

The students who graduated in May, 2018

ATS reporting requirements (Standard 6.4.4) requires us to make an annual public statement about our educational effectiveness. The report is still being written, but here are preliminary demographic data and some comments from the graduates' petitions to graduate.

The 2018 graduating class consisted of:

21 graduates (18 MDiv and 3 MASC)

14 (66.7%) of the graduating class were UU

7 graduates were not UU

76.2 percent of the graduates were high-residency for at least part of their time at SKSM

23.8 percent of the graduates were solely low-residency

17 of the graduates were White

4 of the graduates were people of color

What our 2018 graduates are doing:

2 are back in school, working toward their DMin and PhD degree

3 are in one-year chaplaincy residency programs

5 are interns in UU congregations

2 are not working (one is pregnant, one is studying for the MFC and caring for her ill spouse)

3 are interim ministers or employed in UU congregations/contexts

6 are working in community organizations commensurate with their MDiv degrees.

The annual satisfaction survey (sent out late this past year with only partial response) showed consistent satisfaction with what they had learned in their academic programs at SKSM.

Some soundbytes from 2018 graduates' petitions to graduate, sorted into our 8 thresholds.

THRESHOLD 1: LIFE IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY & INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

SKSM provided me deep connections with those from faiths I had not previously experienced much, nor very positively. Sufi, Muslim, atheist and Christian SKSM students provided me a religious community in which I learned and grew. – AF

The experience of living, eating, playing, and praying with other seminarians day-in and day-out has given me the opportunity to explore my spirituality and participate in the beloved, faith-filled community that so many of us always talk about.-- MM

THRESHOLD 2: PROPHETIC WITNESS & WORK

Because of my time at SKSM I now hear and see and experience the world differently.... To be sure, I have always believed that social justice was important yet 4 years ago I would not have put it at the forefront of a minister's duties. – DB

No matter where I am or what work I do going forward, I will always expect myself to center the experiences of marginalized people and beings. – ST

In my experience, I have found that most institutions doubt and deny that oppression exists, yet at Starr King there is a commitment to educate to counter oppression, its existence being beyond question.—AJ

THRESHOLD 3: SACRED TEXT & INTERPRETATION

... the sacred texts which call to me are not those of major religions. I am drawn to works of fiction, biographies, and prophetic works in today's contexts... [These] are the sacred texts that I will use to tap into the knowledge of our planet and human collective. – ST

I want to interpret and reclaim Christian scriptures because there is so much beautiful scripture that can ground a community and hold it accountable to an anti-oppressive vision.—EK

THRESHOLD 4: HISTORY OF DISSENTING TRADITIONS & THEO/LOGICAL QUEST

Dissenting is sparked by the repeated, embodied experience of dissonance. The internal sensation of dissonance has expressed itself in my early life through the familiar bubbling up of the statement: *That doesn't make sense*. – KS

My dissenting spiritual tradition is primarily that of ... survivors of faulty (public) educational and mental health systems... This is a holy human collective, like groves of old trees with thickly interlocking root systems, a deeply spiritual community that I have experienced. -- KS

I have thrived on the chance to make meaning from the history of religion and theology, and this has given me much more insight into how and why justice work and spiritual grounding are companions in this work. – NKR

THRESHOLD 5: SPIRITUAL PRACTICE & CARE OF THE SOUL

... the spiritual practices which bring me the most joy and peace of mind. Cooking healthy, fancy, and beautiful food, praying spontaneously in gratitude and in need ... and celebrating a more traditional Shabbat ... are some of the most important practices to my daily/weekly living. – ST

One of the most important parts of leadership that I have cultivated over my time at Starr King is the practice of “servant leadership” —rather than needing to be in the spotlight, or have my ideas/vision be the driving force, I have tried to expand my capacity for listening to and understanding the needs of the people I serve, and responding appropriately.— MM

THRESHOLD 6: THEOLOGY IN CULTURE & CONTEXT

I had a powerful experience with the UU College of Social Justice in Nicaragua in which we learned from local organizers and academics... These experiences of theology in action through academic writing and grass roots organizing have given me a better understanding of how to interact with the liberal religious communities of which I am a part. – ST

... the courses that have most stimulated me, inspired me, and expanded my understanding, have been the ones on theology. The opportunity to read some of the theology from the view of eco-feminism, liberation theologians, and counter-oppressive viewpoints exploring sexuality, gender identity, race, class, etc. has provided new levels of ways to see the world.... – NKR

THRESHOLD 7 – EDUCATING FOR WHOLENESS & LIBERATION

Teaching can't be isolated to one area of life in ministry. We are called to always be ready to teach others as we in turn learn from others and from the world. -- NKR

There is [in congregations] a hunger to understand religions outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Nourishing those with this hunger—and actually cultivating the hunger—in people of all ages is part of our job as ministers. – LF

I led a three-part lecture series for GTU students on Mormonism and its history, beliefs, and social issues. I have led two classes [at a UU church]...: one on the basics of Islam and etiquette for visiting a mosque, and one helping those with scars from previous religious experiences heal. – RMW

THRESHOLD 8: EMBODIED WISDOM & BEAUTY

Over the course of my learning I have learned to think of my body as wise. My body is a storyteller, a voice of accountability, a gentle and fierce healer, a hearthstone of beauty, and an engine of love. My body is an archive of memory, the Powerhouse of all my doing and my safe place of rest. – TB

[a day spent with Faithful Fools on the streets of the Tenderloin in SF] ..from joyfully dancing with an elderly homeless man... [to seeing] the shards of a broken mirror in the treasured belongings of another. Seeing myself in these shards of glass became one of my first poems as a Starr King student. – CC

This seems like such an “unbeautiful” time that bringing beauty into the world seems like a radical act of love. -- DH