fellow students to study a topic and discuss it with a faculty member several times during the semester; or a writing project (research or creative) that is guided and reviewed by a faculty member. Additionally, the School encourages students who participate in special events that advance their learning, or engage reflectively in major life experiences, to “write-up” their learning for credit. The write-up describes the event, reflects on what the student did and learned, and identifies how the student’s preparation for religious leadership was advanced. The advisor reads the write-up, may engage the student in an evaluative conversation about their learning, and then determines the amount of credit that will be granted.

The School evaluated its focus on individualized, student-centered learning during the ECO assessment conducted during the 2005-2006 academic year, which identified strengths and weakness to this educational practice.

On the problematic side, the ECO Assessment noted:

“Individually designed courses of study can reinforce white narcissism and upper-class privilege. . . . Students can easily end up believing—because of the School’s educational practice—that ‘it’s all about me and my needs.’ We need to recognize that our educational practice can inadvertently teach that the needs of individual selves take precedence over all other matters. Can we be doing effective counter oppressive education for ministry and religious leadership if we are not placing an equal or even greater emphasis on right relationships and responding to the realities of others’ lives? Can we critique white narcissism in our explicit curriculum, while reinforcing it in our implicit curriculum?”

We recommend that the School give sustained attention to this question: how might Starr King’s educational practices around ‘individually designed courses of study’ and ‘student-centered learning’ need to be revised to guard against self-absorption, insularity, and narcissism. . . . The faculty should take a fresh look at emerging pedagogical theories and practices that are oriented to interactive, communal learning that fosters capacities of right relationship to others. We should consider how new pedagogical attention to group learning, rather than individual achievement, might inform and transform our educational work.”

These considerations and recommendations have informed the evolution of the Educating to Counter Oppressions Seminar (described below), and the faculty is currently engaged in integrating the ECO commitments directly into the advisor-student relationship more explicitly and intentionally so that the value of individualized learning is balanced with

the challenge to engage with others and on behalf of diverse communities of accountability.

On the positive side, the ECO Assessment affirmed that Starr King's educational practices around self-direction inspire students to engage with critical issues in all areas of life. These practices create a crucible for each student to develop, hone, and revolutionize their own and the community's religious leadership. Self-directed studies inspire students to deeply engage in the scholarship to which they are most drawn and to risk engagement with scholarship in areas that are less familiar, but necessary for balanced religious leadership. This practice allows the distinctive realities of each student's life to generate learning goals rather than requiring that all students conform to curricular requirements that may not be relevant to their lives or their communities. It allows the School to be more responsive to the particularities of each student's identity in terms of race, culture, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, religious tradition(s), age, and communities. It affirms the sacred worth of every person, disrupts internalized oppressions that lead to passivity, and provides space for educational projects and work to be created out of the lived realities that students bring to the School and to their hopes for ministry and religious leadership.

The School's student-centered approach is a highly effective in ministerial formation. It shapes habits for successful ministry: strong inner direction; attentiveness to self, others, and world; the capacity to ask and pursue questions; the ability to be challenged, guided, and held accountable. It calls forth the exercise of agency and responsibility.

Assessments of the strong track record of Starr King's graduates serving in Unitarian Universalist ministry, such as the recent Harvard Study found in the appendix, point to the School's method of student-centered education as a key factor in producing excellent ministers who have staying power in the ministry and serve growing congregations. The educational method forms ministers who embody openness, engagement and respect.

One graduate expressed it this way:

“The School did not have an agenda that it sought to impose. I felt seen and acknowledged in the wholeness of who I am; that the school wanted to know me and offer guidance that was based on what I wanted. I felt trusted to know what kind of Minister I was called to be and facilitated in that journey. This trust is something I have been able to extend to my parishioners and others I have ministered to; I believe it is the deepest form of respect...What I learned at Starr King is how to embody this in my relationships with others, by example.”

Three Modes of Learning

As advisors work with each student to chart the student's individualized course of study, they direct students to engage in multiple modes of learning. Three primary modes are emphasized: on-line learning, residential learning, and immersion learning. A holistic program of study involves all three – each mode offers different approaches to teaching and learning, and produces different kinds of learning outcomes that shape the formation

of skills, capacities, and personal characteristics that make for successful ministry and religious leadership.

Online Learning

Starr King's online courses have been developed with new educational technologies in mind, rather than merely being adaptations of classroom courses. The practice of ministry increasingly uses the internet in new ways and so the *preparation* of people for ministry must do so as well. More than 75% of the 2007 graduating class members report using an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, internet, instant messaging, or online class) which is a dramatic increase from 33% the decade before.

In a recent gathering of around 150 graduates of the School serving in ordained ministries, Starr King's President asked the group for a show of hands in response to the question: How many of you, in the last year, have conducted research in preparation for a sermon by using a local theological library? A smattering of hands went up---maybe 15. The next question was asked: "How many of you were trained in seminary to do library research, and to make responsible use of printed scholarly source material?" Nearly everyone raised their hands. Next, the President asked, "How many of you, in the last year, have used the internet to conduct research in preparation for a sermon?" Virtually everyone raised their hands. "How many of you were trained in seminary to do internet research, and to make responsible use of online scholarly source material?" A very small number of people raised their hands. The School now challenges every student to make use of new educational technologies and on-line courses as part of their preparation for religious leadership, recognizing that new technologies are creating new methods of research, publication, reflection, and interaction which are relevant to the practice of ministry.

In online learning, teachers and students engage with one another from a distance—and the virtual classroom that is created connects the multiple locations in which students and teachers are situated. Starr King's online courses have included one in which, for example, the instructor was located in Istanbul, Turkey, and the students were dispersed in different locations around the globe. Such courses help advance the School's vision of global immersion and contribute greatly to a globalized, multi-religious theological pedagogy.

The ATS lists Starr King on its website as one of the ATS schools that offers distance education. The School first offered an online class on Unitarian Universalist history in 1998, to address the needs of Unitarian Universalist students attending non-Unitarian Universalist seminaries. Online offerings had grown to two classes in 2000, and reached six classes in the 2004-2005 school year. By 2004, the School had finished a complete overhaul of its web site, including an extensive library of online papers and historical resources. By the 2007-2008 school year, online course offerings had grown to twelve courses serving 142 students. In the 2009-2010 school year, Starr King is offering seventeen on-line courses, plus eight which will be co-sponsored with the Institute for Buddhist Studies. These courses have been designed and offered as three-unit graduate

level courses, and consistently receive positive evaluations. These offerings remain the primary way that the School assists Unitarian Universalist students in programs outside of Starr King. They also provide continuing education opportunities for ministers, lay church professionals and lay leaders who can register to take these courses as special students.

Prior to 2008, online courses had been open only to students from outside of Starr King and the GTU. Starr King degree students could petition the faculty to take and receive credit for an online course—and a handful did. In January, 2008, after reviewing the plans for the New Educational Model, Starr King’s faculty and board approved a policy allowing Starr King and GTU degree students to enroll in these courses, with permission to earn up to one third of their M.Div. or M.A.S.C. degree credits through online courses. With this self-study, Starr King petitions the ATS Commission on Accreditation to grant preliminary approval for this policy. The formal petition can be found in the Appendix to this Self Study Report.

Most online classes are designed around content specific to Unitarian Universalist M.Div. students. The courses and instructors are approved and evaluated by the curriculum committee and online education administrators. Several are designed and taught by core faculty members and others by adjunct instructors. Effective online teaching requires instructors who make full use of available technology and students willing and able to make use of it. During the 2008-2009 academic year, the School offered a workshop for students on “how to take an online course,” and participated in a GTU-wide training program for instructors in “how to teach online.” It is recommended that more such workshops be integrated into the school’s approach.

As the School endeavors to expand its online course offerings and incorporate them more fully into its Master’s degree programs, more courses are being developed that are appropriate for M.A. and M.A.S.C. students and that provide content from a range of religious traditions. In addition to designing its own courses, the School is partnering with the Institute for Buddhist Studies to co-sponsor courses.

In the past, all Starr King’s online courses have relied on an online technology called “Blackboard,” used by schools across the country. Beginning in 2008, online courses moved to a new platform, known as “Moodle.” Online courses generally need eight students to ensure vibrant interaction, which occurs through self-posted student photos, group discussions, and new technologies such as instant messaging and interactive video feeds.

Online courses embrace teaching/learning methods such as threaded discussions, paper postings and chat groups. The production of traditional research papers, submitted to the instructor for evaluation, is often a part of an on-line course, but distinctive modes of research and presentation of theological reflection are also employed. For example, students in Starr King online courses have produced blogs, videos, and web-sites as course projects.

In assessing the effectiveness and value of on-line courses, the School notes that students' eagerness and readiness for this mode of learning is high. During the first year (2008-2009) that Starr King degree students had access to online courses, the School did not have sufficient space to accommodate all the students who wanted to study in this format. Not every student finds online to be an easy learning approach for them; others take to it with ease and enthusiasm. The School is learning that online courses open the School to low-residency students who can now do part of their seminary work while living at a distance from Berkeley—although, at present, low-residency degree students comprise less than 10% of the student body. Most of the degree students who enrolled in online courses in 2008-2009 were high-residency students.

Residential Learning

The School maintains a Berkeley residency requirement in all its degree programs. All students engage in residential learning in Berkeley, while also being challenged and supported in educational activities that move them into the world and call them to engage with locations and communities beyond the School's four walls.

Residential learning can be defined as learning in which the teacher and the students are in the same place at the same time. Such learning engages the student as a person *in community*, whose learning makes a difference to the whole community as well as to themselves. This mode of learning is tied to the community's progress and provides a balance to the School's individually designed programs by fortifying accountability and solidarity with others. In Starr King's context, community is defined not only as existing within the School's four walls, but in relationships and engagements beyond the Berkeley campus. For example, over seventy-five percent of graduates report being active members of a Bay Area congregation or religious community during their time at Starr King's Berkeley campus. The faculty constantly evaluates this balance--working with students to ensure not only personal growth but to enhance their accountability to the communities they hope to serve.

The School intentionally keeps residential class sizes small, varying in size from two to twenty, with most classes including eight to fifteen students. This class size permits professors to use interactive and community building pedagogies. The School recognizes the value of intimate class sizes by paying adjunct faculty the same salary regardless of student enrollment. The School does not allow auditors, as a way of emphasizing that every person's full participation matters to the whole. Students are expected to complete reading assignments before coming to class so that lectures can go beyond mere review sessions and encompass the presentation of new material. Students are expected to bring their own analyses of the readings with questions and observations for the discussion. Exams are rare at the School, and have been replaced by final projects or presentations by the students. This allows for original research and exploration into a specific part of the course material that may have piqued the student's interest. Starr King residential instructors consistently receive high evaluations of their classes. 25.8% of graduates rate classroom reading, and 28.8% rate classroom discussion, as among the top five most formational pedagogical tools of the School.

Residential learning in Berkeley involves students in the ecumenical and interfaith context of the Graduate Theological Union. Free, open cross registration across the consortium, means that residential learning for Starr King students includes work with a diversity of Christian traditions, represented by the member schools, and opportunities to study with Muslim, Buddhist, and Jewish scholars. Students from other traditions take classes at Starr King, as well, so the religious, cultural mix in the classroom itself enhances engagement with different life realities, heritages, and experiences. Students also can register without charge in classes at the University of California at Berkeley—further enriching the resources available to them.

Creating a holistic, residential community of worship, inquiry and action is a complex task involving personal, vocational, spiritual and academic formation. The School's worship life functions as a laboratory for learning, an enactment of values, and a primary place where the community comes together in the context of something larger than itself—the world and the holy. The Chapel Committee assures that there are weekly chapel services, often led by students, as well as a weekly chapel reflection to allow time for feedback and community learning. Chapels encourage experimentation with the art of worship and call students to critically think and critically feel. The School's worship life has improved dramatically over the decade. 42.4% of graduates list the Starr King's worship services among the top five most formational educational practices of the School, rating them in a tie with the Graduate Theological Union as the top response. Strengthening of the School's worship life began in 1997 when the faculty launched an eighteen month project on "Re-imagining Worship for the Free Church Tradition in the 21st Century." This project included public worship services and shared study, and became the focus of the 1999 Earl Morse Wilbur History Colloquium.

Residential learning in Berkeley is shaped, in part, by the building and grounds. Starr King's small building is a homey, multiple-use space. Its main Fireside Room serves as the School's Chapel, largest classroom, and gathering space for all school meetings, public lectures, community meals, and special events. This multiple use physically manifests the intersections of worship, classroom, community life, and public engagement—and perhaps helps teach that ministry and religious leadership are multi-dimensional, holistic activities. The School's home-like qualities—a kitchen at the heart of things, a Fireside Room carpeted in earth tones, windows opening out to the garden courtyard—have a theological/architectural history in the work of nineteenth century Unitarian and Universalist women ministers in the Iowa Sisterhood. These early women ministers designed and built churches whose sanctuaries evoked the sanctuary of the home, the nurturance of the kitchen table and hearth, *and* the learning environment of a school. They believed religious communities should transform society by integrating home, school, and church. Starr King's building bears traces of this feminist heritage.

Every student, on their first day of orientation, is given a key that will open all the public spaces of the building. This simple practice embodies the School's trust and respect for its students. Everyone shares the responsibility to care for and shape the teaching and learning environment. The building is short on office space, with no rooms dedicated

solely as classroom space, and is often a crowded beehive of activity. Space limitations require everyone (students, faculty and staff) to pitch in on a daily basis – moving chairs, setting up and taking down room configurations, loading and emptying the dishwasher, and juggling cars in the parking lot.

The physical environment of the building and grounds expresses some of the School's values. The hand-lettered roll of honored women in the entryway honors the work women did---beginning in the 1970's--- to advance the School's commitment to feminist principles. The symbols of all the world's religions, displayed on the rafters in the Fireside Room, testify to the history of multi-religious life in Universalism. The prayer rug hanging near the Round Chapel invites Muslim faculty, students and staff to observe their daily prayers at the school. The Mezuzah on the door post welcomes Jews. The Buddha in the foyer summons respect for the Fourfold path and for those who follow it. The Rainbow flag speaks of the School's affirmation of LGBTQ identities. The Transgender signs on the restroom doors mark an advance in the School's understanding and acceptance of diverse gender expressions.

Reflection on the importance of residential learning makes it clear that residential learning in community is essential for the preparation of ministers and other religious leaders, particularly for courses in the practical arts of ministry. Training in pastoral counseling, preaching and worship, and some counter-oppressive skills can best be attained through in-person interactions---with students and teachers in the same place at the same time. Peer relationships cultivated during the residential period contribute to students' ministerial and professional formation---building networks of support and mutual learning for present studies and future collegiality. Extra-curricular activities, such as monthly feast nights with family and friends, nourish these relationships. 28.8% of graduates report community life as among the top five most formational aspects of their studies.

This self study revealed that, in any given year, only about 33% of students actually make full use of these opportunities for community life at Starr King's campus in Berkeley. There is a small group that is particularly active in chapels, committees, and the non-curricular community life of the School. Still others make a point to schedule their classes so that they can participate in some of these activities. But for many students, commuting, jobs and family life pull them away from the community centered at 2441 Le Conte, even when they are "residing in Berkeley." Students supplement that learning with fieldwork and community placements, and on-line courses. Explorations into these alternative modes of learning (beyond the residential mode) suggest that they hold distinctive opportunities for community-building and must be pursued without fear of losing what is valuable about residential life at the School's Berkeley campus.

Starr King's physical center is in Berkeley, but its embrace of low-residency faculty, staff and students makes it into an international school. The building resembles the "Mother House" for a monastic order whose members are at work throughout the world. In a sense, Starr King is located wherever its faculty and students are at work—the School exists multi-locally with permeable walls. Starr King is in Istanbul where the Vice

President for Academic Affairs resides for part of the year, teaching and administering through online technologies, and where students gather for immersion learning. Starr King is in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco, where students meet for classes at the Faithful Fools Street Ministry. Starr King is in Lexington, Kentucky, where the Vice President for Advancement directs the School's advancement and communication efforts. Starr King is in St. Paul, Minnesota; Austin, Texas; Concord, Mass; Monterey, California, etc. -- where parish interns are working and learning. Starr King has been in Iraq, where one of its low-residency students was working for a year; and in New Zealand and Pakistan—home base for one of its part-time core faculty members.

To exist as an educational community, both locally and globally —as residentially-centered and in diaspora— has involved hard work and growing pains. The community is learning new modes of connection and communication and practicing intentionality and flexibility in order to sustain relationships via phone, internet, and travel. By its growing multi-locality, Starr King teaches that community can cross borders and distances, linking people in shared work around the world—but that doing so requires creativity, mindfulness, new practices, and effective use of new technologies.

The New Educational Model is introducing new questions about the meaning of residential learning. For example, the faculty has found itself asking, “In what way is the two-week Rumi Immersion in Turkey *not* residential learning?” The teachers and the students are together intensively, in the same place at the same time, sharing not only structured teaching and learning activities, but meals, music and rituals, individual conferences with their professor, and conversations with their peers. It is recommended that the School continue to explore, in consultation with the Association of Theological Schools, how it defines and expects students to fulfill the residency requirements of the school's degree programs.

Immersion Learning

Immersion learning can be defined as learning in which the *contextual site* is the central component of the learning—a focus of reflection for both the student and the teacher. At Starr King, immersion learning includes cross-cultural engagements locally and globally and first-hand learning experiences in sites of ministry: congregations, community organizations, hospitals and prisons, etc. In immersion learning, the learners must identify the questions, discoveries, and learning challenges that arise for them as they encounter and engage in the context; the teacher guides their reflections, challenges them to examine their assumptions and be self-aware about how they are relating to the context, evaluates their practice of ministerial skills, and more.

The School encourages students to engage in international travel for research, service or cross-cultural experience. One student traveled to Morocco for cross-cultural research on the experience of young people. Another lived and worked among Transylvanian Unitarians. Another began her program from Iraq, working with aid agencies there. Since 1990, Starr King scholarship students have traveled to Japan to study, live and work at Tsubaki Grand Shrine, a Shinto community established in 3 B.C.E. The School also

invites visiting scholars from other countries and faith traditions to study in Berkeley, including bringing a Transylvanian minister to Starr King each year through the Balázs Scholars Program. Immersion in local and global cultural settings---other than those with which one is most familiar---is crucial to the educational process.

With the implementation of the New Education Model, the School is introducing ways to make immersion learning a communal activity, rather than just an individual endeavor. Professors over the decade have guided students on immersions in Indonesia, Italy and Turkey. The Graduate Theological Union also offers educational travel opportunities for students and graduates. In 2008, the School developed and implemented its first two-week immersion in Turkey (the “Rumi” Immersion) and is considering future immersion courses in Turkey, Malaysia, India, Italy and Spain, where students would study and experience religious interactions and intersections in global and “glocal” (global/local) settings. Such programs give students a chance to engage with pressing theological and ethical issues from cross-cultural and multi-religious perspectives. Students bring the perspectives developed in these programs to their future parish or community leadership, by developing religious education curricula, worship resources, community organizing, leadership and governance models, etc.

The School’s program of field work in congregations and community settings has been a vital component of its M.Div. curriculum since the 1950’s, when it was started by then-president Josiah Bartlett. Today, most Starr King M.Div. students spend a year in a full-time parish internship, and complete at least one ten-week unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. MA.S.C. students are required to complete a six-month community placement. The School values these field work experiences because they foster learning through first-hand experience, integrate religious leadership theories with praxis, and provide opportunities for building relationships with related organizations and individuals. The placements are supervised by experienced religious leaders or seasoned community activists, and most CPE sites are certified by the Association of Clinical Pastoral Educators. Students receive credit for this work and are mentored by core faculty members who engage students in theological reflection through face-to-face and online learning groups. Internships are required for fellowshiping by the Unitarian Universalist Association. Intern sites are often chosen because of successful previous relationships with the congregation or minister, and meet several contractual arrangements, including offering stipends that match the UUA’s Fair Compensation guidelines, specific requirements for the congregation and the School as well as oversight by the minister, the intern committee chair, and the School’s internship director. Since 1996, more than one hundred Starr King students have participated in the parish internship program.

Parish interns are evaluated through weekly meetings with the intern supervisor, monthly meetings with an intern committee, online reflection groups with the core faculty, and through mid-term and final evaluations. Intern sites and supervisors are evaluated throughout the six to ten months of the internship, and the annual January Internship Gathering provides an important opportunity for the interns’ voices to be heard. The internship is an important time in the students’ development for the ministry, allowing them to experience the work and feeling of being a minister, with all its obligations,

responsibilities and boundaries. Students frequently contribute their own special talents to the sites where they are serving. 83.3% of graduates report that field education and internship were helpful experiences for their growth. Amongst those going into Unitarian Universalist parish ministry, the approval rating was even higher -- at 96.4%. Additionally, the school provides assistance to students in navigating CPE programs. 39.4% of graduates and 48.2% of graduates pursuing Unitarian Universalist parish ministry reported their CPE experience as one of the top five most formational experiences of their education.

In assessing immersion learning, the School notes that such learning requires significant resources of faculty and staff time; as well as financial aid support for students. It is recommended that the School continue to emphasize immersion learning as essential to preparation for ministry and religious leadership, and that it give further attention to the faculty and staff resources, as well as financial aid resources needed to sustain immersion learning and make it accessible to more students.

Commitments Across the Curriculum

Starr King's New Educational Model integrates three educational commitments across the curriculum. These commitments express the heart of the School's understanding of ministry and religious leadership for the 21st century: Ministry must address the need for just and sustainable communities in which people are able to flourish in wholeness and in right relationship with the earth; it must engage the multiplicity of religious traditions present in the world, embracing these diversities as sources for creative interchange among people rather than causes of division and violence; and it must redress legacies of oppression and injustice that harm people's souls and fracture communities, seeking to repair brokenness and promote liberation.

The next three sections summarize and reflect on what the school is doing in practice to embody these commitments.

Educating to Create Just and Sustainable Communities

The strategic plan of the last decade emphasized the public character of religious leadership. It articulated a goal to strengthen people's approach to ministry and religious leadership in service to society, to building the "beloved community," and promoting the common good. Toward this end, the school developed a new degree program: the Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change and in 2005 the School hired a Director of Studies in Public Ministry to coordinate the M.A.S.C. program, consult on community fieldwork placements for students in all degree programs, and support students participating in Clinical Pastoral Education.

Public ministries that promote just and sustainable community assume many different faces at the School. Students are involved in field education ministries and learning experiences as chaplains, educators and activists working on a variety of social justice issues. They are inspired by a common choice to "bless the world" and by a commitment

to address suffering and oppression and participate in the project of building and strengthening just and sustainable communities. Public events and organizing projects allow greater outreach. One student founded “Seminarians for Peace” and found herself on the FBI watch-list. Starr King’s Professor of Theological Ethics worked with students and faculty throughout the GTU to host a Bay Area Poverty and Truth Commission. Students have provided leadership in movements for living wages and unionization of service workers. Films and public lectures have examined crucial issues from women in Islam to Hurricane Katrina.

Starr King recognizes that it is a part of an interdependent web that includes not only fellow human travelers, but animals and plants, as well as the earth itself. Environmental and ecological issues are included in the School’s curriculum, in courses such as “The Beautiful Blue Ball”; “Environmental Spirituality”; and “Ecofeminist Religious Responses to Globalization, Ecological Degradation and Animal Suffering.”

Starr King is an institutional member of Faith Voices for the Common Good, a non-profit, public community trust, dedicated to creating greater public awareness of the shared values of the country’s diverse religious organizations and leaders, and applying them to public policy. The Director of Faith Voices is a visiting scholar at Starr King, and in this role offers consultation to the faculty from time to time, assists in evaluation and planning (such as the ECO Assessment) and involves students in Faith Voices projects.

The School teaches democratic values that are fundamental to just communities by having student leadership on key committees and the board of trustees. Student-led covenant groups hold promise for an educational approach that builds just and sustainable community and fosters creative interchange in the midst of diversity.

Multi-Religious Life and Learning

Starr King’s Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Islamic Studies is leading the development of the School’s multi-religious work. Following Sept. 11th, 2001, Starr King led the effort to establish Islamic studies at the GTU. Starr King’s board of trustees and the School as a whole committed itself to this project by hiring adjunct faculty to fill the void in the Graduate Theological Union’s course offerings, hosting conferences, and eventually helping to secure a Center for Islamic Studies at the GTU. Through Starr King’s Luce Project for Multi-Religious Theological Education, the School has developed a framework for multi-religious work and initiated opportunities for multi-religious engagements through online courses, residential courses, conferences, and immersion experiences. Rooted in historical analysis of Al-Andalus, the 700 year period of creative interactions between Muslims, Jews, and Christians in Spain, Starr King’s multi-religious approach examines the hidden interconnections between, among and within religious traditions. Students study how different religious traditions may bring new and unforeseen conceptualizations of body, gender, sexuality, class, national and ethnic identity, and aesthetics.

The School's practice of multi-religious theological education has developed substantially over the past decade. Instructors bring a multi-religious focus to their coursework in a variety of ways. "Spirituality and Non-Violent Social Transformation: Gandhi, King, Day and Chavez" incorporates methods of social change across Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Protestant and Catholic traditions. "The Allergy to the Other" makes the work of Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas the entry point for considering religious violence and persecution. Early classes in world religions, taught by single professors, have been replaced with online courses on global religious traditions in which scholars and practitioners of each religion teach that section. The model of team-teaching brings religious diversity into the classroom in a way that enriches both students and instructors and enables learning from the experience and expertise of several professors. Examples include courses on "Ego-Attachment from a Buddhist and Psychological Perspective"; "Comparative Feminist Spiritualities"; and "Story, Poem, Sermon Over Borders," which featured special references to Christianity and Islam. On a scale of one to five, graduates of the last ten years give a ranking of 4.38 ("agree to strongly agree") when asked the question "I had serious conversations with students from other religious traditions."

Unitarian Universalist congregations and organizations provide intersections among multiple religious traditions. Unitarian Universalism demonstrates profound respect for all of the world's religious traditions, in its recognition that each one offers important religious teachings, meanings, and ways. All members of the School's community are called upon to interact on many different levels with people of all faiths. Starr King students gain a historical perspective of the Unitarian Universalist commitment to respecting multi-religious traditions. At the same time, the multi-religious milieu that Starr King offers helps each student to question and reflect upon their engagement with their own tradition. Multi-religious education helps students enter into a way of life that constantly attends to the presence of religious diversity and religious interaction in cultures, current society, and history.

The School's aspirations are mirrored by the inclusion of members of diverse religious traditions who make up the School's student body, faculty and staff. The School at present includes practitioners of indigenous religions and new religious movements, Hindus, Buddhists, Humanists, Jews, Muslims, Christians, Unitarian Universalists and various combinations of all of the above. The School deeply engages the gifts of this diversity in its learning environment, preparing graduates to work constructively in an increasingly pluralistic world. An important part of Starr King's work has focused on religious diversity, moving beyond discourses of "tolerance."

Educating to Counter Oppressions

The School seeks to counter white supremacy, resisting the cultural and institutional patterns that confer privilege and entitlement on the well-being of some at the expense of others. It works to enable all members of the community to gain the tools that they need to address intersecting oppressions in North America and globally, and to advance liberation, healing, peace, and the establishment of a just and sustainable society. Counter-oppressive education is concerned with altering trajectories of violence, harm

and abuse in the direction of justice, healing and compassion. The School aims to move beyond mere tolerance of diversity to actively countering oppression in all forms. It is guided by an Educating to Counter Oppressions (ECO) accountability document, included in the Appendix.

The School's courses intentionally draw from both the standard theological canon and the counter-canon. The School has emphasized the hiring of faculty from historically marginalized communities whose voices, questions, and insights have been historically absent in theology and theological education. The School was an early and consistent supporter of the now closed Center for Urban Black Studies and the Center for Women and Religion. When these Centers closed, Starr King has provided important institutional leadership at the Graduate Theological Union to carry forward the work these Centers did. For example, in the wake of the closing of the Center for Women and Religion in 2003, against the unanimous protest of the Starr King faculty, faculty members provided leadership to help establish the current Certificate in Women's Studies in Religion at the Graduate Theological Union. Starr King faculty members, students and staff have helped re-establish a Black Student organization at the GTU, and have led in the creation of the GTU's Justice Collaborative, the Poverty Truth Commission and the University of the Poor, as an approach to centering theological reflection in the context of oppression.

All M.Div. and MASC students are required to participate in an "Educating to Counter Oppressions/Thresholds" course, typically in their first semester. This is the only required course at the School. During the "ECO/Threshold Seminar," the students write a paper on their communities of accountability. They respond to the question, "For *whom* does my learning matter?" This paper becomes one of the foundational documents in the student's file to be referred to by student and advisor, so the student's individually designed course of studies is developed *in relationship to* communities of accountability. This accountability is concretely embodied in the portfolio conference in which representatives from communities of accountability review the student's work.

Faculty-student advising regularly engages themes of diversity, oppression, privilege and social transformation. Courses provide opportunities for students to gain the knowledge, appreciation and openness needed to practice ministry effectively in changing cultural and racially diverse settings. The student body and the ECO steering committee arrange for workshops and trainings to explore these issues. Finally, students are guided to resources available through the GTU, UC Berkeley, community and congregational fieldwork sites, and the Unitarian Universalist Association for further support.

By placing special emphasis on disseminating knowledge that the dominant culture has ignored or silenced, the School makes "challenging the null curriculum" an important part of its implicit and explicit educational practices. In attending to the "precincts not heard from," the human community may discover wisdom that can lead it beyond the present patterns of oppression and violence towards one another and the earth. Starr King graduates are actively involved in challenging the null curriculum of their religious communities. They have taken lead roles in disability work, mental illness, same-sex marriage, environmentalism, polyamory awareness, racial justice, and anti-war

movements, to name only a few. A significant number of graduates over the last twenty years report that their Starr King education increased their activism around social issues.

Social Justice Issue	% of Graduates with Increased Activism
Racial Justice	81.4%
Economic Justice	78.2%
Gender Justice	76.2%
Environmental Sustainability	75.8%
Queer Issues	71.8%
Transgender Justice	64.4%
Multi-Generational Issues	62.1%
Disability Issues	62.1%
International Relations/Peace Issues	61.5%
Restorative Justice/Prison System Issues	46.7%
Animal Rights Issues	18%

The School’s decade plus of work on counter-oppressive education has given it the foundation as an exemplar on this front. The School has come far enough that it can begin to produce, for example, curriculum resources for congregations. It is recommended that the School further document and disseminate its learning and its approach to religiously based counter-oppressive work; theological education in general and the Unitarian Universalist movement in particular needs this leadership.

Emerging New Educational Structures

In order to foster the formation of religious leaders in communities of learning and faith that reach across space and time, the School’s New Educational Model will provide two additional educational structures to support and enhance its educational philosophies and practices.

- Symposia :

When the model is fully implemented, the Starr King Symposia will be held every year for two weeks every August and again in January. These intensive periods, coming at the beginning of each semester, will provide a collective immersion in the method and message of our educational practices and philosophies. They will bring to the Berkeley campus all members of the community; they will also unite all of the various modes of learning: residential, immersion, on-line, etc..

For these intensive periods, the entire learning community will convene for study, worship, educational planning, community-building and service all centered on a unitive theme. Participation in these Symposia would supply six credits annually towards the degree completion, and count towards the student’s residency requirement, thus allowing some students to attend SKSM in Berkeley who are not able to be in residence for a full semester or year.

- Cohort groups

After these times of immersion in intensive learning community, how will students continue to nurture the relationships that they develop with faculty, students, alums, etc. during the Symposia? Our New Educational Model plans to integrate cohort groups as peer-learner groups convened by faculty members. Not only will these groups unite students across the various modes of learning, they will also provide students an intimate, ongoing community base for collective reflection and mutual support. Regional clusters with periodic gatherings for learning, reflection and worship in community; online discussion groups; and in-person caucuses during the Symposia are all possibilities for assuring constant contact with and among students and faculty. These cohort groups will also invite students to engage with their various communities of accountability.

The New Educational Model in its inclusive embrace of different modes of learning and different life-contexts for our seminarians actually creates a space of mindful and intentional community. Not only are these emerging structures in radical faithfulness to our heritage, they also invite us to create and sustain, in a spirit of ‘holy boldness,’ richly diverse interactive spaces.

Ministerial Formation through the Implicit Curriculum

Starr King embodies progressive religious values, rooted in its Unitarian Universalist heritage, in the way it *does* education, as much as in the explicit content of its curriculum. The School recognizes that the implicit curriculum is powerful and it functions to form practices and habits in its students. At Starr King, ministerial formation occurs significantly through the implicit curriculum.

Educational theorist Elliot Eisner writes, “The implicit curriculum of the school is what it teaches because of the kind of place it is. And the school is that kind of place [because of] various approaches to teaching...the kind of reward system that it uses...the organizational structure it employs to sustain its existence...the physical characteristics of the school plant...the furniture it uses and the surroundings it creates. These characteristics constitute some of the dominant components of the school’s implicit curriculum. ...they are salient and pervasive features of schooling, what they teach may be among the most important lessons.”

By affirming “we teach by who we are and what we do,” as declared in its mission statement, Starr King recognizes that its implicit curriculum matters. The School’s educational practices, course subjects, the communities of struggle with whom students and faculty engage, and its approach to institutional challenges and conflicts shape and inform the kind of religious leaders its graduates will become. Responses to open-ended questions on graduate surveys reveal that the School’s implicit curriculum was a powerful component in preparing graduates for ministry and religious leadership.

Sometimes the school “teaches by who it is” by what it *fails* to do well. Comments from graduates noted some negative lessons: that conflict can render an environment toxic if leadership remains passive; that hospitality to diversity can be thwarted by lack of awareness of the dominant perspective; that idealism is not sufficient if practical applications are absent. While students can learn even from negative lessons, positive learning usually provides more sustenance over the long haul.

Overall, positive learning from the School’s implicit curriculum is strongly evident. In the graduate survey, graduates were asked, “In light of the work you are doing now, what did your Starr King education do for you that you most value?” Respondents referenced the whole experience of the School--its ethos and community life, its institutional culture, its participation in the Graduate Theological Union, its multi-religious and counter-oppressive emphases across the curriculum, and its practice of relational learning in a context of personal self-awareness and self-direction:

“The School’s culture respected the knowledge and experience I brought. I felt seen and heard as someone with a unique perspective and strengths that the school built upon. I found my voice and my authority as a minister.”

“Starr King taught me to trust myself, to be present with others, to value honesty as almost always the best path for constructive and creative relationships, to be as honest with myself as humanly possible and to keep stretching the definition of ‘humanly possible.’”

The School “opened me up to theological diversity, the sources related to that diversity, and ability to converse with those of other religious faiths. It deepened my theology; it opened my eyes to the possibility of a larger, less limited theological perspective.”

“I felt seen and heard for who I was and encouraged in my becoming. I felt encouraged to see and hear others for who they are and who they are becoming. [The School] inspired paying attention, noticing and mentioning, speaking to what you see. It taught that each moment, each interaction could increase the odds on love.”

Starr King “showed me a way to manage a small institution (non-profit or church) that was simple, responsive, gracious and low key based on how the school was structured and operated. I learned how to understand, appreciate, participate in, contribute to and critique Unitarian Universalism as a faith tradition and a denomination. I gained confidence in my ability to express myself theologically in ways that could reach and touch others. My experience at Starr King validated, strengthened and transformed my capacity to bear witness and act in solidarity with people of color and queer people in their social justice struggles. Being part of the whole GTU was life-changing and increased my desire and ability to do

interfaith work ever since, as well as look for wisdom and resources in many other traditions.

“My SKSM years gave me a bone-deep comfort with open-ended inquiry that has served me well in the parish. Parishioners have told me that they appreciate my lack of defensiveness on any subject and that they in turn feel more confidence in their own authenticity because of this. I’m grateful to SKSM for the grounding experience that I gained there.”

The intentional focus on the quality of the implicit curriculum makes Starr King an exciting place to study. Colleagues in the Graduate Theological Union and in the broader theological education community often look to Starr King as an innovator to be emulated. Because this commitment is situated within academic, religious and social contexts of privilege, there is constant tension between providing opportunities for students and teachers to explore innovative theological discourses, and having the efficacy and validity of the School’s educational model and the faculty’s scholarship called into question. Denominational leaders and graduates sometimes react to emerging issues in the implicit curriculum as if it meant the School had no explicit curriculum. The administration sometimes finds that it must reassure its constituencies, “Yes, we *do* teach preaching, and ethics, and church administration.” “Yes, we *do* teach Unitarian Universalist history and polity.” Starr King strives for integrity between its explicit and its implicit curriculum. This self- study recommends that the School continue to hold itself to this standard. The next chapter spells out Starr King’s explicit curriculum in more detail – as it is shaped by the eight Threshold requirements in the M.Div. and M.A.S.C. programs. ozdfjip

Chapter 4: The Theological Curriculum: **Eight Threshold Areas**

*We are here . . .
At the threshold of a house of study,
Where minds and heart are on fire . . .
The threshold of a house of preparation
for the thresholds we will lead others to cross . . .*
- Words of welcome to the Starr King entering class

Starr King's explicit curriculum prepares each M.Div. and M.A.S.C. student holistically for ministry and religious leadership in society through eight "threshold areas":

- 1) Life in Religious Community and Interfaith Engagement
- 2) Prophetic Witness and Work
- 3) Sacred Text and Interpretation
- 4) History of Dissenting Traditions and the Thea/ological Quest
- 5) Spiritual Practice and the Care of the Soul
- 6) Thea/ology in Culture and Context
- 7) Educating for Wholeness and Liberation
- 8) Embodied Wisdom and Beauty

The threshold areas replaced a structure of "thirteen questions" which had previously guided students in the design of their programs. The change was brought about by a desire among the faculty to assure specific learning outcomes, an expressed desire from students for more structure and guidance, and a concern that the educational requirements for Unitarian Universalist fellowshipped ministry placed a second and sometimes competing set of requirements onto students. In developing the threshold expectations, the faculty conferred with Unitarian Universalist denominational leaders in charge of ministerial education and credentialing to assure that all of the denomination's requirements and expectations were included within Starr King's thresholds. The goal was to free students preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry from having to negotiate two separate sets of expectations from the School and the denomination.

Students in the M.Div. and M.A.S.C. degrees must achieve competency in each of these threshold areas. (M.A. degree requirements are set independently by the GTU, and will be discussed separately.) The threshold areas represent more than sets of knowledge to be learned. They integrate the arts of ministry (preaching, teaching, counseling, leading worship and ritual, administering) with the disciplines of theological and religious studies (theology, ethics, Biblical studies, world religions, church history, religious education, cultural studies, psychology, sociology of religion, congregational studies). This integrative approach includes attention to the development of personal qualities and habits for a successful ministry, such as mature judgment, self-awareness, spiritual practice, integrity, responsibility, sensitivity and ethical discernment. For this reason, students achieve competency in the thresholds through a combination of coursework,

fieldwork, independent study, experiential learning and special projects – all under the close, individualized guidance of the core faculty.

Threshold 1: Life in Religious Community and Interfaith Engagement.

The threshold “Life in Religious Community and Interfaith Engagement” introduces students to the role of leading a religious community as a minister, pastor, rabbi or imam. Students’ learning in this threshold is supported by courses and learning opportunities in the fields of functional and pastoral theology, such as “Congregational Dynamics,” “Parish Problems and Joys,” “Church Life and Administration,” as well as courses on polity, ministerial formation, multi-religious understanding, and the scholarly field of history of religions. For many, their time in residence provides a training ground for living out the lessons of these courses. Students also engage this threshold through work with the ecumenical and interfaith Graduate Theological Union and through internships in congregations and community placements.

Graduates of the last ten years were asked to rate their experience at Starr King on a scale of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree):

Learning Outcome	Graduate Rating
Starr King enhanced my capacity to call forth the full, authentic presence of people.	4.48
Starr King enhanced my capacities for effective interfaith and ecumenical engagement.	4.28
Starr King enhanced my ability to understand group dynamics and engage in the democratic process of shared leadership.	4.18
Starr King enhanced my ability to help create community-building solutions to the global problems of inequality, conflict and injustice.	4.01
Starr King enhanced my overall professional, managerial, financial and administrative abilities.	3.34

This threshold contains one of the highest ranking responses, with 92.3% of graduates agreeing or strongly agreeing that the School “enhanced my capacity to call forth the full, authentic presence of people.” Graduates consistently express a need for more financial, managerial and administrative skills to be taught during seminary. However, students generally report that they wouldn’t choose a course dedicated to this area. It is recommended that faculty incorporate these skills into existing courses where possible, and that intern supervisors make them part of the internship experience.

Threshold 2: Prophetic Witness and Work

The threshold “Prophetic Witness and Work” introduces students to the religious leadership role of the prophet. To achieve competency in this area, students are directed to courses and learning opportunities in the fields of ethics and social theory, as well as religion in society. Over the past decade, Starr King has had a wide variety of courses

that support this threshold, including “Moral Commonwealth,” “Spirituality and Nonviolence,” “Allergy to the Other” and “Sources for a Liberating Ethical Imagination.”

Learning Outcome	Graduate Rating
Starr King enhanced my understanding of the theological and ethical issues inherent in life and work.	4.54
Starr King enhanced my ability to conduct critical social, cultural and ethical analysis.	4.41
Starr King enhanced my ability to speak and write publicly on critical ethical issues of our time in the public square in a contextually sensitive manner.	4.29
Starr King enhanced my practical understanding of the dynamic role of reflection and action within movements for social change.	4.21
Starr King gave me ethical tools to challenge oppressive systems that have enhanced my participation with and advocacy for oppressed communities.	4.06
Starr King gave me the ethical tools to imagine, create and sustain alternative, liberating ways of being and fresh approaches to social and moral problems.	4.04

Starr King is doing well in this threshold, as indicated by 96.1% of graduates agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement “Starr King enhanced my understanding of the theological and ethical issues inherent in life and work.” Additionally, at least 70% of graduates agreed or strongly agreed that the School had enabled them to achieve these learning outcomes. It is recommended that the School continue with its current programs.

Threshold 3: Sacred Text and Interpretation

The threshold “Sacred Text and Interpretation” introduces students to the religious leadership role of the preacher and teacher. Students are directed to courses and learning opportunities in the fields of Biblical studies, Biblical languages, and homiletics. Additionally, because Starr King School is a multi-religious place, students are introduced to sacred texts from a diversity of religious traditions. In approaching sacred text and interpretation, the School includes modes of interpretation through the arts—film, visual art, poetry, dance, and photography—and encourages the use of the arts in preaching, worship and teaching.

The School regards the Graduate Theological Union as a primary context for its educational program, and expects its students to accomplish a significant part of their study at other GTU schools, as well as the University of California, Berkeley. This has been especially true in the field of exegesis. In the 2008-2009 school year, the Graduate Theological Union offered eighty courses in Biblical studies, as well as additional courses in the Qur’an, the Talmudim, and Midrash. Additionally, the University of California provides language courses in Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, Yiddish, Sanskrit, Farsi, and many other languages. Homiletics courses have been taught by Starr King core and adjunct faculty members.

Learning Outcome	Graduate Rating
Starr King enhanced my use of fiction, film, poetry and literature.	4.04
Starr King enhanced my ability to responsibly apply sacred texts to contemporary experience.	4.01
Starr King enhanced my ability to interpret sacred texts from many religious traditions in their historical and cultural context.	3.93
Starr King enhanced my understanding of the history and theology of preaching.	3.68
Starr King helped me target my preaching and public speaking to the specific communities that I serve.	3.58
Starr King enhanced my understanding of various sermonic forms.	3.41
Starr King enhanced my effectiveness in speaking to the news media.	3.31

The data from this threshold are difficult to analyze. Nearly thirty percent of graduates disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “Starr King enhanced my effectiveness in speaking to the news media.” In response, courses on the media have been added to the curriculum. The School has had several different preaching instructors teaching introductory preaching courses, but has only offered a few advanced courses in this area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Unitarian Universalist students’ allergic reactions to their own Christian roots make them particularly resistant to their advisors’ recommendations to explore the many excellent preaching courses available at other Graduate Theological Union schools. The result is that the preaching courses that Starr King does offer are often over-enrolled, allowing less time for practice.

Threshold 4: History of Dissenting Traditions and the Thea/ological Quest

The threshold, “History of Dissenting Traditions and the Thea/ological Quest,” introduces students to the religious leadership role of the scholar. Students are directed toward courses and learning opportunities in history. Courses in Unitarian Universalist history are offered annually and the School has had particular success teaching history courses online. One challenge identified was that students often lacked sufficient grounding in the general history of Western thought to engage as deeply as the School would like with the particular histories of Unitarian and Universalism, or to understand the dominant histories against which dissenting traditions have railed.

Learning Outcome	Graduate Rating
Starr King enhanced my knowledge of the historical development and principles of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism.	4.52
Starr King enhanced my ability to see my religious tradition within the historical context of religious tolerance, interfaith dialogue and multi-religious engagement.	4.44
Starr King enhanced my ability to act as both critic and reformer within my religious tradition.	4.18

Starr King enhanced my knowledge of dissenting traditions and gave me tools to uncover silenced and hidden histories.	4.15
Starr King enhanced my knowledge of the faith foundations of historical movements for social justice and social change.	3.99
Starr King enhanced my ability to apply history to daily concerns in the congregation or community.	3.93

At least 70% of graduates agreed or strongly agreed with each of these learning outcomes. For each of these outcomes, graduates of the last ten years ranked the School higher than graduates from the previous ten years did. Additionally, 94.5% of graduates agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “Starr King enhanced my knowledge of the historical development and principles of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism,” making it one of the highest responses. The School’s work in this threshold area is showing strong outcomes.

Threshold 5: Spiritual Practice and the Care of the Soul

The threshold “Spiritual Practice and Care of the Soul” introduces students to the religious leadership role of the pastoral care giver, counselor, and spiritual director. Students are directed to courses and learning opportunities in the fields of religion and psychology, and spirituality. The School’s offerings in this area have included courses on pastoral counseling, professional ethics, pastoral care, spiritual direction and chaplaincy taught by core and adjunct faculty members. These courses have often drawn a high number of students from throughout the GTU. Additionally, the strong emphasis that the school places on Clinical Pastoral Education for M.Div. students provides opportunities for this work.

Graduate level understandings of several different perspectives and theories of faith development are crucial in the development of effective progressive and liberal professional religious leaders. Students who do not have any background in emotional, cognitive and ethical development are encouraged and required to gain insights into human development. At Starr King, the “being” of human being is continually growing or struggling to grow.

Learning Outcome	Graduate Rating
Starr King enhanced my growth as an ethically sensitive and discerning person.	4.57
Starr King enhanced my spiritual practice and faith development.	4.41
Starr King enhanced my knowledge of and capacity for pastoral counseling across the life span.	4.41
Starr King enhanced my awareness of the diversity of spiritual practices.	4.38
Starr King enhanced my ability to encourage and guide individuals on their own spiritual paths.	4.34
Starr King enhanced my ability to encourage spiritual growth in congregations.	4.31

Starr King’s student-centered approach to education has helped it to succeed in this area. At least 80% of graduates agree or strongly agree with each of the survey questions. This threshold also included one of the highest scoring learning outcomes, “Starr King enhanced my growth as an ethically sensitive and discerning person,” with 95.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Threshold 6: Thea/ology in Culture and Context

The threshold “Thea/ology in Culture and Context” introduces students to the religious leadership role of the thea/ologist. Students are directed to courses and learning opportunities in the fields of systematic and philosophical theology, as well as cultural and historical studies of religions. Common courses include Unitarian Universalist theology; theological ethics and feminist theology.

Learning Outcome	Graduate Rating
Starr King enhanced my ability to articulate my own theology.	4.38
Starr King taught me to be theologically creative.	4.38
Starr King prepared me to value differing and conflicting theological ideas from a global and inter-religious perspective.	4.31
Starr King enhanced my understanding of the possibilities and limitations of Unitarian Universalist perspectives, values and practices.	4.21
Starr King prepared me to assist others in articulating their own theologies.	4.16
Starr King enhanced my ability to integrate theology with the practice of ministry.	4.07

80% of graduates agreed or strongly agreed with the efficacy of each of these learning outcomes. It is recommended that the School continue its current practice.

Threshold 7: Educating for Wholeness and Liberation

The threshold “Educating for Wholeness and Liberation” introduces students to the religious leadership role of the teacher and director of education. Students are directed to courses and learning opportunities in the fields of theology and education. Currently, the School is raising money to hire a full time faculty member in this area (the Til Evans Professor of Religion and Education). While funds are being raised, the courses in this threshold have been taught largely by adjunct faculty. Additionally, in the past four years, the first half of the required “ECO/Threshold Seminar” has focused upon this threshold area, as a way of introducing students to the pedagogies of the School.

Learning Outcome	Graduate Rating
Starr King enhanced my ability to educate for wholeness and liberation.	4.1
Starr King enhanced my ability to facilitate learning in small and	3.9

large groups.	
Starr King enhanced my ability to teach to groups alert to cultural contexts, learning styles, and age differences.	3.89
Starr King exposed me to interdisciplinary theories and methods of teaching.	3.8
Starr King enhanced my ability to develop new educational tools including the use of new technologies.	2.89

Graduates gave statistically lower scores to the learning outcomes associated with this threshold. One outcome in particular is important. Over 30% of graduates disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: “Starr King enhanced my ability to develop new educational tools including the use of new technologies.” This was the lowest scoring result of the survey. The School has been working to improve these learning outcomes. Additional courses in religious education have been added, and the faculty instituted a course entitled “Graduate Level Pedagogies” which is required for all students wishing to be Starr King Teaching Fellows. Furthermore, the School’s strategic plan incorporates online learning and multiple modes of learning into its programs and course requirements, so that students acquire the skills to learn and teach in these new media.

Threshold 8: Embodied Wisdom and Beauty

The threshold “Embodied Wisdom and Beauty” introduces students to the religious leadership role of the artist, as well as that of the worship leader, liturgist, and designer of ritual. Students are directed to courses and learning opportunities in the fields of liturgical studies, art and religion, and spirituality. Course work includes classes on worship arts, “Liberation Art,” “Performance,” and music courses. Additionally, student-led chapels provide an opportunity for these skills to be practiced.

Learning Outcome	Graduate Rating
Starr King enhanced my ability to conduct rites of passage and create liturgy and ritual.	4.26
Starr King enhanced my understanding of embodiment, sexuality, and relationality.	4.1
Starr King enhanced my understanding of how art impacts history, culture, spirituality and ritual.	3.94
Starr King enhanced my use of the visual arts, music and dance.	3.85
Starr King enhanced my understanding of the role of ritual action in social movements for change.	3.77
Starr King enhanced my ability to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.	3.51
Starr King enhanced my understanding of the history and evolution of liturgical rituals.	3.42

It is clear that the practice of creating ritual is a strong factor in students’ education. 94% of students report attending chapel services, with 57.6% attending regularly for three or more years and 39.4% also attending chapels at other Graduate Theological Union

schools. 83.3 % of students led a chapel service and 9.1% led more than five. More could be done to help students understand the history and evolution of liturgical rituals.

59.1% of graduates report attending art exhibits, galleries, plays, dances or other theater performances while at Starr King, and 30.3% report participating in the same. The School continues to encourage students to explore the visual, musical and performance arts more fully during their seminary years, but for many the push to complete denominational requirements deters them from taking more courses in these areas.

Educating for the Particularities of Unitarian Universalist Ministry

The School promotes community and covenantal values and counters hyper-individualism through educational practices introduced in the Educating to Counter Oppressions/Threshold Seminar (the ECO Seminar) required of all entering M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students. The class members create a shared covenant to which they hold each other accountable; they engage in a spiritual discipline of praying for one another every day; they write a paper on the communities for whom their learning matters. These practices teach students that they are accountable to one another and to their communities for their learning—not just to themselves and not just to the instructor.

Through courses on stewardship, the School invites students to examine their values and practices with respect to money, and encourages them to practice in their own lives the spiritual disciplines of generosity that are fundamental to institution building. Courses in systems theory help build students' analytical and practical skills for success in leading a healthy institutional life. Implicitly, the School counters anti-institutionalism through its own pursuit of being a just and sustainable institution that is transparent and participatory in its decision-making processes, that establishes and respects good boundaries, that cultivates responsible uses of authority and power—all in the recognition that religious values require responsible institutional embodiment.

The School counters the enmeshment of Unitarian Universalism with economic privilege and white privilege by fostering methods of theological reflection that bring other voices and realities to the center. For example, the work of the Poverty Truth Commission provided testimony to the Starr King and GTU theological community from those who are experiencing homelessness and/or poverty. Scholars, community leaders, and seminarians are working together to think theologically and take action in relationship to this testimony and in community with those who have given their testimony.

The School promotes the articulation and creative transformation of Unitarian Universalist theologies by providing a foundational course in the history of Unitarian Universalist theological perspectives on the classic topics of systematic theology—a grounding usually absent in the lives of students before they come to seminary. A course in Unitarian Universalist identities specifically explores the history of “identity crises” that have affected how Unitarian Universalists present and perform their sense of identity, and how the role of minister relates to these historic struggles.

It is recommended that the School consider giving further attention to:

- Scholarly study of the theories, practices, and history of multi-religious engagement in Unitarian and Universalist contexts and by Unitarian Universalist writers and translators.
- How, when, where and why each of the six Unitarian Universalist sources listed in the principles and purposes came into the movement; what the concerns and fears expressed by whomever were considered the “mainstream” Unitarian or Universalist folks and ministers as each source entered the stream of our living tradition,
- How these sources can and need to respectfully interface with the multi-religious reality of the post-modern world.

Assessing Student Learning

Student learning is assessed at Starr King through a comprehensive set of educational planning and evaluation practices that are thorough, varied and continuous over the student’s course of studies, and include the student’s role in self-assessment. The Thresholds establish the framework of expectation—the desired outcome—for learning plans tailored to each student and evaluated in close consultation between students and the faculty.

At the beginning of their course of study, M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students prepare a self-assessment of their learning needs in each threshold area and begin to identify learning goals in each threshold. This self-assessment is prepared over the course of their first semester in Berkeley, in conjunction with the required “ECO/Threshold Seminar.” During the seminar, members of the faculty make presentations on what each threshold area requires in terms of knowledge, skills and capacities for ministry and religious leadership. Students share their self- assessments and goals with their academic advisors who work with the students to determine how each student can best achieve the learning outcomes expected for each threshold area.

Throughout each semester, students meet with their faculty advisors to reflect on their learning challenges, progress, and plans, in the overall context of the students’ gifts, background, experience, and calling. At the end of each semester, faculty advisors write a summary narrative evaluation of each advisee’s learning that semester – reflecting on the student’s integration of their learning. Some advisors follow the additional practice of asking their advisees to write a self-assessment of their key learnings and progress that semester.

The assessment of students’ learning in their course work is done by the course instructors, in light of the learning outcomes for the specific course and the instructor’s evaluation of the students’ work, including written assignments, class participation, projects, performance on exams, etc. Instructors prepare written evaluations, focused on the personal growth and learning of the student, instead of ranking them against their peers through grades. (Note: In special circumstances, M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students may request letter grades, but the School’s practice of written evaluations is an alternative

to grading, and most students take courses on a Pass/Fail basis. Common (GTU) M.A. students receive both letter grades—which is the common GTU protocol—and written evaluations—which is Starr King’s practice.)

Mid-way through their program of study, students’ progress through the thresholds is assessed through portfolio conferences. Each M.Div. and M.A.S.C. student, in consultation with their advisor, assembles a portfolio of work, including their transcript, written evaluations, sample papers, projects, sermons, and assessments (if they choose) from the Center for Ministry, their CPE experiences, and field work in congregations and the community. The student invites their advisor and one other faculty member, a student peer and a community representative from the student’s chosen field to serve on their portfolio committee. During the conference, the student is given feedback on their progress, including career suggestions, and insights into the physical, mental, and emotional challenges that the student will face in ministry and religious leadership. The review provides an opportunity for affirmation, challenge, and inquiry that can inform the direction of the student’s remaining work.

As the program draws towards completion, the student’s advisor helps determine if all the degree requirements have been met. In conversation with their advisors, M.A.S.C. and M.Div. students must complete a final written self-assessment addressing how their learning and growth in each of the threshold areas has been achieved in their time at seminary. This assessment is submitted as a petition to all core faculty members who read each student’s final self-assessment and vote on the awarding of the degree. Recommendations for graduation are then forwarded to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

Assessment of Learning Assessment Methods

The faculty and the Curriculum Committee regularly reflect on the School’s methods for assessing student learning and revise and refine them, often in dialogue with students and with the Dean of Students. This section summarizes the faculty’s inauguration and evaluation of each practice described above.

Written evaluations rather than letter grades have been the practice of the School since the late 1940’s, and continue to be regarded as of foundational importance to the School’s educational values. In the fall of 2008, the faculty introduced a simplified grid of questions to be used by core faculty in preparing these evaluations. Student reaction to this innovation was mixed, and the faculty agreed to revisit the form for written evaluations in the coming year.

The student’s initial self-assessment of their needs and goals in light of the thresholds is a practice that began with the inauguration of the required “ECO/Threshold Seminar” in 2005. Annual evaluations of the seminar by students, ECO T.A.’s, and the faculty have led to changes in the approach in order to intensify the integration of the seminar with the advising process.

The practice of advisors writing end-of-semester narrative evaluations was inaugurated in the fall of 2008, along with a renewed commitment to the advising/mentoring relationship as a core practice of the school and a central focus of the core faculty's work. At the end of the 2008-2009 academic year, the faculty assessed its first year of experience with this practice. When the Dean of the Faculty and the President met with each faculty member individually for their year end evaluation, the advising relationship and responsibilities was the focus of the evaluation. The whole core faculty then met in retreat, with the leadership of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and spent an entire day reflecting on what had been learned through this assessment method. Overall, the faculty has evaluated this innovation as extremely positive and meaningful. Several identified a need to spend more time as a collective body reflecting on the learning challenges and progress of each student. Giving more time to shared faculty reflection on each student's learning is a faculty goal for the 2009-2010 academic year.

The portfolio conferences were established in the fall of 2000 as a means of evaluating students' work at the mid-way point. The move to portfolio conferences has been an evolution in the School's history; in 1997 "engaged learning groups" replaced the longtime practice of "*donrags*," during which the entire core faculty met with each student for 70 minutes once a semester. Both engaged learning groups and portfolio conferences arose from student initiatives requesting more feedback from faculty. The response to portfolio conferences remains mixed. For many students, it is a time of deep reflection on their career goals and an opportunity for affirmation and challenge. The mix of faculty, peer and community feedback results in holistic evaluations of students' strengths and weaknesses. At other times, students experience the conferences as "more hoops to jump through." In particular, this has been the experience for those students whose advisors have changed several times during the course of their program.

The practice of asking students to prepare a final self assessment of their achievement of the threshold expectations began with the establishment of the Thresholds. In the spring of 2008, the faculty reviewed this process and found that student petitions had developed into a quantitative listing of courses taken in each threshold, rather than a qualitative examination of the students' learning. At the recommendation of this self-study, the Dean of Students worked with the faculty to restore the qualitative focus of students' petitions to graduate.

Since 2000, all students have also had to complete a special project in order to graduate. M.A.S.C. students must complete a final M.A.S.C. project; M.Div. students must complete a representative work; and M.A. students must submit a thesis displaying their competence in independent investigation, scholarship, and creativity. These works are reviewed by the advisor (for M.Div. and M.A.S.C.), or a thesis committee (for M.A.). The form of the final work reflects the different purposes of the various programs. For example, an M.A. thesis must demonstrate that the student has conducted an in-depth investigation of a topic using primary sources which must be appropriately documented and annotated. The thesis must present a clear and cogent conclusion that brings new understanding to bear in the chosen field of scholarship and must demonstrate students' proficiency in at least one modern language. The M.A. thesis and oral defense has

worked well as a process for assuring student learning. Similarly, the M.A.S.C. project, which is presented to the Starr King community, has been a valuable tool for assessment and accountability. Both programs assign credit to students for completion of the thesis or project. The representative work for the M.Div. program has been less successful, owing in part to inadequate staffing to collect and archive them and the fact that most students submit a paper or sermon that they have used for another class. It is recommended that the M.Div program either discontinue this practice or emphasize it earlier and more clearly so that students will truly engage in the creation of something substantial.

In reviewing the school's methods for assessing student learning, the faculty has begun to wonder if, in fact, students *might* be spending too much time and energy meeting all the assessment requirements. The number of evaluative methods used may mean that things like portfolio conferences simply become hoops to jump through rather than moments for creative growth and critical feedback. Narrative course evaluations, individual advising, internship and CPE evaluations, final projects and petitions to graduate, as well as additional evaluations for students doing psychological testing at the Center for Ministry or being interviewed by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, means that students are evaluated regularly and thoroughly. It is recommended that the faculty consider working toward a model that would involve evaluations performed less often but with greater depth. It is also recommended that the faculty review, in consultation with Unitarian Universalist denominational leaders, the overlap and interaction between the School's evaluative processes and those required of students preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry. It is these students, in particular, who *may* be experiencing an overload of repetitious evaluations that consume more of their time and resources than is truly necessary for promoting professional development, ministerial excellence, and meaningful learning.

Overall Assessment of the Thresholds

The faculty established the threshold areas to guide students' individually designed courses of study within a structure of expectation and evaluation, and to assure that M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students achieved competency in the classical and post-classical fields of theological study. The 2002 strategic plan called for a complement of eight core faculty members, each of whom would work within one threshold area and teach a "foundational course" that would serve as an introduction to that area. That vision has not materialized, due to financial constraints and the growing interdisciplinary interests of the faculty, but the School's curriculum committee has assured that courses in each threshold area are offered each year by adjunct faculty. Advisors direct students to Graduate Theological Union courses to further boost their competencies in all areas. This has the benefit of encouraging students to acquire a broader education, but it places significant pressure on adjunct faculty to shape the breadth of the students' education. The strategic plan addresses this challenge by adding visiting professors in several key threshold areas.

The goal of freeing students from separate requirements for the school and the denomination has proven elusive. The denomination's educational requirements have changed since the thresholds were adopted at Starr King, and students preparing for

Unitarian Universalist ministry now must demonstrate competence to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee through a parallel process of documentation and evaluation. The School needs to engage anew with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association to discuss the complementary standards for the School and the denomination. From the School's perspective, the goal should be a partnership that effectively promotes ministerial excellence without unduly burden ministerial students with duplicate work.

Given the School's commitment to multi-religious theological education and diverse forms of religious leadership, the faculty has begun to reflect on the extent to which the thresholds promotes a vision of religious leadership that best fits within a Christian construction of parish ministry, which Unitarian Universalist has adopted. While the School's individually designed programs allow students and advisors great flexibility in demonstrating competency, the formal structures conflate categories such as hermeneutics and homiletics in ways which might not accommodate someone wishing to become a rabbi. Additionally, the use of names such as preacher and pastor may not support someone engaged in social activism. Students in the M.A.S.C. degree met with the director of the program to reflect upon ways that pastoral skills might be redefined for non-profit management, or how preaching skills might translate into public speaking or media communications. Faculty meeting discussions, as well as courses such as "Shaykh, Scholar and Imam," have been dedicated to building bridges across these functional divisions to reflect different theological and organizational structures.

To further improve the thresholds and the School's competency model, it is recommended that: 1) the faculty revisit the thresholds, assigning more specific learning outcomes for students to achieve; 2) the faculty review the first threshold "life in religious community and interfaith engagement" and consider dividing it into two separate thresholds; 3) the faculty continue to reflect on the Christian basis of the threshold areas and ask whether changes should be made to more effectively advance multi-religious education and diverse forms of religious leadership; 4) advisors continue to work with individual students to determine how each threshold best guides their career goals, perhaps even creating a 'course of study' blueprint; and 5) students seeking fellowshiping with the Unitarian Universalist Association, or ordination or credentialing with another body, begin working with their advisors early to understand those places where specific or additional work may be needed.

Chapter 5: Multiple Degree Programs: **One Spirit, Many Callings**

*Your gifts, whatever you discover them to be,
Can be used to bless or curse the world,
You must answer this question,
What will you do with your gifts?
Choose to bless the world.*

-- Starr King Catalog

Starr King School offers three degree programs. All are at the Master's level and each supports a particular calling:

- The Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change (M.A.S.C.) is a two-year program of study that prepares people for religious leadership in society through institutions and vocations that serve the common good and work for justice, equity and compassion (e.g., non-profit leadership, community organizing, lay leadership in congregations).
- The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) is a three- to four-year program that prepares people for ordained religious leadership within congregations and the wider community, especially Unitarian Universalist ministry.
- The Master of Arts (M.A.) is a two-year program offered by the Graduate Theological Union, in collaboration with Star King, that advances people's engagement in the scholarly study of religion and prepares them for Ph.D. studies, teaching, or further work in religious studies or service.

Starr King also offers:

- An opportunity for individuals not in a degree program to enroll as special students in specific graduate-level courses.
- Continuing education opportunities for ministers
- Online courses offering graduate-level credit especially for students preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry outside the Graduate Theological Union.
- Through the school's membership in the Graduate Theological Union, the faculty works with students pursuing Ph.D. and Th.D. degrees.

Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change (M.A.S.C.)

In 2005, with the preliminary approval of the ATS, Starr King introduced a new degree program: the Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change (M.A.S.C.). The program emphasizes not only theological knowledge, but also practical experience in community organizing, media relations, non-profit management, political action and social service ministry. It typically requires a two-year course of study and is generally targeted at those pursuing non-ordained religious leadership. The Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change is a professional degree that is designed for those

who want to concentrate on promoting goals of justice, equity and compassion in society; those seeking grounding in ministerial and theological education; and those already involved in religious leadership for social change who want to improve their professional competence. Graduates of the M.A.S.C. degree program are prepared to assume professional roles in institutions and organizations that work for progressive social change. Depending on the area of specialization and the professional background of M.A.S.C. graduates, the employment area could include (but is not limited to) non-profit organizations, social service agencies, political action organizations, administrative and leadership positions in denominational bodies and religious associations, church (congregational) staffs, educational programs, health organizations, community centers, inter-religious organizations and research and/or advocacy institutes.

Acceptance into the M.A.S.C. program requires evidence of commitment to religious leadership for social change. The variety of resources available to MASC students in the Graduate Theological Union, UC Berkeley and the Bay Area, assures extensive freedom of inquiry for teaching and learning. Each student's program of study is individually-designed to integrate theological study, spiritual practice and professional development in a way that correlates to the particular interests, gifts, and growing edges of the student. At least 24 units must be taken in residence; 48 units are required for graduation. M.A.S.C. students must achieve competency in the School's eight threshold areas and are guided in their engagement with the thresholds to gain theological knowledge and practical experience in community organizing, media relations, non-profit management, political action and social service ministries. The M.A.S.C. degree also fosters personal growth, spiritual practice and deepened commitment to social justice. The student, in consultation with an advisor, identifies an area of specialization for religious leadership, which might include (but is not limited to): racial justice work, gender issues, restorative justice, environmental responsibility, queer activism and other areas.

M.A.S.C. students participate in a six-month community placement, designed to integrate the arts of religious leadership with practical skills required for social change work. These placements may be on a local, national or international level and include supervision from a mentor who is a seasoned progressive activist/leader.

Of the degree programs at Starr King, M.A.S.C. students enjoy the most flexibility in their course of study, as they do not have requirements from the Graduate Theological Union (like M.A.), or the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (which guides the fellowship process of M.Div. students seeking Unitarian Universalist fellowshipped ministry). M.A.S.C. students rely heavily on the expertise of the director of studies in public ministry, who has been effective in encouraging exploration outside the bounds of the School.

The M.A.S.C. Program was carefully developed with the School's commitments to countering oppressions, multi-faith engagement, and diversity in mind. Unfortunately, the program has had low enrollment because advertising and recruitment has been almost entirely focused within Unitarian Universalism, rather than recruiting among the communities of multi-religious social activists that the program was designed for. By the

2008-2009 academic year, the School had received twelve applications and has accepted ten students, nine of whom matriculated. Additionally, a handful of M.Div. and M.A. students have transferred into the M.A.S.C. program. Thus far, Starr King has relied almost solely on word-of-mouth for publicity of the M.A.S.C. degree. After receiving only one applicant for the 2007 fall semester for the M.A.S.C. program, staff and faculty have acknowledged that more active recruitment strategies are necessary and are now involved in a recruitment planning process as part of the School's strategic plan. The M.A.S.C. degree represents Starr King's ongoing commitment to broadening relationships and making theological education accessible to more people. Given the program's uniqueness, M.A.S.C. has great potential to appeal to students from a wide variety of religious, ethnic/racial, gender and other backgrounds within and beyond the U.S.

M.A.S.C. students have had stimulating peer interactions even with their small numbers. They interact across degree programs, and have special monthly reflection groups to help ensure an appropriate community of inquiry, convened by the Director of Studies in Public Ministry. Increased program enrollment would provide more thorough discourse on the meaning of leadership within social change organizations. It is recommended that additional social justice activists and leaders be called upon to serve as mentors, and that the School provide additional resources particularly suited for M.A.S.C. students, including online, residential, fieldwork and immersion offerings. As the distinctiveness of the program and the success of its graduates gains more visibility, the School should pursue additional fundraising, especially to provide scholarships to attract students from marginalized communities.

Master of Divinity (M.Div.)

The Master of Divinity is designed to prepare people for ministerial vocations in parish ministry; community ministry; religious education ministry; hospital, prison or hospice chaplaincy; or related forms of religious leadership with congregations and the wider community, especially Unitarian Universalist ministry. The degree's focus on preparing people for professional religious leadership distinguishes it from other Starr King programs. The M.Div. meets the basic educational requirement for fellowship as a Unitarian Universalist minister, as well as the basic educational requirements for ordination in a variety of other denominations.

Starr King's M.Div. enrollment has fluctuated from 71 in the fall of 1987 to a low of 58 M.Div. students in 2001 to a high of 77 in 2006. The M.Div. currently represents the core program at the School, and has successfully trained people for the ministry, particularly within Unitarian Universalism. The School's curriculum and advising methods were designed for the M.Div., including the student-centered pedagogy and the approach to educating to counter oppressions. M.Div. students benefit greatly from mentors with ministerial experience; currently, four core faculty members serve congregations concurrently with their faculty service, as do many adjunct faculty. Additionally, four other core faculty members have served as ministers of congregations

in the past. All maintain strong denominational ties in their religious communities. The School's lay faculty members are active in denominational work.

Admission to the M.Div. program requires evidence of commitment to and qualities for ministerial leadership. The degree's structures and processes are clearly spelled out in the student handbook and in the School's catalog. At least 30 units must be taken in residence (the equivalent of one year of full-time study); 90 units are required for graduation. Each student's program is individually designed, under the close guidance of the advisor. Students make use of multiple modes of learning to meet the requirement of achieving competence in the eight threshold areas. Learning goals are identified during the student's first semester and honed along the way, especially during Clinical Pastoral Education and ministerial internships. Evaluation takes place through self-assessment, conversations with and written evaluations by advisors, course-work evaluations by adjunct faculty, portfolio conferences, and field work evaluations by CPE supervisors, intern supervisors and intern committees. A final assessment by the faculty takes place when the student presents a request to graduate, which includes a qualitative self-assessment of the student's work in each threshold area and the submission of a representative work.

The School wishes to expand and diversify the M.Div. population. The historically white context of Unitarian Universalism has led to more success in ensuring diversity in gender, gender expression and sexual orientation than in racial and cultural diversity. It is recommended that the School intensify its promotion to Unitarian Universalist prospective students and congregations, publicizing more boldly and widely the track record of Starr King's success in preparing people for Unitarian Universalist ministry. At the same time, it is recommended that the School demonstrate greater openness to other religious traditions, redesign the program so that portions can be fulfilled in low-residence formats, and provide greater scholarship dollars to all students. The School's website should be updated to list the variety of professional roles M.Div. graduates can assume. Prospective students may know that they can use their M.Div. for Unitarian Universalist parish ministry, but publicizing the multiple uses of the degree will open the school to students interested in community ministry or interfaith chaplaincy.

Master of Arts (M.A.)

The Master of Arts Degree, offered by the Graduate Theological Union in conjunction with Starr King, engages students in the scholarly study of religion. Starr King joined the program in 2002, and has matriculated ten M.A. students since that time. The degree program provides an opportunity to explore theological and ethical issues inherent in life and work; an academic structure for personal, sustained inquiry into theological issues or concerns; and a high level of competence in a specific area of study, preparing students for further study at the doctoral level.

Each M.A. student must demonstrate proficiency in at least one foreign language, and must complete four of their courses at Starr King and four at other GTU schools. Their course requirements assure that they have taken classes in theology, ethics, history and

Biblical studies. Students choose an area of concentration as their focus of study and for their thesis. The thesis committee must include the student's primary advisor from Starr King and a faculty member from one of the other Graduate Theological Union schools. For graduation, 48 units of credit are required, and two years in residence. Students appreciate the academic rigor of the program, the breadth and depth of the courses, and the spirit of free inquiry exemplified by the Graduate Theological Union's unique multi-faith and multi-religious environment. For many of the years that this program has been offered, only two members of the core faculty have held Ph.D.'s which limited the fields of study that students could pursue. The strategic plan addresses this concern.

The M.A. program is fully approved through the Graduate Theological Union by the ATS and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Starr King's Dean of Faculty serves on the GTU Council of Deans, which shapes this program's degree requirements and annually reviews course offerings. As a joint program, certain tasks are administered by the GTU, as spelled out in the M.A. student handbook. The School relies heavily on the GTU to plan for and evaluate the M.A. program, and has done little to emphasize why students should affiliate themselves with Starr King. This has left some students feeling marginalized by the School. In order to draw more students to the program, the School must create a distinctive intellectual culture. Welcoming M.A. students into the broader life of the community is a way to invite them into their ministry as scholar-activists. Efforts have been made to involve M.A. students in the life of the student body, through participation in committees and other leadership opportunities, but more needs to be done to connect them to Starr King and GTU life. It is recommended that the School 1) ensure a proper mix of scholarly and multi-religious courses for M.A. students; 2) host inter-GTU school MA student get-togethers and enhance connections with UCB religious studies programs; 3) hire more core faculty with Ph.D.'s so that the program can grow; 4) encourage M.A. students to study with the School's visiting scholars, each of whom holds a Ph.D.; and 5) make the GTU M.A handbook more fully accessible to everyone in the institution, especially faculty and staff.

Graduate Theological Union Cross Registration

Starr King students enjoy free and open cross-registration at all of the ecumenical and interfaith Graduate Theological Union member institutions. The School regards the Graduate Theological Union's multi-religious scholarly community as a primary context for its educational program, expecting students to accomplish a significant part of their study at other GTU schools. Registration statistics show that students take 34% percent of their coursework at other GTU schools, with particular reliance on courses in the areas of Biblical studies, religion and the arts, cultural and historical studies of religions, history, functional theology and psychology. 82% of graduates report making maximum use of these course opportunities, and 42.4% list these courses as among the top five most formational educational practices of the School, a number that rates equally with the School's worship services as the highest response. Additionally, 35% of students registered in Starr King classes are from other GTU schools. They are particularly drawn to the School's work in religion and psychology, religion and society, cultural and historical studies of religion, Islamic studies and functional theology. The School has

begun exploring ways to work even more collaboratively with other Graduate Theological Union schools to find efficiencies in its curricular offerings, particularly for the Master of Divinity degree. Free cross-registration for one class each semester is also available at the University of California, Berkeley. Starr King students are encouraged to draw on university resources in designing their course of study. 11% of graduates report making maximum use of these courses. It is recommended that advisors encourage students to explore these resources more thoroughly and more often.

Certificate Programs

Starr King has also offered two certificate programs for lay leaders over this decade, both of which were discontinued due to lack of financial sustainability. In 2003, the School launched a year-long pilot program in lay leadership with the Mountain Learning Center for Leadership. This program was designed to help lay people have more meaningful and spiritually rich experiences and to provide leadership for building stronger, healthier congregations. In 2007, the School launched Seminary for the Laity (SFTL), a non-resident, online certificate program to help congregational and non-profit leaders develop skills to help organizations move toward fulfilling their mission. The program was particularly designed for lay religious leaders, religious educators, church administrators, music and volunteer services directors, and non-profit leaders. These leaders frequently operate in environments of constant change and limited resources while struggling to support their communities, further organizational goals and plan strategically for the future. By taking the realities of this environment into account, these classes provided students with the necessary tools for organizational sustainability through highly flexible half-semester and full-semester courses designed to fit the needs of participants.

When the School discontinued its most recent program for lay leadership education, it retained the director of that program as an online instructor. Her well-developed set of courses suitable for lay leadership education are now available as full-semester, graduate level courses online. Non-degree students may enroll. By opening its online courses to non-degree students who are lay leaders, religious educators, current ministers, and seminarians at other schools, the School enables valuable interchange with those engaged in contexts of ministry and theological education outside of Starr King.

Supporting All Programs

Diversifying the School's degree programs and educational offerings in order to increase enrollment has been a major goal at Starr King since the last self-study. The M.Div degree was the first degree to be offered at the School, and continues to have the largest enrollment. As a result, a vibrant and active community of discourse has developed on the meaning of ministry and religious leadership, especially Unitarian Universalist ministry. This is to be affirmed. However, it must be noted that additional degree programs—especially the M.A.S.C. program—have been developed with the M.Div. as a template. Students in other programs sometimes struggle with feeling that their path is not as valid those in the M.Div. program. It is recommended that the School support the other degree programs to develop their own distinctive cultures and communities of

discourse that can provide their unique contributions to the School, and to the other degrees, in mutually interactive ways.

Significant effort in the areas of communication, promotion and recruitment are necessary if the School is to achieve enrollment goals; these efforts need to be backed up by adequate staffing and resources. At the recommendation of this self-study, the Board has established recruitment and marketing as a strategic goal. The School has also learned that considerable time and attention must be given to re-working internal staffing structures, designating faculty responsibilities and educational support systems so that the diversity of students and programs is serviced effectively and efficiently. Going forward, it is recommended that the next strategic plan incorporate preparatory phases for planning, fundraising, and internal development with every new educational initiative or practice the School seeks to launch.

Chapter 6: Faculty

*To teach is to cooperate with revolutionary grace
in the healing, transformation and full unfolding of life.*

-Rebecca Parker,
Starr King ECO/Threshold Reader

Starr King's educational programs and values are supported by a distinguished faculty and a distinctive approach to faculty roles and responsibilities.

The core faculty, comprised of ten members, is the heart of the teaching body. The range of expertise in the core faculty reflects and supports the School's commitments to multi-religious, counter-oppressive, student-centered learning. Among the ten, two are specialists in Islamic studies and practicing Muslims; four are Unitarian Universalist ministers. The multi-religious character of the faculty is further enhanced by the presence of people with Hindu and Christian identities. Faculty members bring specializations in theological ethics, educational psychology, black church traditions, youth work, anti-racism/counter oppressive work, community ministry, feminist/process/liberal theology, historical/cultural studies of religion, pastoral care and counseling, preaching and worship, and religious education theory and practice. Half of the core faculty members are people of color and 60% are women. Core faculty members maintain ties to diverse religious communities and publics, nationally and internationally. To enhance the interaction between the core faculty and the lived work of ministry and religious leadership in a global context, the school welcomes and supports faculty members working in part-time and low-residency modes. Several serve congregations while also serving on Starr King's faculty. Four spend part of their time in locations at a distance: Turkey, Pakistan, India, New Zealand, Ohio, and Virginia. While in low-resident periods, faculty members participate fully in faculty roles and responsibilities through the use of new technologies.

The Starr King faculty is guided by policies and practices documented in a faculty handbook developed at the recommendation of the last accreditation visiting team. The handbook was developed by the core faculty in 2000, with the leadership of the Professor of Pastoral Theology. It was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2001, has been updated from time to time, and continues to provide basic guidance on all aspects of the faculty's life and work.

Core Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

The core faculty designs and administers the School's educational programs and practices, and carries responsibility for faculty governance. Its members participate in the areas and protocols of the Graduate Theological Union doctoral program and Common M.A. (In the Graduate Theological Union's nomenclature, "core faculty" would be called "regular faculty," and Starr King has been asked by the GTU Academic Dean to use this nomenclature in the context of the GTU's work.) Starr King's core faculty members conduct research, write and offer public service to the broader academy,

religious bodies, and local communities. Most importantly, the core faculty members serve as the School's body of mentor/advisors. They work intensively and individually with Starr King students in the design, assessment, and guidance of each M.Div, and M.A.S.C. student's program of studies and guidance of the M.A program of studies.

Advising/mentoring is the primary teaching responsibility of Starr King's core faculty. Starr King's New educational model—an evolution of Starr King's sixty years of progressive educational approach centered on individually designed courses of study—places the student/advisor relationship at the core of the School's educational practices. The advisor serves as witness, memory and guide, working closely with the student to shape a program of study that is both rigorous and unique. Advisors encourage stretching and risk taking in the learning process, insisting on direct engagement with the students' growing edges and development. Monthly faculty meetings provide a regular opportunity for advisors to discuss particular concerns and share collegial advice on the advising process. Faculty retreats provide training, evaluation and reflection on this mode of teaching.

In addition to academic advising for coursework and denominational requirements, advisors offer pastoral and vocational guidance, making referrals to outside resources as needed. They evaluate students' write-ups of special learning experiences and independent studies, and assign credit for these. They read evaluations of the student's work in Clinical Pastoral Education, internship and other fieldwork experiences. They reflect with the student on their learning and its implications for preparing them for their vocational calling. Through on-going conversation, the advisor and student explore the student's deepest questions, struggles and hopes. At the end of each semester, advisors write a narrative evaluation of each advisee's learning and growth that semester. By the time a student graduates, at least one core faculty member has an intimate knowledge of the person and has engaged in charting the most relevant course of study and helping discern the person's calling. Often, this close engagement has taken place with several core faculty members, and sometimes with all.

Goals for Faculty Development

The President of the School, in concert with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and in conversation with the Board, has identified a set of goals for the development of the core faculty. These goals support the vision and commitments of the "New Educational Model." The current make-up of the core faculty marks the beginning implementation of these goals:

- Maintain an advising load of 1:7 so that individualized advising/mentoring is renewed and strengthened
- Assure the presence of core-faculty with expertise in Unitarian Universalist ministry and scholarship, a vibrant racial and cultural mix, representation of diverse modes of religious leadership, and expertise that can resource the School's counter-oppressive, multi-religious commitments

- Achieve work loads that are reasonable and sustainable, and assure that governance is informed by a rich diversity of expertise and professional experience, as well as religious, cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Strive for continuity and flexibility so that the size of the core faculty responds to enrollment and tuition revenue as the school addresses the challenges of fiscal sustainability.
- Engage the life of the faculty in global realities and cultural diversities, making use of new educational and communication technologies, so that the core faculty itself manifests patterns of work that replicate what is expected of students: online, residential, and immersion studies.
- Provide ongoing faculty training in pedagogical approaches that support and enhance the school's three modes of learning: online, residential, and immersion learning

These goals reflect the outcome of the self-study process, which revealed, especially, a need to renew and strengthen advising at Starr King. While the graduate's survey, conducted in connection with this self-study, indicated that 66% of graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with the advising they received, significant concerns were identified. Among graduates who were neutral or dissatisfied, top reasons included the rotation of faculty appointments and high advising loads which affected the ability of advisors to effectively guide students. Following the June 2005 retrenchment, which reduced the size of the core faculty, advising loads reached over twenty students per advisor. Faculty members were stressed and dissatisfied with this heavy load, which inhibited their ability to advise as holistically as they wished and it pressured their time in ways that comprised other responsibilities, such as research and writing.

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the faculty considered dividing advising into various segments for academic, denominational, pastoral care and spiritual direction, but ultimately rejected this segmentation as antithetical to the School's philosophical and pedagogical priorities for integrative learning and the formation of whole religious leaders. Instead, it was recommended that advising and mentoring be restored to the status of being a primary focus of the core faculty.

The question was: how to do so (given the School's limited financial resources.) To answer this question, the School has consulted with Goddard College, a historically Universalist school, which shares with Starr King a history of progressive educational practices. The consultations were initiated by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and have included a presentation by Goddard's president and dean to Starr King's board of trustees, and a site visit to Goddard by Starr King's President and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Goddard's leadership introduced to Starr King their highly successful experience with part-time core faculty appointments focused on individualized advising and mentoring. Starr King's board and academic leaders have embraced this idea on a trial basis.

Beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year, Starr King's core faculty includes several part-time visiting professors. The part-time visiting professors were selected through a

nomination process and were vetted by the full faculty before being appointed. They have been appointed by the President, on year-long appointments which can be renewed annually. It should be noted that the nomenclature of “visiting professor” accords with the provisions of Starr King’s faculty policies and procedures established in the faculty handbook. In the Graduate Theological Union’s nomenclature these would be “visiting regular faculty,” and Starr King uses this nomenclature in the context of the GTU’s work which allows “visiting regular faculty” to serve as M.A. advisors.

During the 2010-2011 academic year, the School will evaluate its trial use of part-time core faculty, to assess its strengths and weaknesses, and to determine whether and how to continue, adjust, or replace this mode of working. It is recommended that questions of nomenclature, and processes for selection and appointment be addressed during the evaluation. It is further recommended that consultation with Goddard College continue, especially with respect to Goddard’s work with its unionized faculty, which has produced guidelines for fair job descriptions and compensation with a part-time faculty.

Core Faculty Evaluation

Core faculty members are evaluated annually by the President and Dean of the Faculty based on service or contribution to: 1) Starr King and the Graduate Theological Union, 2.) Unitarian Universalism and other faith communities, 3.) The broader world, 4.) Teaching and coursework, 5.) Published scholarship and creative work, 6.) Advancing the School’s counter-oppressive commitments. Faculty members prepare a report and self evaluation of their work in these six areas. The President and Dean read each faculty member’s report, review the student evaluations of their course offerings, and meet with the faculty member for an in-person evaluative conversation. Strengths and achievements are celebrated; areas for desired professional growth are noted; goals for the coming year with respect to all six areas are discussed. A written record of the evaluative conversation is then prepared by the Dean of the Faculty or the President and placed in the faculty member’s file. Given the renewed emphasis on mentoring and advising, it is recommended that this be added as a seventh area of evaluation and that students be afforded an opportunity to comment on the work of their advisors. It is further recommended that area six be expanded to include contributions to the School’s multi-religious approach to theological education, and in the case of part-time faculty that the areas of evaluation reflect their specific job responsibilities. Implementation of these recommendations began in the spring of 2009.

Core Faculty Roles in Theological Research

Core faculty members are supported in their research interests by a month off from teaching between semesters in January and a month during the summer. In recent years faculty members have also been encouraged to designate one day a week for research and writing away from the School. Some faculty members find they use this time primarily for course-preparation and other tasks but progress on research and writing can be made. As a group, core faculty members devote one morning a month to faculty study time

when School is in session. This is a time when faculty members share professional interests and research with one another for discussion and feedback.

The sabbatical policy for full-time professors allows for a full year's sabbatical leave at full pay after seven years of full time work or a six-month leave after 3.5 years of full time work. All leaves require Board approval, and the work load for faculty members on leave is distributed to the rest of the faculty while their colleague is away. It is recommended that the School consider appropriate sabbatical policies for part-time and visiting professors

Starr King faculty members participate actively in professional societies, presenting academic papers, leading panels, and engaging with colleagues in their fields. The School provides modest travel support for attendance at academic conferences and meetings. Given the complex role of faculty members at Starr King, their productivity and creativity in terms of theological research and writing is noteworthy. Recent examples of faculty research include Dr. Farajaje's presentation of a paper on *Islam and the Media* in Iran, Dr. Sanzgeri's presentation of a paper in South Africa, Dr. Lettini's leadership of the Poverty Truth Initiative and moderation of a panel at the American Academy of Religion meeting, Dr. Blake's public address on Marriage Equality and the Black Church, and Dr. Parker's release of a new book in 2008, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion*, co-authored with Dr. Brock and nominated for an AAR prize.

In affirming the importance of faculty research, the sustainability of faculty work loads has been a critical point of concern—noted in the report of the last accreditation visit. In addition to advising students, full time core faculty members serve on two or more faculty committees. They provide leadership in their religious communities and the broader academic community and carry major administrative responsibilities within the School. Core faculty members may also provide leadership to the Graduate Theological Union. Those with the Ph.D. may, after due process, be approved to serve on the Graduate Theological Union Core Doctoral Faculty, with obligations to guide doctoral students through comprehensive exams and the completion of a dissertation. Faculty members meet with colleagues from GTU member schools in their respective disciplines on a bi-monthly basis. Given these full and complex responsibilities, time for faculty research and writing requires protection, advocacy, and collegial support among the faculty.

The School's founding principles and educational values strongly support full freedom of inquiry, and the School strictly abides by these standards as affirmed in its faculty handbook. While the School and its faculty members have experienced pressure with respect to the School's commitments around racial, cultural and religious diversity, the School holds fast to the principle articulated in its ECO statement on "Sheltering Prophetic Witness." Starr King's faculty members teach, write, and publish in topics that have been sharply curtailed in some religious and academic settings. These include for example: the feminist critique of Christian doctrines of the cross; the address of homophobia in the black church; queer issues and gender issues in Islam.

The School also proactively promotes new modes of scholarship for its faculty and students that it feels are relevant and important. These include, for example: the use of videography as a mode of theological reflection; the creation of websites and blogs as modes of public intellectual discourse; formal consultation with “poverty scholars”—those who offer expert testimony from experiencing homelessness and poverty.

The Evolving Role of Core Faculty

When Dean and President Josiah Bartlett first introduced individually designed courses of study at Starr King sixty years ago (1949), he shaped the school around a re-conceived role for seminary faculty. Teachers were to be counselors and guides to students and to facilitate their learning. This definition of the core faculty’s central task has evolved and changed over the decades, and is currently in the process of being renewed at the school. It was initially introduced at a time when all faculty members were heterosexual, white men. Sixty years ago, Starr King’s progressive educators relinquished traditional aspects of male professorial power and privilege in order to act more as “allies” to students in their learning. However, as the faculty has transformed to be comprised almost entirely of historically marginalized people – women, queers, people of color, and religious minorities or “others”—the significance of the faculty’s role as guide and helper requires special attention to how issues of oppression can play out in the faculty/student relationship. Seen through the lens of socialized roles for women and people of color, faculty members can be easily regarded by students as caregivers and servants who are expected to be nurturing, compassionate, always available and responsive. Those who are queer and/or religiously “other” have sometimes been seen as “exotic” but not authoritative; this expectation has compromised the capacity of faculty to challenge and evaluate students, leading to instances in which faculty members were regarded by some students as abusive or oppressive when faculty did not simply offer comfort and support but expected students to engage with difficult material.

As the School embarks on a renewal and refocusing of advising and mentoring as the primary task of the core faculty, these lessons from the recent past need to be remembered and taken into account. The School must constantly work to fully authorize and communicate respect for its distinguished faculty, and counter the risk of faculty from historically under-represented identities being treated in diminishing ways, especially by students who carry unearned white privilege or class privilege that can lead them to relate to faculty as servants. This requires the faculty to continually advance its analysis of systemic injustice; its theological reflection; its assessment of Unitarian Universalist history, polity and theologies as that history relates to issues of white privilege and resistance to oppressions of many kinds; and its progressive, humanistic educational practices.

The Larger Teaching Body

Starr King uses the nomenclature “teaching body” as a counterpart to “student body” to speak of all those engaged in teaching in Starr King’s educational programs. Starr King’s

“teaching body” most broadly conceived includes the core faculty members, adjunct faculty members, fieldwork supervisors in congregations and community settings, visiting scholars and student teaching fellows. The School affirms that all members of Starr King’s teaching body participate in the work of assuring that the School fulfills its commitments to student-centered, counter-oppressive, multi-religious education.

Adjunct Faculty

The School’s large and diverse adjunct faculty includes accomplished scholars, Unitarian Universalist ministers, and graduates of the School. Adjunct faculty members have long played a crucial role in the academic life of Starr King adding variety and richness to core faculty and Graduate Theological Union course offerings. The diversity of the faculty generates a vigorous community of faith and learning. The School works diligently to assure that the faculty has the expertise to support all of its programs. While most teachers are capable of supporting the professional growth and spiritual development of M.Div. students, additional training may be needed—particularly for adjunct faculty—to assure equal sustenance for M.A.S.C. and M.A. students.

Adjunct faculty members teach residential courses, intensives and online courses. They are chosen by the curriculum committee, which engages in a detailed process of assessing credentials and assuring an understanding of the School’s pedagogical goals. Adjunct faculty members are hired on a limited basis, and for specific courses. Assessment of adjunct faculty teaching occurs through mid- and end-of-semester evaluations as well as adjunct faculty review conferences hosted by the curriculum committee. The School is working to ensure that a higher percentage of evaluations are returned from students, particularly for online classes.

Adjunct faculty members report that teaching at Starr King is a highly rewarding enterprise largely due to the excellence of the students and the freedom they are given to engage in innovative pedagogies. Adjunct faculty members have access to administrative structures through the directors of faculty services and online education. They are oriented to the values of the School through the language of their contracts, a detailed adjunct faculty handbook, dinners with the curriculum committee with discussions that introduce them to the School’s counter-oppressive and multi-religious commitments, and a daylong orientation concentrating on the Starr King’s educational philosophy and pedagogy. In the past, the constraints of cost, other jobs and distance resulted in many adjunct faculty personnel, especially online adjunct faculty members, missing this orientation. Conference call technology is helping to remedy this problem.

It is recommended that the School expand current efforts to connect the adjunct faculty and core faculty into a closer collegial relationship, including the practice of full-day faculty summits dedicated to reviewing course syllabi and promoting the School’s commitments to counter-oppressive and multi-religious work, and the creation of study groups with adjunct faculty to review and discuss pedagogical principles and practices, so that longer-term faculty members mentor newer faculty about how they might balance the demands of their jobs in order to prioritize their own writing and research. It is

recommended that the new All-School symposia be used as an opportunity for the whole teaching body to think and work collectively so that changes in pedagogy, practice or policy are communicated effectively and engage the best thinking of all members.

It is also recommended that the School find ways to recognize and stabilize on-going relationships with adjunct faculty members who are hired repeatedly and who teach subjects that are particularly important to the fulfillment of the School's mission. This may involve the crafting of a curriculum model that identifies core subjects taught by visiting professors and adjunct faculty, identifying some of the most effective multi-religious Unitarian Universalist ministers to join the adjunct faculty, and making greater use of partnerships with GTU schools and faculty.

Intern Supervisors

The majority of intern supervisors are Unitarian Universalist ministers who generously welcome students into their congregations as interns for a period of nine months. Others are seasoned community activists who supervise community placements and fieldwork. These are unpaid, volunteer roles. In Unitarian Universalism, ministers and congregations self-select as teaching sites. Students apply directly to the congregations and counsel is provided to students to help them determine which sites and/or ministerial supervisors would be a good fit for them. The Unitarian Universalist Association provides comprehensive oversight of internship sites, a teaching manual and guidelines for supervisors, and a clearing house for listing sites. Starr King faculty members maintain regular contact with intern supervisors. Intern supervisors are invited to the School each January, at Starr King's expense, for a two-day session with their interns. During that time they receive support and counsel on the work of supervising interns, including orientation to the School's counter oppressive pedagogy.

Intern supervisors interviewed in connection with this self-study expressed a desire for greater involvement with faculty members including more frequent communication and more written guidelines on their roles and responsibilities. The School's 1998 accreditation review included the collegial advice "to continue to develop strategies and practices for training and supporting supervisors and teaching ministers." The January internship conference is a good step forward. It is recommended that a formal process be developed for the selection, orientation, support, and evaluation of intern supervisors.

Visiting Scholars

Visiting scholars are elected by the core faculty for renewable one-year terms. They work independently and without remuneration on research that promotes the School's educational ideals. Formal support is limited to library privileges. The School and the visiting scholars benefit informally from collegial support and both enjoy the mutual prestige of working together. Annual selection allows evaluation as necessary.

Visiting scholars occasionally offer students opportunities to work with them on specific projects, or may volunteer to supervise special reading courses, offer guest lectures, and

participate in worship events. They also serve, from time to time, at the invitation of the School, on committees of the faculty.

Student Teachers

At Starr King, students teach courses which help to develop their teaching skills and facilitate the integration of their seminary learning with their previous professional experience. Each student-taught course is developed in partnership with a faculty member who guides both the pedagogical preparation and the underlying research for the course content. This ensures the accuracy of the course content and also serves to maximize the student teacher's learning regarding pedagogy. Periodically, the faculty and curriculum committee review standards for these course offerings to ensure that student teachers receive sufficient guidance in graduate level instruction procedures, understand their role as instructors, and are well versed in the process of course development, including preparation of syllabi, pacing, and evaluating students. When the core faculty reviewed procedures for student course offerings recently, a requirement was added; prior to submitting course proposals to the Curriculum Committee, all students wishing to teach courses at Starr King are required to successfully complete a course on graduate-level pedagogies. In addition, core faculty members have inaugurated a new policy whereby students teaching full semester courses will be awarded a Starr King Teaching Fellowship and receive stipends for teaching.

Ministers in Residence

Ministers in residence are chosen by faculty vote to visit the School for a full or half semester. They are Unitarian Universalist ministers--either on sabbatical or recently retired--and provide valuable services including teaching courses, leading chapels and advising students. They also bring core faculty into creative interaction with the lived realities of Unitarian Universalist ministry. The faculty has discussed expanding the "in-residence" program to include artists, activists, religious leaders from other faith traditions, and a poverty scholar. While this is a promising opportunity for enriching the resources of the School, it is recommended that sustained funding and clear processes of selection and administrative support are in place before this program is expanded.

Chapter 7: Students and Graduates

My SKSM education helped me form an understanding of UU religious life and leadership, grounded in spiritual practice and our theological heritage. It provided me with courses and experiences that shaped an ethic of religious leadership that is joyful, sustaining, and of service to the world. . . . I experienced a pedagogical approach that I strive to embody . . . I learned to have confidence in my intellectual abilities as well as my institutional and interpersonal instincts.

- Anonymous Response to Graduates' Survey, 2008

Recruitment

Over the past decade, Starr King has met its enrollment goals in most years despite allotting limited financial and human resources to recruitment. The size of the School's student body has grown slowly but steadily over the past two decades, at a time when similar institutions have seen decline. The headcount in the fall of 1989 was 51, in 1999 it was 69, and in the fall of 2008 it was 108 (78 degree students and an additional 30 special students enrolled in online courses.)

Prospective students often first learn about Starr King through graduates, Unitarian Universalist ministers, faculty, trustees and students. Word-of-mouth contact is typically followed by an initial website visit and then communication with student services. The Admissions Coordinator and Dean of Students maintain one-on-one contact with prospective students throughout the application process and coordinate in-person visits. Staff members also participate in meetings with recruitment and admissions officers of other GTU schools to share information and strategies. The administration has increased efforts to track how and what prospective students learn about the School. Most learn about the School because of its Unitarian Universalist identity, or by researching the GTU, Pacific School of Religion, or Union Theological Seminary. Many are drawn to the School's multi-religious focus, its unique pedagogy and commitment to student-centered learning; and to its commitment to social action and counter-oppressive education.

Printed materials are sent to all prospective students and are made available at selected events. The School's publications reflect the desire to recruit and retain students of color as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender students and other historically marginalized people by ensuring that visual and written content is welcoming of diverse applicants. The environmental impact of all publications is taken into consideration by producing more for online reading and through the use of recycled paper and non-toxic inks. The number of printed catalogs was recently reduced to pursue electronic marketing options. The effectiveness of that strategy is still being reviewed.

The School's website and printed materials are aesthetically pleasing. The most popular website features, according to traffic reports, include electronic journals, photo galleries, and podcasts. It is recommended that future website and catalog information be reorganized to highlight the School's unique multi-religious focus, counter-oppressive commitments, student-centered pedagogy, and role on the progressive edge of theological education and

Unitarian Universalism. It should include concise language explaining how each of these foci stems from the School's Unitarian Universalist heritage, and give concrete examples of the work in action. The website would benefit from expanded email announcement lists, specific advertising for the website, and an online evaluation form for visitors.

The School embraces both Unitarian Universalists and progressive people of many faiths, but its recruitment strategies have focused almost exclusively within Unitarian Universalist settings. The largest in-person recruitment effort is the annual General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Recruitment activities include staffing an information booth, sponsoring an annual President's lecture, hosting gatherings for prospective students, and participating in the School's graduate association meeting. Similarly, Starr King's online courses have been advertised primarily in Unitarian Universalist circles via denominational list serves, newsletters, and magazines such as *UU World*. As a result, online course participants are primarily Unitarian Universalist seminarians studying at non-Unitarian Universalist schools.

By focusing primarily within Unitarian Universalism, these recruitment strategies have shaped the student demographics in ways that focus on the M.Div. program. With the exception of the Graduate Theological Union's biannual 'prospective student days' geared toward M.A. candidates, recruitment for M.A. and M.A.S.C. programs largely falls to individual faculty and students. Although the M.A.S.C. degree was established in part to draw more diversity to the School, the recruitment strategies are only now beginning to fully pursue these new possibilities for accountability and solidarity with communities of color, local activist groups, and global justice movements. This progress has waited for the presence on the staff of a recruitment and marketing director—a welcome addition made in January 2009 with grant money to help establish this position.

The School's strategic plan makes recruitment a top priority: geared toward increasing the size of the student body and institutionalizing intentional efforts to build relationships with broader circles of religious and secular progressive communities, both within and beyond Unitarian Universalism. The plan will be advanced by the January 2009 addition of a recruitment and marketing director who will represent the School by attending denominational, interfaith, secular and professional meetings, maintain a regular presence at activist, professional, academic (both secular and religious) conferences, consider overnight recruitment events for prospective students, and revive "*Starr King on the Road*," in which faculty and students lead workshops and worship at local congregations, provide informational materials, speak with prospective students and receive the congregation's weekly offering. The strategic plan expands the school's strategies of "word-of-mouth" recruitment to new constituencies. The addition of a recruitment director allows for personal contact to be maintained while intentionally opening the door to new communities. The plan asks: "Where have we located ourselves when having these conversations and in which locations are we missing?" In particular, the recruitment director will attend events that provide contact with multi-religious communities of color, queer and environmental activists and scholars, Unitarian Universalist youth and young adults; and religious leaders seeking vocational paths other than ordained ministry.

In pursuing this outreach to new communities, the School's leadership is guided by four ethical questions: 1) In what ways is the School truly welcoming and ready for people of color, transgender people, and others with marginalized identities? In what ways is it not yet fully welcoming and ready? 2) How will the School shift its priorities, resources and educational practices to achieve this goal? 3) How will the School's marketing and recruitment methods reflect this growing diversity while guarding against tokenization? 4) What should the School look like at the end of this process?

Admissions

Starr King's application process is unique in that it has been designed to initiate a pedagogical relationship. Prospective M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students are asked to engage in significant personal reflection about themselves, their vocational calling, their background and experience; their involvement in service and leadership activities, their work to counter oppressions, and their financial planning. Additionally, they are asked to consider whether the School is a good setting for their formation and education as progressive religious leaders. This process involves active dialogue between the prospective student and the administration to discern whether the person and the School are a good match. This deep level of self-examination and reflection is highly valued in Starr King's process of theological education. M.Div. and M.A.S.C. applicants commonly submit two to four times the number of pages in their application to Starr King than what they submit to peer theological institutions and two to three times the number of letters of recommendation. This emphasis on the applicant's agency helps the School determine if the student is emotionally and intellectually equipped to handle the responsibility of constructing their individual program of study.

Prospective students in the M.A. degree undergo a similar process of engagement with both Starr King and the Graduate Theological Union. Prospective M.A. students first contact the GTU Dean of Admissions. The Starr King admissions staff then confers with the applicant about the fit between their interests and the expertise of the School's faculty, often setting up conversations with the faculty and the prospective student. M.A. applications require a B.A. from an accredited college or university, an academic statement of purpose, three academic letters of recommendation, transcripts and Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores from no longer than five years ago. Admission to the M.A. program is by joint approval of the GTU Admissions Committee and the Starr King M.A. Admissions Committee. Upon acceptance, the student will be oriented into the same pedagogical relationship as their M.Div. and M.A.S.C. peers.

The application process for M.A.S.C. and M.Div. students requires five letters of recommendation and an interview with a member of the Admissions and Scholarships Committee. Additionally, the M.A.S.C. application asks prospective students to complete twelve essay questions, and the M.Div. application asks for eleven essay questions. Three of the application questions are:

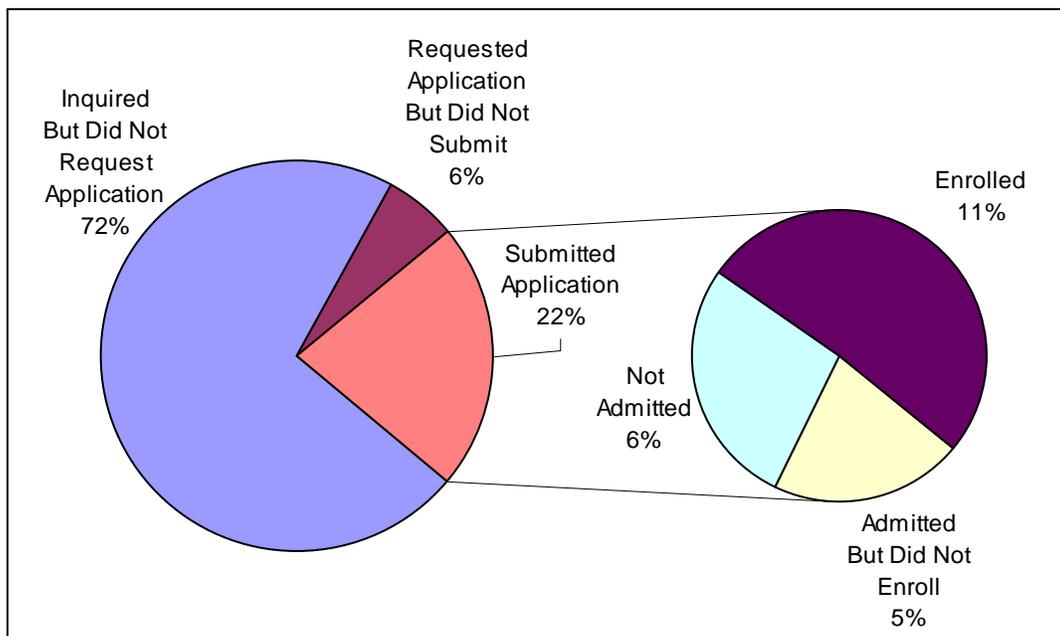
- Starr King's educational philosophy requires self-direction and emphasizes academic inquiry and experiential learning. How would you assess your capability for and interest in these educational values?

- Starr King embodies a curricular commitment to education to counter oppressions and create just and sustainable communities. How have these commitments shown up in your life? How will they manifest in your religious leadership?
- What is your concept of religious leadership? How do you understand this in terms of your call?

The Admissions and Scholarships Committee uses a consensus decision-making model and considers applications on a rolling basis, keeping in mind the amount of space in the entering class. Starr King does not discriminate based on gender, gender expression, race, color, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual/affectional orientation, age, class, physical character or disability. Each applicant is evaluated based on their personal, professional and academic merits using nine criteria: 1) Demonstrated capacity for graduate level work—college graduate in almost all cases; 2) Intellectual curiosity and willingness to learn, grown, and change; 3) Capacity for self direction; 4) Liberal religious values; 5) Passion and a sense of calling to use theological education to go beyond their own needs to help others and make the world better; 6) Openness to education to counter oppressions; 7) Emotional maturity and stability; 8) Engagement with faith community and with the larger community; 9) Diversity in all its forms.

Throughout the students’ first year, the faculty engages in reflective conversations regarding the caliber of the entering class. They may choose to directly address any concerns regarding an individual’s aptitude for academic, personal, and spiritual achievement at the School. Starr King generally attracts extremely high caliber students prepared for rigorous graduate studies. On average, 31% already have advanced degrees upon admittance and the vast majority excelled in their undergraduate work.

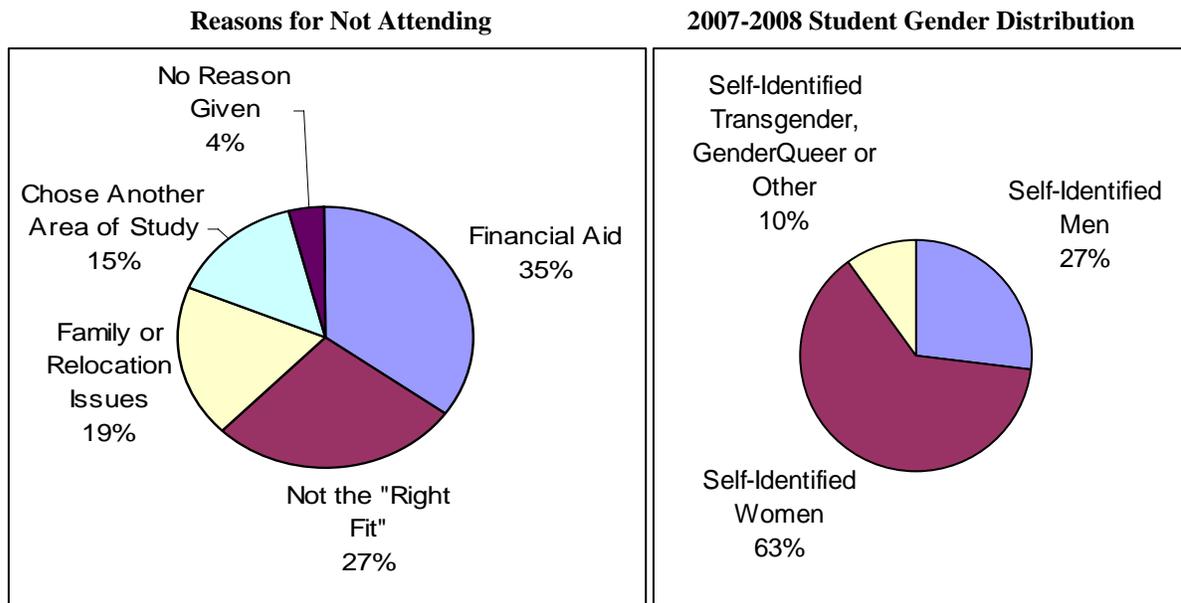
Admissions Statistics



On average, the School has had 164 inquiries per year (low of 89, high of 233). Due to the rigorous admissions process, only eleven percent of those actually matriculate into the

program. This self-study found that the largest number of prospective students dropped out of the process in the step between initial inquiry and the letter of introduction that is required to receive an application. It is recommended that the Admissions and Scholarship Committee review this requirement and consider making the application publicly accessible. While the letter allows for early screening, saving valuable time in the writing and reading of essays from unqualified applicants, it may also serve as a barrier for some prospective students, and particularly for those whose cultural or religious backgrounds may make them reticent about introducing themselves without knowing what the next step of the process entails.

Data collected from 2002 to 2007 confirms that financial aid was the top reason those who were admitted decided not to enroll. Other reasons included “wrong fit”, family or relocation issues, and choosing another field of study. The School’s strategic plan responds to this data by incorporating online learning in all degree programs, fundraising for student aid and increasing awareness of the multiple paths students can pursue.



The School’s understanding of gender diversity has grown over the past decade. Unfortunately, earlier data gathering tools were binary in their distinctions and did not provide for a third gender option. Over the past ten years the School has had a 2:1 ratio of women to men. The gender distribution in the School’s student body has varied from 21% to 32% self-identified men, with an average of 24%. The high number of women and increasing transgender diversity is reflective of broader demographic changes across the mainline and progressive denominations as well as indicative of the School’s intentional commitment to hire women faculty members and faculty who identify as queer or transgender-friendly.

On average, in the past eight years, 7% of the students identified themselves as people of color. This represents more than a 100% increase in enrollment of people of color over the previous decade, but is still disappointingly small. At present, 11% of the student

population is of a cultural or racial identity that includes African, Mexican, Central American, South American, Native American, Arab, South Asian, Southeastern Asian, or Pacific Islander heritage. This figure is on par with theological schools in our peer group, which average 12%. The faculty, staff, and student body are actively exploring ways to attract and provide a meaningful and safe environment for people of color.

The 2006 ECO assessment revealed a discrepancy between Starr King's current "needs-blind and color-blind" admissions model and the School's stated commitment to become a multi-racial, multi-cultural, counter-oppressive learning community. In response, the Admissions and Scholarships Committee has begun trainings to build the Committee's understanding of these commitments, build group identity, and more clearly define its mission. It would be of great benefit to continue to explore the ways in which the racial, ethnic and religious composition of the Committee itself affects its view of religious leadership. As recruitment efforts expand to include a wider universe of students, it is recommended that the Committee consider updating the applications for admission, including: 1) Requiring applicants to submit materials electronically; 2) Asking students about their desire and ability to study in a multi-religious context; 3) Allowing letters of recommendation from community activists in lieu of letters from religious leaders for those applying to the MASC program; 4) Noting that letters of reference may come from a minister, rabbi, imam, shaykh, etc., rather than solely a "minister"; 5) Asking prospective students about their technological skills and equipment needs for participation in online courses; and 6) Asking about library resources available to students studying outside of Berkeley.

Student Services

Students receive a great deal of support from the Student Services Department; students rave about the pastoral sustenance, ethical treatment and administrative assistance they receive. Information about student rights and responsibilities is contained in a detailed student handbook. All information regarding degree programs including tuition, courses and noncredit requirements are listed on the website. Grading and other academic policies are listed clearly in the student handbook, which is revised annually. Information regarding access to academic records and transcripts is clearly publicized on the website, in the student handbook, and during orientation. It is recommended that the handbook be reorganized to provide distinctive sections for 1) information that applies to everyone, 2) that which applies to a particular degree program, and 3) that which applies to a particular mode of learning (online, residential, fieldwork, immersion). An online version of the handbook and frequently used forms should be made available on the website.

Starr King supports both formal and informal systems for students to voice grievances. Student body officers report at monthly faculty meetings regarding general concerns. Formally, Starr King's grievance process is fully outlined in the student handbook. In the past ten years, the formal grievance process has been used three times. In all cases, the grievances were resolved through the efforts of the Dean of Faculty and outside facilitators were not called. It is recommended that this process be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to serve the School well.

Starr King keeps detailed records of the services utilized by students. Requests for grant money and e-mail requests for information and newsletters are all recorded. Starr King computer files are backed up automatically by Pacific School of Religion and stored at a remote location. Student files, transcripts and applications are kept in a fireproof safe that only faculty and student services staff may access. Qualitative evaluation of the School's effectiveness is a strong, ongoing process but there is little time for systematic evaluation and analysis of the data collected by student services. Formal procedures and formats for data collection would increase efficiency.

The School's commitment to the student body is paramount. Phone and e-mail exchanges are common for students during field placements. As the School expands its off-campus programs, significant culture changes for tracking student progress and staying in contact with students will be necessary. The Student Services Department currently functions largely through face-to-face "check-ins", with significant time and energy expended to track down students to "check up on" their academic and administrative progress. As enrollment is increased, more students are studying in low-residency for part of their time, and all students are allowed to participate in online courses, standardization of registration procedures and greater emphasis on student agency and responsibility is recommended, not only in educational design, but also in administrative details, meeting deadlines and watching for program markers. Adjustments to staff and faculty work hours and methods of tracking and communicating with students will also be required.

The School's strategic plan calls for diversification of the religious, vocational and geographic demographics of the student body. Recommended steps to ensure parity involve structuring student services to provide equal services for various programs. Examples include the following: 1) Provide equal support for an M.A. thesis defense as for M.Div. and M.A.S.C. portfolio conferences; 2) Invite speakers to discuss career options for M.A.S.C. students in the same way that the Unitarian Universalist Association's credentialing director communicates with M.Div. students; 3) Publicize the language exam dates for M.A. students the same way that deadlines for ministerial scholarship funds are published. 4). Provide fuller services for students studying online or in the field; 5.) Examine whether students from religious traditions other than Unitarian Universalism may need additional support.

Tuition and Financial Aid

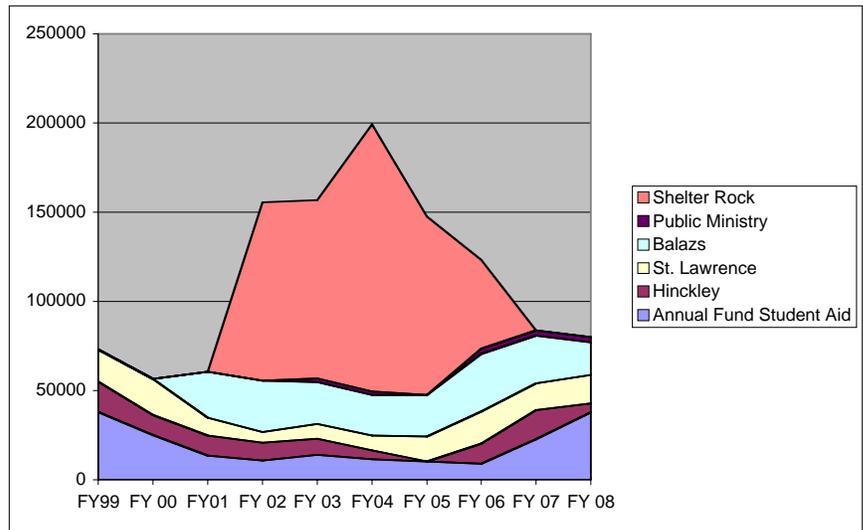
Tuition and continuing fees for the M.A. program is charged per semester and set by the Graduate Theological Union. Tuition for the M.Div. and M.A.S.C. degrees is a flat fee for the entire program. The tuition and fee rates are approved annually by the faculty and board of trustees. In 2005, an additional continuing education fee was added for M.Div. students who did not graduate in three years and M.A.S.C. students who did not graduate in two years. It was expected that students would graduate more quickly when this continuing education fee became mandatory. However, in the subsequent three years, the number of fourth year and fifth year students has increased. It is believed that the fee was set too low, at \$500 per year, to act as an inducement to graduate. Students chose the

continuing education fee over the large loan repayments facing them at graduation. Beginning in 2009, the continuing fee for M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students will be raised to one-half of tuition, bringing it into line with the GTU M.A. rates.

Starr King’s financial aid policy acknowledges that economic oppression takes a variety of forms. The School allows flexible payment plans and provides scholarships to students who declare need. However, the School’s financial resources do not allow for as much financial aid as is needed. While Starr King’s tuition is comparable to other schools with high Unitarian Universalist enrollments, its tuition assistance is not.

Tuition grants distributed by Starr King take the form of nineteen endowed scholarships made available to students depending on their demographic status or area of study. Additionally, annual fund scholarships are raised through mailed appeals and grant requests, primarily to Unitarian Universalist organizations and foundations. The amount available for this type of tuition grant depends on the Advancement Department’s fundraising activities in the past year. A portion of the fund is set aside for “Growth & Learning Grants” to pay for counseling, conferences, and other extra-curricular opportunities.

Funds Raised for Annual and Endowed Student Aid



A portion of the fund is set aside for “Growth & Learning Grants” to pay for counseling, conferences, and other extra-curricular opportunities.

Tuition grants are distributed by a subcommittee of the Admissions Committee consisting of the one faculty member, the Dean of Students, and one student who is no longer eligible for tuition aid. Financial need is categorized into four levels: low, medium, high, and, in recent years, “super-high”. In 2007, the low category of need was \$5,700/year and the super-high was \$40,000/year. Approximately half the enrolled students required a full tuition scholarship, about \$13,700 per year. Actual awards fell substantially short of this need: the average grant was \$2,692. In recent years, tuition grant assistance has not been given to students with a need under \$10,000. In 2007, twenty-six scholarships were given, totaling \$65,000.

In addition to financial need, the subcommittee considers the School's commitment to manifesting a multiracial, multicultural, multi-religious learning community. Student diversity is a primary consideration in granting tuition grants because the mix of student backgrounds provides for a richer learning environment. One significant gain to the scholarship pool was the Shelter Rock grant that provided the School with \$500,000 from 2000 to 2005. However, since the expiration of that grant, fourth and fifth year students

represent the highest percentage of the student body since 2000 with entering students comprising the lowest percentage. The scarcity of financial assistance is one of the largest barriers to diversifying the racial, ethnic and class demographics of the School, and to matriculation rates overall. It is recommended that endowed and annual scholarship funds be increased, targeting specific sources of giving for 1) students of color; 2) students with disabilities; 3) M.A.S.C. and M.A. students; and 4) students of other religious traditions.

The School also assists students in finding scholarships and grants from outside sources. The Graduate Theological Union hosts a database and monthly email notice of upcoming scholarships. The Unitarian Universalist Association provides eight different scholarships for M.Div. students in aspirant or candidate status with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and sermon contests that award financial prizes. Some congregations provide tuition assistance to members pursuing ministerial education, and the Starr King student body maintains a loan fund for peers who need periodic emergency assistance. Still, in the absence of additional funds from the School, it is recommended that the School do more to encourage students to seek outside sources by highlighting approaching deadlines, and promoting scholarships beyond those specified for Unitarian Universalist M.Div. students, (i.e. funds designated for thesis writing on cutting edge academic initiatives and internship opportunities for students working for social change.)

For many students, work study and student loans fill the void. Starr King's federal programs are administered through the Graduate Theological Union, and are in compliance with federal regulations and guidelines for financial aid. The School distributes approximately \$20,000 a year in federal work-study grants. In 2007-2008, Starr King students requested a total of \$496,663 in student loans. This number increases during the year slightly as many students borrow additional loans as the year progresses. The 2007 graduating class left the School with an average loan debt of \$54,132, up from \$36,411 in 2002. The high cost of living in the Bay Area sharply impacts total indebtedness, with the highest gasoline prices and the most competitive housing market in the country. Over the last decade, healthcare costs have had a negative and disproportionate impact on students due to the higher average age of the graduate student population. The School's strategic plan partially addresses these realities by allowing students to do a portion of their coursework from a distance.

Based on estimates of compensation graduates will receive, the School counsels students to minimize borrowing and explore alternative funding. This financial counseling is provided through the Dean of Students; "money and ministry" seminars are conducted once every three years illuminating the realistic impact of loan repayment after graduation; financial management classes are available at the Graduate Theological Union for students who reach \$50,000 in loan debt; and one-one-one counseling with GTU financial aid officers are offered when students reach \$75,000. This last option is a new initiative to ensure that students are making informed decisions and are aware of their options in repayment. As the School prepares students for career paths that may be less lucrative than Unitarian Universalist parish ministries, reliance on student loans may become even less practical.

The School's senior administrators and financial aid officers review student educational debt every three or four years as part of the School's fundraising and grant-writing efforts. They are acutely aware of the gap between need and availability of resources. The School's board has not typically been part of these conversations; fuller reports to the board of trustees are recommended, thus enlisting the board's help in the formulation of fundraising strategies at a strategic level.

Students apply for financial aid late in the spring semester to receive assistance for the following year. This creates difficulty for prospective students, who are asked to commit to the School before knowing what aid they will receive, and accordingly, may result in lower matriculation rates. It is recommended that the School explore strategic linkages between scholarship granting and admissions, such as: adjust scholarship timelines to match the admissions process, use historical data and projections to provide earlier scholarship estimates, provide higher financial assistance for first year students, and utilize partial tuition waivers when scholarships are not available.

Efforts have been undertaken to increase student awareness of the School's scholarship process. Communications about inflows of scholarship funds and statistics about the amount of scholarships that have been awarded have increased. The school sends letters to students receiving funds notifying them of the total amount of grants, the number of applicants and how much was given in diversity grants.

Placement and Graduate Services

Starr King assists its graduates in employment placement that reflects individual calling, specific degree program preparation, and institutional mission. In keeping with the School's educational philosophy, this assistance relies heavily upon a process of individualized discernment. Faculty, advisors and staff work closely with each student and maintain contact with graduates as they enter into their professional work. Vocational discernment is a serious concern for the School community, fueling frequent conversations between students and faculty, graduates, and denominational officers, as well as among students themselves. A number of more formal institutional structures compliment this commitment to vocational discernment. A binder of career placement opportunities is maintained and accessible to students and graduates. Faculty members assist students in the search and application process through written recommendations, as well as less formal personal contact with search committees and organizations.

The majority of Starr King students seek placement in congregational settings as Unitarian Universalist ministers. Unitarian Universalism's congregational polity requires ministers to have both a call from a congregation, and be received into fellowship by the denomination's Ministerial Fellowship Committee. The School works closely with the Unitarian Universalist Association Department of Ministry, hosting regular visits and facilitating individual meetings for students with denominational officers. Students prepare to "see the MFC" through participation in study groups and mock interviews. Over the past decade, 86% of 108 Starr King students and graduates passed the MFC, while 14% were advised to complete additional work and then return. Since 2001, that

record has been improved further, with 91.3% of students passing and only 8.7% being asked for additional work. No Starr King student has been turned down by the MFC during this decade.

A 2007-2008 study commissioned by the Unitarian Universalist Panel on Theological Education on “Excellence in Ministry” and conducted by Harvard Divinity School professor Dr. Dudley Rose yielded quantitative and qualitative data on the contribution of Starr King graduates to Unitarian Universalist ministry. It confirmed that Starr King is the educator of more Unitarian Universalist ministers than any other school; that Starr King graduates are identified by their peers as excellent ministers much more often than graduates of other schools, and that Starr King graduates serve larger congregations:

We concentrated our analysis on congregations with active ministers who had graduated with some form of theological degree. We analyzed senior or sole pastors . . . 553 congregations (of a total of 1041 congregations) met the criteria . . . Of those 553 congregations 303 (54.8%) were served by ministers from 4 schools: 37 from Andover Newton, 78 from Meadville Lombard, 93 from Harvard Divinity School, and 95 from Starr King School

The average size of congregations served from these four schools:

	<i>Av # of members</i>
<i>ANTS</i>	<i>156</i>
<i>ML</i>	<i>230</i>
<i>HDS</i>	<i>232</i>
<i>SK</i>	<i>286</i>

Of the fifty-largest congregations 29 are served by ministers from the four schools:

	<i>Serving 50 largest congregations</i>
<i>ANTS</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>ML</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>HDS</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>SK</i>	<i>15</i>

David Pettee [Director of Ministerial Credentialing] surveyed several long-time Unitarian Universalist officials and asked them to give us a list of the ministers within the movement whom they would characterize as excellent. . . Our short-list comprised . . . nine of whom we were successful in interviewing. . . . Seven did their seminary training at Starr King, one at Harvard, and one at Vanderbilt. . . .

The seven interviewees who went to Starr King gave a . . . varied account of their seminary experiences. . . . One highlighted the integration of academics and practice and noted that a primary role of minister is that of educator. Another chose Starr King because he already “had a solid academic background,” but he also noted that seminary is the place “to wrap one’s head around religion,” . . . Six of the seven ministers who attended Starr King mentioned and valued

personal development aspects of their seminary experience. “A time of discernment,” said one. “Met him where he was,” said another. “Starr King allowed him to imagine what was important for him to do and then to figure out how to get credit for it,” and yet another said, “The seminary accepted and celebrated what she brought, the school was a co-learner with her, and it helped her get out of her own way.” One noted a culture of, “Thou mayest “ One described the greatest benefit of his seminary experience as the feedback he received. Another went so far as to say Starr King saved her life.

As Starr King has broadened its vision of the possibilities of religious leadership beyond fellowshipped Unitarian Universalist ministry, it has become more complicated to provide appropriate placement assistance for each degree program. For many students, contacts made through fieldwork, community placement and academic conferences suggest paths to employment. Still, it is recommended that the School take a more active formal role in providing structured placement services, particularly as the student body grows to include more students seeking jobs as scholars, activists, artists and community organizers in religious traditions beyond Unitarian Universalism.

The School embraces a special responsibility to advocate for students who are members of historically marginalized groups in the area of employment and career development. This responsibility is addressed at the outset through faculty selection and admissions practices that actively seek to promote the leadership of women, transgender, queer, and differently-abled people of all colors and from religious minorities. Starr King intends for all students to experience empowerment through immersion in the innovative curriculum and through participation in a community that strives to embody counter-oppressive values. This advocacy continues throughout the employment search, with the provision of letters of reference and the sharing of personal contacts.

Starr King monitors the placement of its graduates into appropriate positions. Exit interviews are conducted with each student regarding their career plans upon graduation and the information gathered is provided to the board of trustees. The Student Services Office keeps data on graduate placements, and the Advancement Office maintains a database of graduate records and conducts periodic interviews. Graduates are invited to describe their current activities through the online graduate directory. Additionally, the Graduate Association hosts an annual meeting during the Unitarian Universalist Association’s General Assembly. Nearly 50% of Starr King graduates from the last twenty years participated in a survey conducted for this self-study.

Despite these efforts, the School has lost touch with a sizable population of graduates: the nearly 40% who are not fellowshipped Unitarian Universalist ministers. This is, in part, because past tracking methods and communications have relied upon the Unitarian Universalist Association’s records and annual meetings; and in part is due to the fact that the School’s narration of its own story has not highlighted these constituencies. The School’s strategic plan calls for an intentional reconnection with these graduates.

Chapter 8: Physical and Institutional Resources

The Building

Over the past ten years, the School has continued to operate from its modest building at 2441 Le Conte Avenue in Berkeley. The property underwent significant change in 1998 with a \$350,000 major interior redesign. At that time, there was a realignment of space for worship, classes, offices and the shared life of the community.

Since the 1998 major renovation, an additional seven offices have been created and student workstations are now available in a common area, offering flexibility for student computers and meeting space. Altars and displays enhance the sense of community spirit and express a diversity of cultures and perspectives. Areas previously utilized for storage have been transformed into office spaces and both the front patio and back garden enhance the learning environment as beautiful places for fellowship, meetings and student collaboration. The two-story building accommodates differently-abled persons on both levels with exterior ramp access to each area of the building. An elevator to improve accessibility remains on the wish list at this time.

At present, the space is crowded for accommodating the faculty, staff and 70-80 students in residence. Part-time faculty share office space—four desks per office. Still, the small, homey campus--carefully maintained--evokes a feeling of close community and expresses the value the School places on frugal simplicity.

Reports are submitted annually to local officials regarding property and fire safety; to state officials regarding the School's authority to confer degrees; and to the federal government regarding financial aid programs, crime statistics, and proper disposal of hazardous materials. The School has no deferred maintenance and regularly budgets for routine improvements and enhancements to the facility. Given that the School is situated on a convergence of geological fault lines, there is a desire for priority funding for an enhanced emergency system.

The School has become a leader at the GTU with respect to safety and security. On a scale of one to five, graduates of the past decade rated campus security at 4.03 "satisfied," and upkeep of the campus as 4.29 "satisfied to very satisfied." The GTU offers some shared classroom space through a registration system that matches class size with room size. However, the scarcity and small size of the classrooms at the School limit the opportunities to offer space for events, symposia or meetings outside of the routine daily usage.

The School does not own any residential housing and students largely make their own living arrangements. The School provides assistance in locating residences by sharing information, including options at the GTU. On a scale of 1 to 5, graduates of the last ten years rated housing as 2.73 "neutral to not satisfied." The School is looking to form new partnerships to assist with the challenging housing scene in Berkeley, but no immediate plans are in place. As an experiment, from 2006 to 2009 the School leased a roomy house

that offered shared living space for four to six students, which gave the staff some experience in the management of student housing. The balance between staff time required and the benefit to students didn't warrant continuing the experiment. The lack of availability and affordability of housing has had an impact on staff and faculty in this region, and has partially impeded some possibilities to work with visiting faculty and other guests.

Technology Resources

Ten years ago, the School relied on six phone lines and two AOL accounts for online communication. Now a building-wide wireless Internet service allows wide access by all students, staff and faculty to the vast resources of the worldwide web. The Lilly Foundation granted \$1 million for the GTU's information services to be completely transformed into a multi-location integrated system. Starr King relies on the Pacific School of Religion as the hub for technology resources, and benefits from the expertise and resources of the GTU. Opportunities for group purchase power abound at the GTU, as do occasions for mutual support and consulting.

Starr King's strategic plan for the next six years will require it to make significant advances in technological resources. While the School has been a leader in the online delivery of courses, its infrastructure has not kept up with its expanding pedagogies. Many of the computers at the School are older, slow or cumbersome, and too few are available for student use. Online faculty and students are provided only modest technical support, and audio/visual and computer training for residential faculty and students is needed. The current practice of outsourcing many technological tasks to Pacific School of Religion and the GTU limits the opportunities for growth as online and non-residential realities are incorporated into the learning and teaching methods. As the School implements an educational model that will rely more fully on technology as a delivery system, it is recommended that the School 1) invest in at least one full-time designated institutional technology specialist; 2) upgrade the current technology; and 3) provide real training for students, faculty and staff.

Institutional Environment

The School environment has shown resiliency in recent years, adapting to the shifting human, physical and fiscal demands of the learning landscape at the GTU and within the Unitarian Universalist context. The staff, through their individual and collective commitment to the mission, have enabled the community to thrive; exceeded the goals of the Centennial Campaign; navigated the controversial talks of merger between the two Unitarian Universalist schools; and adopted the challenging commitment to educate to counter oppressions. With meetings, supervision, collaboration and attention to the quality of relationships remaining integral to the School's management ethos, teamwork and mutual support are demonstrated at every level of the organization.

Cooperative Use of Resources and Clusters

The life of Starr King School is closely linked with the Graduate Theological Union. Shared academic and administrative efforts benefit the consortium in many cost saving and resource-enhancing ways. Centralized financial aid and registrar functions are maintained through an agreement including “per user fees” and are cost-efficient and effective. GTU bookkeeping/accounting, accounts payable/receivable and supportive record keeping gives added security to all of these administrative functions. Campus security for the GTU neighborhood includes sharing the work so that affordable card access technology can be brought to campus buildings.

Starr King takes the lead in coaching the GTU schools in online learning. The School took an early risk to create cutting-edge courses and has been able to share best practices in the dawn of advancing pedagogy. The GTU has looked to Starr King to provide this leadership for its centers, including co-sponsorship of online classes with the Institute for Buddhist Studies.

Further opportunities for partnership exist. One such opportunity would cluster Starr King and its neighbors at the Pacific School of Religion and the American Baptist Seminary of the West, to share curricular, financial and supportive resources. The Dean of the Faculty and the President will serve as lead collaborators for this work in the coming months. The School looks forward to new ideas and cooperative efforts to emerge from these conversations.

Library and Information Resources

The Flora Lamson Hewlett Library is the common library for the nine member schools of the Graduate Theological Union. It is the primary library for Starr King students and faculty. Starr King faculty and students also have access to the libraries at the University of California at Berkeley. The library’s holdings include more than 440,000 volumes and 290,000 microforms, audio and videocassettes, and other media. It subscribes to 1,554 current periodicals as well as to 67 key research databases. The collection includes over 6,000 rare books and more than 900 linear feet of archives and manuscripts.

Students have access to extensive library collections at the GTU, UC Berkeley and through interlibrary loans. Library staff personnel are available to answer questions, provide individualized research assistance and give workshops. 75.8% of graduates report making maximum use of the Graduate Theological library during their time at Starr King, while 21.2% report making maximum use of the library at the University of California, Berkeley. They rated the library’s collection as 4.38 “satisfied to very satisfied.”

The faculty Library Committee, composed of a faculty representative from each of the member schools and a doctoral student representative, meets with the Library Director monthly during the academic year. This committee provides useful advice for Library operations and policy, oversees archival acquisitions, and serves as a communication conduit for school faculties. The GTU Board of Trustees’ Library Committee, on which Starr King’s President serves, is charged with establishing goals and policies for the library. It meets at least three times a year in conjunction with board meetings.

Additionally, faculty members may coordinate special presentations by librarians for their class to support students in finding specific research tools for their fields.

Further details regarding the GTU library can be found in the appendix.

Wilbur Rare Book Collection

Among Starr King's distinctive resources is the Earl Morse Wilbur Rare Book Collection, housed in a secure storage space at the School. The collection was the life work of the School's first Dean and President, Earl Morse Wilbur, who wrote a two-volume history of Unitarianism that has not been surpassed as a definitive and comprehensive history of Unitarianism. Deckerd Turner, a leading specialist in theological rare books, has evaluated the collection in terms of monetary value and scholarly significance. The collection is unique in housing the primary texts (including many first editions) from the sixteenth century reformers, including those of the radical reformation. Wilbur created a cataloging system in which the books are related to one another based on their authors' debates and dialogues—making the collection a physical documentation of conversation and controversy. Cataloging, preserving and making the collection accessible to scholars and students was the special focus of the work of Dr. Alicia Forsey, who served as Starr King's Professor of Church History until the retrenchment in June 2005 which eliminated her teaching position. She was named Research Professor in 2005 and, in that capacity, finished editing the first English translation of Michael Servetus' *Restitution of Christianity*--one of the rarest texts in the Wilbur Collection--and the book that was strapped to Servetus' thigh when he was burned at the stake. She has also continued to research and write about radical women reformers of the sixteenth century and about Unitarianism in the context of the Ottoman Empire.

Efforts are now underway to more fully integrate the Wilbur Rare Book collection into the Flora Lamson Hewlett Library of the GTU. In 2006, an agreement was reached such that the GTU Library staff has access to the collection in order to manage its use by interested students and scholars. Following protocols for the proper handling of rare books, scholars and students may request access to the collection (with the assistance of GTU research librarians.) This agreement was a step forward in making the collection more broadly available but the effectiveness of this system depends on the inclusion of the Wilbur Collection in the GTU's online catalog, GRACE. The GTU Library has made several efforts to secure grant funds for this cataloging project to be completed--so far, without success. Changes in staff at the GTU library and at Starr King have also slowed down the progress of this work. It is recommended that the agreement be revisited and renewed so that new staff members at the GTU Library, including the head of the Library (new since 2006) are brought into accord with the plan and are engaged in its implementation.

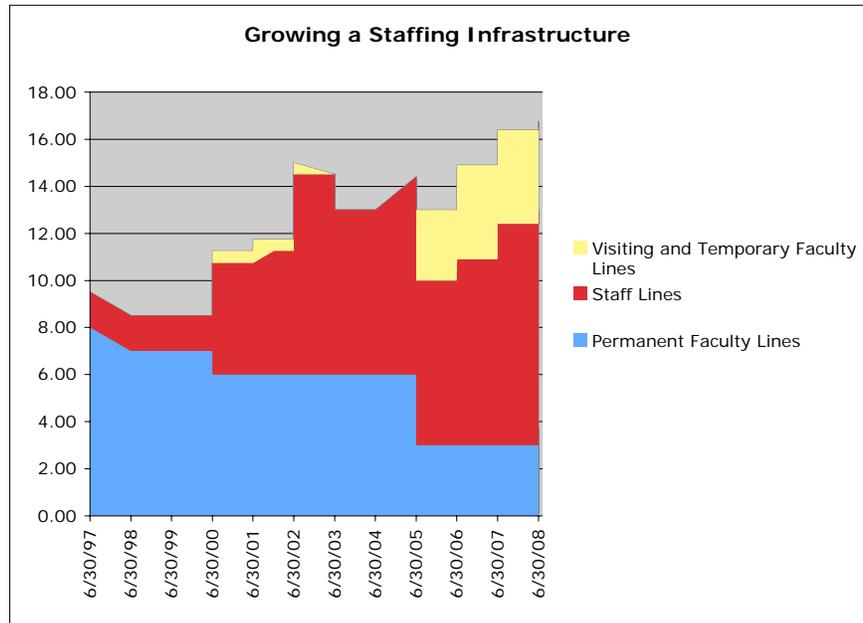
It is further recommended that the Starr King faculty conduct a review of the uses for the Wilbur Rare Book Collection and establish specific objectives for its continued

integration into the Graduate Theological Union library system and its accessibility to Unitarian Universalist students and scholars.

Chapter 9: Human Resources

Growing a Staffing Infrastructure

At the School's last accreditation review in 1997, the ATS visiting team advised the School to build a professional staffing infrastructure. At the time, the School's staff consisted of one full time office manager, one part time database/annual funds manager, and temporary work-study students. The staffing FTE, not including faculty and work study students, was 1.5.



In 2009, the School's staffing structure included Vice Presidents for Finance and Administration and for Advancement; a Dean of Students; Directors for Online Education, Faculty Services, Donor Relations, Communications, and Marketing and Recruitment; Administrative Assistants to the President, Student Services, Faculty Services, and Finance and Administration, a part time building and grounds keeper, and temporary work-study students to work as admissions coordinators, receptionists and faculty assistants. The staffing FTE, not including faculty and work-study students, is 12.25. These numbers represent a partial recovery from financial exigency in 2004-2005 that led to lay-offs of staff members and of two core faculty.

The growth of the staff was planned well by the President and the Board of Trustees. Fundraising professionals were hired first--so that their work could help to bring financial support for further hires. The administration annually reviews the budget and five-year financial plan to determine appropriate times to raise salaries or bring on new hires. However, the appropriate pace of growth—given economic ups and downs—has not always been easy to discern. While the trajectory of building a staff structure has remained clear, in order to balance budgets and advance the School's economic sustainability, staff positions have been reduced and reorganized three times this decade.

The investment in staff has paid off. Staff personnel have raised the School's accountability and professionalism. Budgets are prepared in a timely manner and audits are clean (most years!). Regular mailings have generated new funds from donors, who are thanked in a timely and gracious manner. The School's communications materials

and website are beautifully done. Students and faculty feel supported by the proficiency and commitment of the staff. While there have been tumultuous years, the staff has kept the School's culture and daily operations running smoothly. Students often look to staff for pastoral support. On a scale of 1 to 5, graduates of the past decade rated their satisfaction with the helpfulness of the staff at 4.47, up from 4.19 the previous decade.

Starr King has made significant strides in hiring administrative staff, achieving its goal of relieving core faculty of some of the administrative work load. However, the demands of increased enrollment and the addition of new programs indicate that continued development of an appropriately-sized staff will be important. .

A More Diverse Environment

In its hiring practices, the School has made significant strides in the racial and ethnic diversification of its staff and faculty. Data show that over the past decade fourteen whites and thirteen people of color were hired. This attention to diversity has also been evident in the range of religious identities present among staff and faculty. Furthermore, the School reflects Unitarian Universalist commitments to women's leadership, to affirmation and inclusion of lesbian, gay and bisexual identities, and to a growing inclusion of transgender persons.

The School approaches its commitment to building a multi-religious, multi-cultural, counter-oppressive faculty and staff with intentionality. Potential employees are provided with Starr King's statement on educating to counter oppressions so they are informed of the School's commitments. An annual staff-faculty retreat, led by outside diversity trainers, is held almost every year--with a focus on strengthening the School's capacity to be a counter-oppressive, multi-cultural work place. In assessing itself, the School is aware that such intentionality remains critically important. Too often, staff and faculty are the targets of dynamics that reflect stereotypes, ignorance, or tokenization that devalue their multi-racial, multi-gender and multi-faith identities.

Shifts in Culture

The development of a professional staff also brought about shifts in the culture of the School. The introduction of staff meant that clearer boundaries and lines of authority needed to be drawn. Specialization has occurred. The School has ceased having a family-style culture and become a professional institution. For years, the School relied on oral communication as its primary mode of operation. The addition of professional staff slowly shifted this culture. The larger number of people has meant that information must be communicated by memo and email, and more practices, policies and protocols needed to be codified in written handbooks. Processes have been automated and streamlined.

New processes put into place by staff have altered the School's capacity to "turn on a dime." Changes need to be vetted through several departments before their implications can be fully understood or their implementation achieved. The institution is multi-tasking and carrying many projects at the same time. While all of the departments are working

toward the same goal, they are not necessarily working on the same tasks at the same moments. This requires administrators to plan further in advance. The administration is still growing into this awareness, sometimes forgetting that it is no longer a family-sized institution and becoming surprised in the process.

Policies

Since the last self-study, a written faculty handbook and an extensive adjunct faculty handbook have been developed. The adjunct faculty handbook is updated annually. It is recommended that a thorough review and re-write of the faculty handbook occur during the 2010-2011 academic year to reflect the new educational model approved by the faculty. The School's personnel policies manual has been in place, with modest changes, since the last self-study. It needs to be updated and initial work to update it is underway.

All key constituents of the School—students, faculty, staff—have established guidelines for ethical practices and procedures for grievances. These practices and procedures are readily available in the student, faculty, and personnel handbooks. In addition, the Vice President for Finance and Administration handles all Title IX directives. Policies for responding to grievances and sexual harassment are clear. While evaluation procedures are generally clear, the specific criteria for evaluation are not spelled out in the handbooks and are implied in staff job descriptions. Employees at the School have reported that clearer job descriptions and evaluations standards would be welcomed.

The Board of Trustees has developed, adopted and implemented a comprehensive approach for evaluating the President, which is spelled out in the trustee handbook. The Board appraises the President annually --through an evaluative conversation-- in light of the School's goals and priorities. Every three years, a formal evaluation is conducted with input from a variety of constituencies. The President's work as a member of the faculty is also evaluated annually, utilizing the same process that is used for all core faculty.

Staff members are evaluated by their supervisors. This process does not at present occur with clear regularity or consistency across the departments, and work is underway to standardize the evaluation practices for staff. Policies and practices for vacation time, sick leave, comp time, and time for family priorities are generous. Staff and faculty do not always take the vacation time they are due. The administration is striving to counteract a culture of over-work and heavy work loads, in order to assure that all who work at the School find their work to be a source of satisfaction.

Aligning Job Descriptions to the Strategic Goals

In the fall of 2008, the School began a comprehensive assessment of all job descriptions in order to align the work loads and job expectations to the priorities of the four strategic goals. The assessment began with a daylong faculty-staff meeting in which the strategic goals were presented in detail and each staff member was asked to respond to evaluative questions. 1) What am I currently doing that contributes toward the success of this goal? 2) What might I need to give more attention to in my job responsibilities so this goal will

succeed? 3) What might I need to stop doing in order to be able to focus on my part in the success of the strategic goals?

The process of assessment will include individual meetings between each employee and their supervisor to reflect on these questions together. From these conversations, new job descriptions and benchmark expectations/work outcomes will be prepared, leading to a process of annual review and evaluation of all employees in light of the School’s strategic goals. Evaluation will include not only individual performance but the work of the staff and faculty collectively. In this way, it is hoped, work loads can be revised to be more focused and more manageable, using the School’s strategic priorities as a measure of what needs to be done and what can be left undone. It is recommended that this assessment be completed and that annual evaluation of the faculty and staff in light of the strategic goals place the accent on celebration of successes achieved.

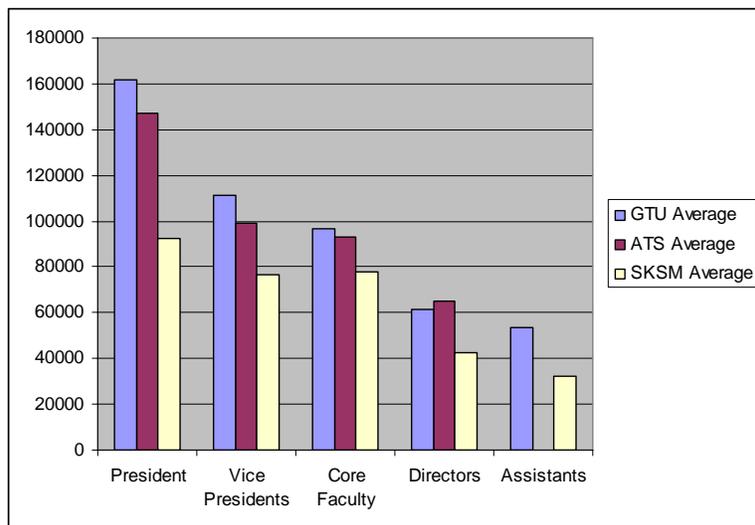
Compensation

Goals from the 1997 self-study included across-the-board increases in compensation, particularly to provide retirement benefits for core faculty and professional staff and more financial support for faculty development, especially for attendance at academic conferences and for pursuit of research. Starr King has made steady but slow progress in increasing compensation for faculty and staff, and it continues to strive to make further improvements in compensation.

The School uses annual data on average compensation at the Graduate Theological member schools as its benchmark in setting compensation improvement goals. Starr King is currently the fifth largest of the nine schools in terms of enrollment, so aiming to match the average is reasonable. The School also pays attention to comparable compensation as reported in the ATS Fact Book. The President has regularly reviewed these comparisons with the Trustees and the Board has approved budgets with compensation increases toward these targets whenever projected income allowed.

A 2007 review of Starr King compensation in comparison to averages at the GTU showed that if the School were to have reached this target in 2007, it would have been spending \$500,000 more annually on faculty and staff compensation. The review showed that this discrepancy is most acute at the upper and lower ends of the School’s pay scale. At the highest end, Starr King’s President received 57% of

2007 Compensation Comparisons



the average compensation, despite being the longest serving President at the GTU. At the lowest end of the pay scale, administrative assistants and work study students were making less than the Berkeley living wage in the 2007-2008 school year.

A six-year financial projection presented to the Board in January 2008 included bringing all employees up to the GTU averages by 2014. The board affirmed that such improvement should be a high priority in budgeting and in fundraising goals. At its April 2008 meeting, the Board significantly increased salaries, assuring that all staff and work study students were paid the Berkeley living wage or better, and providing for the first time a benefits package (\$5,000) for each staff and faculty member (pro-rated for part-time employees). This brought the School into compliance with generally accepted business practices in benefits management. An across-the-board increase of 3% was also approved. The President's compensation has been temporarily improved dramatically through an agreement by the School to forgive (by Dec. 30, 2009) the loan the School made for her housing.

Starr King allows employees to designate a portion of their salary for pre-tax payments into group health insurance programs and retirement plans. The School's benefit provision is sufficient to cover health insurance for all employees. At this time, all faculty and staff do have some form of health insurance, either through the pre-tax plan or through family members' plans. Not all, however, are electing to (or able to) save for retirement.

The 1997 self-study recommended that the School increase compensation so that faculty and staff could set aside funds for retirement. In 2000, the School instituted a \$4,000 per person increase in compensation for all employees to encourage and support employees in self-designating funds for retirement. In 2008, four of seven faculty members and two of twelve staff members participated in a pre-tax retirement plan, mostly at a minimal level. Anecdotal evidence suggests that compensation amounts are simply too low for employees to put more away. It is recommended that Starr King continue to strive to improve compensation--that it work with faculty and staff to identify and affirm meaningful ways that faculty and staff might be compensated in ways other than higher salaries when higher pay is not within the School's financial reach--such as extra time off.

Volunteers

The School relies in many ways upon the generosity of volunteers. Students keep the building clean and provide hospitality and program support for special events. Ministers in Unitarian Universalist congregations and activists in social justice ministries serve as intern supervisors as part of their broader vocation. The Board of Trustees contributes time and energy to fundraising, recruiting and speaking well of the School. Former trustees serve important roles such as caring for the garden, providing nearly all the administrative support for the Balazs Scholars' program, and leading fundraising efforts. The School is blessed to be a place where so many willingly give so much.

At the same time as it welcomes volunteerism, the School is aware that the *reliance* on volunteerism can be problematic. There are few quality control measures that can be taken when volunteers don't come through. Their areas of interest may not be the most pressing matters for the School to attend to. They often require assistance from staff, taking them away from other responsibilities. And the persistent culture of volunteerism can easily translate into a real or perceived expectation of volunteerism from employees who are already very busy. It is recommended that the School be clear about its own needs and the expectations, services, and limits that come along with the invaluable work that the volunteers do for the School.

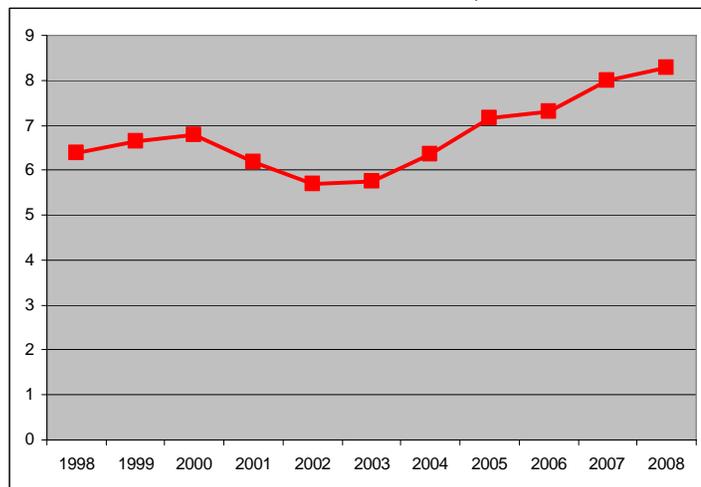
Chapter 10: Financial Resources

Starr King School has survived and emerged stronger following a decade in which it pursued aggressive plans to grow its staffing infrastructure, increase enrollment and inaugurate new educational programs, and complete a Centennial Campaign, while simultaneously responding to a serious economic downturn that threatened the School's viability. When deep spending cuts had to be made, the President and the Trustees faced the difficult decisions head-on and took action to preserve and grow the School's assets. The way ahead remains challenging, but the School has set a strategic course following a careful consideration of options for its future. A look at changes in the School's total assets shows the big picture of decline and recovery. (Note: this analysis concludes with June 20, 2008 – before the most recent crisis in the U.S. economy which will be reflected when the FY 2009 audit is completed.)

Total Assets:

1998	6,388,276
1999	6,636,622
2000	6,795,638
2001	6,196,086
2002	5,695,875
2003	5,752,713
2004	6,356,302
2005	7,158,285
2006	7,289,943
2007	8,003,867
2008	8,278,422

Total Assets in Million \$



The Annual Budget

The annual budget is drafted by staff. It is reviewed and revised, as necessary, by the Board's finance committee, and finally approved by action of the full Board at its spring meeting. The budget preparation is guided by the Board's mission and vision as well as by five-year financial projections of income and expenses, and by the Board's annual and long-range priorities as established in consultation with the President. Most of the annual budget is allotted to fixed costs, Graduate Theological Union allocations, and personnel expenses. The detailed preparation of the budget has been in the hands of the President and Vice President for Finance and Administration in consultation with the executive staff and the officers of the board. Recently, additional staff members have asked to participate in the budget-making process and broader inclusion began with the preparation of the FY 2009-2010 budget.

Starr King contracts with the Graduate Theological Union business office for accounting services. Oversight for day-to-day financial activities and monitoring of the budget is provided by the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The President and the VP's for Advancement and Academic Affairs carry financial decision making for their departments within the parameters of the Board approved budget. Regular and detailed reports, prepared by accounting staff at the Graduate Theological Union, support the School's management in making

decisions. Budget performance is reviewed by the Board bi-annually and reports are more frequently provided to the treasurer and finance committee. Over the past decade, in no year have expenditures exceeded the Board-approved budget or draw on reserves.

Virchow, Krause & Company, LLP—a common auditor agreed upon by all of the Graduate Theological Union schools—audits the School annually. The Audit Committee, the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees review the audits. Auditors provide management letters that help identify changes in accounting practices and improvements to financial management procedures and practices as needed. Since the last self-study, the auditors have noted no material deficiencies. Changes in accounting practices have been planned and made to comply with changes recommended by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB). The most recent budget, audit and management letters can be found in the appendix.

Operating Revenues and Operating Expenses

Starr King’s revenues were negatively impacted in 2001 and 2002 by the downturn in the U.S. economy and have gradually improved since then. Revenue streams have grown primarily through enrollment and tuition increases and fundraising successes. From 2003-2007 Starr King’s revenue flow was improved by recovery in the U.S. economy. Increases in expenses over this period reflect the School’s pursuit of an assertive plan to build a staffing infrastructure, inaugurate new educational programs (the MASC degree and online education), and invest more in fundraising and communications.

Annual Operating Revenues and Operating Expenses*

Fiscal Year	Income	Expenses	Difference	Cumulative Surplus or (Deficit)
1999	1,275,168	1,026,822	248,346	1,071,402
2000	1,225,937	1,066,921	159,016	1,230,418
2001	835,892	1,435,444	(599,552)	630,866
2002	1,017,852	1,518,063	(500,211)	130,655
2003	1,656,910	1,600,072	56,838	187,493
2004	1,713,532	1,622,316	91,541	279,034
2005	1,948,425	1,660,185	288,240	567,274
2006	2,028,231	1,795,556	232,675	799,949
2007	1,753,909	1,814,881	(60,972)	738,977
2008	2,650,029	2,050,608	599,421	1,338,398

*This chart is based on year end operating results reported to the board and on the audited financial statements of the school. In 2004, the auditors reclassified some revenue which is not reflected here. (It shows in the total assets chart above.) Also, in 2007 the auditing standards changed with respect to revenues from pledges, so that cash received in 2007 that had been pledged in previous years is not counted as 2007 revenue, resulting in the year end showing in the red.

The fiscal stress that led the School to declare financial exigency in 2005 began in 2001 and 2002 and hit its lowest point in 2003. Revenues fell far short of need. The School decided to move forward with its plans to build a staffing infrastructure and met its expenses by spending down accumulated reserves from the late 1990’s – in effect taking a high draw on its fast dwindling endowment. New staff hires allowed the School to pursue strategies to grow tuition and gift income, while stepping down the endowment draw. But by 2004 these strategies were not showing clear enough success to assure recovery of the losses. Facing depleted reserves, and

the loss of more than one million dollars in the value of the School’s total assets, and with projections of growing deficits in the future, the Board declared financial exigency in 2005, using the ATS Policy Statement and Guidelines on Retrenchment. A retrenchment plan was implemented; faculty and staff were reduced while efforts to raise more money and increase tuition income continued. Taken together, deep cuts and continued fundraising efforts enabled the School to begin to recover, and consider options to address the challenge of longer-term sustainability.

Income Patterns

The School’s operating revenues come from four sources:

Income Source	1999	%	2007	%
Tuition	\$373,740	29%	\$723,850	41%
Gifts and Grants	\$271,647	21%	\$423,387	24%
Denominational Support	\$176,000	14%	\$273,000	16%
Endowment & Misc	\$453,781	36%	\$333,672	19%
TOTAL	\$1,275,168		\$1,753,909	

This comparison (conducted in 2007 at the beginning of the Self Study process) shows changes in income streams:

- Tuition income has grown by 95% over this period (12% per year on average)
- Gift and grant income has grown by 56% (7% per year on average)
- Denominational support has increased by 56%
- Endowment income has decreased by 26% (down 3.25% per year on average)

Comparing the data from 1999 and 2007 shows the shifts that have occurred through intentional planning to move the School beyond the limitations of a small endowment and place it on a different business footing. The percentage of total operating revenue that comes from tuition has grown (from 29% to 41%) while operating income from the endowment has declined (from 36% to 19%). Gift and grant income and denominational support, as percentages of the total, have grown slightly (from 35% combined, to 40% combined).

A 2007 ATS Peer Profile Report reveals that Starr King tuition revenue as a percentage of total revenue is higher than the median for peer schools over the five year period. Renewable and non-renewable grants have provided a new stream of short-term income in recent years. Such grants have been critical in the past three years in supporting the compensation costs of one permanent faculty member. Starr King has higher denominational support than its peer schools. Unlike its peers, a relatively small percentage of Starr King’s operating income is derived from investments, and the School does not receive any income from auxiliary enterprises.

Several of the trends from 1999 to 2007 have continued to the present. Tuition is becoming an even larger portion of the whole, and endowment income is dropping even further given the economic downturn. The one trend that has reversed is that denominational support is declining. In FY 2009 it was \$190,000.

Expenditure Patterns

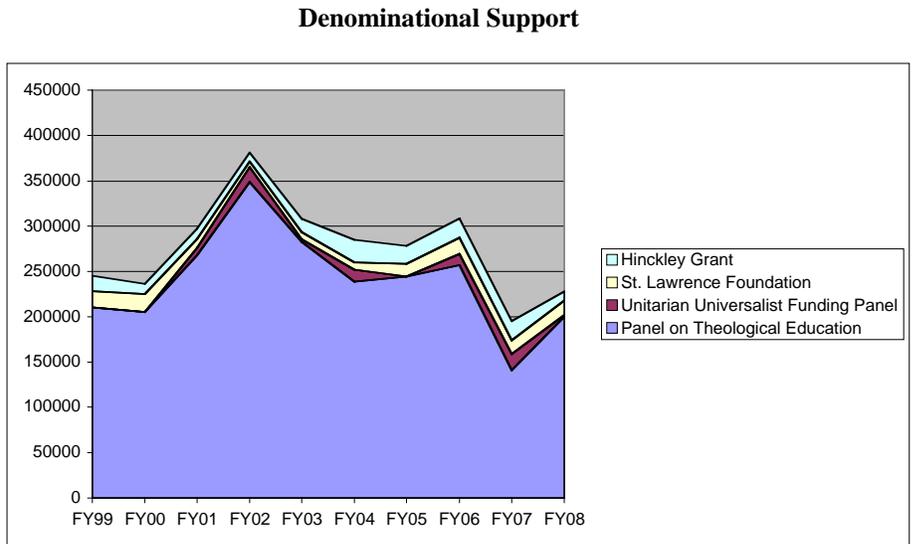
The School dramatically increased expenditures in 2001 when it implemented a hiring plan to add several professional staff positions at the recommendation of the ATS. Following that initial step up, the proportion of personnel expenditures devoted to faculty and staff has changed very modestly over this period. (Retrenchment in 2005 cut both faculty and staff). Averaged over the course of the decade, expenses increased an average of 4.2% per year. Investment in hiring staff in the areas of advancement, communication and online education has led to increased tuition and gift income. The higher cost of doing business, especially the rising cost of insurance, auditing services, and utilities, is reflected in the increases in institutional support and physical plant. Instruction as a percentage of the total budget has been higher than the median among peer schools over the past decade, but the School's compensation levels for its faculty are lower than the median. These patterns have continued to the present:

Expenditure	1999	%	2007	%
Instruction	\$432,864	41%	\$670,589	37%
Library	\$85,353	8%	\$143,882	8%
Academic Support	\$11,261	1%	\$24,430	1.5%
Student Services	\$75,358	7%	\$119,430	6.5%
General Administration	\$203,976	19.5%	\$307,492	17%
Development	\$83,718	8%	\$163,426	9%
Communications & Online	\$53,827	5%	\$151,362	8%
Institutional Support	\$80,465	7.5%	\$172,943	9.5%
Physical Plant	\$24,061	2.5%	\$61,730	3.5%
TOTAL	\$1,050,883.	99.5%	\$1,814,872	100%

General expenditures on a per student FTE basis have changed from \$15,230 in 1999 (69 FTE) to \$19,104 in 2007 (85 FTE degree students and 10 FTE online students). The School operates at a level significantly below the ATS average of expenditures per student. The ATS average in FY 2007--for schools similar in size to Starr King--was \$57,427. Only schools with enrollments over one thousand had per-student costs that came close to being as low as Starr King's -- their average was \$22,130. On the one hand, Starr King is holding costs for theological education to record levels of efficiency and frugality. It is able to do so because faculty and staff members are manifesting extraordinary levels of productivity and creativity. On the other hand, this raises questions about the sustainability of Starr King's human resources. The School may need to reframe its thinking about "financial viability" to include more attention to "human sustainability."

Denominational Support

The School's most significant Unitarian Universalist support over the decade has been an unrestricted grant by the Unitarian Universalist Association's Panel on Theological Education, of approximately \$250,000 per year, with \$190,000 being the FY 2009 grant. The original source of this grant was an endowment by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, New York.



In addition to the Panel, the School has consistently received grants from three other denominational organizations. The Hinckley Grant Committee at First Unitarian Society of San Francisco has provided an average of \$20,000 per year to support financial aid, general operations, and special projects including the School's Balázs Scholar program to support a Transylvanian Unitarian minister studying at the School. The St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education has provided grants ranging from \$6,000 to \$24,500, usually to support financial aid for Unitarian Universalist students. The Unitarian Universalist Funding Panel has given grants ranging from \$3,000 to \$18,000 for special projects, including the history colloquia, student internships, the Seminary for the Laity program, and faculty research on large church dynamics and Thomas Starr King.

In May of 2006, Starr King received a letter from the Panel on Theological Education informing the School of its intent to eliminate basic operating grants for the two Unitarian Universalist schools over the next three years and channel the money instead into projects and programs that would advance "ministerial excellence." Step-downs in funding began in the fall of 2006 and have continued at a pace of \$25,000 less per year in the fall of 2007 and the fall of 2008. This slower pace of cut backs than what was first indicated is partly a result of successful lobbying efforts by Starr King's leadership, donors and friends. The evolution of this funding stream remains uncertain at this writing, but for FY 2010 the Panel made an extra grant of \$25,000 to assist the School in the economic downturn. The Panel has orally indicated that it plans to invite the schools to apply for programmatic grants (rather than unrestricted operating grants) at some point in the future. The Starr King Board and President are actively advocating for the funding to remain. These developments will merit close monitoring. They also point to the need for aggressive fundraising from other sources both within and beyond Unitarian Universalism.

Additional Grants and Gifts

Starr King maintains an active relationship with several granting bodies beyond Unitarian Universalism, especially the Luce Foundation and the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation. Grants and LOIs have been submitted, as well to the Lilly Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Sister Fund, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Carpenter Foundation, the Hedco Foundation, Carnegie, and the Wabash Foundation. Luce and Arthur Vining Davis have been especially responsive to Starr King's vision and needs. Based on this success, financial projections conservatively include the expectation that the School will receive an average of \$100,000 from private grants annually.

Foundation grants played a significant part in keeping the School afloat after retrenchment. Between 2005 and 2008, Starr King received a \$150,000 grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation to fund a Director of Studies in Public Ministry and establish the Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change degree. The School also received a \$300,000 grant from the Luce Foundation to advance Islamic studies at the GTU and launch a pilot project in multi-religious theological education, and received a second grant of \$375,000 in 2008 to support the school's strategic plan. These grants allowed the School to support two core faculty positions, hire several adjunct faculty members, and advance new educational programs.

The School receives a modest federal work-study grant annually. Income from this source ranged from a low of \$16,715 in 2005, to a high of \$24,875 in 2001.

Centennial Capital Campaign

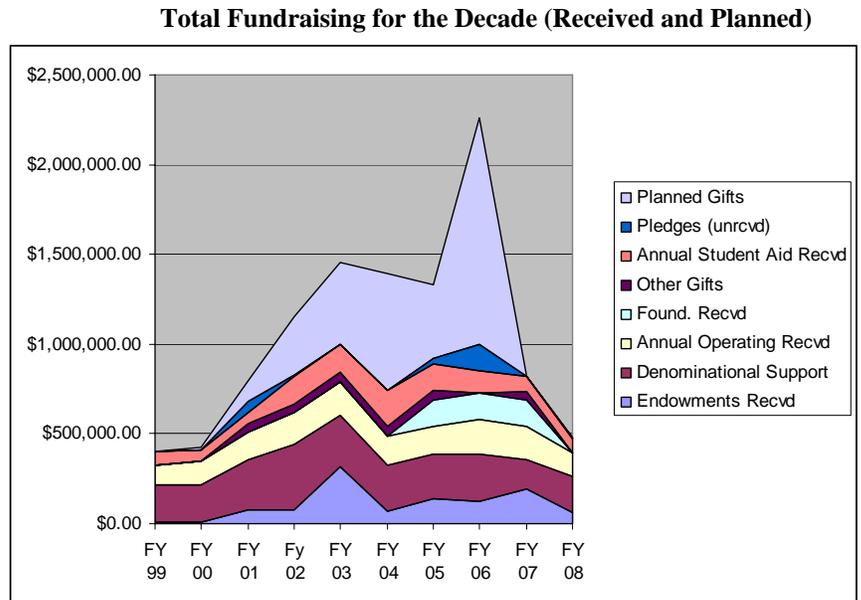
In 2002, the Board of Trustees initiated a comprehensive Centennial Campaign to build the endowment, grow annual funds and raise capital to advance the mission of the School. After hiring a nationally-recognized fundraising consultant firm to conduct a feasibility study on achievable goals, the Board set a total goal of \$7 million, to be raised over the next three fiscal years. The goals included:

- \$5 million in endowment gifts for faculty and student support, including the Til Evans Professorship, and student financial aid and housing.
- \$750,000 in annual funds to sustain the annual operating needs of the School, representing an increase of 7% per year in the growth of annual funds.
- \$1.25 million in capital for the School's immediate needs, including educational program development, and accessibility and space needs of the building.

The campaign concluded in June 2006, having taken two years longer than anticipated. The School raised \$8.2 million, exceeding the \$7 million goal by over a million dollars. Cash and pledges equaled \$4.76 million (58% of the total) and planned gifts comprised \$3.45 million, (42% of the total), coming close to the School's anticipated goal of raising 60% in cash and 40% in planned gifts. Of the funds raised, \$4.4 million was designated as endowment for faculty and student support (the goal was \$5 million), with one million of the \$4.4 in cash. The campaign goals for annual funds were met or exceeded, especially in the area of program support. The School raised \$1.7 million in annual operating and student aid funds – exceeding the goal by a

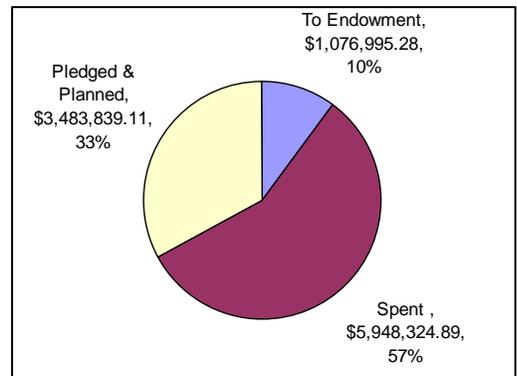
million – and an additional \$1.8 million in cash for programs, including hiring a Professor of Preaching and Worship, a Director for the new MASC degree, and technological upgrades to the School’s main worship and classroom spaces.

The number of graduates and friends who made contributions to the campaign totaled 1500, with major gifts of \$10K or more coming from eighty contributors, up from nineteen the decade before. Annual operational support from donors went from \$110,476 in June 1999 to \$185,526 in June 2006, an increase of 59%. While the first million-dollar gift from a donor was not secured, as had been hoped, the number of people who made major gifts between \$100,000 and \$250,000 doubled from ten to twenty.



Conducting the campaign made it possible for Starr King leaders to visit over thirty congregations, holding dozens of small and large group gatherings for hundreds of Unitarian Universalists across the country, raising both awareness and money for the School. This outreach led to increased giving by graduates and individuals. In 1999, 183 graduates contributed a total of \$22,600 to the School, with the average gift totaling \$124. By 2006, 203 graduates contributed \$81,600, with the average gift totaling \$402. Among individual givers, although the number of individual contributors decreased, those who gave did so at higher levels. In 1999, 273 people contributed \$16,400 for an average gift size of \$60. By 2006, only 192 individuals contributed to the School, but their total giving was \$95,000 with an average gift size of \$495.

At times during the campaign, donors (and even trustees) found it confusing to understand how with so much fundraising success the School continued to be stressed financially. While there was genuine success in fundraising, the School was still forced to make several staff and faculty layoffs, declare financial exigency, and participate in merger talks initiated by the denomination: all in the middle of the campaign! Cash for growing the endowment was limited to one million, a significant sum in the School’s history, but less than what was spent on immediate needs or raised in planned gifts. It is recommended that this juxtaposition of fundraising success and ongoing financial challenge continue to be explained clearly to the School’s constituency.

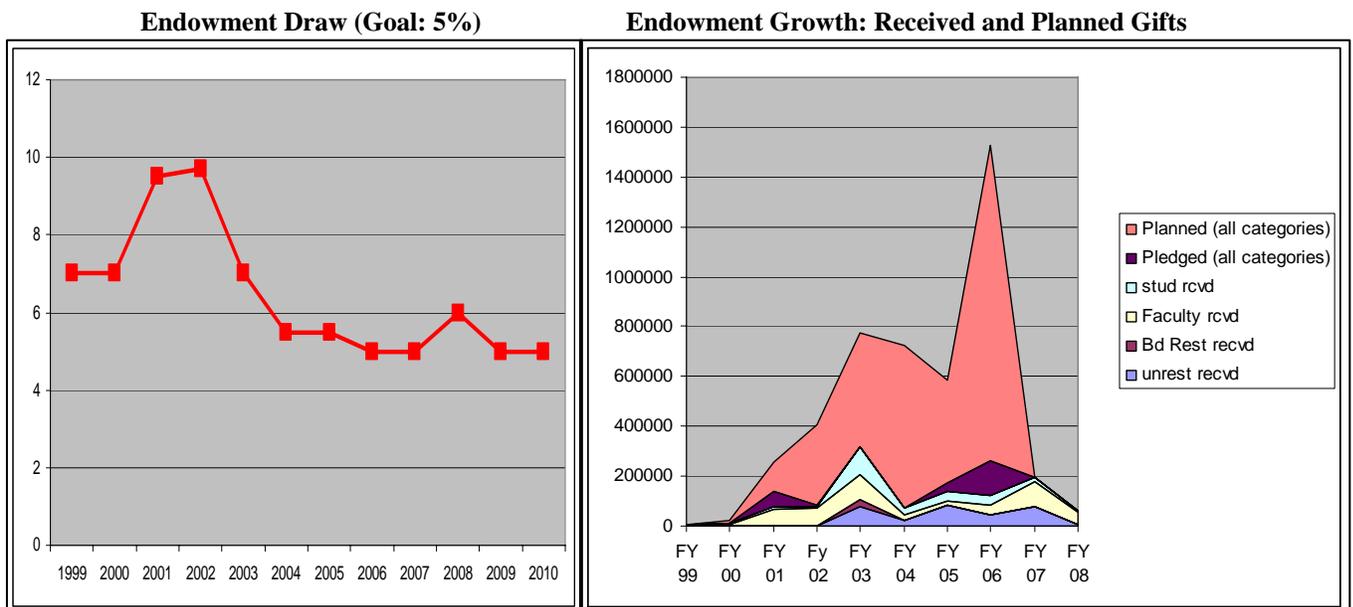


Endowment

Starr King has a few endowment funds managed by the Unitarian Universalist Association. These include the Horace Davis Starr King Fund of \$232,149.79; and the Horace & Edith K. Davis Fund of \$122,714.77. However, the vast majority of the School’s endowment funds have been invested with the Common Fund since 1994. As of June 30, 2007, the endowment totaled \$6,872,787.43, up from \$5,116,942 in 1997.

The School’s finance and investment committees provides endowment oversight. The investment strategies of the School are conservative. For most of the past decade, 40% of the endowment has been invested in multi-strategy fixed income bonds, and 60% in multi-strategy equity funds. At this writing, the impact of the fall 2008 economic crisis is still being assessed, but the allocation mix will warrant review, and the impact of the steep losses will require adjustments in the school’s five year financial projections, necessitating even greater success in enrollment growth and annual giving.

The Common Fund has done a reasonable job in investing the School’s endowment with an average annual return of 8.2% over the decade. In 2004 the board adopted a draw policy of 5.0% of the average total endowment balance (averaged over the previous thirteen quarters). The 5% draw policy is intended to provide operational funds to support the School while also allowing the endowment to grow so as to preserve its value against inflation. The actual draw was high in the first half of the decade but the Board has been diligent in reducing it to 5%.

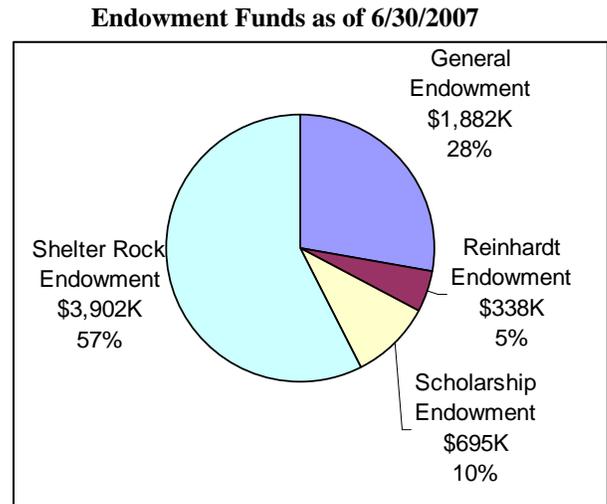


Planned giving was a key part of the School’s Centennial Campaign and is instrumental to the future growth of the endowment funds. Given the success of the campaign’s planned giving efforts, it is estimated that the School will be able to roll an additional

\$50,000/year into the general endowment and \$60,000/year into the scholarship financial projections starting in 2010.

Much of the School's endowment is restricted to targeted purposes, including the Shelter Rock endowment for faculty enhancement, the Reinhardt professorship endowment and an endowment for several named student scholarships. Fortunately, these purposes are in line with the core needs for faculty and student support and the School is not hampered by these designations. The unrestricted general endowment of \$1,822K provides very modest leeway for other purposes or initiatives.

The Financial Future



The School has weathered the 2001-2002 downturn in the economy, declared financial exigency, and come through talks of merger. It has also raised significant funds, all while remaining true to its educational priorities. The strategies that saw the School through were straightforward: have a solid, adaptable plan grounded in mission; budget frugally; honor donors well; keep accurate records; and have trustees and a core group of volunteers working with the President and advancement staff to make the calls and visits that lead to generous support from donors.

The School recognizes that its financial health is vulnerable to economic and stock market performance and to fluctuations in a relatively small enrollment. Starr King continues to operate with concerns about the difficulty of balancing the annual budget; the fact that compensation is not where it should be; and the knowledge that the School is under-resourced in terms of the number of staff and faculty. Uncertainty regarding denominational funding adds to the pressure.

Looking to the future, Starr King has set an aggressive strategic plan for educational innovation that will require significant money to achieve and will also generate increases in tuition income. The next phase of fundraising work will focus on growing cash for the School's annual funds while continuing to build the endowment through planned gifts, bequests and cash contributions. The \$8.2 million raised during the campaign was done with no more than two full-time advancement staff at any given time, and with nearly two-thirds of the President's time devoted to fundraising. To accomplish an even larger record of success, it is recommended that the School add at least one full-time major gift officer; increase the time and energy board members play in securing major (\$10K) and principle (\$1M) endowment gifts; and reach beyond Unitarian Universalist circles to bring new foundations and forgotten graduates into the School's exciting mission.

Continuation of sound financial strategies to manage the School's resources will be critical looking forward. It is recommended that the School continue to keep its draw on its endowment to 5%, that it closely monitors the impact of the fall 2008 global economic crisis and make contingency plans. It is further recommended that the School budget

expenditures within available resources for the foreseeable future, rather than borrowing from its reserves. The School also recognizes the possibility that plans to increase enrollment may be negatively affected by the global credit crisis if students' ability to borrow funds to pay for their tuition and expenses comes under pressure. The pace of implementation of components of the strategic plan should be congruent with reasonable projections for new income, and their continuation should be evaluated based with respect to projections of sustainable income. Starr King exists within a consortium that holds promise for collective sustainability through difficult economic times. The School will continue to develop its strategic plans in cooperation with the work of the Graduate Theological Union's Alternative Futures Task Force. Additionally, the School has a clear fallback contingency plan: Becoming a House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion.

Flexibility, creativity, stamina, vision and the capacity to make hard decisions will be needed going forward. Starr King's track record on these qualities is strong, so there is reason for hope. As founding President Earl Morse Wilbur commented in 1929, reflecting on the School's first 25 years of existence, quoting another famous writer:

*'She is a little school, but there are those who love her,
Those who have sacrificed for her,'
And so we greet the future with a cheer.*

Conclusion

As the School looks to the future, it recognizes that its character and work going forward will be shaped by the decade of success and struggle just past. In April 2008, the Board of Trustees devoted its meeting to reflecting on what the School had learned over the past decade that should inform the School's future. To gain perspective, the Trustees read the first draft of the self-study and invited Board Chairs from the past two decades to meet with them. Past Board Chairs offered their thoughts on where the School had been and where it should go. Trustees then summarized their overall assessment of the past ten years by identifying the following joys and struggles. This self-study has elucidated these joys and struggles and its recommendations flow from them:

Joys

The School has been clear, consistent and successful in its mission to educate people for Unitarian Universalist ministry and for progressive religious leadership for society.

The School's graduates are leaders within and beyond the Unitarian Universalist movement, pursuing varied paths in ministry and religious leadership that exhibit and inspire compassion, peace, and justice. They have learned to be ethically sensitive and discerning leaders; to understand the theological and practical issues inherent in ministry; to understand the historical development of Unitarian Universalism; and to call forth the full, authentic presence of people. The School is proud of each of them.

Throughout the decade, students have been taught well by faculty members who have given their time, talent and expertise to guiding and nurturing, confronting and challenging, healing and building-up. The School is deeply grateful to the faculty for its leadership and sacrifices, many of which will never be fully known.

Over the past decade, at the recommendation of the ATS, the School has established and maintained an administrative infrastructure. The staff has worked with dedication, professionalism and pastoral sensitivity. The School is deeply blessed not only by their work and commitment, but by the fullness of the people that they are.

The Board of Trustees is strongly committed to the School's mission and has exhibited leadership that has seen the institution through a number of difficult and painful crises. The School continues to exist because of their determination.

The School continues to exist! Starr King has faced steep challenges described in this self-study that may have led to its closing. We delight that it is otherwise.

The School has kept pace with needed maintenance of its building, improved its facilities and its technology infrastructure, implemented successful fundraising campaigns, and produced distinct and effective communications materials in print and on the web.

The School embodies Unitarian Universalist values in its educational mission and pedagogy. It has deepened its commitment to countering oppressions, cultivating multi-religious life and learning and creating just and sustainable communities. It has endeavored to renew the public character of religious leadership and ministry, to increase historical and cultural consciousness, and to promote religion and the arts.

The School has focused and strengthened its Master of Divinity degree, introducing innovative educational practices including threshold areas, portfolio conferences and the “ECO/Threshold Seminar.”

The School has developed and established new educational programs, including the Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change degree (MASC), the common Master of Arts degree with the Graduate Theological Union, online education and learning opportunities for lay leaders.

The School is respected for its distinctive contributions to the Graduate Theological Union, particularly for its work in the areas of feminist scholarship, interfaith engagement, Islamic studies, queer studies, anti-racism, and prophetic justice for poor and marginalized populations.

Enrollment in the School’s degree programs reveal an upward trend and new educational offerings (such as online courses) continue to attract growing numbers of participants.

Learning is happening! The parish internship program is thriving. Chapel services are lively, imaginative, and meaningful. In sites around the world where Starr King students, faculty and staff are at work, the School’s energy, vitality and spirit is vibrantly manifest.

The School has strong presidential leadership and has worked to clarify the distinct roles and responsibilities of the President and the Board. The School’s professionalism, clarity, appropriate boundaries, and accountability structures have been improved. As a result, the School has become a healthier and more professional institution.

The School has diversified its faculty, staff and student body. Every year during the past decade the School’s core faculty and core staff were predominantly comprised of people from historically marginalized communities. These include women, people of color, people who identify as queer (LGBT), religious minorities, immigrants, and the poor and the formerly poor. The School has negotiated an institutional shift of power with respect to supporting new possibilities of leadership in theological education. It has confronted external and internalized dynamics suggesting that the historically marginalized cannot lead. The shift is unprecedented in the School’s context. It is good, hard work.

The School has survived, perhaps made stronger by its struggles and conflicts.

Struggles

The School remains under-funded for its mission. Leaner and tougher institutions can be healthier than those with too much, but there is such a thing as too lean. Progress has been made, but there is still much to do to assure financial stability for the School for the long haul. Strategies of growing the enrollment, building the annual fund, and raising more money for the endowment, while operating within current resources to the best of our ability, need to continue.

The School's financial challenges and retrenchment decisions took a toll on relationships and morale. Over the decade, the School has once laid-off faculty and three times laid-off staff. Faculty members and staff have taken on heavier or more complex responsibilities, with improvements in compensation delayed. Several current core faculty members are on year-to-year contracts which provide the School with necessary financial flexibility. This flexibility needs to be balanced with attention to how the School might best provide longer-term security for a larger number of core faculty members.

Students who choose to attend Starr King must bear significant costs. Financial aid resources have slowly increased, but remain extremely modest. Most students work during their graduate studies. Many graduates carry high debt loads. Going forward, the School needs to continue to raise more resources for financial aid.

While the School enjoys positive relationships with the majority of its Unitarian Universalist graduates, it has tended to lose touch with the forty percent of its graduates who are serving as religious leaders in religious traditions outside of Unitarian Universalism and in contexts other than congregations. These represent an under-tapped resource for financial giving to the School and for extending the School's person-to-person recruitment efforts. Future recruitment and advancement work should renew connections with them, and call on their support.

The School has been challenged by some of its constituency to articulate in theory and practice how the work of counter-oppressive, multi-religious education relates to preparing people for Unitarian Universalist ministries. At times, lack of understanding or outright disagreement with the School's commitments has resulted in the withdrawal of financial support, conflict, and even hate mail. External resistance to the School's efforts to diversify its faculty has affected the School internally. The School's faculty and staff – consisting for most of the decade almost entirely of people from historically marginalized communities—have responded to this pressure while also dealing with their own internalized oppression. Going forward, the Board, faculty and staff need to continue to interpret the School's commitments clearly and boldly, forging ever deeper confidence and solidarity in leading the good work of the School.

Over the decade, the School's denominational base of support has been in flux, while the denomination considered its goals and priorities for Unitarian Universalist theological education and ministerial excellence. These changing patterns in denominational funding present a challenge and an opportunity. The School should continued to pursue healthy relationships with the Unitarian Universalist Association and Meadville Lombard

Theological School, while also expanding its own mission and base of support beyond an overly-exclusive relationship with Unitarian Universalism.

Finally, Trustees noted that as the School implements its new strategic plan, the School's leaders will need to remain alert to avoid new expressions of old systems-dynamics. The strategic plan won't guarantee a healthy organizational system without vigilant attention to the practices that will advance the School as a just, sustainable, responsive and compassionate institution. It is important to stay in right relationship with each other, as well as with Unitarian Universalist and multi-faith leaders. To respond to this challenge, the School needs to reflect continually on the theological sources of its commitments and to seek a deep spiritual engagement with the holy.

Summary Recommendations

By way of summary, this section highlights the major recommendations found throughout the body of this self-study. Implementation of each of these recommendations has already begun.

- 1. That Starr King School for the Ministry be “out loud and proud” regarding its Unitarian Universalist values of countering oppressions, cultivating multi-religious life and learning, and creating just and sustainable communities.** This involves further research and publication of Unitarian Universalism's historical commitment to these values; considering whether to make representation of religious diversity a formal criteria for service on Starr King boards, committees and other decision making bodies; and giving on-going attention to the authorization, support, and celebration of leaders from historically under-represented communities.
- 2. That the faculty and Academic Affairs department design and implement a new educational model that will advance Starr King's educational excellence, open the School to a larger enrollment by providing greater flexibility and accessibility for students, and make more effective use of teaching staff, educational resources, and new educational technologies.** This plan allows for far more community engagement by embracing multi-residential and immersion learning, and allows the School to grow the student body with a minimal investment in property development, and without further stressing the close confines of the current building. The plan should give particular attention to ensuring a sense of community for low-residency students, and providing additional resources for the educational needs of the growing M.A. and MASC populations. Timelines should include preparatory phases for planning, fundraising, and internal development with every new educational initiative or practice the School seeks to launch.
- 3. That the Faculty further improves the School's Threshold and evaluation model.** The faculty should consider assigning more specific learning outcomes for students to achieve; publicizing GTU and UCB resources that fulfill these requirements; dividing the first threshold “life in religious community and interfaith engagement” into two; renaming the thresholds to reflect multi-religious education and diverse forms of

religious leadership; and continue working with students to match the thresholds to their career goals. Additionally, the faculty should give attention to which methods of evaluation are the most successful, and consider reducing the number of evaluations, particularly in regard to the M.Div. representative work and the dual requirements of those seeking Unitarian Universalist Fellowship ministry.

- 4. That the faculty, Academic Affairs Department and Board of Trustees, in consultation with Goddard College, review the plan for the teaching body as a whole in the spring of 2010.** The current configuration maximizes student engagement through advising, teaching and mentoring, but may compromise research, contribution to the GTU, and continuity in faculty leadership. Special consideration should be given to assure that the teaching body is prepared to meet student needs in all three degree programs and in all modes of learning. Possibilities to stabilize relationships with adjunct faculty and visiting professors should be pursued. Current efforts to connect the whole teaching body into a closer collegial relationship should be enhanced using the All-School symposia to gather core, visiting and adjunct faculty together with intern supervisors. It is further recommended that a formal process be developed for the selection, orientation, support, and evaluation of intern supervisors and visiting ministers. Once completed, the new processes should be incorporated into an updated faculty handbook.
- 5. That the Student Services department reorganize itself to fully and equally support the three degree programs and multiple modalities of the School.** Standardization of registration procedures and greater emphasis on student agency and responsibility in administrative details and deadlines would free up the department to focus on program-specific proposals, including: providing services for M.A. and MASC programming and formal vocational placement; creating cohort groups and speakers specific to the needs of each program; providing fuller services for students studying online or in the field; and promoting scholarships and opportunities for a greater array of students. Additionally, it is recommended that the student handbook be reorganized to provide distinctive sections for 1) the information that applies to everyone, 2) that which applies to a particular degree program, and 3) that which applies to a particular mode of learning. An online version of the handbook and frequently used forms should be made available on the website. Additionally, greater awareness of the GTU M.A. handbook should be assured.
- 6. That the Student Services department, working with the departments of Academic Affairs and Communications, design and implement a recruitment and marketing plan.** The plan should increase the size of the student body and institutionalize intentional efforts to build relationships with broader circles of religious and secular progressive communities, both within and beyond Unitarian Universalism. Strategies include the hiring of recruitment and communications staff, attendance at denominational, interfaith, secular and professional meetings, maintain a regular presence at activist, professional, academic (both secular and religious) conferences; possible overnight recruitment events for prospective students; the revival of “Starr King on the Road”; and updates to the School’s website to draw new

constituencies and publicize the multiple community and interfaith uses for Starr King degrees. Success will depend upon adequate staffing and resources.

- 7. That the Admissions and Scholarship committee consider adjustments to its applications and timelines.** These include consideration of whether to make the application readily available on-line; requiring applicants to submit materials electronically; asking students about their desire and ability to study in a multi-religious context, their technological skills and equipment, and their library resources outside of Berkeley; allowing letters of recommendation from community activists in lieu of letters from religious leaders for those applying to the M.A.S.C. program; and noting that letters of reference may come from a minister, rabbi, imam, shaykh, etc., rather than solely a “minister”. Strategic linkages between scholarship granting and admissions should be explored, such as: adjusting scholarship timelines to match the admissions process, using historical data and projections to provide earlier financial aid estimates, providing higher financial assistance for first year students, and utilizing partial tuition waivers when scholarships are not available.
- 8. That the Advancement Department, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees, design and implement short-term and long-term financial and fundraising plans.** In addition to meeting the programmatic needs of the school, the plan should intentionally reach out to the 40% of graduates working in religious leadership for society, and make a special effort to provide additional scholarship support for students of color, students with disabilities, MASC and M.A. students engaged in academic or internship placements, and students from multi-religious backgrounds. It is recommended that the plan add at least one full-time major gift officer; increase the time and energy board members play in securing major (\$10K) and principle (\$1M) endowment gifts; and reach beyond Unitarian Universalist circles to bring new foundations and forgotten graduates into the School’s exciting mission. Particular attention should be given to explaining the juxtaposition of fundraising success and ongoing financial challenge to the School’s many constituencies.
- 9. That the Finance and Administration department continue sound financial strategies to manage the School’s resources.** It is recommended that the School continue to keep its draw on its endowment to 5%, that it closely monitor the impact of the fall 2008 global economic crisis and make contingency plans. It is further recommended that the School budget expenditures within available resources for the foreseeable future, rather than borrowing from its reserves. The pace of implementation of components of the strategic plan should be congruent with reasonable projections for new income, and their continuation should be evaluated based with respect to projections of sustainable income. When possible, the School should continue to improve compensation. It is also recommended that a more participatory budget process continue to be developed.
- 10. That the Finance and Administration department, in collaboration with the faculty and the Departments of Academic Affairs and Advancement, develop a plan for increasing access to institutional and educational technology.** This will

involve investment in at least one full-time designated institutional technology specialist; upgrading the current technology to keep pace with the School's pedagogical commitments; and providing structured opportunities for real technology training for all members students, faculty and staff. Continued reliance on collaboration and outside consultants should only be continued if it can meet both the educational and financial needs of the institution.

11. That the Board of Trustees be reorganized and revitalized to successfully achieve the School's mission, vision, and strategic goals. This will involve restructuring the board's work around functioning committees, including an executive committee; considering the criteria of multi-religiosity, philanthropic skill, contacts and means when recruiting new Board members; assuring on-going training for fundraising; and focusing on three imperatives: speak well of the School, raise money, and recruit students.

12. That the President designate committees, policies or procedures to assure a more frequent and standardized review of several specific administrative responsibilities. These include periodic review of the grievance policies; clear written job descriptions and evaluation criteria for all members of the staff; analysis of the expectations, services, limits and risks that come with the invaluable work of volunteers; continual balancing between financial viability and human sustainability; and establishing specific objectives for the integration of the Wilbur Rare Book Collection into the Graduate Theological Union's library system to assure accessibility to Unitarian Universalist students and scholars.

Postscript

The following words, originally shared at a service of welcome for new faculty in 1996, formed the conclusion of the School's last self-study for the ATS in 1997. It is appropriate that they be repeated here.

"The School began in hope and continues in hope.

We hope the School will make it possible for there to be more ministers and religious leaders in the world who are progressive, broad-minded, intellectually responsible, alert to the social problems of the time, capable of leading congregations to contribute to the shaping of a common good, and willing to offer religious and ethical leadership throughout society.

We are especially concerned that religious leadership be capable of addressing the realities of violence: violence against women and children, violence constructed racially, and by gender, sexuality, age, and physical condition; violence against the earth.

We want religious leadership that can bring refreshing depth to a culture made banal by its hectic, numbing and destructive materialism, and that restores human connection, intimacy and community, in a society of up-rootedness, alienation and fragmentation.

We want religious leadership that is ordinary, down to earth, practical, sane, humane—humanizing and humble.

We want religious leadership that reconnects us to the resonances of history, and does not only seek to move onwards and upwards forever.

We want religious leadership that can move us in new ways imaginatively and ritually . . . that are sensitive to cultural specifics, and that foster life that is respectfully and authentically multi-cultural.

We want religious leadership that takes us to the threshold places, revealing the directions in which we need to move, the passageways through which we must travel, so we as a society can cross over into another way of life, one that is more sustainable, has more intimacy, depth and justice.

We want a way of life that no longer is content with any form of silencing of the human soul—not the silencing of gender, not the silencing of sexuality, not the silencing of the young or the silencing of the old, not the silencing or constricting of human life by how we construct and then enact racial hierarchies.

We want to step across a threshold into a place of wider embrace of human possibilities, a deeper listening, and a fuller human engagement.

Our educational work is dedicated to calling forth the presence of religious leadership which embodies these hopes.”

The School still continues in hope. But today that hope is backed up by a comprehensive strategic plan which builds upon the School’s joys and is attentive to its concerns.

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General Institutional Standard 10: Multiple Locations and Distance Education

It must be noted that while Starr King includes on-line courses, field work in congregations at a distance from Berkeley, and international immersion opportunities as modes of learning for its degree students, none of these constitute a distinct extension program or even a distance learning program. Rather, the School's educational commitments and practices exemplify an understanding that globalization in theological education must be an integral component of the School's life and work. In keeping with this understanding, this self-study does not include a separate section for distance learning, but rather integrates the findings into the fabric of the text, in the same way that students, faculty and staff encounter multi-locality throughout their work and courses of study. The school maintains a Berkeley residency requirement in all its degree programs.

All students engage in residential learning in Berkeley, while also being challenged and supported in educational activities that move them into the world or engage them in their home locations. The School's strategic plan allows for far more community engagement by embracing multi-residential and immersion learning, and allows the School to grow the student body with a minimal investment in property development, and without further stressing the close confines of the current building. Starr King School for the Ministry is requesting permission from the ATS to allow M.Div. and M.A.S.C. students to earn up to one-third of their credits through graduate level online courses offered through Starr King or other member schools of the Graduate Theological Union. Because there are no standards specific to this request, the School has responded comprehensively to the standards in section 10 as a substitute.

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