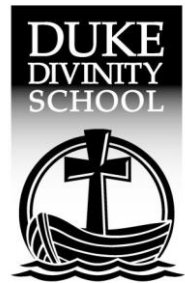


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DATE: March 12, 2010

FROM: Greg Jones

TO: Peter Lange

RE: New Degree Proposals

The proposals for three new degrees accompany this memo. As you know, the Divinity School's new strategic plan centers upon the creation of three new degree programs—Master of Arts in Christian Studies (M.A.C.S.), Master of Arts in Christian Practice (M.A.C.P.), and Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.). Although each of these degrees has its own aims and end, they stand together as the core of the School's new strategic plan, and for this reason we are submitting them for approval at the same time. The proposal for each degree narrates the rationale for that degree, but let me make a few brief comments about how these degrees, collectively, form our strategy for the future.

It has always been the case that the degrees offered by Duke Divinity School have been designed and defined principally in relationship to the church. Thus as part of our strategic planning process we conducted an in-depth assessment of the relationship between the long-term trends in Christian ministry and our four current degree programs. We concluded that these four degrees remain strong and are essential aspects of our existence as a top-tier institution of theological education. At the same time, however, we identified a significant trend in the relationship between the church and theological education that warrants a considered response.

The trend we identified concerns our Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. For several years, we have been the exception to national trends shifting away from residential M.Div. programs; but last year those trends began to catch up with us. We had strong numbers in overall applications to the Divinity School, but we saw a small decrease in M.Div. applications. Meanwhile, our exit interviews of M.Div. graduates indicated a rising number of students not intending to serve as pastors in local churches. During this same period overall inquiries to the Divinity School continued to increase, but many of the people inquiring were not focused on pursuing ordained ministry.

Both the instability in M.Div. applications and the increase in students seeking a vocation other than that of being a pastor in the local church correlate with research we conducted as part of our strategic planning process, which suggests that shifts away from M.Div. education, however small and subtle at the moment, expose weaknesses in the Divinity School's longstanding dependency on the M.Div. degree as a shorthand description of our central relationship to the church. The three proposals for new degrees address these weaknesses. In

broad terms, the weaknesses are two: (1) because of our current emphasis on degrees that prepare students either for ordination or research doctorates, we do not have degrees that allow us to attract the large and growing audience of lay people who are interested in theological education, but for whom neither ordination nor a scholarly career are aspirations; (2) we have no degrees to offer ordained men and women who, after serving in the local church or some other ministry for a number of years, determine that they need to pursue additional theological education in order to sustain their vocation and meet the challenges of their work.

The M.A.C.S. and M.A.C.P. degree proposals address the first of these weaknesses, and the D.Min. proposal addresses the second. As you may recall, in the initial draft of our strategic plan we outlined two, not three, new degrees. Our original intention had been to create the M.A.C.S. degree as a single degree that we would offer in a residential and an “executive” format, so that we would reach the widest possible audience of lay people. However, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) strongly encouraged us to submit for their approval two separate degrees to accomplish our aims with regard to lay education. In order to ensure a smooth approval process with the ATS, we have followed their advice and added a proposal for the M.A.C.P. degree.

Taken together these three degrees, if approved, will expand the reach of the Divinity School both into a varied audience of lay people—graduating undergraduates looking for next steps, graduate students in other professional schools seeking to supplement their chosen vocations with theological education, laity working in churches and church-related institutions who are in need of theological education in order to excel in their work—and into a large audience of ordained Christian ministers (many of whom are our own alumni) whose careers have begun to demand renewed and rigorous theological education. Each of these new audiences is important in its own right, but any one by itself is too narrow a base on which to build our strategy for the future.

The comprehensive character of our planning in this regard is apparent in the financials that accompany each degree. A significant part of our strategic planning process involved creating a new financial model that would carry the School well into the future. As part of this model, we projected that in our years we would need between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000 in new annual revenue—mostly from tuition, but some from new philanthropy. It became apparent in our planning that no single degree could carry this burden by itself; however, we do feel confident in projecting that, in combination, these three degrees will generate more than \$930,000 in new revenue by the fifth year, in no small part because of the real excitement that these ambitious plans have already generated with some of our significant donors.

Finally, let me note that our faculty and curricular planning for these degrees rests on the assumption that each degree will be fully integrated into faculty loads and curricular planning—thus we see these degrees as of a piece not only with one another, but also with the wider ambitions for the strategic direction of the School over the next five to ten years.