

Earlham School of Religion
Self-Study Report
for
The Association of Theological Schools
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E A R L H A M
SCHOOL *of* RELIGION

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INTRODUCTION

Context

This self-study occurs at a moment when much of the news surrounding theological education has an ominous tone. Enrollment trends are declining to the point that some of our peer institutions have been driven to desperate measures. Church membership shows a similar trajectory for many once stable denominations. Student debt has reached unrealistic levels for many well-intended ministers in the making. To further complicate matters, belief systems appear to be more fluid than in the past, with Christianity losing whatever place of primacy it may have once had in U.S. culture. These are a smattering of the influential factors shaping the context of this self-study. Like tectonic plates, the ground beneath theological education is shifting with ramifications that extend from adequate curriculum to resources and staffing to vocational placement opportunities. So significant are these factors that the school no longer is preoccupied with being located in a sleepy Midwestern town where the economy has never really recovered from the auto industry's exodus. It is no longer about location, location, location, if it ever even was. Nor is it about denominational loyalty or doctrinal purity, which frankly were always struggles for a centrist institution trying to serve a non-creedal faith tradition. Theological education is about relevancy; not just the claim of relevancy reinforced by appeal to platitudes, but relevancy demonstrated so that "doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God" is a defensible hope. It is about discovering meaning amidst the sense of a persistent and nagging call that continues to beckon a population, many of whom are not certain what they believe, if they believe, or if belief even matters in a post-modern context. It is about developing a niche that while rooted in the traditions that have sustained the faithful for generations will also venture to unexplored conversations for the sake of nurturing the formation and gifts of those who risk undertaking the process, and connecting enough dots that graduates can offer lives of ministry and service that matters to them and to the communities they call home. This context is not necessarily comfortable, but it does provide opportunity for imagination and renovation.

ESR's context is further shaped by Earlham College and Bethany Theological Seminary. ESR is a part of Earlham. As an embedded seminary at a liberal arts college, it is like and unlike its parent. Both are founded by Quakers and are committed to holistic education, but one is missionally pluralistic and the other is Christocentric. These do not have to be incompatible differences. ESR also partners with Bethany Theological Seminary, the seminary for the Church of the Brethren. In dealing with its own missional challenges over two decades ago, Bethany chose to build on the Earlham campus and relocated here in 1994. Together, these two products of the peace-church traditions complement one another's educational mission while not infringing upon the respective denominational identity or obligations. A robust shared curriculum, an enriched community life and a modicum of cost savings through select shared administrative functions are the primary outcomes of this partnership. The original visionaries of that partnership have moved on, leaving this current generation to inspire vibrancy and purpose in the relationship.

The Quaker component of ESR's identity provides the context for this most interesting moment. Quakers were slow to affirm the value of theological education due to the theological and ecclesiological peculiarities of the group. Over the years, different branches of Quakerism have embraced the school, while others chose not to do so. In some cases, this was due to how a particular branch might understand the necessities to create and nurture religious community; in other cases, it resulted from an assessment that ESR's educational curriculum was not a good match for the group's

understanding of faithfulness. Along the way, Quakers have not been exempted from cultural battles over sex, authority, and Jesus. The splintering of yearly meetings leads to new, smaller groups. In the wake of these events, ESR is left to ascertain where its educational ministry can be of service to the survivors. This is not an uncommon experience for theological schools. It does, however, contribute to ESR's assessment of its mission and future.

These factors converge to create ESR's current context. In retrospect, decisions made by earlier generations of leadership positioned ESR to remain strong in the face of these changes. Prior to the trend of partnerships and mergers, ESR formed a strategic partnership with Bethany in 1994. Even earlier than that, the ESR faculty developed program concentrations within the M.Div. that expanded its breadth beyond pastoral ministries to areas like peace and justice or writing as ministry. Many more schools are following suit these days.

During the period covered by this self-study, the school did experience a decline in new admissions beginning in 2011-12 but also experienced the first stages of a rebound last year. Thus far current recruitment activity gives reason for optimism that this will continue for a second year. We believe those are the results of new recruitment strategies that grew out of our planning. The Great Recession affected annual fund donations significantly; many of our most substantial donors are on fixed-incomes. As their funds have declined, the sizes of their gifts have reduced. Fortunately, funds raised for major gifts have more than offset the effect of annual giving. Through it all, budgets have remained balanced, community has remained healthy, and graduates leave prepared to answer their calling.

Review and Response

The 2006 Comprehensive Self-Study affirmed the school's efforts to address various issues identified in 1996 and later revisited in a Focused Visit in 2001. As recommended in the 2006 report, the school has continued to develop its intentional engagement with the Religious Society of Friends. Quakers have not been exempt from the religion and culture wars that affect much of the wider church. Still, ESR works to serve as broad a spectrum of Friends as possible, while also continuing to appreciate and cultivate a strong, ecumenical presence. Indeed, a strong ecumenical student body has been and is a positive feature of the ESR educational experience, as these students strengthen enrollment and increase theological diversity in the seminary. The school also continued to nourish and tend to the *ESR Access* program. When ATS last visited, we had preliminary approval for this distance education program. Following the graduation of our pioneering first class, ESR petitioned for and was granted on-going approval for this program. The visiting committee also affirmed a "nascent culture of assessment" upon which the school should lavish attention as that work continued. The institution hopes that this report conveys how deeply that encouragement was taken to heart. Indeed, assessment has been a key consideration over the past decade since the last comprehensive visit.

The last self-study named two items for further attention, and ESR has worked to faithfully address those within its context. First, the previous self-study identified lack of racial/ethnic diversity of the faculty as an item for attention. ESR advertises every search as affirmative action friendly, and balances that with its commitment to maintain the Quaker identity of its faculty and its intention to hire the most qualified person for the position. North American Quakerism is largely Caucasian, and to this point, the school has not succeeded in hiring qualified Quakers from other countries. Since the last self-study the school occasionally employed adjunct professors who added short-term racial diversity to the seminary community. However, in the spring of 2015 ESR concluded a search for a half-time theology position by hiring Grace Ji-Sun Kim. She is a Korean American and an ordained

Presbyterian minister. Grace is an exceptional scholar and writer, and had significant teaching experience in a seminary setting. With her hiring, the school finally had a successful first step in addressing the issue named in the last self-study. The search for a new business manager (an administrative faculty position) necessitated by Tracy Crowe's retirement, resulted in a hire that continues to address this matter.

The second item named for further attention was that of "process of placement." Placement is complicated by Quaker ecclesiology—many congregations do not employ ministers—and by Friends' lack of a centralized process for those congregations that do employ ministers. As ESR sought to address this void, it decided to develop a website that would serve, at a minimum, as a place for employment opportunities to be posted. An added objective was to strengthen ESR's network with the many Quaker organizations that do depend upon employed personnel. To create a more robust resource, the site links with other career sites, employment pages of Quaker organizations, religious and non-profit organizations such as Idealist Careers, and resources for job seekers such as MyPlan. Interested persons may register for weekly notification from the site. The development of this site complements the informal network of relationships with meetings and organizations that confer with various faculty and staff as resources for nominations of candidates for employment.

An additional idea currently in its infancy is the creation of a ministry incubator for graduates who, at the end of the program, find themselves most interested in non-traditional ministry that is entrepreneurial in nature and often does not fit in congregational or church structures that come with salary and benefits. As an example, many of our students desire a ministry in spiritual direction. It is a worthy ministry, but one for which there are few congregations (at least in the Quaker world) that seek to employ a spiritual director. If successful, this initiative may be less about placement and more about launching non-profit ventures as the chosen venue for the practice of their ministry. This idea falls into the category of innovation and imagination named earlier under context. It may amount to nothing ultimately, but the conversation seems to be valuable.

Other correspondence with the ATS during this ten-year period has been the occasional response to a question generated by annual report figures. Reported enrollment figures triggered the request on two occasions. A higher than anticipated headcount was addressed in 2012. The following year, a significant drop was addressed. The two cases were related in that a new registrar's misunderstanding reported high numbers one year which, when corrected the following year, created a different cause for concern.

Involvement in the Self-Study

The structure of this self-study process was intentionally broad. It began with participation in an ATS sponsored self-study workshop to help the institution fully appreciate current expectations in light of newly adopted standards for and emphases within theological education. Preliminary work began during the summer of 2014 as the Dean and his assistant began gathering materials that would be useful for self-study purposes. Work began in earnest during early fall 2014. It commenced with working lunches for the faculty as a whole, providing an opportunity for review of the standards and to identify themes and concerns that seemed appropriate for concentration during this self-study. The strategy behind these conversations was to engage the entire group in the self-study process, encourage reflection on the standards as applied to ESR, and to give all faculty members a voice at the outset of the process. Prior to these conversations, individual faculty members were assigned responsibility for writing the first drafts of individual standards. By

identifying them in advance, they could give extra attention to conversation related to the standard for which they were responsible.

Dean Jay Marshall wrote the draft for Standards 1 and 7. Professor of Peace and Justice Studies, plus the senior member of the faculty, Lonnie Valentine, created the draft for Standard 2. Professor of Quaker Studies, Stephen Angell, provided first drafts of Standards 3 and 5. Jane Pinzino, the theological librarian, wrote the draft for Standard 4. Director of Recruitment and Admission, Matt Hisrich, drafted Standard 6. Business Manager Tracy Crowe was responsible for addressing Standard 8. Matt Hisrich and Associate Professor of Pastoral Care, Jim Higginbotham, worked collaboratively on the draft for the Educational Standards and the Degree Program Standards. Each first draft was presented to the faculty as a whole prior to yet another round of working lunches. This time, the conversations evaluated the first draft, affirming the strengths and identifying areas that needed improvement or that were overlooked in the initial draft. The original authors revised their drafts accordingly and placed them on the server in a file restricted to faculty access, at which point the faculty was given a limited amount of time for additional comments.

At the end of the defined period of time, Associate Dean Tim Seid, charged with editing and revising the drafts, took the various chapters and began the work of creating a coherent whole. He worked closely with Dean Jay Marshall to further refine the report, and to draft an appropriate introduction and conclusion. A draft of the entire report was presented for review to various stakeholders: faculty, staff, students, the ESR Board of Advisors, the Earlham President, and the Earlham Board of Trustees. Explicit approval was received from the ESR Faculty. This process, we believe, ensures this self-study is the product of a collaborative process and reflects perspectives and voices of a diverse set of stakeholders.

Organization of the Report

The 2006 self-study was organized thematically, telling the ESR story while also addressing multiple standards in each chapter. In accord with the guidance given at the ATS Self-study training event, ESR has organized this self-study by considering each General Standard individually, followed by a sections on the Educational Standards and the Degree Standards.

In this more methodical approach, ESR is hopeful that its story may still be heard and that it will be a compelling one. Though the context described earlier demands focused attention and certain risks remain apparent, the faculty and staff are rather optimistic about the school's future. Sound strategic planning, dedicated attention to assessment, and an innovative spirit that intends to adapt to its ever changing context are key themes that undergird the optimism, and that should be evident in this report.

PART 1: GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

Standard 1: Purpose, Planning, and Evaluation

Purpose

Since its inception, Earlham School of Religion (ESR) has embraced a mission directed toward the preparation of persons for ministry in the manner of Friends. With that focus, it has served not only a diverse Quaker body but a wider circle of other compatible denominations and seekers. The rise and fall of trends, issues, and interests in academia, the Church, and society have, of course, influenced the implementation of that interest, creating healthy and sometimes difficult tensions with its constituents. Particularly in the last 17 to 20 years, ESR has directed deliberate attention to gathering and interpreting data, examining its assumptions, and revising—or even recreating—the programs by which it fulfills its stated mission.

ESR's well-defined sense of purpose and vision is evidenced by its recently reaffirmed mission statement, its complementary role as an embedded seminary within Earlham College, and the reflection within the 2013 strategic planning process as to how contemporary challenges are best addressed by the school's historic commitment.

ESR was founded in 1960 specifically with the ministry needs of Quakers in mind. In particular, the peculiarities of Quaker theology and understandings of ministry were driving forces in an effort to adapt to developments within Quaker ecclesiology. Retaining a commitment to Quakers' historic understanding of ministry while adjusting to a changing environment was paramount. That continues to be true for the school now nearly 60 years after its launch.

The school's mission statement, revised in 2000 as part of that strategic planning cycle, was reconsidered and reaffirmed during its 2013 strategic plan. The statement reads:

Earlham School of Religion is a Christian graduate theological school in the Quaker tradition. ESR prepares women and men for leadership that empowers and for ministry that serves. This mission grows out of our Christian belief that God calls everyone to ministry. Using a transformative model of education, ESR encourages students to explore the intellectual, spiritual and practical dimensions of their calls to ministry.

This mission is grounded in the conviction that education for ministry is a valuable process. It roots this educational process in the school's Christian and Quaker heritage and commits to a formative educational model that engages the whole person. Though Quaker in its identity, the school welcomes applications from any who meet the criteria for admission and wish to study at ESR. A strong mix of ecumenical students is served by this missional commitment.

Two key considerations when thinking of purpose are ESR's relationships with Earlham College and Bethany Theological Seminary. ESR is an embedded school, operating within the larger Earlham College context. The College was founded by Quakers in 1847. As an independent, residential college, its [mission](#) is to "provide the highest quality undergraduate education in the liberal arts, including the sciences, shaped by the distinctive perspectives of the Religious Society of Friends." The intended influence of Quaker perspectives and the school's understanding of education as the pursuit of truth create natural bridges of connection despite ESR's explicit Christian

commitment alongside the College's pluralistic religious environment. ESR's own commitment to inclusive models of Christianity, interfaith dialogue, and promotion of diversity within its student body further ease what could otherwise be a point of tension. The program objectives of ESR's two degree programs demonstrate a commitment to critical thinking, reflection, and integration of learning, all of which are complementary to the larger liberal arts culture at Earlham.

Any statement of purpose must also include the intentional partnership between ESR and Bethany Theological Seminary. The latter relocated to Richmond, Indiana, in 1994 and the two schools have worked in partnership since that time. According to its stated [mission](#) Bethany "equips spiritual and intellectual leaders with an Incarnational education for ministering, proclaiming, and living out God's shalom and Christ's peace in the church and world."

Based upon its mission and shaped by its respective partners, ESR envisions itself as a center for innovative, ministry-focused education that is relevant to the changing landscape of faithful living for individuals and communities. This vision is anchored in the following commitments:

- To ground education for ministry in spiritual formation that is transformative in its effect
- To understand that such formation can be a common connection across traditions, and that points of intersection exist between our Christian Quaker heritage and other traditions
- To connect education in the Bible, Christian theology, Church history, and practical training with the emphases of Quaker spirituality that lead to lives of ministry and service
- To be a source of leadership and a resource for renewal among the larger body of Friends and the wider church as "way opens"

These commitments incorporate a few revisions that arose from our 2013 strategic planning process (see Planning, below). It recognizes spiritual formation as a key component of the educational process we contend is transformational. It further names this formation as the potential bridge for dialogue across traditions—a facet of education whose place has been elevated in recent years as we consider the impact of ministry in a global and technologically driven world where differences are nearly impossible to avoid or ignore. Whereas previous value statements named "ministry in the manner of Friends" as a goal in its own right, the commitments named above focus on connecting classic disciplines with Quaker spirituality that lead to the desired life of ministry and service.

Planning

ESR is committed to regular cycles of strategic planning and institutional assessment guided by its missional focus. Since the last accreditation visit, ESR completed the goals of one strategic plan and adopted a new plan in 2013.

The plan approved in 2000 focused on communication and accessibility. It took a decade to complete because of the time required to develop, implement, and assess its distance learning program. A final piece of that plan, completed since the last self-study, was a curriculum revision of the M.Div./M.Min. and M.A. programs. Utilizing curricular metaphors provided by ATS material, the faculty recognized that its program better fits the discipleship model than the transformation model, though not in a traditional sense. That is to say, our graduates are typically disciplined in the

manner of Friends' listening for the guidance of the Spirit. This leads to personal transformation. But the transformation metaphor as used within the ATS metaphors focused on leadership that transformed ministry settings. The faculty desired a program that accomplished both and made the following changes to the M.Div./M.Min. program:

1. Recognizing that some graduates were heavily invested in their spiritual practice but apathetic about communal participation, the faculty developed a new required course in Spiritual Formation and Public Ministry. This course emphasizes communal spirituality and is paired with the Spiritual Formation and Personal Practice course.
2. Recognizing the increasing religious pluralism in our communities and considering feedback from alumni/ae, the faculty added courses in Interfaith Dialog and Contextual Theology. The former is designed to promote understanding and dialogue amid religious plurality; the latter utilizes immersion experiences to promote understanding of being "other" and issues of ministry that arise in such contexts.
3. Eliminated a teaching emphasis because our curriculum did not provide courses specific to teaching and pedagogical issues.
4. Introduced an emphasis in leadership, primarily because we discovered that many of our graduates are of an entrepreneurial sort and need preparation not covered by a traditional seminary curriculum.
5. Increased the hours required for graduation from 81 to 84 in the M.Div./M.Min. program to accommodate these changes.

In the review of the M. A. degree, the basic program structure remained the same, but hours were increased from 36 to 48 credit hours. Those additional hours are met by giving credit for three introductory courses which formerly did not count toward the total number of hours and also the allowance of one elective.

As the 2000 strategic plan neared completion, a series of focus groups and electronic surveys with actual and desired constituents gathered information to be used alongside reports by various groups such as the Pew Foundation and the Association of Theological Schools. A charge from the dean to an appointed planning group began by considering the question of the relevancy of theological education in a society where shifting values and demographics were changing the religious landscape with an effect on enrollment, fundraising, and placement of graduates.

The [2013 Strategic Plan](#) (see Appendix 01) identified four goals to receive attention during our next cycle:

1. Innovative adaptation of degrees and/or creation of certificate programs that align ESR's educational commitments with the changing context in which ESR functions, and which also contribute positively to ESR's revenue streams by increasing enrollment or fundraising.

ESR's niches in the Ministry of Writing and Quakerism attract students with an interest in a specific subject or craft but not necessarily a degree. Research from young adult Quakers indicated a desire for content related to faithful living rooted in theological reflection but less interest in ministry as a profession. Declining opportunities for living wages in traditional avenues for ministry also raised the ethical question of the cost of a three-year master's degree. Taken together, the strategic plan outlines an experiment with a limited number of certificate programs that can both serve a stated need and perhaps serve as a feeder program into the degree program for those who discover that the full degree is desirable after all.

2. Embrace public engagement as one feature of ESR's strategy for success.

Repeatedly, feedback suggests that the most effective means of connection with constituents is through personal contact and word of mouth: the satisfied alumnus; the faculty member offering a workshop; students traveling with the dean. For a small school like this one, everyone has a role to play in promoting the school's visibility and the value of its educational programs. Creating buy-in to that concept is a key to ESR's success.

3. Develop new or existing structures that support the success of faculty, staff, and students.

All would agree that we want to create an optimal environment for those who are employed here and those who study here. Much debate has occurred over what support structures in particular are the best choices. At the time of the last self-study, a question was raised about ESR's role in the placement of graduates. While Friends' decentralized structures do not provide easy avenues for such coordination, ESR has developed a job posting and search site ([Quaker Career Center](#)) that can serve employers and graduates alike. Additionally, the school has developed a [web page](#) to provide access to a multitude of electronic resources that assist the transition from student to job-seeker. Another significant addition to the available resources for students is that of writing assistance. Faculty often cites writing deficiencies as an issue in students' academic progress. ESR has designed a three-part process for these students: writing workshops; writing tutors/coaches who work to reinforce the strategies of the workshops; and a self-paced learning Moodle site called [Resources for Academic Research and Writing](#) (Moodle login required) consisting of a collection of links to online resources and video tutorials for further learning. A consistent resource of tutors is the largest challenge in this effort, and we continue efforts to solidify this portion of the support. The faculty has considered requests from students for a campus chaplain but has declined to move in that direction, in part due to structural and philosophical differences and in part due to costs. As a response to the issue, the school has elevated the often ignored availability of the Associate Dean as a resource and allocated funds for spiritual direction sessions for all students.

4. Explore partnerships, especially with Quaker organizations, that create mutually beneficial synergy in support of ESR's mission.

As a result of this initiative, the school developed a working relationship with [Earlham's M.A. in Teaching](#) program that allows students to choose a teaching emphasis in the M.Div./M.Min. program, in effect restoring the previously eliminated teaching emphasis. A course in Peace Journalism that is co-taught with an Earlham College professor has been added to the Ministry of Writing program. Preliminary conversations have begun with a local public university to explore the possibility of a joint M.Div./M.S.W. degree. Within the denomination, ESR is developing projects with [Friends United Meeting](#) (FUM, a Quaker denominational body) in which Ministry of Writing students' projects provide articles and resources for FUM's publishing ministry. This provides quality material to the denomination, plus experience and professional connections for our students. Beyond the denomination, ESR has established a mutually beneficial relationship with the Swedenborgian denomination. It has also implemented a streamlined application process with [Meadville Lombard](#) to admit their students who wish to take courses at ESR that are not offered at Meadville Lombard. Internationally, the faculty has provided teaching support for the Cuba Yearly Meeting Institute for Peace (Instituto Cuaquero Cubano de Paz) as a means of offering formative theological education to our Quaker constituents and in honoring the school's global responsibility. Some thought has been given to developing a

Quaker concentration for an accredited university in Kenya to better serve the needs of Kenyan Quakers. ESR recently signed a cooperative agreement with [Hanshin School of Theology](#) in Korea to create cross-cultural collaborative opportunities for faculty and students.

This strategy also permeates recruitment of students. By creating networking opportunities and devoting scholarships to students with particular experiences, ESR has developed fruitful connections with the leadership programs of Quaker colleges and several volunteer service and/or intern programs.

Evaluation

Evaluation at ESR is threefold: evaluation of students; evaluation of programs; and evaluation of the institution (including personnel).

1. The evaluation of student learning is described [here](#). The documented process utilizes individual course evaluations, advisor input, and annual deliberation by the faculty to assess student progress. Written feedback conveys any concerns identified by the faculty that requires student attention.
2. The last ATS comprehensive visit encouraged ESR to continue nurturing the “nascent culture of assessment” that was in evidence. Evaluation of the educational programs was directly fed by the curriculum revision described above as the faculty developed a program assessment process in which it:
 - a. Identified program objectives for each program.
 - b. Identified how each course contributed to these objectives and plotted those on a grid.
 - c. Developed a master syllabus for every course so that consistency of course construction and learning outcomes among professors could be assured.
 - d. Identified desired direct and indirect data to be gathered.
 - e. Formed an Assessment Committee to collect and review this data annually and provide a report to faculty with recommendations for action.
 - f. Considers reports from the Assessment Committee at least once annually with recommendations for change, as appropriate.

Some valuable information has been uncovered through this process. Educational effectiveness data reveals that those who graduate typically do so within 4–6 years. That alone is acceptable in terms of the letter of the law. However, data on student retention revealed that the school’s retention rate is lower than ESR had perceived; and the likely departure of our distance students (end of first year) is different than our residential students (third year). The data also demonstrated that students who took a two-year leave of absence rarely returned. The picture is further complicated by studies on student indebtedness. For a student who borrows the maximum amount available, each additional year of study adds about \$20,000 to the student’s accumulated debt. The faculty concluded that first-year distance students need better integration and personal support than has been received; in contrast, residential students appear to “hit a wall,” often driven by family hardships, financial challenges, or health issues. Admissions, then, began to revise strategies for orientation of new students, such as a welcome meal and gathering to launch two-week intensive classes. Student Services addressed strategies for more regular communication with

students at a distance. A limited number of full-tuition scholarships have been established, and the upper limit of need based aid increased from 40% to 50%. Lilly grant funds have been used to create a set of required workshops on developing [financial acumen](#) (Moodle login required). However, remedies for health issues are more difficult to address. The Business Office requested and was granted a policy change so that leaves of absence are limited to one year.

As a second example, the faculty also revised the assessment process itself after its initial implementation, acting on the assessment committee's recommendation for a different artifact from one of the capstone courses that would better address the program objectives. Even more, the group has now begun a process to assess the assessment process as a whole.

3. Institutional evaluation occurs continually through processes described in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and through the dean's administrative efforts. The Faculty Handbook delineates the criteria and process for faculty evaluations. For administrators, these are annual and are based on the employee's self-evaluations as related to stated criteria and the analysis of the dean. This process reviews the year's work against the stated goals and includes goal setting for the coming year. We recognize that "department goals" such as development or admissions are largely incorporated into personnel evaluations. This is primarily due to the fact that an area typically has one person devoted to the work, supported by collaboration with the faculty as a whole. For teaching faculty, evaluations occur in multi-year cycles using the criteria named in the Faculty Handbook. These criteria and the timing of teaching faculty reviews were reviewed by faculty in 2015. The criteria remained largely the same, except for more explicit guidelines for promotion of faculty rank. The sequence of evaluations changed slightly, moving from every five years to every six years after twelve years of service. At the heart of the consideration is to strike a balance between accountability to the institution and value to the reviewee.

Each year, administrators create a [Fact Book](#) that presents performance over time of fundraising, budget management, and admissions. This performance influences strategies for the coming year. For instance, after review of results of previous campaigns and an aging donor base, the school determined to forego the traditional, loyalty-based campaign model in favor of a cause-driven major gifts campaign. That has helped to fuel a substantial increase in restricted endowment funds without the cost of energy and dollars for a traditional capital campaign. This strategy has proven fruitful to date. Pastoral Studies, Christian Spirituality, Peace and Justice, Cross Cultural Ministry, Leadership, and Technology in Ministry endowments have been established and provide significant support to ESR's operations. Similarly, current analysis highlights the need for increased annual fund participation. Since the market turmoil of 2008–09, contributions to the annual fund have not recovered from a 25% drop even though the number of donors has remained comparable. Larger social trends in addition to denominationally specific issues affect denominational loyalty and the perceived value of the theological education in the 21st century church, leaving ESR with a significant challenge to raise annual fund totals. Declining membership within the denomination compounds the problem. Two emerging strategies in response to this are more direct efforts to recruit students as donors immediately prior to graduation and increased personal outreach to alumni/ae and Quaker congregations. The Director of External Relations now begins cultivation of students prior to graduation; the Dean has increased visitation and consultation with Friends meetings, particularly those within 70 miles of Richmond. They are each experimenting with electronic communication strategies

as a means of creating high-touch, cost effective contact with ESR's constituents. In terms of percentage of participation there is room for increase.

Closing Points on Purpose and Planning

Harkening back to the response to its 1996 Comprehensive Visit, ESR has demonstrated a commitment to thoughtful institutional evaluation and planning. As a consequence ESR has a deeper understanding of the missional challenges it faces. Some of these arise from institutional habits and trends in theological education. Others are thrust upon it by the changing ethos of religion in America and in particular, the Religious Society of Friends. Planning and assessment supports the work of a highly functioning team of administrative and teaching faculty. The work has been undertaken mostly with a good spirit in the understanding that it improves the quality of the school's functioning and fulfillment of its mission.

Achievements:

- ESR concluded its 2000 Strategic Plan, drafted and began a new plan in 2013.
- ESR revised its programs, both in form and content, to adjust to current challenges in hopes of serving its constituents and demonstrating the continued relevancy of theological education.
- ESR modified its fundraising strategy with significant success.
- ESR uses standard evaluation processes to monitor its activity and progress toward goals.

Recommendations:

The school should monitor the effectiveness of the changes implemented from strategic planning and assessment to determine if they help ESR succeed in its mission; no doubt this will need continual conversation and re-imagination.

Standard 2: Institutional Integrity

Conduct of Activities

As described by Standard 2, ESR's primary commitments for institutional integrity are its mission statement, the standards of the Association of Theological Education, the standards of the HLC as part of Earlham College, and its stated guidelines for dealing with its various constituencies. Though ESR is a Quaker school, there are no direct covenants with any particular Quaker group, though significant effort is expended to cultivate good relations with the various persuasions of Quakers, while maintaining the school's integrity of witness.

ESR is formally a graduate school within Earlham College and our mission is consonant with the mission of the College. Earlham, including ESR, is an institution founded by Quakers, upholding the traditionally Quaker testimony of integrity. As formally a division of the College, ESR was accredited by the Higher Learning Commission two years ago. As such, ESR was found to be in compliance with applicable laws.

The school's mission statement and its contribution to the larger College system were referenced in Standard 1. As the faculty reviewed the curriculum that supports this mission, it approved this statement of our curricular mission in late 2006:

We desire a curriculum characterized by spiritual formation and spiritual leadership, shaping graduates who, while sharing their faith with integrity, offer ministry that contributes to the transformation of communities and society, whether in traditional or non-traditional settings.

Before ESR's last accreditation the school had extensively revised and updated its policies and procedures in line with ATS standards. We regularly update the major policy documents, including the [Student Guide to Earlham School of Religion](#) and the [ESR Faculty Handbook](#). The relevant policies addressing legal obligations, such as FERPA, Non-Discrimination, Disability, Sexual Assault, and Harassment are provided to students and faculty in the Student Guide and Faculty Handbook. In addition to the catalog and relevant handbooks, the [ESR website](#) communicates important policies, standards, and processes in an effort to be transparent as well as just in its dealings with its various constituents.

Integrity as Compliance with Standards

With regard to commitments to ATS, the school complies with requests for annual data and any subsequent requests for clarification of changes in data. In compliance with the changes in the General Standards, the major work since the last accreditation has focused on refining and revising our assessment processes and implementing our strategic plan. To further improve the culture of assessment, the school first developed specific objectives in the M.Div./M.Min. and M.A. programs. The [M.A. program objectives](#) were reviewed and then approved in the fall of 2011 and the M.A. Guidelines were then revised in light of the objectives in early 2012. We also identified the [M.Div./M.Min. program objectives](#) and approved those in the spring of 2012.

In order to create an assessment process that would serve those two program objectives, we developed a [Master Syllabus](#) (see Appendix 06) for each course which presents program goals for both degree programs as well as aids adjuncts or faculty who would cover another faculty member's

course. This process led to structural changes in course syllabi changes and also greater cohesion of program objectives across all areas of the curriculum.

The school then addressed the means of evaluating program objectives, moving from narrative evaluations with no grades (though allowing for students to request grade conversions), to the use of rubrics for student evaluation and assessment of learning. These rubrics specifically connect evaluation of learning with degree program objectives. Because of both student and faculty concerns about the loss of the narratives, we retained the option for faculty to give narrative evaluation in addition to submitting course rubrics for assessment purposes.

We believe that this process and the result addresses assessment requirements of ATS, and this was done with integrity in the context of ESR's institutional mission statement and learning objectives related to our curriculum mission statement of 2006.

The next significant action with regard to maintaining institutional integrity was the commencement of our [Strategic Plan in 2013](#). We have long sought to consider the many ways ministry is understood in Quakerism and beyond, and this plan seeks to discern what changes we need to make now given trends affecting seminary education, religion in America, and the Religious Society of Friends.

For many years, ESR has offered various emphases within the M.Div./M.Min. program which follows from the Quaker understanding that all are called to ministry and so ministry comes in many forms. Each area of emphasis requires four courses in a specific area of the curriculum. The emphases continued since our last accreditation are: [Pastoral Ministry](#), [Pastoral Care](#), [Spirituality](#), [Writing](#), [Quaker Ministry](#), and [Peace and Justice](#). Since then we have added a [Religious Leadership](#) emphasis in response to our perception that current and potential students as well as other constituents are seeking leadership skills in order to better contribute to changing their work and community for the better. We have also reinstated our [Teaching](#) emphasis in partnership with Earlham's M.A. in Teaching program, which provides us with courses in pedagogy that we had previously been unable to offer. We are also in conversation with Indiana University East about a possible joint M.Div./M.S.W. program.

As we implement this plan, we do so in light of data gathered from current students, alumni/ae, and our larger constituency, including our ESR Board of Advisors, donors to the school, and Quakers not directly connected to the school. This is being done to assess "the efficiency of ESR's educational program in preparing students for the work/ministry they do," focusing upon graduates five, 10, and 15 years after graduation. For other constituents, we are seeking "to assess the progress made by ESR with regard to communication and accessibility in the last decade and determine current perception of need among these groups." The school has been clear about our goal of serving Quakers and the larger church beyond our degree programs. We already formalized and expanded our [Traveling Ministries](#) program where faculty offer lectures, workshops, and consultations to those interested in what we do. The school does this at no cost to those who ask us to come. As a next phase, we intend to utilize technology to broaden the opportunities available through the Traveling Ministries program.

ESR has been committed to increasing student awareness of issues of race, ethnicity, and culture as required by ATS Standards. However, we have gone further in that we also address issues of gender and class throughout our curriculum. In each theological discipline, these issues are addressed in a variety of ways. However, since our last accreditation, we now require of all M.Div./M.Min. students two courses that also address these concerns: Contextual Theology and Interfaith Dialog. Further, the school has expanded its offerings in contextual theology in order to

promote awareness of these issues. In partnership with Bethany Theological Seminary we have offered contextual theology courses led by faculty to China, Kenya, Israel/Palestine, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico/Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Germany, Italy, Ireland, India, and Philadelphia. Additionally, students can now take courses for credit with the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE) and Appalachian Ministries Education Resource Center (AMERC). We have also provided the opportunity for students to structure an individualized contextual theology course in line with our process for doing an Independent Study.

Other courses that clearly address the issues of race, gender, class, and other intercultural issues have included Bible in Global Context, Women and the Bible, Poverty and the Bible, Liberation Theologies, Eco-Spirituality, Introduction to Peace and Justice Studies, Church's Mission in World Community, Modern Quaker Life and Thought, and Human Sexuality in Ministry. Since ESR students can take classes offered by Bethany Theological Seminary, a number of Bethany courses also address these issues: Gender and Christian Devotion, Evangelism in a Postmodern Context, Youth and Mission, Women in Ministry, Conflict Transformation, Ecological Theology, Modernity, Postmodernity, & Belief. Our new marketing materials address the particular strengths of our program in intercultural programs and courses.

Related to the issues of cross-cultural understandings, ESR has developed relationships with the Friends Theological College in Kenya and the Quaker Institute for Peace in Cuba. Faculty have taught courses or presented programs in both locations. We were invited to visit the Friends Theological College to learn more about Quakers in East Africa (the largest concentration of Quakers in the world), and the entire faculty traveled there in 2011.

In our employment and admission practices, we continue to exceed the ATS standard of non-discrimination in employment and admissions. We actively seek to employ women and minorities and seek a diverse student body. We currently have two women and six men who are full-time teaching faculty and one woman teaching half-time. Of the seven administrative faculty, three are women serving as the Librarian, Director of External Relations, and Director of Academic Services (this is a shared position with Bethany). Progress has been made in the area of ethnic diversity as well.

We have revised the ESR Faculty Handbook regarding contract renewal and promotion. ESR Faculty benefits conform to Earlham College faculty benefits. The specific ESR faculty policies in the Handbook include policies with regard to sexual assault, harassment, sexual relations with students, equality of opportunity, and alcohol and drug use.

From our last accreditation, the percentage of women in the ESR student body has gone significantly above the approximately 50% mark that it had been for years. Since 2006, males have averaged about one-third of the student body. We continue to work on attracting international and minority students to the program. Since our previous accreditation, we have graduated six students from East Africa, one from Korea, one from Bolivia, and one from Sweden. Currently, we have two students from East Africa and one from Japan. Recently, we have graduated three African-American women and several GLBTQ students, including two transgender students. We have also sought to develop relations with the Metropolitan Community Church and have worked with a number of students from an MCC congregation in Indianapolis.

Our endowment for the long-established Cooper Scholarship has grown. Currently, this scholarship covers two-thirds of course credits required for the M.Div./M.Min. and one-half for the M.A. in Religion for residential students. Additionally, ESR provides other scholarship money, such as the Mullen Scholarship, which helps students in either the M.Div./M.Min. or M.A. program

complete their studies without tuition costs. The school provides up to 50% need-based aid to non-scholarship recipients. Since our last accreditation ESR added a major scholarship, the Leadership and Service Scholarship, which provides full tuition for the complete M.Div./M.Min. and M.A. programs to persons completing a year of service in approved volunteer service program. Further, we have collected information on outside scholarship possibilities for our students.

Many of our students finish their program without paying any tuition. Aside from these significant tuition scholarships we have had the second lowest tuition of our ten peer comparison institutions since 2010. Although our tuition has just been raised to a level that exceeds most of our peers (assuming their 2014 tuition rate) given our new scholarships and the strong Cooper Scholarship, tuition costs to students are not anticipated to rise. Our student default rates have grown some since our last accreditation but remain very low, averaging 3.0 from 2006–12. Our revised marketing materials stress the low cost of attending ESR.

Cohort Default Rates for Earlham College and Earlham School of Religion, 2003–2012

Fiscal Year	Rate Type	EC & ESR Combined Default Rate:	# ESR with Loans	# ESR in Default	ESR Only Default Rate
2012	3 yr official	6.10%	18	3	16.67%
2011	3 yr official	3.70%	17	0	0.00%
2010	3 yr official	4.40%	8	1	12.50%
2009	2 yr official	2.80%	8	1	12.50%
2008	2 yr official	2.40%	13	0	0.00%
2007	2 yr official	0.70%	13	0	0.00%
2006	2 yr official	1.20%	6	0	0.00%
2005	2 yr official	0.00%	10	0	0.00%
2004	2 yr official	0.80%	8	0	0.00%
2003	2 yr official	1.50%	4	0	0.00%

Because of ESR's efforts to provide significant student tuition scholarships, engage in training students for justice and service work, and provide cross-cultural education, ESR has been recognized as among the [Seminaries that Change the World](#) for the last two years.

In addition to these major undertakings, ESR continues to revise our policies and procedures. In 2012 we revised the [Student Complaint Policy](#), focusing on sexual assault and harassment in order to be in compliance with Title IX. For other complaints, we also revised our "Pre-Hearing" procedure in order to have the complaint officer at Earlham College, outside our immediate faculty, examine the complaint. We revised the [Plagiarism Policy](#) and Probation Policy and have now twice revised the [Library Collection Policy](#) in light of the changes in electronic resources. We developed the Plagiarism Policy in cooperation with Bethany and in recent years have presented and discussed this policy with each new class. Unfortunately, we have had to discipline several students for plagiarism, including dismissing two students from the program. These student policies are briefly presented in our catalog and in detail in [A Student Guide to Earlham School of Religion](#). In addition, in 2015 we have revised the policy for the use of technology. These policies, plus other important information such as the [cost of attendance](#) and [transfer of credits](#) are located in the Student Handbook and the website.

Closing Points on Institutional Integrity

ESR values integrity as a fundamental component of its institutional character. This is a direct result of its Quaker heritage. Many of the criteria delineated in this standard are deeply embedded in the schools processes and manner of being. The largest challenge for the period covered by this self-study was the creation of a culture of assessment.

Achievements:

- Engaged the entire faculty in creating and implementing a culture of assessment.
- Increased scholarship aid in an effort to assist students in their educational pursuits.

Recommendations:

- Prepare to launch the next strategic planning process in 2018.

Standard 3: The Theological Curriculum: Learning, Teaching, and Research

Teaching, learning, and research are at the heart of ESR's daily efforts. The seminary is committed to providing the resources necessary to build a strong learning community. Solid programs and competent teaching faculty are critical, and regular assessment of these assures responsiveness to students, constituents, the Religious Society of Friends, and the wider Christian Church.

Goals of the Theological Curriculum

The academic programs at ESR are aimed at combining academic rigor with spiritual formation so as to provide a holistic education. The growth of the whole person needs academic and intellectual input, but we hold that this growth comes only with the movements of the Holy Spirit in study, in class, in worship, and in fellowship together. ESR's academic programs seek to promote the inner transformation of the student as much as the outer preparation of the minister. The overall shape of our curriculum takes seriously our heritage as a Quaker school within a broader Christian tradition and seeks to educate and inculcate in our students the strengths of both our particular denominational heritage and the wider tradition. The ESR Credo, "We hold that Christ is present, guiding, and directing our lives, and that we can know and obey Christ's will" is the foundation for our curriculum and the context in which the School offers theological education.

The theological curriculum guards carefully the objectives and content specified in the degree standards for the M.Div. and M.A. degrees. It also strives to remain anchored in the Quaker heritage that is important to the school's identity while also responding to the changing roles, expectations, and contexts for ministry.

To deliver this curriculum, the faculty embraces an educational philosophy suited for adult education, striving to create a learning environment in which teacher and students all are motivated. It utilizes a Credit/No Credit evaluation system in which on-going narrative feedback affirms excellence and identifies areas for improvement. Ultimately, work must be of a B- quality or higher in order to earn credit. As a concession to the need a student may have to enter doctoral programs or certain work environments, the student may request a transcript conversion to letter grades prior to graduation.

Both the M.Div. and the M.A. programs require foundational courses that build the knowledge base necessary for general competency in theological education as well as specialization in chosen areas of ministry and/or research. Program objectives that guide the curriculum for the [M.Div./M.Min.](#) and the [M.A.](#) degrees emphasize critical thinking and theological reflection as fundamental components of religious leadership in its many capacities. Personal and spiritual formation is tended in particular classes devoted for that purpose and also woven into the larger curriculum. As is discussed elsewhere, in recent years the curriculum has been strengthened with regard to cross cultural and interfaith components. Students' demonstration of integration of learning is a necessary part of academic progress that paves the way toward graduation and must be demonstrated in courses designated as capstone courses (Constructive Theology, Comprehensive Seminar, and Supervised Ministry). In addition to narrative feedback to students throughout these courses, final evaluations link student learning to program objectives.

The M.Div. degree, in particular, bears the influence of its Quaker heritage. Quakers define ministry broadly, believing that all are called to ministry in some form. The curricular structure

acknowledges pastoral ministry, but much more. The various degree emphases such as peace and justice or ministry of writing validate calls to non-traditional forms of ministry. Our alumni/ae database reveals that our programs support pastors, chaplains, teachers, non-profit leaders, writers, and more. ESR celebrates this diversity and anticipates its increase in coming years. At the same time, this prompts the school to consider how its curriculum may need to change in response to these moves.

Learning, Teaching, and Research

Faculty have reason for more confidence in the cohesiveness and quality of the curriculum than in earlier periods of the school's history. This confidence results from the extensive work invested in the [Master Syllabus](#) project (see Appendix 06). This project gave faculty the opportunity to collectively review and revise course objectives, range of readings, and suggested learning experiences. As a result, forethought has been given to such things as multiple learning styles and the inclusion of global perspectives in reading lists.

Faculty are creative and engaging in the construction of their courses. The centrality of the lecture format lessens in upper level courses, preferring conversational methods of instruction and opportunities for student-led discussions instead. Writing of various types (e.g., research-driven, reflective, case studies) remains a primary means of evaluation. Library resources, instructor feedback, and a recently created [Moodle resource](#) (Moodle login required) to assist students who need to strengthen their writing all contribute to a high quality learning experience.

Characteristics of Theological Scholarship

The following paragraphs provide an overview of the curriculum, describe the range of theological scholarship occurring at ESR, and present examples of the faculty's engagement with diverse publics.

Biblical Studies

Nancy Bowen (1991) is Professor of Old Testament and holds the Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. She teaches required courses for both ESR and Bethany. She has overseen an extensive revision of the Biblical Studies curriculum since the last self-study in 2006. She teaches advanced courses in such subjects as Bible in Global Context; Writing Midrash; Images of God; and Women in the Old Testament; as well as studies of Exodus; Wisdom; and Biblical Poetry. In addition, she has helped to devise two team-taught courses, Quakers and the Bible (with Stephen Angell); and the Bible and Pastoral Care (with Jim Higginbotham). Nancy also directs the M.A. students concentrating in Biblical Studies.

Nancy's scholarly activities are substantial. Her commentary on *Ezekiel* was published by Abingdon Press in 2010. She is now working on a commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon, which will be published by the Liturgical Press in its Wisdom Commentary Series. In 2003, she co-edited a festschrift, *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*. She wrote the entry on "Feminist Hermeneutics (OT)" for the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, an article that appeared in print in 2014, and she contributed articles on "Esther" and "Additions to Esther" for the *New Interpreter's Bible* (2010). In addition to presenting papers at academic conferences (e.g., a co-presentation with Jim Higginbotham on "The Hebrew Bible and Suffering" at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature SBL in 2013), Nancy has published many articles and book reviews in the past two decades. From 2010 to 2012, she was Chair of the

Committee on the Status of Women for SBL and has co-chaired the Feminist Hermeneutics Section previously. She has received numerous grants and fellowships: For example in 2013, she was a participant in a Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Religion grant on partnered teaching of the Bible and Pastoral Care. She is ordained in the United Methodist Church and frequently offers workshops for the New Mexico Conference.

Tim Seid (2001) is Assistant Professor of New Testament Studies (as 1/3 FTE) and holds the Ph.D. from Brown University. Since joining the ESR faculty, he has been entrusted with developing the *ESR Access* program. He is ESR's Associate Dean and brings to his work strong gifts in Biblical Studies and computer technology, as well as pastoral experience. In 2008, Wipf and Stock published Seid's study based on his sermon series of the Book of Hebrews: *The Second Chance for God's People: Messages from Hebrews*. In addition, Tim has published book reviews, study guides for Paul's letter to the Philippians, and articles for Quaker journals. During his 2008 sabbatical he participated in the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar in Classical Studies at the American Academy in Rome and taught a course at the Bethlehem Bible College during a three-month stay in Bethlehem. During his 2013 sabbatical he developed the website soulshare.org, a site "designed for people who are interested in how to live a Christian life based on the philosophical principles in the letters of Paul of Tarsus and to make use of current internet technologies for building community." Over the past dozen years, Tim has taught advanced courses that have ranged widely through the New Testament and intertestamental literature. His regular rotation of courses is Jesus as Sage, Hebrews, Romans, Gospel of John, Philippians, and James. (The first three of these are offered online.)

Biblical Studies offerings are currently supplemented by Bethany faculty (Dan Ulrich, Steve Schweitzer), as well as by adjunct and visiting professors.

Peace and Justice Studies

Course offerings and faculty leadership in Peace and Justice Studies have been consistent since the last self-study. Bethany and ESR jointly sponsor a Peace Forum that supplements the regular curriculum in this regard. Up to the Spring of 2015 semester, this Peace Forum met weekly; however, due to declining enrollments, it was the decision of students and faculty of both seminaries to convert Peace Forum to an occasional rather than weekly format, beginning with the 2015–2016 academic year.

Lonnie Valentine (1989) is Professor of Peace and Justice Studies and holds the Ph.D. from Emory University. From 2013, he also holds the Trueblood Chair of Christian Thought at ESR. Lonnie teaches Interfaith Dialog, a new course added to the curriculum during our curriculum review. It opens to theological reflection the relationship of Christianity to other faith traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Many of Lonnie's course offerings, such as Liberation Theology, Process Theology, and Christian Ethics, either are cross-listed in Theological Studies, or fall entirely within Theological Studies. Over the past decade, he has also taught a variety of courses that fall mainly (or entirely) within the Peace and Justice Studies category, including: Introduction to Peace and Justice; Christian Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution; the Bible, Violence and Nonviolence; History of the Friends Peace Witness; and the Spirituality of Peacemaking. Lonnie also directs M.A. students whose concentration is in Peace and Justice Studies.

Lonnie is a frequent speaker in the Quaker world, speaking on such topics as pacifism, conscientious objection, and process theology. He is also a scholar who has written many articles, encyclopedia articles, and book reviews. He contributed a chapter on "Quakers, War, and

Peacemaking” to the *Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* published in 2013. In the fall of 2014, he organized a national conference on War Tax Resistance that was held at ESR.

Additional courses in peace studies are taught by Bethany faculty (Scott Holland and Debbie Roberts).

Theological Studies

Grace Ji-Sun Kim (2015) is Associate Professor of Theology and holds the Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the University of St. Michael’s College, University of Toronto. During her first year on the ESR faculty, Grace has taught courses in Introduction to Theological Reflection online; Christian Ethics; and a Contextual Theology class entitled “Borderlinks.” Her position is currently a half-time position. Grace brings to ESR a considerable background in feminist theology, Asian-American liberation theology, constructive theology, and ecumenism. She is a frequent presider, for example, on the “Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching and Activism” panel for the American Academy of Religion. In addition, Kim has authored six books and has edited, or co-edited five others, including *The Holy Spirit, Chi, and the Other: A Model of Global and Intercultural Pneumatology* and *Here I Am: Faith Stories of Korean American Clergywomen*. She has also published numerous book chapters, journal articles, and book reviews.

Kim’s predecessor, David Johns, who had taught Theological Studies at ESR since 2001, resigned from the faculty in the spring of 2013 to accept another position. Lonnie Valentine, whose Emory University Ph.D. was in the field of Constructive Theology, filled much of the gap over the next two years. A variety of capable adjunct professors also made important contributions.

In addition to the Interfaith Dialog class, which straddles the areas of Peace and Justice Studies and Theological Studies in our curriculum, a course on Theology in Context was also added during our recent curriculum review. This course introduces students to the role of context and culture in theology and in the practice of ministry through a first-hand cross-cultural experience and careful reflection upon it. Travel is usually part of this class, although travel need not be a long distance; a recent contextual theology class explored interfaith options in New York City. A variety of professors have taught this course. One recent contextual theology class, in January, 2015, visited with Hindus and Buddhists in India. Other contextual theology classes have visited Honduras, Mexico, Italy, Israel/Palestine, and China; Bethany offers similar classes with a similarly wide array of topics and destinations.

One student, Jean Olson, who took a contextual theology class focused on China, wrote subsequently, “I was surprised by much of what I saw. The best way to understand another culture is to experience it. We visited seminaries, churches, and a Buddhist academy, and talked with professors, students, monks, and ministers. . . . I developed much admiration for the Christians in China during the course of the trip. . . . In order to understand Chinese culture, one simply has to experience it firsthand. . . . I could see reflected in their faces the struggles and difficulties [Chinese Christian ministers] had been through. But I also gained a deeper understanding of the commitment and joy in the progress they have made and their hopes for the future” ([ESR Reports, Spring 2013, pp. 1–3](#)). While these courses take much effort for both students and faculty, the effects that they have had are profound, as Olson reports here. This course has been an extremely valuable addition to our curriculum.

Other required courses for M.Div./M.Min. students are Introduction to Theological Studies, Constructive Theology, and Christian Ethics. Lonnie Valentine has taught the Constructive Theology classes and semester-long Christian Ethics classes at ESR from 2013 to 2015. Adjunct

professors have taught the online version of Introduction to Theological Studies and the Christian Ethics course during the two-week intensive period, as well as certain theological studies electives.

Additional courses in theological studies are regularly taught by adjunct professors and by Bethany faculty (Scott Holland, and, beginning in the fall of 2015, Nate Inglis).

Quaker Studies

As a result of a generous gift to the seminary, ESR established an endowed chair of Quaker Studies in 1991. Stephen Angell (2001) is the Geraldine C. Leatherock Professor of Quaker Studies and holds the Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University. Steve teaches courses in Quaker History and Literature; Quaker Beliefs; Quaker Public Ministry; the Creation of Modern Quaker Diversity; Modern Quaker Life and Thought; and (together with Nancy Bowen) Quakers and the Bible. He also directs M.A. students whose concentration is Quaker Studies.

Steve is active throughout the Religious Society of Friends, having served as a committee member or officer for Friends General Conference, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Pendle Hill (a Quaker Study center in Philadelphia), and the Quaker Universalist Fellowship, as well as his own monthly meeting and yearly meeting. He has also provided courses for Pendle Hill and for the Cuban Quaker Institute for Peace, in Gibara, Holguin Province, Cuba. He is an active member of the Quaker Historians and Archivists, the Quaker Theological Discussion Group, the Quaker Studies Research Association (U.K.), and the Quaker Studies Group of the American Academy of Religion. He has also served an editorial role for *Quaker Studies* and *Quaker Theology* (two journals of Quaker thought centered in Birmingham, U.K., and Durham, N.C., respectively).

Steve has co-authored or co-edited four books pertaining to Quaker studies in the past decade, including the *Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (2013), which he edited with Ben Pink Dandelion. His historical interests range over the entire 360-year history of Quakerism, and thus he authored a series of articles for *Quaker Theology* on a schism in Indiana Yearly Meeting, a split that was finalized in 2013. He has also authored other journal articles, book chapters, and book reviews.

Additional courses in Quaker Studies have been offered by Earlham College faculty (Michael Birkel, Mary Garman) and adjunct and visiting professors.

Historical Studies

ESR students are required to take two courses (out of a three course sequence) in the history of the Christian churches. Of these three courses, one course, American Religious History, is offered directly by ESR. For most of the past decade, Stephen Angell has offered this course. He designed the online version of this course, first taught in 2005, and since 2009 he has taught the residential section of American Religious History as well. (Prior to 2009, the residential section of American Religious History had been taught by Mary Garman of Earlham College.) In addition to his Quaker studies expertise, Steve has considerable knowledge and expertise in American Religious History as well, having authored a variety of books, book chapters, and articles with a focus on African-American religious history, which had also been the focus of his Vanderbilt Ph.D. dissertation. Steve has also offered advanced courses in American Religious History, but, given the increased demands on the faculty with the expansion of course offerings resulting from the curriculum revision, has not offered such advanced courses since the new curriculum went into effect.

ESR receives substantial support in this part of its curriculum from Bethany. Bethany exclusively offers the courses in History of Christianity I and History of Christianity II in a variety of

formats, including a weekend intensive format and an online format. These courses are currently taught by Bethany professors Ken Rogers, Denise Kettering-Lane, and adjunct professors.

In its Comprehensive Seminar, ESR professors have discovered that there is a lack of integrative knowledge of church history, perhaps because of the fragmentation of church historical studies into three different courses, with the responsibility for the teaching of those courses divided so starkly between two seminaries. As a way to address this, and also as a way to prod students into thinking about positive uses for historical studies, instead of solely critical uses, ESR faculty have a practice of assigning an integrative book in church history in its capstone course, Comprehensive Seminar. The book that is currently used in this way is Diana Butler Bass's *A People's History of Christianity*. Faculty report good results from the use of Bass's book for this integrative task.

Pastoral Care and Counseling

Jim Higginbotham (2005) is Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling and holds the Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University. He brings a rich background as a pastor, chaplain, pastoral counselor, and instructor to his work at ESR. In addition to having taught at a seminary in Nanjing, China, Jim is active with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) locally and regionally. Jim is ordained with the Disciples of Christ. He is currently an Executive Committee member and a Co-Moderator of the Disciples Peace Fellowship, and he serves on the Healthy Boundaries Task Force of the Christian Church in Indiana.

Pastoral Care courses that Jim has taught at ESR include: Introduction to Pastoral Care and Counseling, both residually and online; Anger, Shame and Guilt; the Bible and Pastoral Care (co-taught with Nancy Bowen); Emergency Pastoral Care; Human Sexuality in Ministry; Pastoral Care to the Dying and their Families; and Pastoral Care with Family Systems, both residually and online. He also provides advising to students exploring chaplaincy and CPE programs. Jim has also taught courses at the Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, Kenya.

Jim has been active in presenting scholarly papers at conferences, some of which have been appearing as published articles. For the meeting of the Society of Pastoral Theology in 2014, Jim presented a paper on the subject of "Toward a Pastoral Theology of Incarceration." The *Journal of Pastoral Theology* in 2015 published a revised version of this paper. He also was a grant participant in the Wabash Center program of "Bridging the Classical/Practical Divide: Pitfalls and Possibilities of Seminary Partnered Teaching in Bible and Pastoral Theology," a seminar that took place at Wesley Theological Seminary in 2012 and 2013.

Pastoral Studies

In response to the needs of programmed Friends and recognizing the distinctive aspects of Quaker pastoral ministry, ESR has full-time faculty oversight for Pastoral Studies. Pastoral Studies faculty provide courses in preaching, church administration, Christian education, missions, and the day-to-day work of the pastor.

Phil Baisley (1999) is Associate Professor of Pastoral Studies and holds the D. Min. from Ashland Theological Seminary. Phil's background in pastoral ministry is extensive and ongoing. He also brings experience in Christian education and curriculum development. He is currently writing a book on the distinctive characteristics of the Quaker pastorate, with both theoretical and practical insights for Quaker pastors. It is under contract with Friends United Press.

Phil's course offerings in Pastoral Studies include: Introduction to Preaching (online); Church Administration; Pastoral Spirituality; the Church's Mission in World Community; the Work of the Pastor; the Friends Pastor; the Pastor and Religious Education; and Theology and Preaching.

Additional courses in pastoral studies are offered by Bethany faculty (Dawn Wilhelm, Russell Haitch).

Christian Spirituality

This has been an area of turnover in the past decade, sometimes in a sudden and unexpected fashion. For the first half of the decade, courses in Christian Spirituality were taught by Stephanie Ford. Stephanie resigned her position in the spring of 2010 in order to move to North Carolina with her family. Carole Dale Spencer (2010) is the current Associate Professor of Christian Spirituality and holds the Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham, and will continue in that capacity until the end of the 2015-16 fiscal year. Her resignation was unexpected and was due to serious illness in her family. In late February 2016, ESR concluded a search for Carole's successor, inviting Michael Birkel to the position of Professor of Christian Spirituality. Michael holds a Ph.D. from Harvard.

The professor of Christian Spirituality, along with other ESR faculty as needed, teaches two of the foundational classes in the ESR curriculum: Spiritual Formation and Personal Practice and Spiritual Formation and Public Ministry. In addition, the Christian Spirituality professor teaches courses in the History of Christian Spirituality; Spiritual Direction; Christian Discipleship and Living in the Spirit; Prayer; and a variety of advanced courses geared to the professor's interests and expertise. Carole's courses on Spiritual Formation and the Mystical Tradition and Mysticism in the Quaker Tradition were always popular and well-enrolled. Stephanie's offering of Spirituality and the Body, while she was on faculty, also attracted substantial enrollments. Michael brings exceptional depth in Christian spirituality, Christian history, Quakerism, and interfaith issues, and will enrich and expand the curriculum with these many competencies. For instance, new courses titled "The Spirit of Islam: The Qur'an Among its Interpreters" and "Comparative Contemplative Practices" are already scheduled.

Carole was a much sought-after speaker and a distinguished scholar with a variety of important publications to her credit. Her book, *Holiness, the Soul of Quakerism* (2007) is already a classic in the field of Quaker studies. In addition, she has contributed chapters to two different books edited by Stephen Angell and Ben Pink Dandelion: "The Man who 'Set Himself as a Sign': James Nayler's Incarnational Theology," in *Early Quakers and their Theological Thought, 1647-1723* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); and "Quakers in Theological Context," in *Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2013). Her forthcoming biography of Quaker holiness advocate Hannah Whitall Smith is under contract with Wipf and Stock Publishers. She has written numerous other articles, book chapters, and book reviews. Michael, too, is a frequent presenter at academic and Quaker gatherings. His recent publications include *Silence and Witness: The Quaker Tradition*, *The Timeless Wisdom of John Woolman*, and *Qur'an in Conversation*.

Additional courses in Christian spirituality are offered by other ESR faculty (Jim Higginbotham, Phil Baisley) and by adjunct faculty.

Writing as Public Ministry

Starting in the fall of 2013, Ben Brazil became the new Assistant Professor and Director of the Mullen Ministry of Writing Program. Brazil has considerable experience in writing for a popular

audience, especially in the area of travel writing. He holds the Ph.D. from Emory University, having successfully defended his dissertation (on the topic of *Wandering Spirits: Youth Travel and Spiritual Seeking, 1964-1980*) in May 2015. Brazil has published widely; as a reporter and freelance travel writer, he published dozens of articles relating to travel. This theme has carried over into some of his scholarly publications. For example, he wrote a chapter on “Travel and Religion” for *Religion and American Cultures*, edited by Gary Laderman and Luis León. He has also offered numerous other articles, essays, scholarly presentations and book reviews on matters relating to religion and travel and other issues. He has offered such courses as: Writing the Story; Writing as Ministry; Writing for God and God’s People; Writing Public Theology; Writing Mental Illness; Creative Nonfiction; and Peace Journalism. He also offered a two-week Contextual Theology trip to Colombia in partnership with Christian Peacemaker Teams.

Early in their history, Friends regarded themselves as “publishers of truth,” and they emphasized writing of journals, tracts, and epistles as a witness to the Light Within. Thus, historically, Quakers have considered writing a form of public ministry. Tom Mullen (late dean and faculty member) was responsible for initiating the study of writing at ESR. M.Div./M.Min. students may choose as an emphasis, Writing in Public Ministry. Many students outside the emphasis elect to take one or more courses in writing as well.

From 1997 to 2005, the Ministry of Writing Program was overseen by a variety of adjunct professors, including Brent Bill, Peter Anderson, Barbara Mays, and even Tom Mullen himself. (Until 2005, Mullen continued teaching after his retirement, as an adjunct professor; Tom died in 2009.) Since 1990, a popular signature event has been the annual Ministry of Writing Colloquium, which draws writers nationwide to a weekend of presentations and workshops. The seminary initiated a year-long W.O.R.D. Sojourn program in 2003, a series of writing courses for non-degree-seeking students. This program was replaced in 2014 with the launch of the Ministry of Writing certificate program. A Mullen Writing Fellow—a writer-in-residence working on a theological writing project of particular significance and interest—is appointed through a competitive application process each year.

In 2006, ESR hired its first Director of the Mullen Ministry of Writing Program, Susan Yanos. Susan combined a Ph.D. in English Literature from Ball State University with an M.A. in Pastoral Theology from St. Mary-in-the-Woods. She provided dedicated leadership for the Ministry of Writing program for six years until her resignation in 2012. In the 2012–2013 year, the program was again overseen by capable adjunct instructors.

Religious Leadership

ESR, recognizing the importance of religious leadership in a variety of forms, offers an emphasis in leadership. This may be useful for students who have a goal of ministry in non-profit management, or for some form of entrepreneurial leadership, or some other related area. In addition, leadership courses are useful for most forms of ministry. Since a call to ministry is a call to service, it will often involve leadership in various capacities. Thus, it is appropriate for preparation for ministry to help students take into consideration power dynamics and the responsibilities of leadership. Courses in this area include: Organizational Leadership; Religious Leadership Formation; Quaker Process in Matters of Leadership; Leadership with a Biblical Influence, and Fiscal and Resource Stewardship.

Jay Marshall, Dean of ESR, provides direction and leadership for this emphasis. Marshall holds the Ph.D. from Duke University. Marshall has written a number of books, articles, and other

essays in a variety of areas related to religious studies and religious leadership. Two essays by Marshall that specifically deal with leadership are “Leadership: Can It Be Taught?” (a presentation to the ESR Leadership Conference in 2011) and “Powerful Beyond Measure: Trusting the Call to Leadership” (a presentation to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends in 2011). Other publications include “Quaker Contributions to an Integration of Spirituality and Leadership,” in *Journal of Religious Leadership* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2015) and “The Centrality of Institutional Mission as an Anchor of Corporate Vision,” in *C(h)aos Theory*.

Teaching

Through a partnership with Earlham College’s M.A. in Teaching program, students with a call to teaching can utilize courses from this program to develop competencies in pedagogy and curriculum development, integrating this work with the theological and spiritual grounding of the M.Div./M.Min. curriculum of ESR. We previously had a Teaching emphasis, and several students had chosen this emphasis prior to 2009, arranging supervised ministry opportunities as teaching assistants to faculty in the Religion Department of Earlham College, among several possibilities. However, we discontinued it in our curriculum review, which instituted a revised curriculum in 2009, as we had no faculty overseeing the emphasis and had little instruction in the area of religious education and pedagogy. However, we concluded an agreement with Earlham College in 2014 which enables us to utilize the faculty in their M.A. in Teaching program, through existing courses already taught for that program, and the faculty approved bringing back the teaching emphasis on this basis. No students as of this writing have yet enrolled in this emphasis.

Supervised Ministry

ESR provides one year of supervised ministry experience for M.Div./M.Min. students. Prior to supervised ministry, however, the seminary requires students to take the course Discernment of Call and Gifts, which places spiritual discernment of call at the heart of ministry preparation.

Stephanie Crumley-Effinger (2000) is Director of Supervised Ministry and holds the M.Div./M.Min. from the Earlham School of Religion. Stephanie brings a wealth of experience concerning Quaker organizations, as well as an appreciation for the complexity of vocational discernment among programmed and unprogrammed Friends. Much of her career has been in campus ministry, four years at Wilmington College and 14 at Earlham College.

Stephanie is very active in Quaker circles, including the Quaker Theological Discussion Group and the Friends Association of Higher Education, and she frequently represents ESR at yearly meetings. Stephanie has written articles and devotional writings and regularly attends meetings of the Association of Supervised Ministry Educators. She is a recorded Friends minister.

Stephanie teaches the Discernment of Call and Gifts in a two-week intensive format. She also offers the Supervised Ministry course in a variety of different formats, including residential, online, and a blended synchronous format. Because an on-site visit from the Director is valuable to students, Stephanie has made it her practice to visit the supervised ministry sites of all students taking supervised ministry, including those enrolled in the Supervised Ministry course through our *Access* program. In the event that Stephanie is unable to visit, another ESR faculty member or an adjunct faculty member will make the visit in her stead.

The entire faculty participates in the Supervised Ministry program by approving the readiness of students for Supervised Ministry and subsequently approving their site and supervisor for Supervised Ministry. The Supervised Ministry Committee prepares for these serious and

sometimes very detailed faculty meeting discussions by bringing their recommendation to the entire faculty. Stephanie is always a member of this committee, except when she is on sabbatical. Other faculty members who are frequently members of this committee include Phil Baisley, Jim Higginbotham, and Nancy Bowen.

The Supervised Ministry course has sometimes been taught by Phil Baisley or an adjunct instructor.

Comprehensive Seminar

This M.Div./M.Min. capstone course at ESR has been in place since the 1970s. Its current design dates from 2003, and thus it has been taught in the current way for more than a dozen years. It has been taught in both a traditional residential format and an online format. Currently it is being taught for the first time in a synchronous blended format.

The current design begins with a general question given to the entire class: “What is the church, and what is its mission in the world today?” Students must then address that question from eight perspectives: (1) personal context; (2) biblical studies; (3) historical studies; (4) theological studies; (5) denominational perspective; (6) cultural issues; (7) area emphasis; and (8) supervised ministry site. For each of these areas, each student presents a brief paper to the class and submits a copy to the faculty for assessment. One class session is devoted to each of these perspectives. After the eight topics are explored, each student must then generate a specific question for himself or herself (subject to faculty modification and approval), and again he or she must address the question from the eight perspectives already mentioned. At the end of each question, students provide a summary to the class.

The final aspect of the course requires students to submit a plan for continuing education, particularly addressing those areas assessed as weak through the semester’s work. The faculty is pleased with the present design, as it meets the course’s objectives, it is integrative and comprehensive, and it provides the student, faculty, and seminary as a whole clearer and more frequent opportunities to assess achievement. We see this course as fundamental not only to our assessment of graduating students but also to assessment of institutional performance as a whole.

At present, the faculty who teach this course are Stephen Angell, Phil Baisley, and Nancy Bowen. This is such an important class to the seminary that it is always taught by a core faculty member, never by an adjunct.

Theological Scholarship

Freedom of Inquiry

As an embedded institution within a liberal arts college, ESR values academic freedom. This can create points of tension with denominational groups that may prefer the representation of a particular viewpoint. The fact that Friends resist creedal formulations of faith and are themselves a diverse group with differing viewpoints lessens this pressure.

ESR protects academic freedom by means of a policy included in the [Faculty Handbook](#). The text of that policy reads as follows:

ESR undertakes to provide in every way for a teacher’s freedom to investigate, teach and publish the truth as one sees it.

Earlham encourages teachers to feel full freedom in the design of their courses and the exposition of course material, considering it an important condition for a vital intellectual community. Even while they may advocate positions, teachers may not use their authority, including grading, to insist that students hold particular views. Outside the classroom teachers are encouraged to express their opinions with clarity and vigor. On those occasions where faculty members make public comments or write about issues clearly at odds with known policies and positions of ESR, they should make it clear that they are not representing the School of Religion.

Global Connections and Partnerships

The majority of Quakers reside outside the United States. This makes it expedient that the seminary invests in understanding the theological perspectives and leadership needs of those groups. ESR seeks to make the expertise of its faculty more widely available in the global context. We have sought to assist our sister theological schools in other parts of the world, first, by considering the possibility of partnership agreements, and second, by encouraging ESR faculty to contribute their efforts to the education of seminary students in other parts of the world, wherever possible. On several occasions, ESR faculty members have allocated time during their sabbaticals toward teaching Quaker seminary students in the “two-thirds world.” The faculty has considered partnership agreements with the Cuban Quaker Institute for Peace (Gibara, Cuba), the Friends Theological College (Kaimosi, Kenya), and St. Paul’s Theological College (Limuru, Kenya). For various reasons, these considerations so far have resulted in a formal partnership agreement only with the Cuban Quaker Institute for Peace. However, Hanshin University in Korea has recently approved a partnership with ESR, so this partnership is in its first stages of implementation.

Eight ESR faculty members have taught courses in the “two-thirds world” in the past decade. Those who have taught in Cuba are Stephen Angell, Phil Baisley, and Carole Spencer; those who have taught in Central America (Costa Rica and Honduras) are David Johns and Susan Yanos; those who have offered courses at the Friends Theological College in Kenya are Phil Baisley, Nancy Bowen, Stephanie Crumley-Effinger, and Jim Higginbotham. This on-the-ground commitment to teaching Quaker seminary students globally has had important influences on our increasing commitment to cross-cultural ministry during the same time period, as ESR faculty have had numerous opportunities for practical experiences and interactions cross-culturally.

Ethics of Scholarship

Much of ESR’s work on the ethics of scholarship focuses on proper citation and plagiarism, in both faculty and student scholarship. This commitment is most clearly described in the [Joint Policy on Citation Style and Plagiarism](#). The school also follows the policy administered by Earlham College with regard to research involving [human subjects](#).

Closing Points on the Theological Curriculum

ESR is confident in its theological curriculum. We view it as a dynamic collection that benefits from review and change.

Achievements:

- Strengthened the holistic learning process by clarifying objectives, maintaining a healthy balance of spiritual formation and academic rigor, and attention to integration of learning, especially in capstone courses.

- Further embraced a broad vision for ministry supporting degree programs in which students can find their passion and niche while being well prepared in the classical theological disciplines.
- Strengthened student preparation for ministry in areas of global awareness and interfaith issues as part of the overall curriculum revision.

Recommendation:

- Continue to evaluate program curricula in light of changing realities of spirituality and religion in society and their impact on our graduates.

Standard 4: Library and Information Resources

[Lilly Library](#), centrally located on the campus “Heart,” serves as the main library for Earlham Libraries and Archives. The library provides vital support for teaching, learning, and research at Bethany Theological Seminary, Earlham School of Religion, and Earlham College. The Library Director and the Theological Librarian directly serve the information needs of Bethany and ESR, while all Lilly Librarians and staff support the complex operations of acquiring, providing access to, and instruction on using the diverse materials that comprise Earlham Libraries and Archives. All library and staff adhere to the following goals that forward the [educational missions](#) of the three institutions:

- “Develop collections of information resources that meet the needs of patrons as they engage in teaching, learning, researching processes;
- Ensure access to information resources from print and electronic sources;
- Provide library facilities that promote the use, preservation, and production of information resources;
- Work closely with on-campus partners such as Information Technology;
- Work closely with consortium partners such as PALNI (Private Academic Library Network of Indiana), ALI (Academic Libraries of Indiana), and ATLA (American Theological Library Association);
- Provide professional development opportunities that stimulate thinking about the improvement of library services and prepare librarians and staff to deliver those services;
- Maintain efficient and effective internal processes to enhance patron services;
- Promote awareness of and participate in new developments in librarianship, scholarly communication, and public and technical services;
- Advance awareness of innovations in teaching and learning with technology;
- Foster and support a visionary environment of creativity and productivity.”

The library is an ATLA institutional member and the Theological Librarian an ATLA individual member. Earlham Libraries and Archives employs eight FTE librarians, five FTE hourly staff, and eight FTE student staff. In addition to Lilly Library, Wildman Science Library located in Noyes Hall is also fully available to seminary patrons.

Library Collections

The faculty, students, and staff of Bethany and ESR enjoy full access to the materials and resources that comprise Earlham Libraries and Archives, including theological and special collections as well as multi-disciplinary collections serving the undergraduate programs of Earlham College. Earlham Libraries and Archives offer over 400,000 monograph volumes, whether in print or online, and a premier collection of educational documentaries in DVD format. The [collection development policy](#) serving the two seminaries originated in 1998, was updated by the Joint Seminary Library Committee in 2007, and was updated again by the Committee most recently in 2014. The most significant recent change in the collection development policy has been to address the tremendous

growth in electronic resources, including e-books, together with the need to serve distance students as fully as residential students in both materials and instruction. Thus in 2014 the Joint Seminary Library Committee approved a policy to acquire electronic books and journals over print whenever feasible. At this time, a number of the small theological presses still publish primarily in print, and therefore Lilly's collection development for the theological disciplines is hybrid. Lilly ships circulating print materials to patrons who reside 50 or more miles from campus via its "Document Delivery Service."

A survey assessment of seminarian perceptions of library resources and services conducted by the Theological Librarian in 2013 indicated significant uncertainty both about availability of electronic books through the library and how to use them. In presenting these findings at a Joint Faculty meeting, the faculty affirmed the idea of modeling e-book usage to students. The Theological Librarian provides instruction on using the databases to both students and faculty upon request, including distance patrons through Skype.

Lilly Library's theological holdings may be engaged by patrons at the [resource guide](#). Of particular usefulness to Bethany and ESR are Lilly Library's online subscriptions to the *ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials*, *Academic Search Premier*, *JSTOR*, *Project Muse*, *EBSCO Academic Complete collection*, the *EBSCO Religion ebook collection*, *Loeb Classical Library Online*, *EEBO (Early English Books Online)*, and *Lexis Nexis*. Among the key reference resources available through the Lilly website are *Credo Reference*, *Oxford Online Handbooks in Religion*, *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*, and an array of encyclopedias offered by Gale and Oxford, including *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, and *The Encyclopedia of the Reformation*. In addition to faculty request, print and media items are selected by the Theological Librarian through *Choice Reviews* and according to the list of publishers collaboratively agreed upon by the joint seminary faculty.

In March 2015 PALNI (Private Academic Library Network of Indiana) brought together the library directors and theological librarians from seminaries throughout Indiana to coordinate a collaborative collection development plan for Indiana. With the advent of "PALShare" in spring 2015, expedited interlibrary lending among academic libraries across the state makes it possible for each seminary to collect in-depth in areas specific to its respective curricular emphases and yet enjoy ready access to diverse materials from other seminaries in the state. University of Notre Dame's premier ARL (Association of Research Libraries) library is collaborating in this initiative, and thus theological institutions in the state of Indiana are moving toward not only a viable but a world class collection of diverse materials supporting theological education and research. For Bethany and ESR, clear areas of collecting emphasis include Church of the Brethren theology and history, Religious Society of Friends theology and history, Old Testament history and interpretation, New Testament history and interpretation, homiletics, mission and evangelism, and peace and justice studies. Discussions at the first "Theological Libraries of Indiana Summit" indicated that Lilly also holds a strong collection in world religions and interfaith dialog that other seminaries in Indiana may rely upon.

In April 2015 Earlham Libraries joined ATLA's "[Reciprocal Borrowing Program](#)," a resource sharing project that allows ESR and Bethany distance students and faculty to procure print materials from a participating seminary library closer to their permanent residence. Through the program Earlham Libraries also extends borrowing privileges to seminarians from other ATLA institutions living in close proximity to Richmond, Indiana. This useful collaborative program supports the increasing trend toward online seminary education by enhancing broad availability of library materials for teaching and research.

Earlham College's Friends Collection and Archives, located in the lower level of Lilly, is administered by Quaker historian Thomas Hamm and offers a comprehensive and globally distinguished collection of historic and contemporary Quaker materials. This prestigious Friends collection is developed with a separate budget and collection development policy under Earlham College and offers abundant primary and secondary source materials for original research in Quaker Studies.

Contribution to Learning, Teaching, and Research

Earlham Libraries has a longstanding and award-winning tradition of excellence in bibliographic instruction. All new seminarians are invited to participate in a library orientation session. The Theological Librarian further supports students and faculty with library and information literacy instruction in several modes: through face-to-face classroom instruction; embedded as a "non-editing teacher" in Moodle course pages; and in individual research consultations conducted either face-to-face or through video-calling with screen-sharing, e.g. Skype. In addition, the library offers instruction on research tools, including Zotero and other citation management software, and develops LibGuides with key materials for the foundational theological curriculum as well as for specialized and upper-level seminary courses. Since 2012, the number of individual research consultations conducted annually by the Theological Librarian has risen by a steady 20–25% per year. The Theological Librarian takes an active role in supporting academic integrity, working one-on-one with students to avoid plagiarism and to cite properly according to Turabian, in support of Bethany and ESR's clear policies. Faculty routinely consults with the Library Director as well as the Theological Librarian concerning copyright matters. The seminaries adhere to the [copyright policy](#) developed by the Library Director in 2014. In order to provide optimal library services to *ESR Access* and Bethany Connections students, the library recommends that faculty teaching online courses create a "Library HelpDesk" as a discussion forum on Moodle to which the Theological Librarian may subscribe so that she may work with students with whom it would otherwise be difficult to engage. This outreach strategy was the innovation of seminary faculty members.

Partnership in Curriculum Development

Through access to the seminaries' Moodle site, the Theological Librarian regularly reviews all syllabi to target the best selections for the collection.

The Theological Librarian partners in curriculum development by consulting with faculty individually and attending faculty meetings and retreats at which the curriculum comes under review.

Administration and Leadership

The current Library Director, Neal Baker, assumed the library's lead position in 2012 after serving ten years as a Lilly Librarian. The current Theological Librarian, Jane Pinzino, joined Lilly Library in 2012 also. Jane holds an M.Div. (Duke), a Ph.D. in Religious Studies (University of Pennsylvania), and an M.A. in Library and Information Science (University of South Florida). Jane serves the Humanities Departments at Earlham College and maintains an active research agenda in medieval piety. In April 2013 Jane participated in the week-long workshop on theological librarianship at the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion. The Library Director and Theological Librarian are contracted as Administrative Faculty, participating in governance of the affiliated institutions and teach courses for credit on a limited basis. Since her

arrival in 2012, the Theological Librarian has offered an ESR Independent Study and served as a reader for an M.A. Thesis.

The Joint Seminary Library Committee, consisting of at least one faculty member from each seminary, together with Lilly's Theological Librarian, oversee collection development for the seminaries' curricular and research needs. The Committee meets whenever major library decisions are involved, e.g. revising the collection development policy, considering a significant purchase, reducing periodical subscriptions, or weeding the print collection.

Resources

Lilly Library, with its collaborative learning spaces, computer labs—including a remodeled Digital Liberal Arts Lab partially funded by a Mellon grant in 2014—offers a welcoming environment for students and faculty alike. In 2013–2014, Lilly replaced all chairs for patron use.

In recent years, in light of the inflationary costs of periodicals, it has been necessary to reduce subscriptions to some of the lesser used theological journals, including those in print and in non-English languages. While faculty are rarely enthused to do this, Lilly has increased the speed and accommodating nature of its interlibrary borrowing through increased staffing and adoption of ILLiad software.

The collection development policy supports freedom of inquiry in theological scholarship by empowering the Theological Librarian and teaching faculty with wide latitude in selection of diverse materials supporting the seminaries' curriculum. The multi-disciplinary strengths of Earlham Libraries and Archives, together with its Interlibrary Lending policy and service that put the world's scholarly resources at the fingertips of every patron, offer a plurality of resources with little restriction. [Earlham Libraries policies](#) uphold the American Library Association's guidelines for protecting patron privacy and confidentiality.

ESR and Bethany Library Materials Expenditures

Following is a summary of materials expenditures by Bethany and ESR over the past ten years.

ESR and Bethany Library Materials Expenditures

Academic Year	Books	ATLAS	Bethany unique books	Periodicals	Bethany unique periodicals
2005–2006	\$7,586.10	\$1,586.00	\$117.85	\$10,851.69	\$427.00
2006–2007	\$10,689.43	\$1,665.00	\$110.38	\$11,663.37	459.00
2007–2008	\$9,956.20	\$1,750.00	\$92.00	\$12,817.71	600.95
2008–2009	\$11,222.65	*	\$99.42	\$13,430.07	451.76
2009–2010	\$4,528.11	*	\$16.00	\$12,034.67	\$541.76
2010–2011	\$7,512.70	*	\$139.66	\$12,028.61	\$397.45
2011–2012	\$10,965.16	*	\$27.00	\$12,739.72	\$664.10
2012–2013	\$8,212.42	*	\$27.95	\$12,999.76	\$689.10
2013–2014	\$8,901.80	*	\$184.24	\$10,443.08	\$652.10
2014–2015	\$8,660.67	*	\$36.90	\$11,023.23	\$666.10

**Starting in 2008, ATLA and ATLAS charges were combined and the library assumed all costs for this service.*

Closing Points on Library Support for Seminaries

Participating in the larger Earlham library system has clear benefits for the seminary, offering a range of support that would not otherwise be available. In particular, the

Achievements:

- Collection Development Policy was updated in 2014 to emphasize acquisition of electronic resources in support of distance education.
- Number of research consultations conducted by Theological Librarian has increased approximately 20–25% per year for each of the past three years.

Recommendations:

- Encourage the Theological Librarian and teaching faculty to work more closely together in developing library resources for new and revised courses.
- Encourage more faculty to include a “library help desk” in their Moodle course pages (a discussion forum that the Theological Librarian monitors).

Standard 5: Faculty

Qualifications, Responsibilities, Development and Employment

Instructors and administrators each carry the title of faculty at ESR. Both are directly involved in seminary governance and participate equally in faculty meeting. Some administrative faculty teach, depending upon curricular needs and academic preparation. All faculty who teach have the necessary credentials, competencies, and experience to fulfill their responsibilities, many of which were described in Standard 3. Documentation of teaching faculty member's educational credentials is available for committee review.

As a Christian graduate theological school in the Quaker tradition, ESR seeks to attract faculty trained in a variety of schools who, nevertheless, maintain a commitment to Quaker scholarship and a commitment to a Quaker vision of education and ministry. While ESR values diversity on its faculty, Trustees and Advisors have emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong Quaker presence among the faculty. For a seminary serving a small denomination, this task is challenging. Presently, the teaching faculty includes three women and six men. Five of these faculty members are also members of the Religious Society of Friends, all of whom hold master's degrees from the Earlham School of Religion. Four of these five also hold doctoral degrees, each from a different institution (Emory University, Vanderbilt University, Ashland Theological Seminary, and Harvard University). The remaining four non-Quaker faculty represent Catholics, the Disciples of Christ, Presbyterians, and United Methodists (with doctoral degrees from Princeton University, Emory University, the University of Toronto, and Vanderbilt University). Most faculty have had ministry experience in local meetings, churches, campus ministry, and the like, and five are either recorded Friends ministers or ordained by their respective judicatories.

ESR devotes time and resources to creating a sense of camaraderie and community among the faculty (evident in joint faculty development activities such as the faculty trip to Honduras and Guatemala in 2006 and to Kenya and Rwanda in 2011). In addition to cultivating valuable global connections with Friends, the investment in team-building has established a level of community among faculty that enables it to work well together, even on potentially contentious matters.

There has been considerable stability on the faculty since the last ATS review in 2006. Of the nine teaching faculty, six were on the teaching faculty that year and have been continuously on the teaching faculty since that time. Over that ten-year period, and indeed, over its more than half-century existence, ESR has put great emphasis on its teaching faculty being excellent teachers, not simply researchers. ESR has sought to build a faculty of highly qualified persons who share the seminary's vision and who sense a particular call to work in this context.

As for the three new hires since the last self-study, in the 2014–2015 school year, ESR conducted a search to fill a half-time position in theological studies. Given the recent downturn in enrollment, and the presence of other faculty formally trained in theology at ESR and Bethany, the faculty determined that, at least for the short-term, it would not need to hire a full-time person for this position as in the past, and, out of a strong field of 17 candidates, we hired Grace Ji-Sun Kim as Associate Professor of Theology, commencing in Fall, 2015. This was an instance where, given the opportunity to invite a young Quaker scholar representative of the next generation or to invite an accomplished scholar who would also finally bring ethnic diversity to the teaching faculty, the faculty seized the moment to work toward greater diversity on the faculty.

Previously, the most recent hire had been in the Ministry of Writing. Ben Brazil has capably served as Assistant Professor and Director of the Writing Program since the fall of 2013. Brazil holds a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Emory University.

Carole Dale Spencer has served as Associate Professor of Christian Spirituality since the fall of 2010. Spencer has recently concluded that she can no longer teach in the program as it is structured, since the program is dependent on having a faculty member who can teach residentially. Michael Birkel will fill that position starting July 2016.

A copy of the Faculty Handbook is given to each faculty member at the time of their employment. This handbook contains the policies, rights and responsibilities, benefits, and other matters of employment. ESR does not follow the practice of granting tenure. Instead, full-time teaching faculties are evaluated for contract renewal in their second year of teaching, again in their fifth year, and on a regularized cycle for the duration of their teaching career. Criteria for this process are clearly outlined in the Faculty Handbook. The Faculty Handbook was revised in the spring of 2015.

Six courses constitute a full-time teaching load at ESR. This, along with student advising, committee work, and involvement in the seminary community are primary components for a full-time faculty member. Professional development as well as a sense of growth in calling are other important areas of focus. These categories form the criteria used in the faculty review process described in the ESR Faculty Handbook. A Faculty Review Committee, comprised of faculty peers, provides a written narrative about the faculty member under review. The committee solicits a self-evaluation from the faculty member under review. This narrative takes into account this self-review, and also synthesizes evaluative materials submitted for this purpose by peers within ESR and beyond, current students, and alumni/ae. It covers teaching effectiveness, advising and mentoring, professional development, participation in the ESR community and in the larger Religious Society of Friends, and growth in calling. The Faculty Review Committee presents its summary along with its recommendation to the Faculty Meeting where a collective recommendation is made by consensus. The Dean presents the faculty's recommendation to Earlham's President. Final responsibility for the decision rests with the President and Board of Trustees but with the advice, consultation, and seeking of consensus with the Dean and ESR Faculty. Procedures for faculty reduction due to financial exigency or discontinuance or reduction not mandated by financial exigency are clearly specified in the handbook.

This practice provides security and academic freedom in a different way than occurs with tenure systems, but the faculty feels that academic freedom can be protected through other means than tenure, and that our review system provides that protection. Simultaneously, the review system also assures a robust ongoing process of assessment and development of the faculty. Yet, more than providing regular assessment of faculty performance for purposes of retention, this process benefits individual faculty by providing regular feedback for the purpose of professional development. Faculty members under review make recommendations for their own ongoing professional development. The Faculty Review Committee, in its report, will often make specific recommendations for that person as well. In preparation for a review, recommendations from previous reviews provide benchmarks for evaluating development.

ESR monitors three salary bands from ATS data: schools for which the highest degree awarded is the M.Div., schools with student bodies comparable in size to ESR, and peer schools included in the institutional peer reports. The dean attempts to insure that salaries are competitive with the range established by those bands. In the challenging economy of recent years, the school has

given small compensation increases every year but one. Even so, there is room for improvement. If current budgets modeled for the next three years are met, ESR expects to make progress in this regard.

Faculty Roles in Teaching, Student Learning, and Research

Full-time teaching faculty provide oversight for their respective program areas as part of their role in the life of the seminary community. This entails regular review of course offerings and occasionally recommending to the faculty new courses when necessary. While each faculty member basically inherits a curriculum for their discipline upon arrival, the faculty encourages new members to incorporate their teaching and research interests into the curriculum so long as the program objectives are not compromised and the mission of the school is not weakened.

The final component of the previous strategic plan was a curriculum revision. To begin this process, the faculty met in a retreat center in southern Ohio in January, 2008, in order to address questions such as these:

What courses continue to function as intended? What courses should be modified to meet our learning objectives? What needs to be discontinued or merged? Can *ESR Access* be realigned more along the lines of the regular curriculum? Can we brainstorm with *ESR Access* students so as to give them their voice and see what they would like? Is faculty staffing adequate for what we will do in the future? Will there be needs for faculty retooling? What are our experiential expectations, in terms of class sizes, and other similar factors? What kind of graduate are we trying to form? What do we want students to know when they leave? Do we figure out our requirements first before we establish our emphases, or is that negotiated back and forth? Do we standardize the requirements for emphases? Can we have a create-your-own emphasis?

The retreat was a productive one that made a number of decisions that guided the curriculum revision process. The faculty decided to build on ESR's curricular strength in Christian Spirituality by extending the requirement for the basic course in spiritual formation from three to six credits and adding a course in Spiritual Formation and Public Ministry. This was to address a deficiency observed among some graduates, wherein sufficient commitment to invest in the sometimes difficult work of leading or participating in community was lacking, preferring instead a more isolated spiritual practice. Two three-credit courses in Interfaith Dialog and Contextual Theology, in which they were to experience two weeks of immersion in a culture different from their own, were added to the curriculum as required courses. The group reviewed the M.Div./M.Min. emphases, standardizing them as a 12-credit requirement for each M.Div./M.Min. student. The faculty added an emphasis in Quaker Leadership, changed the emphasis previously titled Ministry among Unprogrammed Friends to one that would be called Quaker Public Ministry. The overall requirements for an M.Div./M.Min. degree were expanded from 81 to 84 credit hours.

A decision was made to drop the M.Div./M.Min. emphasis in teaching, because the faculty did not teach 12 credit hours of courses in pedagogy and saw no way to extend ourselves to add those. Subsequently the faculty worked out an M.Div./M.Min. program that incorporated coursework from Earlham's M.A. program in teaching. Again ESR was able to offer a program where M.Div./M.Min. students could have 12 credit hours of classes in teaching and undertake a Supervised Ministry project based on teaching.

To ensure that each course clearly contributed to program objectives and because some individual courses are taught by adjunct faculty in addition to regular faculty, the faculty has devoted much effort in the past ten years to preparing and approving (as a faculty) [master syllabi](#) (see Appendix 06) for every course. The master syllabus for each course has been prepared initially by the regular faculty member in charge of the course area. The entire faculty then reads and reviews the master syllabus for each course, offers suggestions, and after revisions then approves each master syllabus. We have followed these action steps for each course in the seminary curriculum and have found this both an enlightening and clarifying process that has improved individual courses and strengthened their support of M.Div./M.Min. and M.A. program objectives. When multiple faculty teach the same course, this helps to ensure a large measure of consistency between the approaches that each faculty member brings to the course. Each of our syllabi states how this particular course fits into the overall objectives of the M.Div./M.Min. and M.A. degrees.

Faculty involvement in student learning extends beyond the classroom. ESR faculty advise students. The Dean assigns new students to a faculty advisor based on a variety of factors, including the faculty's overall advising load and the students' interests within the seminary curriculum. When a student determines his or her program emphasis, that student is assigned a faculty mentor in the appropriate discipline. Mentoring is not substantially different from the advising that faculty provide in a student's first year. However, mentoring may include prayerful guidance in vocation, discussion concerning possible direction in supervised ministry, as well as assistance in planning the student's academic program. Community life at ESR includes weekly worship opportunities and a Common Meal lunch, bringing faculty and students together in extra-curricular contexts. These occur throughout the regular semester.

Clear objectives for each degree program were one outcome of ESR's curriculum revision and its work on assessment. With the Dean's leadership, these were identified and refined by the faculty. Criteria for evaluation of learning and academic progress are explained in the [ESR Catalog](#) (p. 8). The ESR faculty are directly responsible for the evaluation of student learning, progress, and graduation. The ESR Assessment Committee reviews gathered data and brings recommendations to the faculty for consideration and, if approved, implementation.

The faculty makes a notable contribution to theological research, both in the academy and in the church. Recent contributions through Oxford Press and Cambridge Press are examples of the faculty's contribution to research within Quakerism, as is ESR's strong representation in academic groups held in conjunction with AAR. Faculty are also involved with the wider Religious Society of Friends through attendance at Yearly Meetings, participation in the Friends Association of Higher Education and the Quaker Theological Discussion Group, and outreach to Friends through on-campus conferences and gatherings, such as the [Leadership Conference](#), [Pastors Conference](#), the [Spirituality Gathering](#), the [Ministry of Writing Colloquium](#), and the [Willson Lectures](#). The faculty also makes itself available to Quakers through the ESR [Traveling Ministries Program](#). For our 50th anniversary (2009–2010), we traveled widely among Friends, making available faculty-led lectures and workshops in many yearly meetings across the United States. Faculty also attend Quaker-related events such as Friends General Conference (which has an annual Gathering in the summer), Friends United Meeting (which has triennial sessions, the most recent of which was in Indiana in 2014), and the Friends World Committee for Consultation. Faculty are also involved with the wider Religious Society of Friends through publication in various Quaker periodicals. Faculty are also involved in leadership and governance of other denominations: For example, Nancy Bowen has served on the Board of Ordained Ministry of the New Mexico Conference of the United Methodist Church; Jim Higginbotham has served in leadership positions for the Disciples Peace Fellowship, affiliated with

the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Grace Kim has worked in the area of developing women's leadership for the Presbyterian Church (USA), serving as a board member for the Korean Association of Clergy Women for that denomination.

ESR supports this involvement in a variety of ways. Regular semester-long sabbaticals every four and one half years with full compensation is a substantial investment. Each faculty member has an annual professional development allowance of \$1,200. The Dean also secures additional funds in order to support other faculty development projects. For example, the faculty, with the assistance of current students and other stakeholders in ESR such as alumni/ae, are currently using a grant from the Lilly Endowment to study new and emerging ministries, in order to consider how these might lead us to revise our seminary curriculum as we progress further into the twenty-first century. The faculty form research teams with existing students, and the grant, which we began to utilize in fall of 2014, will carry through for three years until the spring of 2017 and support nine different faculty projects (three per academic year).

Distance Education and Faculty Experience

The seminary launched *ESR Access* (a distributed education program) in 2001 and thus has accumulated roughly fifteen years of experience with this kind of education. In order to offer a program that resonates with ESR's vision of theological education and community life and that is consistent with the school's mission statement, *ESR Access* consists of: online courses (usually, although not always, asynchronous), classroom intensives held at our campus in Richmond, and blended synchronous classes combining both residential students on campus with students connecting to the classroom remotely via videoconference. Section 4 of this self-study has more on how the library needs of distance students are met.

In our self-study ten years ago, we commented that "this program has generated considerable discussion among faculty concerning pedagogy, theological and spiritual formation, and the role of community in seminary education" (28). While we continue to be stimulated in our pedagogy by teaching in a variety of formats, we are also pleased to say that we have settled into the process of teaching in such varied formats over the past ten years. None of the ESR faculty had experience teaching in such a program prior to *ESR Access*, but we have gained increasing facility in teaching in these varied formats and have continued to grow in our pedagogy, even as the number of students entering our *ESR Access* program (both in absolute numbers, and in comparison to the Residential Program) has grown substantially over the past ten years. Faculty have used technology in a variety of ways, including podcasts, videoconference software, and video and audio recording. The assembly of a technology cart for video conferencing has been a success, and Associate Dean Tim Seid's willingness to provide assistance during morning, afternoon, and evening classes has had a great deal to do with its success. The technology has been very reasonable in cost, and the results of the faculty's growth in the use of technology have been to enhance the personable aspects of this variety of education. Faculty initially found some challenges in responding to the volume of postings by students in their classroom forum, but we have learned that we do not have to respond to everything. We have learned how to be present enough in the way that we give feedback so that the students feel engaged. With the growth of synchronous blended classes (in addition to the mostly asynchronous online classes), faculty have been flexible in their scheduling and willing to switch times that classes are offered in order to maximize the benefit from all forms of course delivery. We would emphasize that instead of the *Access* program (and, for that matter, other educational programs) being faculty-centered, it is instead strongly focused on the needs of the students.

It is clear the *ESR Access* program is here to stay, and the ESR faculty have continued in its confidence (indeed, even been strengthened in its confidence) that it is delivering an excellent seminary education through its *Access* program, and that our flexibility in course delivery is meeting a great variety of student needs in terms of gaining access to seminary education.

Closing Points on Faculty

Faculty morale is generally positive. Several factors may account for this. First, decision making in faculty governance is done through the “sense of the meeting.” This Quaker process is empowering and allows everyone to participate and have a substantial voice in decision making. Second, a process of regular standardized faculty review is in place. The process is in principle and in practice constructive and provides ample opportunity for professional growth and permits assessment from a wide variety of constituents. Third, the Dean’s leadership is seen as confident, engaged, and competent. Fourth, faculty are generally supportive of and interested in their colleagues’ scholarly and professional endeavors and frequently offer collegial support and encouragement. Finally, grant-funded travel/learning opportunities have boosted camaraderie while being substantial development and cross-cultural opportunities (Honduras, 2006; Kenya and Rwanda, 2011).

Achievements:

- ESR faculty is committed to on-going assessment of the curriculum and its effectiveness.
- The faculty reflects the broad theological diversity of Quakers, as well as several other perspectives within the wider Christian church.

Recommendations:

- As budget permits, increase faculty compensation rates.

Standard 6: Student Recruitment, Admission, Services, and Placement

Recruitment

ESR strives in its official recruitment and admissions policies and in its actual practice to operate according to the Mission Statement of the seminary and according to its [Guiding Principles](#).

The Director of Recruitment and Admissions works with the Dean to prioritize recruitment travel and the Director of External Relations to develop targeted marketing that is consistent with the overall mission and purpose of the school. Along with the Associate Dean, who manages institutional publications, these three met with an outside consultant over a period of several months to review our existing body of promotional materials and develop new pieces that better represent who and where we are as a school at this point—again while staying true to our mission. In terms of printed material, this meant scaling back on the volume of pieces that may have led to confusion and instead primarily directing prospective students to our new [viewbook](#). The viewbook includes an overview of the school’s mission, purpose, programs, faculty, and community. It includes descriptions of our academic programs and interviews with current students and graduates. As the viewbook states, “Ministry isn’t just a vocation or calling. It’s a way of being in this world—seeking to make it whole. This is the ministry that ESR supports and equips.” With the inclusion of alumni/ae profiles, prospective students can also quickly gain an insight into the vocational opportunities ESR graduates pursue.

Part of the effort to overhaul our promotional materials includes a reframing of our [catalog](#), the seminary’s principal document of record in which courses, scholarships, and various co-curricular opportunities are announced. The catalog previously shared duties of documentation and promotion, making it unnecessarily cumbersome for readers. With the shift to emphasizing the viewbook as our primary promotional piece, the catalog is now freed to focus more narrowly on its own central purpose and provides greater clarity and navigability.

Our advertising approach is shifting in line with this overall review as well. ESR is scaling back its print advertisements primarily to those directly related to Friends organizations the school seeks to support. The bulk of our advertising budget is now directed toward online advertising through Google Adwords. Whereas we have tried to target specific markets in the past and advertise directly with certain sites, this method allows us to utilize Google’s massive data pool to direct advertising to users based on their interests.

In terms of social media presence, the Director of Recruitment and Admissions and the Director of External Relations collaborate to manage ESR’s blog, “[Learning and Leading](#)” (which also maintains a list of ESR student and alumni/ae blogs), a [Facebook page](#), a [Twitter feed](#), two LinkedIn pages ([school](#), [company](#)), a [GooglePlus](#) site, an [Instagram](#) account, and a page on the [QuakerQuaker](#) site. In addition to our email database, these tools allow us to quickly disseminate press releases, information about upcoming events, and share sermons and other writing from faculty and students.

Consistent with ESR’s vision of being “a source of leadership and a resource for renewal among the larger body of Friends” and the emphasis upon “preparing students for ministry in the manner of Friends,” ESR works hard to send representatives to many Quaker Yearly Meeting sessions. These representatives may be official Admissions office staff, teaching or administrative faculty, students, or alumni/ae. When possible, these representatives offer substantive workshops or

presentations, since these are more effective than are purely self-promotional presentations. Further, the Admissions office developed an add-on program to ESR's annual Leadership Conference specifically targeting future Friends leaders. The annual [Quaker College Leadership Gathering](#) invites Quaker students primarily from those Quaker colleges and universities that have Quaker Leadership programs (but also others without that support) to encourage networking and the development of leadership capacity. A [Quaker College Leadership Network page](#) on Facebook is now also maintained by the school.

ESR's Christian belief that God calls everyone to ministry is reflected in our efforts to work collaboratively with other seminaries to make the case for graduate theological education to the broader culture. Earlham School of Religion has been a leader among ATS members, collaborating with Andover-Newton to develop the first-ever [Virtual Seminary Fair](#) through CareerEco. Fifty schools and over 300 prospective seminary students participated in the last event. ESR has also been involved in the collaborative efforts to host seminary fairs at the last two ATS SPAN conferences (Orlando and San Antonio). Designated as one of the 19 schools in the first cohort of [Seminaries That Change the World](#), ESR also worked with that group to develop a viable and collaborative summer tour of seminarians who visit church camps and voluntary service sites. Regionally, ESR continues to work with area seminaries to develop a "Seminary Night" experience that can be taken to college and university campuses.

In 2012–2013, ESR went through a strategic planning process that included a recommendation to launch a [Certificate Program](#). This program was launched in the fall of 2014–15 with Ministry of Writing and Quaker Studies tracks. A third track in Spirituality launched in the fall of 2015–16. Enrollment has been low thus far but is consistent with our demographic expectations that the program would be attractive to those with significant education who are not seeking additional degrees but would like something more substantial than occasional classes. Based on these early results, we are confident that certificates are a way to reach an audience we would not otherwise be able to engage.

ESR reviews and revises financial aid on a regular basis. We are fortunate to have substantial endowed scholarship funds and track spendable balances to ensure the long-term viability of our scholarship program. In 2014, ESR Admissions, the Dean, and the Business Manager worked together to revise the school's financial aid policy to improve our ability to attract and retain quality students from a range of backgrounds. This process resulted in several changes: a 25% discount for our new Certificate program for students who pre-pay for the coursework; up to 25% of tuition in need-based aid for the Certificate program; an increase in need-based aid for degree-seeking students from a maximum of 40% to a maximum of 50%; a shift in our full-tuition Cooper Scholarship for residential degree-seeking students from a 27 credit award renewable for up to an additional 27 credits to instead a straightforward 54 credit award up front with no renewal requirement, assuming satisfactory performance; and finally in the creation of the Leadership and Service Program. This new program is specifically designed to more effectively target younger, residential students with a commitment to Quaker Leadership, service, or both. This is a full-tuition scholarship for the entirety of either degree program ESR offers that is open to two different groups:

1. students who, within the past three years, are recommended by and have participated in a service or leadership program including: a Quaker College Leadership program; a "Service Programs that Change the World" program, or a year-long internship with Friends Committee on National Legislation or other approved service organization. Up to four will be awarded each year.

2. students who, within the past three years, are recommended by and have participated in a Bonner Scholar or Bonner Leader program. Up to two will be available at any one time. Through a partnership with Earlham College, Bonner Program students will complete their volunteer hours in the Bonner Scholars Program office at Earlham.

An important and very practical promotional practice in ESR's recruitment efforts is the AHA staff. AHAs, Admission and Hospitality Associates, are specially trained ESR students who work under the supervision of the Director of Admissions. AHAs assist the seminary's recruitment efforts by making phone calls and mailing information to prospective students. One of their most vital functions is to arrange the details of campus visits and meeting with visitors for meals. In part, this peer connection provides an important student perspective in the process. ESR consistently receives feedback that reinforces the quality of this experience as offered and the importance of this hospitality in the decision-making of prospective students.

In the interest of integrity, ESR surveys annually each incoming student to determine whether the seminary's representation of itself (in promotional materials and practices) is consistent with their experience of the school following New Student Orientation events. The relevant question on this survey reads: "Are your initial experiences at ESR consistent with the image you obtained in our written text and the contacts you had with faculty/staff/students before orientation?" New students have overwhelmingly confirmed the fair representation of the seminary in its promotional materials and institutional representation.

Admission

ESR accepts and follows federally mandated anti-discrimination statements in its admissions decisions and practices. In addition, as stated in "Other Policies," II.B., Admissions Policy: "the School moves beyond this minimal statement and affirms its commitment to equality of opportunity for all individuals who desire the type of theological education offered within the context of the School's mission statement. Furthermore, since ESR is committed to maintaining its Quaker identity, it will aggressively seek candidates who are Quaker and ecumenical students who are in congruence with Quaker testimonies."

Applications for admission are reviewed by a three-member Admissions Committee that consists of one teaching faculty, the Dean, and the Director of Admissions. This committee reviews carefully all application materials. Transcripts, for example, are evaluated not only for the applicant's GPA, but also on the breadth of pre-seminary studies undertaken. The seminary catalog suggests that: "Prospective students will be best prepared for ESR if they have a well-rounded undergraduate education. Especially important is training in critical reasoning, the thoughtful assessment of texts, standard library research techniques, and the essay as a form of communication." In addition to these areas, ESR recognizes that the overall educational environment is affected by the character and drive of its students. "More important for success in seminary than specific backgrounds, however, is the student's demonstrated capacity for creative learning, self-discipline, and the pursuit of excellence." As a seminary, ESR also seeks to go beyond academic training alone: "the academic programs at ESR intend to combine academic rigor with spiritual formation and value the inner transformation of the student as much as the outer preparation for the minister" (*ESR Catalog: 2015–2018*, 3).

Since ESR offers both degree and non-degree programs, the objectives and criteria specific to each are stated clearly in the seminary catalog. In order to determine a prospective student's academic readiness for graduate study, criteria for regular admission have been established. As stated

in the seminary catalog they include: a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university, and “personal and vocational objectives compatible with the mission of ESR” (*ESR Catalog: 2015–2018*, 31).

Applications from prospective students are evaluated on the quality of previous academic work (undergraduate and graduate, if applicable), ordinarily determined by GPA, articulation of ministry objectives, written essays, references, and interviews with Admissions Committee. ESR’s combined administrative and teaching faculty allows the school to incorporate regular review of the quality of its student population into its structure. The Admissions Committee includes the Dean, the Director of Admissions, and a rotating Teaching Faculty member. The faculty as a whole (including the Dean and Director of Admissions) review the progress of new students at the end of the first semester and all students at the end of each academic year. These discussions then inform the ongoing work of the Admissions Committee.

ESR’s vision of God’s call to ministry as well as its commitment to equality are informed by its parent denomination. Consequently, the seminary strives to make the educational and discernment experience available to a variety of persons of varied academic preparedness. Without compromising academic excellence in instruction and expectation, ESR offers three categories of admission:

1. Standard Admission

“United States citizens or permanent residents holding a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and who hold personal and vocational objectives compatible with the mission of ESR may apply to the School for admission” (*ESR Catalog: 2015–2018*, 31).

2. Conditional Admission

“Applicants whose qualifications for admission are non-typical may be admitted ‘conditionally’ under an agreement in which the student addresses lack of requirements. Conditional admission may be extended to persons who will complete a baccalaureate degree between the time application to ESR is made and the time of matriculation, persons whose undergraduate degree is from a non-accredited college, or anyone whose application shows a deficiency which the Admissions Committee believes the applicant can address while working on the ESR degree. In considering such applications, the Committee gives special weight to membership within the Religious Society of Friends and persons committed to a vision of ministry consonant with that held by ESR” (*ESR Catalog: 2015–2018*, 31).

3. Special Admission

“Occasionally applicants who, because of their special circumstances, do not hold a baccalaureate degree may be admitted as a ‘special student.’ Once admitted, these students will be reviewed annually. If the special student makes academic progress at ESR and satisfies the Admissions Committee’s stipulations in the student’s letter of admission, the School will admit the student formally into a regular degree program. ESR can admit only a small number of special students, and potential applicants without an undergraduate degree should plan, if at all possible, to complete that degree. This option is not available to students who apply to the M.A. program.” (*ESR Catalog: 2015–2018*, 31).

“All international students whose first language is not English must take and score a minimum of 550 on the Paper based version of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), a 213 minimum on the Computer based version of the test, or 82 on the Internet based test prior to admission. Students who have already taken or find it easier to take the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test must take the Academic version and achieve a score of 7 or greater” (*ESR Catalog: 2012–2015*, 62–63; the score for the IELTS was set in 2013).

We have revised the application, both in terms of its content and its use. Between 2010 and 2012, application essays began to be distributed to academic advisors to help teaching faculty advisors familiarize themselves with new students and assist them in their making appropriate recommendations. Until the 2012–2015 catalog the essay questions on the application had remained unchanged since at least the 1999–2001 catalog. With this edition, the number of questions remained stable but the questions were modified slightly to deliver more helpful information to the admissions committee. Beginning in 2010, the school also added a background check requirement for degree-seeking students. This requirement has since been extended to certificate students.

Student Services

Each matriculating student receives [A Student Guide to ESR](#) (student handbook) during orientation. The most recent version of the Student Guide is also available on the ESR website. This handbook includes introductory material, academic policies and procedures, as well as the seminary’s policies on grievance, appeal, harassment, sexual assault, and student records. The handbook prominently displays ESR’s Mission Statement, Guiding Principles, and Credo.

We continue to experiment with the best way to deliver useful information that students will retain. While in years past we have devoted a session during orientation to a review of the handbook, a concern arose that students were being inundated with too much information at that time. In 2014 we partnered with Bethany to develop an online quiz over the handbook. Students were directed to a joint site that included links to the handbooks for each school and unique quizzes. Students were expected to complete the quiz prior to their arrival, at which point they also received a print copy. Beginning in the fall of 2015, ESR also launched a “Travelling Companions” program, where each incoming student was paired with a current student to ask questions and provide another communication link with the school. Both new and current students have shared positive feedback about this effort.

On several occasions throughout the first year, the Director of Students Services meets with first-year students to respond to questions, comments, problems and recommendations. The Director also meets with graduating students to prepare them for the Baccalaureate service, commencement, and the transition into their lives as graduates of the school. Throughout the year, this office functions to connect students to the range of services and opportunities available in the both the Earlham and greater Richmond community. ESR students also benefit from ESR’s place as an embedded school within Earlham College. This means that they have access to Earlham’s Athletic and Wellness Center, its sizable library, and its cultural offerings on campus including renowned authors and speakers.

The Business Manager consults with any student who provides documentation of disability and recommendations for accommodations. All disability plans are held by the Business Manager and kept separate from academic records. In April 2001, the ESR and Bethany faculties approved the “Joint Policy Concerning Students with Disabilities” ([A Student Guide to Earlham School of Religion:](#)

[2015–2016](#), 23–27). This policy was written not only to comply with IDEA and ADA regulations, but also to ground the disability practices in the seminary’s institutional mission and theological vision.

ESR administrators have an “open door” policy and are often available to meet with students without an appointment. Administrative faculty meet on a regular basis to share information, discuss opportunities related both to specific student issues, and to larger seminary policies and procedures. Given the student body size, staff persons are aware of the responsibilities of each person and can offer students consistent, reliable information.

ESR provides many services for students and yet realizes that as an educational institution it cannot duplicate some services that are better provided elsewhere. Thus, the seminary makes every effort to inform students both of those services available at and through the seminary itself and what services are available in the wider Richmond community. Although this is so, the faculty is still learning how to best discern when a student’s issues require patient faculty deliberation and when they require the attention of other professionals. The Student Guide to ESR enumerates the seminary’s recommendations for “Care of Body, Mind, and Spirit,” including spiritual direction, pastoral care, counseling, and mental health services. The seminary maintains current information on licensed counselors and therapists ([A Student Guide to Earlham School of Religion: 2015–2016](#), 2–4).

Student feedback regarding student services was brought into the Strategic Planning process through both community conversations and student representation on that committee. Specific actions related to this topic emerging from the Strategic Planning process include: development and launch of the Quaker Career Center; writing workshops and improved access to writing assistance resources; financial support for spiritual direction sessions; and the physical move of the Associate Dean’s office to the ESR classroom building. Please refer to the “Planning” section in Part I, Standard 1, for further discussion of this effort.

With regard to students’ records, ESR complies with and is committed to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). A summary of FERPA and the rights it protects is printed each year in the Student Handbook under the heading “Student Education Records Policy” and is also emailed to the students each fall.

Records for current students are housed in secured cabinets in the office of the Director of Academic Services. When a student graduates or otherwise leaves the seminary their records are archived. ESR maintains a well-ventilated archive facility wherein confidential student records (admissions materials, summary course evaluations, transcripts, etc.) are stored in secured, fireproof file cabinets. The Director of Academic Services reviews all requests to view records to ensure compliance with the aforementioned requirements. The Director of Academic Services stores all transcript request forms and tracks where all transcripts are sent. All online records on the seminary’s servers are password-protected and backed up nightly. Earlham College manages the Banner database of student records, which includes ESR’s student records. Those database files are backed up nightly to disk. The files are then encrypted, moved to tape, and stored offsite.

Complaints about the failure to meet ATS standards are covered as an Academic Complaint in the [Student Handbook](#) under the section “[Policy and Procedures for Student Complaints](#)” (29–34). The Academic Complaints Officer is appointed annually and this role generally falls to ESR’s Associate Dean. Students are notified of the person assigned to this role in the Student Handbook. Complaint records are stored in the Dean’s office.

For much of its history, ESR has noted with some degree of pride that its tuition ranks in the bottom quartile of its peers. The strategy has been made possible by its endowment strength. The position resonated as a strategy to maintain costs for students who were choosing a ministry/service oriented vocation. This is a laudable strategy, except that it no longer appears sufficient to attract the desired number of residential students. ESR's tuition in 2013–14 was \$11,259. For comparison purposes, the Association of Theological Schools reports these tuition averages for 2013–14:

College Affiliated Theological Schools	\$15,609	+4,350	+39%
Independent Theological Schools	\$14,038	+2,779	+25%
Schools with Student FTE < 75	\$13,167	+1,908	+17%
Schools with Student FTE 75–150	\$14,502	+3,243	+29%
Regional Peer Average	\$12,470	+1,211	+11%

ESR's tuition for 2014–15 was \$11,502. The posted tuition for 2014–15 of the five regional seminaries ranges from a low of \$12,420 to a high of \$17,940, with an average of \$14,972. While ESR remains committed to affordable seminary education, in 2014 The Earlham College Board did approve a 25% increase in tuition. The approved increase yields a tuition cost of \$14,391 for 2015–16. ESR remains regionally competitive while still being below the median cost for schools in this area. It is also important to note that to minimize the effect on existing students, ESR increased its financial aid to cover the increase in tuition. The school has received no negative feedback regarding the tuition increase. More about this decision can be found in the finance section.

ESR's financial aid policy is designed to assist students who have limited financial resources and to reward students who have the potential for leadership in a variety of public ministries ([ESR Catalog](#), 67–72). Aid is calculated and packaged in accordance with regulations in the Federal Student Aid Handbook. The Business Manager oversees much of the financial aid process, working with the Earlham Financial Aid department on FSA loans, as well as professional judgment adjustments and other special issues; she keeps up with requirements and changes via Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) email notices and attends FSA conferences every few years. Students must apply for need-based aid and FSA loans each year.

Full-tuition merit scholarships (including the Cooper Scholarship and the Leadership and Service Scholarship) for 54 and 84 credits are awarded to over 75% of our full-time, M.Div./M.Min. degree-seeking residential students (27 and 45 credits for M.A.). It is important that an ESR education is available to a diverse student body; a limited number of full-tuition scholarships are available to international and minority students each year; international students may also receive free housing and a living expense. Criteria for merit awards include commitment to ministry and service, leadership, self-awareness of one's spiritual formation, courage of conviction, and meaningful engagement in community life at ESR.

Many degree-seeking students not receiving a merit scholarship qualify for need-based aid, which awards between 10–50% of tuition. Need is calculated as the total Cost of Attendance less the FAFSA Expected Family Contribution, as defined by the Department of Education. ESR also offers grants of up to \$1,000 to cover travel costs for students taking a required cross-cultural course.

A listing of other non-ESR sources of scholarships available to seminary students is maintained on our web site; students are reminded on a regular basis to apply. We also suggest that students request aid from family, friends and faith communities. Most of our *Access* distant

education students work part- or full-time and residential students are encouraged to be creative in finding paid work in an area that is still struggling to recover from the recent economic depression.

As a service to students and in the interest of full and fair disclosure, ESR regularly publishes its requirements for all academic programs in the seminary catalog (23–32). Since the catalog is published only periodically (recent catalogs, for example, have been dated: 2001–2004 and 2004–2007, 2007–2009, 2009–2012, 2012–2015, 2015–2018), this information is also available on the seminary website and in the student handbook as well, both of which are updated as needed. This information includes details concerning registration, cross-registration, incompletes, evaluation processes, leaves of absence, and so forth.

In addition, each semester ESR students receive an updated “academic inventory.” These inventories, a copy of which is provided to the student’s academic advisor, indicate all requirements for the student’s specific program along with an updated notation of courses completed.

Student Borrowing

ESR is concerned with rising student debt, especially in fields where earnings potential is limited for many graduates. Of students who receive FSA loans, our average student debt is around \$50,000, close to the ATS/Auburn averages. We realize that each additional year in seminary may add more than \$20,000 in student debt, so faculty advisors and administrators encourage students to complete their degrees in as little time as reasonable.

Thanks to the 2013 [Lilly Endowment grant for Theological School Initiatives to Address Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers](#), we have implemented several new programs to increase student financial awareness and literacy.

All students who receive FSA loans are required to watch two videos and pass related quizzes with information about loans and debt, supplementing and building on Department of Education Entrance Counseling. They must also attend or watch an in-depth presentation on loan repayment options before they graduate. All students receiving any type of financial aid from ESR are required to attend, either in person or via recorded webcast, a series of three workshops covering topics such as money and investment concepts, ministerial tax issues, estate planning, and insurance, with a goal of empowering them to make informed financial decisions and build healthy financial habits. Students who complete the workshop series are eligible for a \$500 matching long-term investment grant.

The Lilly grant is also funding research into the realities of small church and bi-vocational ministry to determine how to better equip leaders to succeed in those settings, particularly with regard to creating a well-balanced life. We will develop programs in entrepreneurial ministry that match the gifts of future leaders with new models for outreach and service as a means of proclaiming the gospel.

Placement

A number of services and opportunities exist at ESR that assists students in the transition from seminary life to the next step in their lives.

ESR maintains current files that list local and national job vacancies in a wide variety of ministry contexts. Additionally, because of ESR’s reputation, a number of ecclesial bodies and social service agencies regularly contact the seminary seeking suitable candidates.

Because of the judicatory structure of the Religious Society of Friends, Quaker students studying at ESR in the pastoral ministry track are not ordinarily under the care of a ministerial credentialing body. Thus, the structural relationships customary to seminarians in many seminaries do not exist for ESR's Quaker students. However, Yearly Meeting superintendents are regularly invited to campus in order to become acquainted with the seminary's programs and with students (potential candidates). In this way, the seminary is developing an informal network with placement possibilities.

The [Quaker Career Center](#) website, a sub-domain of the [Quaker Information Center](#), which ESR maintains, is kept up-to-date each week with new job openings. There are two kinds of job postings. As a service to the Religious Society of Friends, these may be any type of job that Quaker (or "Quaker-friendly") institutions or organizations have available. Secondly, they are positions that might be of interest to seminary graduates. At the end of each week an update of that week's new postings is emailed through Mail Chimp to a self-subscribed list and posted to the [Quaker Information Center's Facebook page](#). ESR then shares that on its own Facebook page and Twitter feed.

Thanks to the partnership with Bethany Theological Seminary, each year students are invited to attend an on-campus clergy-tax seminar to acquaint them with the tax implications of ministry careers. In addition, the seminaries host an annual CPE Day to assist students in finding placements and contacts for residencies.

Closing Points on Student Recruitment

In summary evaluation of Standard 6, ESR has aggressively modified many of the areas addressed in this standard in large part as a response to the strategic plan's assessment of the school's changing context. Old methods and avenues of recruitment such as the grad school fair or the denominational networks are no longer productive. New networks have been established with groups and causes that are better connected with our target groups, such as various service corps. Traditional print ad outlets have failed us, even more dramatically since smartphones have become primary providers of information. Early methods of internet advertising such as banner ads failed to yield, but with the utilization of Google we see clear evidence of progress.

The changing expectations of governmental agencies and accreditors have also influenced the school. More time is invested in education of students with regard to the long term impact of debt than previously in the school's history. As a school that falls under the category of "professional school," ESR now goes beyond the educational enterprise and provides support for placement after graduation.

Achievements:

- Re-imagined a strategy of recruitment.
- Enhanced student services, especially with regard to financial support for spiritual direction and writing resources.
- Developed a proactive educational strategy with regard to student borrowing and financing seminary.
- Created digital resources to assist graduates' preparation for entering the job market.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of new recruitment strategies to determine their merit.

Standard 7: Authority and Governance

Authority

ESR operates as a part of Earlham College. Earlham was founded in 1847 as a boarding school by Indiana Quakers. In 1880, Indiana and Western Yearly Meetings created a corporation to own and govern the College, thereby relinquishing formal ownership but retaining the right to appoint or approve a certain number of trustees. That arrangement continued until 2010 when Indiana Yearly Meeting terminated its formal relationship with Earlham, leaving Western Yearly Meeting as the sole Quaker body involved with Earlham's operations.

Earlham is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Indiana, as established by the [Articles of Incorporation](#) of 1881. The [By-Laws](#) were amended and restated in 2013 particularly to reflect the changes in Trustee appointments when Indiana Yearly Meeting ceased its involvement with the school. Earlham retains its commitment that a majority of trustees shall be members of the Religious Society of Friends. The remainder of the positions are filled by College alumni/ae or at-large appointments. In filling these appointments the nominating committee considers such issues as expertise needed by the board and diversity. Currently 15 men and nine women comprise the board; some progress has been made with racial and ethnic diversity, but room for improvement remains.

The Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws clearly establish that the [Earlham Board of Trustees](#) is the ultimate legal authority over the operation of Earlham, including all activities of ESR. The Board meets three times annually and bears responsibility to exercise authority in governance, including all policies and procedures and financial issues. A Nominating and Governance committee bears responsibility to periodically assess the structure and effectiveness of the Board. This assessment contributed to a process during 2014–15 in which Trustees created committee charges to clarify the work and responsibility of each board committee. A set of desired “trustee characteristics” guides the nomination process. Prior to their appointment, prospective board members are briefed with regard to expectations for trustees. Once appointed, new members participate in a daylong orientation: the ESR Dean contributes to that orientation so that new members have a better understanding of the seminary's mission and its place within the larger Earlham corporation. Board members complete a conflict of interest form each year.

Governance

The School of Religion itself was founded in 1960 by the Earlham Trustees after an extensive consultation among the Religious Society of Friends as to the appropriateness of beginning a graduate school to educate Quakers preparing for ministry. In 1990, the Board of Trustees modified its structure to create a committee designated to give attention to the oversight of ESR's mission. The committee's charge specifies that this committee will “give focused attention to all areas of the school's operation that a board of trustees normally oversees.” This committee is composed of eight Trustees and meets directly with the Dean and other administrators and teaching faculty as needed. The Institutional Advancement and the Property and Finance committees also attend to matters related to the seminary, as appropriate, with seminary administrators included in their meetings. For instance, the Property and Finance committee sets the endowment draw for the seminary and the college. It approves ESR's budget, compensation rate, and tuition annually. ESR now provides a three-year budget projection to assist the committee's work. As an embedded seminary, ESR lacks

the opportunity to develop a board for which supporting the seminary is the primary mission; however, the 1990 changes provide ESR with direct channels of communication with its governing board.

The President of Earlham is both the President of the College and the School of Religion. The Dean of the seminary is a Vice President of Earlham and an officer of the College, reporting directly to the President. As described in a position description, the Dean serves as the chief operating officer for the seminary and reports regularly to the Board of Trustees. The Dean oversees a staff of personnel (nine teaching faculty, five administrative faculty, and four staff) that implements the various programs, policies, and initiatives crucial to the operation of the seminary. The Dean is also the primary liaison with ESR's partner seminary, Bethany Theological Seminary.

Faculty

With a commitment to shared governance, the Board empowers the ESR faculty to oversee and carry out the educational functions of the institution as directed toward the school's board-approved mission. The Faculty typically meets six times per semester. These meetings include a staff and a student representative except on occasions when the Faculty is in executive session.

Designated as a graduate school rather than a department or program, the School of Religion is permitted a degree of autonomy within the Earlham system. ESR has the responsibility to hire its own faculty and design its curriculum, and bears responsibility for its own promotion and fundraising.

In addition to the aforementioned Earlham By-Laws, a document titled "[ESR Governance](#)" and the [ESR Faculty Handbook](#) are crucial pieces of documentation related to governance and authority. The Faculty Handbook was most recently revised in 2014. The ESR Governance document conveys this power as such:

“The Faculty for the purpose of the transaction of business shall consist of both the administrative and instructional personnel. The Faculty is authorized and empowered to prescribe courses of instruction, to adopt academic methods and to carry on all of the educational functions of the institution for the best interest thereof, except where the Board may take general or special action in reference thereto. The Faculty shall have oversight of the non-academic life on the College campus with such delegation of responsibility to committees or organizations from the Earlham community, including its student body, as is deemed appropriate. In turn, the faculty may invite students to participate in governance through representation at faculty meeting and committee participation.”

Students

Student involvement in governance is provided for structurally in a few important ways. Student Meeting for Business is the vehicle for student interaction and decision making with regard to their participation in community life. This participation includes organizing extra-curricular opportunities, appointing persons to standing and ad hoc committees, and providing a forum for discussion of issues of concern to the student body. The clerks of the Student Meeting for Business or their representative attend the general session of faculty meeting and regularly present student issues to the faculty as well as report on faculty meeting to Student Meeting for Business. Students are also invited to send observers to Board of Trustee and Board of Advisor meetings.

Advisors

Another group important to the school's functioning is the [Board of Advisors](#). This group comprises representatives from the diverse landscape of North American Friends. As a general rule, they are engaged with Friends' organizations outside of their local meetings and have networks among the Religious Society of Friends that are beneficial to ESR. They offer advice on mission related topics and serve as advocates and liaisons with the school's wider constituency. In 2014 the group made an intentional decision to seek and appoint three representatives from other denominations whose students frequently choose to attend ESR. Those appointments were successfully confirmed. Though this provision has long been available, the increasing number of non-Quaker students who choose ESR has helped to heighten the value of this expanded membership.

Closing Points on Authority and Governance

ESR appears to be in good order with regard to authority and governance. Documents such as by-laws, trustee committee charge, a governance document specific to ESR, and the Faculty Handbook are current.

Achievements:

- Earlham College updated by-laws to reflect changes in governance structure in light of Yearly Meeting affiliation changes.
- Revised Faculty Handbook, including changes to the timing of reviews of teaching faculty.

Recommendations:

- None

Standard 8: Institutional Resources

Personnel

The hiring process for teaching and administrative faculty is governed by the policy in the [ESR Faculty Handbook](#). Hourly staff hiring is done according to the [Earlham Staff Handbook](#). Hiring for all positions begins with the declaration of a vacancy and a job description.

Following the recommendation of our Board of Advisors, ESR intends to maintain a critical mass of Quaker scholars on its faculty. Given the demographics of North American Quakers, this commitment hinders our efforts to create a more racially diverse faculty. Still, the school emphasizes its affirmative action commitment in searches and seeks to compile a pool of diverse candidates for each search. Ultimately, it attempts to hire the best person for the position. To date, the school has maintained the Quaker core encouraged by advisors but also achieved denominational, theological, and ethnic diversity in the process.

For teaching and administrative faculty, the hiring process moves through clearly defined search, recommendation, approval, and offer steps. Members of the faculty, administration, staff, and student body are given opportunities to participate in candidate interviews.

For hourly staff, the Dean works with the College HR Department to find suitable candidates and conduct appropriate background checks. The Dean will include other administrators in interviews, as appropriate.

Employees are offered a wide variety of opportunities to participate in community life at ESR. Faculty, staff and students from both ESR and Bethany Theological Seminary are involved in planning weekly worship services, which cross a wide spectrum of Quaker and ecumenical worship styles. They also plan weekly Common Meals that offer food, fellowship, and a short program on a variety of topics (e.g. land mine removal, prison ministry, and hospice volunteering) that enhance and expand the seminary experience. On a lighter note, at other Common Meals we have had pumpkin carvings, Christmas parties, and open-mic song and story programs.

Several annual conferences bring speakers and workshop leaders of note to campus, providing employees, students, alumni/ae and others the opportunity to experience a wide range of theologies and discussions. Starting off the academic year, the [Leadership Conference](#) in early August addressed a variety of topics such as “Leading Change: Faithful Listening, Creative Results” by Joyce Schroeder. Later in the fall we have the [Pastor’s Conference](#), where Margaret Placentra Johnson recently spoke on “Faith beyond Belief: Accompanying Our Congregations on the Journey Toward Faith.” The [Ministry of Writing Colloquium](#) is next, bringing well-known, respected authors and artists to campus, such as Sharman Apt Russell. In the spring we have the [Spirituality Gathering](#), exploring a new topic each year. In 2013 we hosted scientist, theologian, and Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio speaking on “Christ in Evolution: Challenges and New Directions.” We end our annual conference schedule with the [Willson Lectures](#), established in 1967 by Dr. and Mrs. J.M. Willson to stimulate the community’s theological reflection and pursuit of truth. In 2015 Diana Butler Bass spoke on “Finding the Spirit of God in the Spirit of the World.”

Administrative and teaching faculty are provided with funds each year for professional development, which can be used for membership dues, conferences, books, training, and other resources. In 2013 one of our instructors used his funds to attend a conflict resolution conference in Kenya, and along with an ESR Kenyan student, presented on the Alternatives to Violence project.

Another has made several trips to Turkey where he works with a small group of people trying to start a Quaker meeting. Staff are allowed to attend training from companies such as Fred Pryor as needed.

Grants and other funding have been used to provide more extensive professional development. In January 2006 a Carpenter Foundation grant funded a 10-day cross-cultural immersion experience in Honduras for all faculty and staff, where we lived with local residents, studied Spanish, and visited Friends churches. In 2011 faculty and staff traveled to Kenya and Rwanda to deepen relationships with Quaker institutions there. Since 2012 an Arthur Vining Davis grant funds faculty and student cross-cultural travel to many countries, including Cuba, India, Israel/Palestine, Italy, and Columbia.

ESR also utilizes the knowledge and expertise of our employees to provide in-house training on various software products such as Microsoft Office and Moodle. Employees have free access to lynda.com for self-paced training on a wide range of topics.

ESR uses a scriptural model (Matthew 18:15–17) and Religious Society of Friends testimonies of equality and peace as the basis for our harassment and complaint policies. The [ESR Faculty](#) and [Earlham Staff](#) Handbooks include detailed Board-approved policies which have been reviewed and updated in the past few years to ensure compliance with revised government requirements and standards.

Earlham College provides sexual harassment and assault training to employees, as well as expertise and guidance from employees with extensive knowledge and training in such areas.

Hourly employees follow Earlham's Staff Grievance Policy in the [Staff Handbook](#); administrative and teaching faculty are subject to ESR's faculty Grievance Policy in the [ESR Faculty Handbook](#).

The Handbooks also include, among others, policies on equal opportunity employment, academic integrity, faculty ranking and retention, and compensation and reviews. ESR does not use a tenure system, instead reviewing teaching faculty in their second and fifth years, and every five years after that. Administrative faculty annually complete a self-evaluation as the basis for a discussion with the Dean about their performance and goals. They also have a more extensive review in their second year of employment, as detailed in the Faculty Handbook. Input from colleagues, students and alumni/ae are elicited for all faculty reviews. Staff reviews are coordinated by the College HR department; the employee and immediate supervisor complete and discuss evaluation forms, setting goals for the upcoming year.

ESR employs eight full-time faculty, one part-time, and a limited number of adjuncts per semester as needed; the Dean and Associate Dean also teach one to two courses each per year. ESR faculty cover all of our M.Div./M.Min. areas of emphasis as well as our M.A. program, with Bethany faculty providing additional course offerings to complement and augment ESR's. In addition to the Dean and Associate Dean, there are three full-time Administrative faculty, two Administrative positions (one faculty, one staff) that are shared with Bethany Seminary (the Director of Academic Services and Seminary Computing Services specialist), and a full-time theological librarian shared with Bethany and the College. We have three hourly staff personnel, and students provide many hours of office support through our Cooper Scholar Volunteer program. Although the school is one person deep in most areas, the Dean allows each employee to develop and utilize his or her gifts and talents in areas other than the normal job description. This in no way relieves anyone of his or her duties, instead providing additional support and expertise to everyone at ESR.

It is ESR's goal to keep compensation equitable and competitive with local and regional benchmarks. Hourly employee wage categories and pay ranges are set by the Earlham HR department. In 2013 they compiled extensive hourly benchmarking data, resulting in one ESR employee receiving a 20% increase. The Dean uses ATS peer data to determine appropriate beginning salaries for teaching and administrative faculty salaries. The President approves teaching faculty contracts, but he delegates this to the Dean for administrative faculty.

Each February the Board approves any wage increase for the next academic year. All employees usually receive the same percentage increase, although the Dean may make small discretionary adjustments to individual increases.

Job descriptions for teaching faculty are drafted by the whole Faculty and then presented to the Board of Advisors for advice. The Dean creates detailed administrative faculty and hourly job descriptions.

Financial

ESR has had a cumulative operating budget surplus of \$61,975 in the past three years, and an \$18,929 cash flow surplus. Because we can draw on the College's significant cash resources, we have been able to do major improvements and upgrades to our facilities in recent years, as well as respond to emergency expenditures (\$206,777 over the past three years), without the need for external financing. Our facilities have no major deferred maintenance issues. Although ESR is experiencing a reduction in student enrollment similar to seminaries across the country, we have successfully trimmed operating expenses to match lower tuition and fee revenue, while continuing to provide modest cost-of-living wage increases to employees. Our three-year estimated future budget forecasts continued operating and cash flow surpluses. Budget reports can be found in supporting documents.

ESR has three main sources of operating revenue: endowment draw, tuition and fees, and annual gifts.

Unrestricted and scholarship endowment provides approximately 71% of operating income, gifts are 19% and tuition and fees are 10%. Due to the recent recession, our 2007 endowment of \$40,000,000 dropped to \$28,000,000 in 2009 and has since recovered to an all-time high of \$44,000,000. Correspondingly, our unrestricted endowment draw dropped from a high of \$964,000 in 2008–09 to \$820,000 in 2012–13 and is steadily increasing as the low quarters drop off the spending rule calculation (\$854,000 for 2015-16).

Annual Fund donations have begun to rebound after several years of decline. We anticipate modest gift increases in our three-year budget. Our constituent base is aging, and our alumni/ae are typically employed in lower income careers. Therefore, realizing that Annual Fund should not be relied on to balance our budget, the Dean, with enthusiastic support from our Board of Advisors, has implemented a long-term Major Gift campaign to eventually provide sufficient income to fully support key programs and personnel positions in several areas. To date, significant funding has been secured for the pastoral ministries, Christian spirituality, peace and justice, and cross cultural ministry programs.

For many years ESR has intentionally remained in the bottom quartile of ATS tuition rates. This strategy does not appear to have been sufficient incentive for many students to enroll at ESR. Given the challenges of recent declining enrollment, the Dean explored ways to increase tuition revenue. As a result, in February 2015 the Board approved a 25% tuition increase for the 2015–16 academic year. With this increase, tuition at ESR will remain slightly below the median for other

ATS accredited seminaries in Indiana and western Ohio. We are able to do this with minimal financial impact to our students by increasing our financial aid awards, utilizing a greater portion of the unspent \$1,000,000 accumulation of restricted scholarship fund income. Subsequent tuition increases are expected to return to typical levels of 2–5% per year.

ESR has maintained a balanced budget throughout the recession years by cutting expenses and utilizing restricted funds raised from the major gift initiatives to provide relief to the operating budget. In 2011–12 the full endowment draw from our Pastoral Ministry and Christian Spirituality Major Gift restricted funds became available, allowing us to support a significant portion of faculty wages and to benefit operating expenses of those two positions to those funds. Our permanent endowment has withstood a serious “stress test,” surviving a major economic downturn, while continuing to provide sufficient income to maintain ESR’s purchasing power and financial integrity.

The Earlham Foundation, whose role is to provide stewardship for the long-term financial resources that support and promote the activities and programs of Earlham, was created in 1931 as an incorporated, independent, not-for-profit foundation to hold and invest the Endowment assets assigned to it by Earlham College, and for the benefit of Earlham, including the Earlham School of Religion. The Investment Policy Statement (IPS), revised and approved by the Board in August 2013, defines the responsibilities, philosophy, and objectives of the Foundation. The policy is reviewed every four years by the Earlham Board of Trustees with input from the Socially Responsible Investment Advisory Committee (SRIAC) and the Earlham Foundation Board of Directors.

Prior to 2011–12, Earlham’s endowment spending rule was 4 – 4 ½% of the adjusted 12-month rolling average. In order to smooth out drastic swings in endowment draw due to stock market volatility, a new spending rule was adopted by the Board in 2012–13:

“Adjust endowment spending from the previous year by the change in the all-items CPI index for the prior calendar year but the adjusted endowment spending shall not exceed 5% nor be less than 4% of the average market value of the endowment over the 12 calendar quarters ending on the last day of the calendar quarter ending December 31 preceding the start of the fiscal year. If there are additions to and/or withdrawals from principal in excess of an annualized 1/2% then the market values for the prior quarters shall be adjusted accordingly before the calculation of the budgeted spending.”

The spending rule may only be changed according to the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) that is in Appendix A to the [Investment Policy Statement](#). In order to preserve the real purchasing power of the Earlham Endowment while providing a relatively predictable, constant and stable stream of earnings for current use, spending is limited to a rate equal to the long-term real return of the Earlham Endowment.

At times the Board may approve additional endowment draws for special purposes. In February 2013 the Board approved a ½% draw for four years to support ESR’s Strategic plan initiatives, starting in 2013–14. This amounts to approximately \$100,000 per year.

The Foundation Board has adopted both “Interim” and “Long-Term” asset allocation policies with the objective to achieve the Long Term asset allocation structure by the end of fiscal year 2018. (See [section IX of the IPS](#) for asset allocation details.) The Endowment’s success in meeting its performance goals will be evaluated versus a passive implementation of the Endowment’s asset allocation targets and will be evaluated over rolling three- and five-year periods.

Earlham reaffirms the values and testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends by declining to invest in certain companies. The Socially Responsible Investment Advisory Committee (SRIAC) is a committee that is charged with the responsibility for proxy voting on corporate governance and social responsibility issues, for monitoring securities held by investment managers in separately managed accounts, and for maintaining a list of excluded companies. Appendices B and C of the IPS detail the SRIAC Policy and investments that are to be excluded.

ESR's financial relationship to the College has improved in recent years due in part to 15 years of budget and cash flow surpluses that have drastically reduced our inter-fund balance. The President and CFO, both hired in 2013, worked closely with the Dean and Business Manager to reduce administrative fees we "pay" the College to a level more in line with industry standards. Services are provided to ESR by the following College departments:

- Human Resources: payroll, benefits, compliance issues
- Information Technology Services: Banner and Zimbra software, iLight internet connection
- Public Safety and Security: nightly building checks, compliance notices, ID's, general security
- Finance and Accounting: accounts payable, cashiering, audits, general accounting
- Maintenance: grounds work, conference set ups, minor repairs
- Development: gift processing, mailing lists, planned giving administration
- The Earlham Foundation: ESR's endowment management
- Financial Aid: FSA loan disbursement, general support
- Lilly Library: access to entire collection and staff, as well as a dedicated Seminary Librarian
- Post Office: picks up and delivers USPS mail and campus mail daily
- Athletics and Wellness Center: membership for students and employees
- Earlham Bookstore: stocks all books required for on-campus courses
- Health Services: provides medical services to ESR students on limited issues

ESR greatly enhances and supports Earlham's identity as a Quaker College by speakers we bring to campus, by our contribution to the Quaker Collection and other theological resources at Lilly Library, by the interaction of our more mature students with undergraduates, and by our alumni/ae. Current ESR graduates who work at the College include the Controller/Asst. Treasurer, the Senior Associate VP of Academic Affairs and Director of Accreditation Activities, the Director of the Newlin Quaker Center, Bonner Scholars Program Coordinator, two undergraduate Religion Department Professors, and the Religion Department Administrative Assistant.

As part of Earlham, ESR uses Ellucian Banner 8.x software, which conforms to NACUBO accounting principles and procedures. The ESR Business Manager and Director of Academic Services also use Hyperion Interactive Reporting Studio, an Oracle report writing program linked to Banner tables.

Earlham retains the services of an external independent auditor. The Board of Trustees Audit Committee has oversight of, among other things, financial statements, external auditors, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Yearly audits are reviewed at the October Board meeting. The full Audit Committee Charge and Charter can be found in supporting documents.

The Management letter for the past two years are in supporting documents ([Audit Management letter 2015](#)). 2014 was the first year Earlham used Capin Crouse LLC, and several previously overlooked issues came to light, which were either immediately addressed, or plans were made to make appropriate changes in the coming year. One example is the finding that net assets have been misclassified in prior years, due to the comingling of management-designated net assets with temporarily restricted or permanently restricted net assets. Earlham responded immediately by performing a thorough review of all restricted funds, identified and moved all incorrectly classified funds, and worked with the Institutional Advancement office to ensure the accurate classification of future gifts. (This did not have any effect on the total dollar amount of net assets, just the classification.)

Every November ESR department managers submit budget requests for the upcoming academic year, as well as projections for the subsequent two years. The Business Manager compiles this data and works with the Dean to develop a preliminary balanced budget, which is presented to the Board in February; related tuition and compensation increases are approved at that meeting. The final budget is approved at the June Board meeting. A report on the previous year's final budget result is reported at the October Board meeting. Capital expenditures are requested and approved at any of the three meetings, as needed. The Board of Advisors is also provided with a yearly budget report. No external group or agency has control of ESR's operating budget. We are, of course, obligated to use restricted funds according to the donor's or grantor's guidelines and provide expense reports to those entities as requested.

Those in charge of departmental budgets or specific expenses approve and code all expenditure requests, which are reviewed by the Business Manager before disbursement is made. Departmental managers are provided with monthly and year-end budget reports and are responsible for verifying the accuracy of revenues and expenses within their control. The Dean and Business Manager are responsible for overall accuracy and control of the operating budget, as well as all restricted funds.

All administrative faculty and some teaching faculty and staff have business management responsibilities. Each employee has a job description, but because we are quite small in numbers, we are fortunate, and perhaps a bit unusual, in the amount and quality of consultation and collaboration across departments in the office. We also have the support of College personnel in parallel departments such as accounting, development, financial aid and IT. An example of internal and College support is when the Business Manager was on medical leave for four weeks, some of her accounting and financial aid responsibilities were handled by College personnel, and other duties were distributed among other ESR administrators, providing continuous support to students, employees and vendors.

Earlham's and ESR's process of widely sharing and consulting with employees and departments during most job searches provides extensive vetting and confirmation of potential employees' qualifications and right institutional "fit."

ESR bears primary responsibility for its fundraising, utilizing the Banner database and certain College support staff for data input and receipting, plus planned giving assistance. The seminary utilizes a major gift strategy to cultivate donor support for programs and new initiatives.

This work is overseen by the Dean. Priorities for major gifts are determined based upon strategic plan initiatives. Utilizing this strategy, ESR has created \$1 million endowments for Quaker Studies, Ministry of Writing, Pastoral Ministry, and Christian Spirituality. Nearly \$750 thousand has been dedicated to a Peace and Justice Endowment. Over \$6 million has been raised by this strategy, with the bulk of the funds going to ESR's endowment to establish a stronger financial future. Annual fund strategies are overseen by the Director of External Relations in consultation with the Dean. An aging donor base, declining church membership, and ministry-oriented alumni/ae make it difficult to increase the net revenue from this fund. The 2008 market decline and recession caused a 30% drop in annual fund revenue. This total has regained some of its lost ground but still lags pre-2008 levels. Revenue generated by the major gifts offset the budget consequences of this loss. New strategies are tested annually to attract new donors with some success. Starting in 2014–15, we sent calendar and fiscal year-end emails to donors asking for a new or extra gift, which increased on-line giving. We also tested new content for fund-raising letters, including one authored by a member of our Board of Advisors who was part of our first-ever *ESR Access* program graduating class.

Physical Resources

ESR strives to be a place that offers welcoming hospitality to students, employees, guests, and other constituents. It is important that we provide a safe, comfortable, and appropriate environment that encourages learning, worship, and community.

Classes are held in the ESR Center and the Bethany Seminary Building, each having four classrooms. Our residential classes vary in size from three to 25 students, with the average around eight, and the rooms have a capacity of 14–30, clearly sufficient for instructional purposes. The ESR Center also houses our worship room, resource room with a small collection of relevant books and publications, student break room, commuter lounge with shower, and other rooms for quiet study, meditation and prayer, or meetings of small groups. The central gathering area provides several “conversation areas” of couches and chairs where students and others meet and relax.

The ESR Center is well-suited for conferences of up to 100 people with space for workshops and presentations. Our large kitchen and dining room are used extensively for weekly Common Meal, Peace Forum, student-sponsored events, ESR conferences, Board meetings, and other College and Bethany Seminary events.

The shared Seminary Computing Services (SCS) office, computer lab, and ESR's Student Services office are also in the ESR Center, where students are most likely to spend time and request assistance and guidance. All ESR and Bethany students and employees have 24/7 access to the ESR Center.

The Robert Barclay Center (RBC) houses administrative and faculty offices. All employees except the receptionist and custodian have his/her own locking office, with room for confidential conversations with guests, students, and other visitors. RBC also has two conference rooms and an extra office for adjunct faculty. Employees are provided with all office furnishings and IT equipment necessary to comfortably and efficiently perform their work. We have an open-door office policy where students and co-workers are welcome to drop in without an appointment.

ESR students and employees also have full use of Earlham's Lilly Library, the Wellness Center, and various other common-use facilities on the Earlham campus.

In 2010 Lauramoore Friends Home, Inc. gifted Lauramoore House to ESR. It is a 150-year-old Italianate style 10-bedroom house located less than a mile from campus and is used to house prospective students, conference speakers, and students attending our two-week intensive classes.

Lauramoore is on the National Register of Historic places (as the Mary Birdsall House), and Indiana Landmarks holds a deed of preservation and conservation easement that assures the property's architectural, historic, and cultural features. Many approved upgrades have been made to Lauramoore including new roofing, mini-split heating and air conditioning units throughout the house, new carpet, and paint. Extensive grounds work has removed trees that were in danger of harming both the house and guests.

ESR employs a full time custodian who thoroughly checks facilities for safety and cleanliness. Handicapped accessible automatic door openers have been installed on the ESR Center front doors, and the elevator was upgraded in 2013 to be fully compliant with current safety and fire codes. Although there is not an elevator to the faculty offices on the second floor of RBC, the first floor is wheelchair accessible and provides meeting space for faculty and students who may not be able to use the stairs. We have been able to move offices to accommodate employees' physical need to work mainly on the first floor of RBC. Lauramoore House is not handicapped accessible and this is clearly stated on our web site and to potential guests.

We receive regular inspections on other facilities and all issues identified in inspections are dealt with in a timely manner.

- Fire Extinguishers: Koorsen Fire and Security
- Kitchen equipment and sprinkler system: Koorsen Fire and Security and Leisure Mechanical
- Elevator: ThyssenKrupp Elevator Corporation
- Exit lights, general fire safety: Richmond Fire Department
- Boiler inspection: Cincinnati Insurance Company
- Copier repairs: Ricoh USA
- HVAC systems: Leisure Mechanical

Quaker testimonies of simplicity and stewardship encourage a respectful relationship with the natural environment. ESR has done much to reduce our energy use in the past several years, utilizing recommendations from an energy audit to draft and prioritize an implementation schedule. HVAC and kitchen equipment have been upgraded to more energy-efficient models. The digital HVAC upgrade in 2014 has decreased natural gas usage by 25% in the first six months of operations, and we anticipate similar savings in electricity usage for air conditioning. New carpet is all certified "green" carpet, old drafty windows have been replaced, and additional insulation has been installed in the RBC attic. We maintain our grounds with minimal chemical use.

The only year-round student housing ESR offers is Cadbury House, a three-bedroom home across the street from ESR, rented from the College. It is used to house our International Cooper Scholar students and one or two other residential students when extra rooms are available. ESR provides a listing of available local rentals to assist other residential students in finding their own housing. Lauramoore House provides rooms for prospective students, conference speakers and attendees, Board members, and other guests of ESR, Bethany, and the College. However, its main use is providing inexpensive housing to *ESR Access* students here for two-week intensive classes. This has turned out to be an incredible community-building opportunity.

“Staying at Lauramoore helped me build a community of friendships that will last until I die. That house gave us a chance to be ourselves at all hours of the day and share that with each other when we wanted to, and privacy when we needed it. I truly hope that Lauramoore will produce more relationships and friendships in the future.” Laura B., *ESR Access* student

“I appreciate Lauramoore for its convenience—easy access to campus, laundry facilities, kitchen use—but more than that, I value the friendships I have made there. We cook and share meals together, have wonderful conversations, and support each other in our difficult times. I cannot imagine how different and less rich my ESR experience would be without that facility.” Lynn D., *ESR Access* student

The ESR Center, Lauramoore House, and Robert Barclay Center have all received major upgrades and remodeling in recent years. Although ESR fixed assets are technically owned by Earlham, they are booked and depreciated in ESR’s accounting fund. Our Dean and Business Manager work with the Earlham Finance Office on budgeting and payment of capital expenditures, which have historically been at a level that Earlham can handle with internal cash flow, not requiring external financing or related interest expense to ESR.

We participated in Earlham’s 2012 facilities audit and 2014 energy savings assessment, which provided us with monetary and scheduling guidelines for changes ranging from replacement bulbs to major systems upgrades. All critical items identified on those two reports have been completed with some remaining discretionary items scheduled for the next few years.

All three buildings have been re-carpeted and painted in recent years. A 25-year-old pneumatic HVAC system in the ESR Center was replaced with a digital system in 2014. Mini-split air conditioning units were installed throughout Lauramoore in 2011, making the house more acceptable for May and August intensive students. New high efficiency furnaces are scheduled to be installed at RBC in 2016.

Details of all recent major improvements can be found in the [Capital Project report](#).

ESR does not have any agreements for use of other facilities.

Institutional IT Resources

As part of Earlham, some decisions about IT are made elsewhere. For instance, ESR utilizes Banner, the College’s choice of software, for finances, development, and student records. The seminary purchases access to the internet through the College’s connection. In general, these resources function well, though at times it is apparent where the seams lie between these two institutions.

Other IT responsibilities are born by the seminary, and many times shared with Bethany. In order to make the most effective use of our technological resources, ESR shares two IT professionals with Bethany Seminary. Their responsibilities include maintenance of the infrastructure, training and assistance for students, support for faculty in terms of instructional design and enhancements, and all employee technology needs. The Associate Dean also provides technical support to faculty and staff in the areas of instructional technology, and he developed and manages our program assessment tool.

ESR’s regular operating budget dedicated to our administrative and educational technology is \$65,000. Our 2013 Strategic Plan includes additional financial resources for technology that will provide instruction for faculty with regard to new teaching technologies that will heighten the

experience of personal touch in online courses and develop a pedagogical model for synchronous courses.

In the fall of 2013 our Board of Advisors donated \$55,000 in support of technology at ESR for a video conferencing system for use in our synchronous courses, upgrading our Wi-Fi network system, and a Customer Relationship Management program.

Our technology resources include:

- **Wi-Fi Network:** We provide students and employees with reliable Wi-Fi access throughout our facilities.
- **Student Computer Lab:** Students are provided with a dedicated lab with desk top computers and unlimited printing, as well as many other spaces throughout the ESR Center for wireless lap top computer use.
- **Video conference cart:** A mobile cart with a dedicated computer and 75 inch screen, using videoconference software for administrative conference calls, conference presentations and synchronous classroom courses.
- **Building Access Control System:** We maintain an ID card system that allows 24/7 access to the Computer Lab and other common areas in the ESR Center, providing extra flexibility for study schedules.
- **Faculty and staff IT systems:** Computers, peripherals and software are provided for all employees, updated and replaced on a regular schedule. Hardware and software is also provided for special needs such as video recording, contact management systems, and marketing and web design.

ESR has long collected paper course evaluations from students, and faculty have written evaluations on each student's class participation. But the systematic collection and use of that data was difficult and did not provide the information needed to sufficiently assess our progress toward goals and objectives. In 2013, Associate Dean, Tim Seid, developed an on-line tool using LiveCode and a five-table relational database to collect data on course objectives, and Business Manager, Tracy Crowe, developed a retention-reporting tool using Hyperion Interactive Reporting Studio and Microsoft Excel. This data is now being used by ESR's Program Assessment Committee in a more rigorous assessment procedure that consists of three parts:

1. Aggregate data on program completion
2. Faculty artifact rubrics from capstone classes
3. Sample of capstone course artifacts

The Committee also uses external data from the ATS Graduating Senior Survey, ESR's Alumni/ae Survey, and vocational placement information. Course evaluations from students are collected in Survey Monkey and registration information is extracted from Banner using Hyperion or SQL reports. Data is collected and analyzed on a yearly basis and presented to faculty with summative findings and recommendations; the faculty then considers changes to courses and programs.

Data and findings are shared with various external reporting agencies, including ATS, IPEDS, HLC, Open Doors Institute of International Education, and the Modern Language Association.

Institutional Environment

In a school as small as ESR, the tone of the institutional environment is set by upper management. The Dean models work that is serious but fun, open, and welcoming, while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and confidentiality. The Quaker process of consensus, or “sense of the meeting,” is utilized with faculty, staff, and students whenever possible, but the Dean and other administrators know they are ultimately responsible for timely decisions and accurate completion of their duties. ESR has an open door policy that invites students and co-workers to stop in without appointments, discuss issues of immediacy, collaborate, and socialize at a reasonable level.

Representatives from Student Meeting for Business, our student governance body, are invited to participate in the general sessions of Faculty Meeting, Board of Advisors and Trustees meetings, as well as new faculty searches and other ad hoc committees. ESR prides itself on an intentional attitude of hospitality to all who work, study, or visit here. We maintain our facilities to be comfortable and safe, providing current technology as well as quiet space for meditation, encouraging “community” to form organically.

Cooperative Use of Resources

ESR has mutually beneficial relationships with several institutions. As discussed in other parts of this report, we receive significant support in many areas from Earlham College. ESR’s affiliation with Bethany, begun in 1996 and reviewed every three years, has changed and adapted to evolving needs. The Affiliation Agreement details issues of changes in shared personnel, joint curricular planning, maintenance of common areas, and joint publicity and marketing.

Currently ESR and Bethany contribute equally to the full-time Director of Academic Services, the full-time on-campus Computing Services Specialist, and all related departmental expenses. We also share our Managed Information Technology Support contracted services professional in a ratio proportional to the number of administrative uses in each Seminary.

The two seminaries work cooperatively with regard to teaching faculty and the open curriculum. For instance, ESR relies on Bethany for the bulk of New Testament and Church History courses; in turn, Bethany relies on ESR for its Old Testament and Pastoral Care curriculum.

ESR and Bethany cooperate informally on orientation and prospective student open house activities and use each other’s facilities for various functions, shared meals, and worship services. Bethany pays a yearly fee to ESR for use of our kitchen and dining room for several of their annual conferences and meetings. Classrooms and other facilities are readily shared during emergencies such as flooding or HVAC system failures.

ESR has cross-registration agreements with four area seminaries: Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, IN; United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH; the Graduate Department of Religion at the University of Dayton; Payne Theological Seminary in Wilberforce, OH; as well as with Carolina Evangelical Divinity School in High Point, NC. ESR recently entered a cooperative agreement with Hanshin School of Theology, a Presbyterian seminary in Seoul, South Korea. The goal is to further integrate the possibilities of cross-cultural exchange for faculty and students alike.

One goal of our 2013 Strategic Plan is to explore “innovative adaptation of degree...programs that align ESR’s educational commitments with the changing context in which ESR functions, and which also contribute positively to ESR’s revenue streams.” As a result, ESR now

has relationship with Earlham College's M.A. in Teaching program to provide four courses focused on areas such as pedagogy and curriculum development to ESR students pursuing an M.Div./M.Min. emphasis in teaching.

Instructional Technology Resources

ESR supports instructional technology with an integrated Learning Management System (LMS) consisting of several components:

- Moodle is our main LMS system, utilized to distribute all instructional materials to our students (syllabi, book- lists, etc.), as well as to conduct our distance education courses. Moodle also provides supplementary information, such as resources for academic research and writing, student assessments, and various workshops, videos, and quizzes developed for our Lilly Grant Financial Acumen initiative.
- Blended Learning Environment: We use videoconference software and a dedicated mobile video conference system to effectively manage interaction between the instructor and both on-campus and distance students, providing a seamlessly integrated classroom environment for our synchronous, or blended, courses.
- Seminary Computing Services: Our on-campus, full-time Computing Services Specialist, shared by ESR and Bethany, provides technology support to students in our Computer Lab, as well as to our distance students.
- Digital Quaker Collection: This website contains full text and page images of over 500 individual Quaker works from the 17th and 18th centuries, which gives distance learners access to the same type of quality information as students have on campus at the Lilly Library.
- Quaker Information Center: Works on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends to answer questions from Friends and non-Friends alike, directing inquirers to information and resources from and about the Society of Friends.
- Quaker Career Center: Updated weekly, this website lists jobs of possible interest to ESR students and alumni/ae. Recruiters can post directly to the site and the Associate Dean searches the internet for additional listings.
- ESR Leadership Website: This offers resources and videos about Quaker leadership.
- Banner Self-Service: Students use BSS for self-registration, accessing grades, financial aid, and account balance information.

All of these resources support our learning goals that focus on ministry shaped by Christian and Quaker religious heritage and of creating a learning environment in which students are formed for ministry that is relevant to the current era. A working knowledge of technology will be required in most ministries of the future, so utilizing such a diverse LMS not only provides the resources needed to succeed at ESR but also a basis for life after seminary.

Although the need for some minimum level of computer knowledge is inherently understood by anyone embarking on an advanced degree, ESR does provide prospective and admitted students with additional guidance and training. During the recruitment and admission process, students are informed about the technology skills, software, and equipment needed to successfully participate in classes. Details are also available in our catalog and website. Once admitted, students receive

instructions from our Computing Service Specialist on how to access email and use the hardware in our computer lab; he is available during regular working hours to assist all students, both residential and distance, with issues as needed.

The Director of Academic Services has a one-on-one conversation with each student to orient them to Banner Self-Service and other resources. A video tutorial about Moodle is available, and Earlham provides all students with access to lynda.com for training on a wide range of relevant topics.

Faculty receive the same tech support as do students, as well as additional support from the Associate Dean for instructional technology such as the use of videoconference software, the mobile video conference system, and the design of courses in Moodle.

In addition to routine maintenance tasks such as automated roll-outs of security and system updates, SCS periodically updates other technological resources. Specifically, all employee computing devices are upgraded on a rolling four-year cycle. Server hardware is updated on a rolling five-year schedule. We have recently completed the overhaul of our wireless network to enhance performance and range of the system. SCS also works closely with administrative departments to ensure consistent roll-out of new technological process aids, such as the CRM that is currently under development.

Closing Points on Institutional Resources

Achievements:

- ESR remained financially strong during a difficult economic period.
- Formulated a long range plan for maintenance and addressed many deferred maintenance issues.
- Continued improvement and support of technology infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- Look for opportunities to collaborate with Earlham College or Bethany Theological Seminary for economies of scale that do not interrupt the ESR's mission or distinctiveness.
- Continue with implementation of energy-saving projects.
- Remain current with technology upgrades.

PART 2: EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Meeting ESR's Educational Mission

As noted in Standard 1, the faculty and Board of Advisors, reaffirmed ESR's educational mission in 2013:

“Earlham School of Religion is a Christian graduate theological school in the Quaker tradition. ESR prepares women and men for leadership that empowers and for ministry that serves. This mission grows out of our Christian belief that God calls everyone to ministry. Using a transformative model of education, ESR encourages students to explore the intellectual, spiritual and practical dimensions of their calls to ministry.”

To achieve its educational mission, the seminary offers two approved degree programs: an 84-hour M.Div./M.Min. degree and the M.A. in Religion, a 48-hour degree program. The distinction with regard to vocational intent is articulated in Part 3, Degree Standards. Many of the core course requirements for the two degrees are the same, such as introductory level Bible and theology courses. Different assessment criteria related to the students' degree program are utilized in evaluating these students, thus maintaining a proper evaluative focus in these courses.

Given our expansive view of ministry and the seeking nature of students who tend to be attracted to ESR, we believe that the non-degree programs (T.R.Y. and our Certificate Programs) are particularly suited to extend this educational mission to students who may not wish to pursue a traditional degree.

Through *ESR Access*, the seminary offers an approved comprehensive distance learning program to students unable to relocate to Richmond for the residential education program. Students can earn either the M.Div./M.Min. or the M.A. degree through *ESR Access*. ESR does not offer an extension program nor have any branch campuses.

There are some students who are interested in taking only one or two seminary courses, or who perhaps want to take more but are not interested in earning a degree. Consistent with ESR's Quaker understanding of universal ministry, these students are encouraged to pursue their interests and explore their callings. While this is an enrollment status and not a program, these students are officially classified as Occasional Students. Occasional students may take up to two courses per semester; if they choose to become degree-seeking students, the credits earned are applied toward the requirements as appropriate.

Online Education and Faculty-Directed Instruction

ESR built its distance education programs in response to requests from the Religious Society of Friends, as some Friends wanted greater accessibility to an ESR education. The program relies heavily upon asynchronous educational formats but utilizes short-term residential courses to create a component of face-to-face learning. In the last two years, the school has incorporated a few synchronous learning opportunities as its video capabilities improved.

The M.A. *ESR Access* curriculum is identical to the residential program except that it normally requires three years for completion. Thus, it builds upon the same sequence of

introductory level courses, upper level courses, plus an area of concentration prior to the thesis writing stage. All required courses and electives may be satisfied from the classes offered within the *ESR Access* curriculum. Greek is regularly offered online, usually by Bethany, to satisfy Biblical language requirements. To fulfill the nine hours in an area of concentration, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may include appropriate courses from the *ESR Access* curriculum, appropriate transfers of courses from other institutions, or approved independent studies.

As with all independent studies (IS) at ESR, these courses are limited to meeting particular needs of students and should not substitute for existing available classes, except in unavoidable or unusual circumstances. All faculty-directed instruction requires a detailed IS proposal, including a rationale, objectives, and bibliography, which is approved by the Dean. Since an IS requires regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor, the Dean encourages faculty to limit the number of independent studies to which they agree.

The *ESR Access* M.Div./M.Min. curriculum closely resembles the residential program, although fewer electives are available. The primary difference between the distance and the residential program is in the area of Practical Education, explained below in the degree requirements. Of the 84 credit-hours, more than half of this work may be completed online (primarily asynchronously) or in a few new blended courses in which distance and residential students—the latter in the classroom with the instructor—participate in a class together synchronously using videoconference software. At least 27 hours, equivalent to one year, must be completed on the ESR campus during two-week intensives or weekend intensives, the latter usually only offered by Bethany. Blended courses do not qualify for the residential requirement unless the student is on campus for a majority of the classes.

ESR Access operates in a manner fully consistent with the expectations of the seminary's residential degree programs. In this delivery system, faculty and administration approach education holistically. The faculty frequently engages the question of how one creates an online learning community and continues to have regular development for online teaching including many workshops, peer-educational opportunities around use of Moodle, and blended classes (videoconference software), and course design. For example, the Associate Dean, who has training in distributed education, completed [extensive studies](#) regarding student participation in each instructor's online classes to help facilitate effective education. He also is available for the development of new classes and pedagogical approaches and their implementation, troubleshooting of educational and technical issues, and provides extensive resources for teaching faculty. The partnership with Bethany is beneficial at this point since a number of joint faculty meetings and retreats have been devoted to improving online delivery and instruction. Discussion groups, collaborative projects, face-to-face and other interactions among students and with the instructor are among the variety of means used to engage different learning styles and create a high-quality learning environment within individual classes.

Full-time faculty teach the vast majority of online classes; in general adjuncts are utilized when there is a vacancy due to departure or sabbatical. The Associate Dean and IT staff assist these part-time instructors in setting up and implementing their online classes, while the Dean provides oversight and supervision of the educational objectives. An adjunct course packet is provided for each instructor, and they have the same administrative support available to regular faculty.

Community is enhanced through many communication media, via virtual student participation in Student Meeting for Business and many other residential events like conferences and interviews, and during the two-week intensives through worship, regular meals together, and a

variety of other fellowship opportunities that parallel the activities available to residential students year-round. Many of these events are held jointly with Bethany, thus increasing the available leadership and resources. Spiritual formation remains a core feature of the M.Div./M.Min. *ESR Access* program. *ESR Access* students are strongly encouraged to begin their studies with the required Spiritual Formation and Personal Practice in a two-week intensive, the first week of which operates like a retreat, creating close relationships and spiritual friendships, in some cases similar to a cohort that lasts the entire seminary experience. Distance students are very often embedded in faith and support communities, providing further support for their formation and other learning.

The development and review of online courses are guided by the same program objectives and master syllabi as residential classes. As part of in-service meetings for improving online delivery, faculty, technical staff, and the theological librarian examined Moodle courses of each of the faculty that teach online. To assist students with research and use of library resources, the theological librarian is readily available for individual support and often is included as an instructor in online classes as a resource for such issues. As described in General Standard Four, distance students have access to the vast majority of the library resources, including ILL (inter-library loan), which are fully adequate for the level of research expected for both the M.Div./M.Min. and M.A. programs. Mail service plus an increasing shift to e-books has increased resource availability to distance students. Individual technical support is available through IT staff and the Associate Dean. Each online student must log in to the secure Moodle site, ensuring identity and privacy.

ESR's experience with distance education has been largely positive. Multiple points of contact and integration exist between the residential and distance student bodies. The two-week intensives, in particular, serve the purpose of softening the distinction between the two student bodies. Still, we do hear an occasional lament from the residential student who may, for whatever reason, need to take an on-line course instead of a residential one. Or a residential student may take advantage of the online curriculum and choose a Supervised Ministry setting outside our geographical area, thus reducing their time on campus from three years to two. This is to be expected and does not dampen our overall enthusiasm for the program.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Earlham School of Religion's current assessment program developed parallel to and following the curriculum review outlined in Part 3 below. In good practical theological fashion, the program objectives were clarified even as they guided the curricular changes. The current objectives ([M.Div./M.Min.](#) and the [M.A.](#) program objectives) are available to students and the public on the ESR website. Teaching faculty then examined each class and developed a master syllabus based on these program objectives, which was reviewed by the entire faculty. This process took many working lunches and portions of other faculty meetings over the course of two years to complete. Great emphasis was placed on measurable goals for each class so that learning could be effectively assessed.

Following the development of master syllabi, course evaluation methods—both those used to assess students and those used by students to evaluate the class and instructor—were examined and modified in light of the new program objectives. Although the Credit/No Credit narrative system was preserved, it was determined that evaluation of student performance needed to be redesigned to align with these degree program objectives and to be useful in assessing learning outcomes. Not every class helps to fulfill all of the program objectives (the curriculum was reviewed to ensure that objectives were being addressed across required and practical classes), so course evaluations by faculty and students are based on the particular objectives relevant to that class. The Associate Dean

developed online tools for submitting both types of course evaluations to streamline the process and ensure consistency between residential and distance programs. Three representatives traveled to Pittsburgh to participate in an ATS sponsored event focused on assessment, using the opportunity to determine if the process met accrediting expectations.

Over the course of several additional meetings, consultation with the Board of Advisors and feedback from the Bethany faculty, the ESR faculty reviewed, helped modify, and accepted a robust, comprehensive strategy of assessment drafted by the Dean. The program objectives named above serve as touchstones and principles for assessment, the goal of which is a process that is straightforward, effective, and built to accommodate and foster continuous improvement. A [flowchart](#) best depicts the feedback loop for this assessment process.

As noted in this assessment cycle, a Program Assessment Committee was needed to implement this process. It was determined that the committee would benefit from a perspective from outside ESR by providing greater objectivity. A faculty member of Bethany Theological Seminary, who has served as interim dean, agreed to fill this role alongside the other committee members: the Dean, two faculty members (one teaching and one administrative), and the Director of Academic Services. This committee has worked with faculty to improve the process of assessment and provide the tools necessary to complete it. The timeline for the committee process—to present annual reports to the faculty in early fall—is meant to provide the faculty with ample time to weigh any necessary modifications in the program and make budget adjustment recommendations before the school's budget is presented to the Board for approval.

Two primary tracks of assessment have been identified, internal and external, and each has a subset of instruments designed to provide a range of direct and indirect measurements as well as quantitative and qualitative indicators of student learning.

- Internal Track
- Aggregate data on program completions
- Faculty artifact rubrics from capstone classes
- A sample of capstone class artifacts
- External Track
- ATS Graduating Senior Survey
- Alumni/ae Survey
- Vocational Placement (via ATS Report and Employer feedback)

Program completion information provides meaningful insights into overall retention as well as identifying particular points in the program where drop-off is more likely to occur for both residential and distance students. Associated with this internal data is the vocational placement information that helps to evaluate how effectively the program prepares students for actual ministry. The Associate Dean created and maintains a large database of relevant vocational opportunities ([Quaker Career Center](#)) that assists students in finding placements beyond the usual means of students and faculty.

Perhaps most crucial for assessing learning outcomes are the rubrics and artifacts from the three capstone classes required of all M.Div./M.Min. students. Rubrics were designed for the M.A. program, with the thesis serving as the capstone artifact. Use of these capstones is meant to avoid the

need for extensive analysis of each course in the curriculum. Instead, the capstones provide points of entry to the curriculum as a whole that may signal the need to pinpoint areas of improvement that can be addressed earlier in the program. From the master syllabus process, the faculty was familiar with the concept of implementing rubrics tied to the program objectives in the classroom, facilitating implementation of a similar artifact rubric piece for assessment. In both Comprehensive Seminar and Constructive Theology, the final project or paper is used as the artifact from these capstone classes. The Assessment Committee has found these to be adequate for evaluating student learning in relation to the program objectives in these courses. Initially, the student Self Evaluation, completed at the end of a year-long class, was selected as the artifact for Supervised Ministry. After the first cycle of assessment by the committee, they recommended and the faculty approved the use of the Second Ministry Incident Report, since it would better align with and allow for evaluation of program objectives. After the second cycle, the committee recommended working with the Director of Supervised Ministry to improve the artifact for that course. After some consideration, the Director proposed returning to the end-of-year self-assessment, but incorporating in that assignment questions specifically tied to the program objectives. The same will be done with the site supervisor evaluation of the student and both the student's evaluation and the supervisor's evaluation will be submitted as artifacts. Building on the online tool for entering rubrics for classes, the Associate Dean added a follow-up page for instructors in these capstone courses to submit their artifact rubrics with student information removed. The Assessment Committee developed a [guide to artifact assessment](#) and distributed it to the faculty. The committee requested that three sample artifacts be submitted for review along with the rubrics for each capstone class in each academic year, consisting of an average example along with the best and the least successful examples. This wide range of artifacts provides the committee a clearer sense of how student learning is meeting the objectives rather than by a random sampling of artifacts.

ESR was already collecting external data through the GSQ and its Alumni/ae Survey. The committee developed an employer survey to gather additional data on our graduates' readiness for the workplace. These are not particularly easy to secure, but when returned, they do provide useful data to the committee.

The committee also reviews course evaluation data from two first-year and two second-year courses in which we can expect that 80% or more of students take the courses. These are: Spiritual Formation and Personal Practice, Introduction to the Old Testament, Discernment of Call and Gifts, and Interfaith Dialog. While there are too many variables to view these direct indicators of students' progression through a program, they provide touchpoints at different points in program where faculty can observe whether or not students exhibit the level of proficiency expected at that point in the program. In particular, consistent low ratings would trigger conversations to investigate and address the matter.

These various streams of data provide the information reviewed by the Assessment Committee and inform the report and recommendations made to the faculty. Largely because of the data available, most recommendations from the first cycle of assessment focused on retention and completion. Initial positive outcomes emerging from this first cycle of program assessment included:

- Writing training sessions offered to students
- Spiritual Direction sessions offered to students
- CRM software implementation for better student follow-up underway
- Peer mentorship program adopted for incoming students in the fall of 2015

With 2014-2015 marking the launch of a full-year artifact rubric assessment process it became possible to perform a more thorough review and discussion of systemic questions regarding the program structure and operation during the second cycle.

In November 2015 the ESR faculty approved the committee's recommendation to:

- Officially designate Constructive Theology as a Synthesis Capstone and to strengthen the prerequisites for this course.
- Accept the document "[Guidance for Developing Consistency in the Assessment of Master of Divinity Objectives](#)," which was drafted by the Dean as a summary of faculty discussions.
- Adopt 3 (out of 4) as the minimal average class scores for each objective evaluated in a capstone course.
- Submit a request to ATS to remove the word "philosophy" from the Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) question regarding "Knowledge of Christian philosophy and ethics" as it has no direct connection to either an M.Div. or M.A. degree program standard and may skew the responses we receive from our graduates.

As is evident, much of the committee's time to date has focused on the M.Div. program. M.A. assessment is a simpler process. As an academic rather than professional degree, the priorities differ from the M.Div. Program objectives for the M.A. are outlined in Section 3. Admission into M.A. candidacy and successful defense of the M.A. thesis provide the two focal points where faculty determine if learning and program objectives are met. Initial plans for a similar and parallel process for the Master of Arts program are underway. In addition, the Program Assessment Committee has developed a meta-rubric and an assessment process to evaluate the program assessment effort at ESR. The ESR faculty reviews each student's progress after her or his first semester, and then annually after that. M.Div./M.Min. students undergo a separate review of readiness for ministry prior to approval for Supervised Ministry. M.A. students' progress is reviewed when they submit a thesis proposal to the faculty. Students are also reviewed as to whether they have fulfilled the objectives of the program prior to graduation. A formal record of these processes, along with any recommendations or action steps, is kept in the Dean's office.

ESR maintains and periodically updates a [Statement of Educational Effectiveness](#) page on the school website.

Academic Guidelines

Admissions

Standard Admission

United States citizens or permanent residents holding a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and who hold personal and vocational objectives compatible with the mission of ESR may apply to the school for admission. The quality of previous undergraduate and graduate work, articulation of ministry objectives, letters of reference, and interviews with Admission Committee members are the chief criteria used in making admission decisions.

International Student Admission

International prospective students holding a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and who hold personal and vocational objectives compatible with the mission of ESR may apply to the school for admission. ESR defines “an international student” as someone who requires a visa to enter or stay in the U.S. and is therefore not eligible to receive financial aid from the U.S. government.

Conditional Admission

Applicants whose qualifications for admission are non-typical may be admitted “conditionally” under an agreement in which the student addresses lack of requirements. Conditional admission may be extended to persons who will complete a baccalaureate degree between the time application to ESR is made and the time of matriculation, persons whose undergraduate degree is from a non-accredited college, or anyone whose application shows a deficiency the Admissions Committee believes the applicant can address while working on the ESR degree. In considering such applications, the Committee gives special weight to membership within the Religious Society of Friends and persons committed to a vision of ministry consonant with that held by ESR.

Special Admission

Occasionally applicants who, because of their special circumstances, do not hold a baccalaureate degree may be admitted as a “special student.” Once admitted, these students will be reviewed annually. If the special student makes academic progress at ESR and satisfies the Admissions Committee’s stipulations in the student’s letter of admission, the School will admit the student formally into a regular degree program. ESR can admit only a small number of special students, and potential applicants without an undergraduate degree should plan, if at all possible, to complete that degree. This option is not available to students who apply to the M.A. program.

Transfer Admission

Students who transfer to ESR from other graduate schools may request that their transcripts be evaluated to determine what prior work may contribute to their pursuit of a degree at ESR. A formal request, along with an official copy of all transcripts to be evaluated, should be forwarded to the Dean, who will determine transferable credits and ESR courses still to be met. Three important requirements guide this evaluation: 1) The course work must be of B- quality or higher to be eligible for transfer; 2) No more than 50% of courses contributing to another degree may be counted toward a second degree, and at least one year of work must be done at the institution granting the degree; 3) Transferred courses must meet ESR curricular requirements. Course work over ten years old is not eligible for transfer. Residency requirements affecting M.Div./M.Min. transfer students stipulate that at least 27 of the 84 semester-hours required for the degree be taken at ESR, including SC 380 Comprehensive Seminar. Residency requirements affecting M.A. transfer students stipulate that at least 12 semester-hours must be taken at ESR, and that the thesis must be done under the guidance of ESR.

Occasional Student Admission

Students holding a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and desiring to take up to two courses per session for credit or audit without seeking a degree may apply to be Occasional Students. Occasional Students may belong to the residential or *ESR Access* programs.

Transfer Credits for Current Students

To transfer credit from another institution, the student should have an official transcript sent to the Dean and submit a written request for transfer credit to the Dean. The Dean will review the student's transcript and Academic Inventory and will respond to the student, granting credit or not granting credit. The Dean will specify which, if any, of the degree requirements the transfer credit will satisfy. The Director of Academic Services will record the transfer credit, if any, in the Academic Inventory and on the student's current transcript. The [criteria for evaluating requests](#) for transfer credits are available on the website. The [instructions](#) for this process are located on the [Seminary Academic Services website](#).

Shared Credit in Degree Programs

On occasion, students request transfer credit that has been applied to a degree earned elsewhere, or wish to earn both the M.Div./M. Min. or the M.A. at ESR. In either case, the school follows ATS regulations that no more than ½ of credits applied toward one degree may be applied to a second degree.

Advanced Standing

Students may attain advanced standing by passing proficiency exams for certain introductory courses. These exams are developed by and administered by the faculty members who bear responsibility for the course from which exemption is sought. ESR complies with the ATS standard ES.7.4.3 that not more than ¼ of the total credits acquired for a degree may be granted in this way.

Nondegree Instructional Programs

All of ESR's credit-granting, non-degree instructional programs utilize existing courses and faculty for their implementation. These non-degree programs fall into two categories. First, *T.R.Y.* and *WORD Sojourn* are intended to provide the chance for students to explore seminary education in general or by focusing on our unique program of Ministry of Writing. The *WORD Sojourn* program will be phased out in 2015 with the new catalog and website. Secondly, the 18-hour Certificate Programs utilize ESR's Quaker distinctiveness and particular expertise, concentrating on Ministry of Writing, Quakerism, or Spirituality. These certificates are designed for development of vocational ministries—based on Friends' understanding of universal ministry—or personal growth and enhancement. ESR also hosts five major educational events each year focused on areas within the ESR curriculum, each at least a full day of lectures and workshops: Willson Lectures (which rotates among the other disciplines not represented here), Leadership Conference, Ministry of Writing Colloquium, Spirituality Gathering, and Pastors Conference. These programs provide important continuing education and opportunities of growth for the Society of Friends at large, alumni/ae, religious leaders, and other nearby residents. At least one faculty member and the staff of the school organize each program.

Theological Reflection Year (T.R.Y.)

T.R.Y. is a one-year program designed to introduce participants to various areas of theological education while allowing the flexibility to pursue particular interests. It offers a formal setting in which issues of vocation and ministry, of theological inquiry, and spiritual growth can be explored. T.R.Y. students are assigned to a single faculty advisor. The school encourages T.R.Y. students to pursue their particular interests, but all T.R.Y. students take the following foundational courses: Spiritual Formation & Personal Practice; Introduction to Theological Reflection; Introduction to the History and Literature of the New Testament; and either Introduction to the History and Literature of the Old Testament or one of the 100-level church history classes.

Certificate Programs

ESR's 18-hour certificate programs provide the opportunity to participate and earn credit in full graduate-level courses leading toward a certificate in a focused area of concentration. It can be completed in as little as two years.

Ministry of Writing Certificate is a six-course program to develop an understanding of writing as public ministry and hone composition skills in multiple genres. Four of the courses come from the Ministry of Writing program, two of which are required, Introduction to Writing as Ministry and Writing Seminar, and two come from other classes within the seminary curriculum. For their remaining two courses, students may choose introductory courses or focus more narrowly on a field, pairing an introductory and intermediate/advanced course.

Quakerism: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow Certificate is a six-course program to examine both the roots and branches of the denomination through multiple lenses, such as theology, history, culture, literature, spirituality, and practical theology. Quaker History and Literature is a requirement, and the other five courses may be taken from the other Quaker Studies offerings or other relevant courses with the approval of the advisor.

Deepening the Life of the Spirit Certificate is a six-course program designed to deepen one's spiritual life and one's capacity to offer ministry from inner leadings and promptings of the Holy Spirit. This program builds on the unique perspective of Quaker spirituality and classical Christian or other religious traditions' disciplines. Spiritual Formation and Personal Practice is a foundational requirement. The other five classes may be taken from spirituality studies classes, the other two formational studies classes, or other classes as approved by the advisor.

Closing Points on Education Standards

The evolution of ESR's educational programs over the past decade is impressive. Various factors influenced the development of a distance learning program. A different set of factors required an investment in the practice of assessment. Ultimately, even if some lament the loss of a residential-only educational model, ESR sees some positive value in these changes as well.

Achievements:

- Approval of a comprehensive distance learning program to expand and complement ESR's superb residential learning experience.
- Development of a substantial assessment process, extending from defining program objectives to curricular design to data collection and evaluation processes.

- Documentation of implementation of recommendations/feedback from the assessment process.

Recommendations:

- Assess the effectiveness of retention strategies.
- Develop a meaningful assessment of the assessment process.

PART 3: DEGREE PROGRAM STANDARDS

Earlham School of Religion offers two degrees, one of which is oriented toward ministerial leadership (M.Div./M.Min.) and one of which is oriented toward general theological studies (M.A.). The former is by far the larger program at ESR, but the latter serves a particular niche of students who apply to ESR. Based on the work of graduates, both programs well serve the Religious Society of Friends and others who choose to be educated here. Both degrees are offered in their residential format at ESR's campus in Richmond, Indiana. The distance version of these degree programs complies with residency requirements of the respective degrees.

Master of Divinity / Ministry

Purpose, Goals, Outcomes, and Assessment

Following the 2006 ATS visit, the faculty and staff continued the curriculum review process begun at the "French Lick retreat." Comprising well more than a dozen faculty meetings, surveys of and conversations with students, alumni/ae, and our Board of Advisors, consultations with our partner school, Bethany, and another retreat, the process examined the existing objectives, requirements, course offerings, and educational culture in relation to the mission of the school. The faculty affirmed much of existing curriculum but determined that several important changes were needed to fulfill this mission in our contemporary context. Three new requirements were added: Contextual Theology to help students more effectively negotiate a multicultural, interconnected world; Interfaith Dialog that is equally essential for ministry in every part of the globe; and Spiritual Formation and Public Ministry that prepares students for public ministry and a more integrated participation in faith communities throughout seminary and beyond. The faculty also determined that it was important to bolster the competency in ministry by strengthening the Practical Education requirements as detailed below. The faculty reaffirmed that a competency model for the practice of ministry best suited the *Access* program and the ministry emphases for residential students. The teaching emphasis was removed for a couple of years because of the school's inability to provide adequate instruction in methodology but was later restored in 2013 thanks to a partnership with Earlham College's Master of Teaching program. The faculty also reviewed each area of emphasis and worked to create more flexibility for fulfilling required courses. The schedule and mode of classes were carefully examined. In order to meet these new requirements, especially to provide coherence to the *Access* program in relation to their competency in ministry and in light of the increase in *Access* students, several classes were adapted for an online or intensive format.

The goal of this degree is to equip and develop students' competency for a variety of ministries common to Quakers and other faith traditions. A strong formational component anchors the educational experience, in which a Quaker spirituality of listening for the inner movement of the Spirit coupled with theological reflection and group participation opens students to new conversations and a path toward spiritual discovery and practice. This is accomplished in the residential and distance learning program. Within this highly formative process, all degree-seeking students take a core curriculum of courses intended to provide a foundation of knowledge and skill in a variety of theological and ministry related disciplines. Beyond the classical disciplines of biblical, historical, and theological studies, the required synthesis capstone courses, and required courses in spiritual formation, students take courses from practical areas of ministry represented in the curriculum. Residential students accomplish this through the selection of a ministry emphasis plus

electives. *ESR Access* students choose from courses in the practical areas of ministry to create broad competence in the practice of ministry. Students in both programs are able to shape the choice of supervised ministry experience to their intended ministry and test out a sense of call to a particular form of ministry. ESR's M.Div./M.Min. emphases consist of: Pastoral Care, Pastoral Ministry, Peace and Justice, Quaker Ministry, Religious Leadership, Spirituality, Teaching, and Ministry of Writing.

M.Div./M.Min. Program Objectives

One particularly helpful outcome of the assessment movement was the clarity reached with regard to objectives for the school's respective programs. A much larger list created at the aforementioned French Lick retreat was refined over time to reach the seven outcomes listed below. The faculty recognizes that the adopted objectives lack the religious language and nuances contained in the objectives of some of our peers. Even so, as a Christian school in a non-creedal Quaker tradition that is part of a larger liberal arts environment, these objectives are well-suited to the school ESR desires to be.

The M.Div./M.Min. degree program prepares persons for a variety of ministries as informed by the traditions of the Religious Society of Friends—especially its emphasis on spiritual discernment and commitment to peace and justice—and the wider Christian movement. Graduates of this program will:

- Demonstrate the ability to think critically about issues of faith and ministry.
- Demonstrate the capacity for theological reflection grounded in both scholarship and experience.
- Show evidence of growth in and commitment to one's personal and spiritual formation.
- Reconstruct an understanding of their faith in relation to the tradition.
- Develop a theological and biblical infrastructure that supports their understanding of the church and their own gifts for ministry.
- Recognize, interpret, and respond to cultural dynamics from a multidisciplinary point of view.
- Demonstrate integration of learning in accord with their gifts for ministry and/or ministry emphasis.

The success or failure of our student learning and our program design is gauged by the evaluation of student learning ([ESR Course Catalog](#), p. 9) and the program assessment processes described in Section 2. These processes guide faculty decisions about students' academic progress, potential graduation, and ongoing program critique and revision.

M. Div./Min. Content

The M.Div. curriculum operates with a sequence of introductory courses followed by upper-level courses. As one moves through the curriculum, faculty rely less on lecture and more on conversational and student-led styles of learning. An important goal is a move along Bloom's taxonomy toward synthesis and evaluation. With this educational philosophy, the faculty offers a curriculum that engages students deeply in the four key areas ATS identifies for this degree: religious heritage, cultural context, personal and spiritual formation, and capacity for ministerial and public leadership. The curriculum is structured as follows:

Biblical Studies (12 hours)

Introductory courses in Old Testament and New Testament are required. In addition, students take at least two 300-level Biblical studies courses, advanced seminars in either Old Testament or New Testament studies. Biblical Hebrew and Greek are offered on alternating years, although neither is required for graduation nor do they fulfill the Biblical Studies requirement.

Formational Studies (9 hours)

Spiritual formation is a primary process in preparation for ministry and a core objective of the program as evidenced by—not only the three required classes but also—the opportunities for spiritual growth throughout the program. Many classes, including those in pastoral ministry, pastoral care, Biblical studies, peace and justice, and writing as ministry, address the spiritual dimension. A yearly Spirituality Conference offers the community in-depth exploration of a topic of spiritual formation; students often lead workshops at the conference, providing a chance to expand their spiritual gifts. The required Formational Studies classes help students develop spiritual practices in order to grow emotionally and in their personal faith, consider their place and ministry within a corporate setting, and discern their call and gifts for ministry. Spiritual Formation and Personal Practice and Spiritual Formation and Public Ministry are to be taken during the first year of the residential program and during the first two years of *ESR Access*. ESR advocates “gift-based” ministry and designs its program to assist students discern those gifts. Discernment of Call and Gifts assists in that process and is a prerequisite for Supervised Ministry, ESR’s field education experience.

Historical Studies (9 hours)

Course work covering two of the three major periods of church history provides the required foundational introduction to this field. Students take two of the following three courses: History of Christianity I, History of Christianity II, or American Religious History. Quaker students take one additional course in Quaker history or theology to fulfill this requirement. Students from other denominations must satisfy this requirement and are advised to do so in consultation with their advisor and denominational body. This may be fulfilled, for example, by an independent study or a transfer course in their denomination’s history and polity.

Theological Studies (12 hours)

All students take a three-course sequence in theology. Introduction to Theological Reflection is usually taken in the first year of study. Students also take Christian Ethics, usually in the second year, which requires students to integrate theological conviction and moral integrity with complex issues and practical realities. Two courses designed to demonstrate the contemporary value of theology are Interfaith Dialog and Contextual Theology. The former is designed to develop the capacity to understand differences and engage in a constructive dialog with persons of other faiths, which is essential in today’s interreligious environment. The latter reflects ESR’s commitment to contextual theological education and the dynamics of ministry, issues discussed in many other classes. In Contextual Theology students are immersed in cultures other than their own, often outside the continental U.S., and critically examine the experience theologically, sociologically, and with other relevant disciplines depending on the focus of the immersion. This class also provides praxis for reflection on the issues, language, and history of traditional disciplines of seminary education through engagement in another culture, raising questions such as otherness, enculturation of faith, cross-cultural communication, theological diversity, etc.

Peace and Justice (3 hours)

Peace and justice studies have deep roots in the Quaker tradition and in ESR's curriculum and community life. All residential students are required to take a 300-level Peace & Justice course as part of their course of study. *ESR Access* students must take Introduction to Peace and Justice Studies (usually online, PJ101-O). Many other peace and justice courses are available at ESR and Bethany for those students with an interest in this dimension or type of ministry. ESR and Bethany host regular Peace Forums and other lectures (along with Earlham College) addressing contemporary local and global social concerns.

Practical Education (24 hours)

M.Div./M. Min. students are given abundant opportunity for developing ministry skills that can be utilized in students' future area of ministry. ESR offers courses in the areas of Christian spirituality, pastoral ministry, ministry of writing, leadership, pastoral care, Quaker ministry, and peace and justice. In the residential program, students choose from among these seven emphases, each of which requires four courses related to that ministry. These, plus four electives in the practice of ministry, provide the necessary 24 hours. The competency for ministry curriculum used with *ESR Access* allows students to choose eight courses of practical studies in place of an emphasis plus electives. In consultation with the student's advisor, these selections should mix a balance of competency in ministry with the student's particular ministry interests and experience.

Synthesis Capstone (15 hours)

A central component of the M.Div./M.Min. curriculum is the supervised ministry program. Students admitted to candidacy in this degree program develop a ministry setting and/or a ministerial project in which they exercise and further develop their gifts for ministry under the supervision of a qualified theological supervisor with whom they meet weekly for theological reflection. Each setting and/or project is tailored to the student's particular sense of calling and needs to develop competencies for future ministry. The faculty approves these settings/projects and theological supervisors, who may or may not be directly connected to the internship or project. When a theological supervisor is not directly associated to the setting or project, a site liaison provides a connection to and/or oversight at the internship. Ministerial projects utilize specialized advisors and/or groups, such as an expert in the area of writing the student is focusing on or a writer's feedback group, to help the student meet the goals of the ministerial experience. Students are assisted by the Director of Supervised Ministry and their advisor in the selection of supervised ministry settings. The potential locations for placements have increased through relationships with the Board of Advisors, Quaker groups, other traditions, and alumni/ae. In consultation with the supervisor, students develop a Learning/Serving Covenant, specifying goals, with clear steps for accomplishing and evaluating them. The placement is assessed, in part through a site visit by the Director of Supervised Ministry, other faculty member, or appropriate representative. The Supervised Ministry booklets detail all of the relevant procedures and guidelines.

This internship experience provides the opportunity to test and refine gifts for ministry in a practical setting and includes a classroom component. Supervised Ministry is a two-semester seminar, worth nine hours, in which students use the case study method to engage in group learning as they critically examine ministry incidents with fellow classmates. This praxis-oriented learning focuses on the unique context in which the ministry incident occurs. As part of the class, students are required to participate in educational workshops outside the classroom to facilitate a life-long learning approach to ministry.

Constructive Theology is a capstone class that provides an opportunity for students to construct their own systematic theology. During their final year, seniors in both the residential M.Div./M.Min. and *Access* programs take Comprehensive Seminar. This course enables the student to have an experience in integrating learning from all areas of the curriculum around a given problem and helps the school assess the quality of student learning. The experience requires students to draw deeply from their accumulated reservoir of learning and demonstrates their own readiness for ministry.

The areas of religious heritage and cultural context have benefited from increased inclusion of course materials and new courses in which perspectives other than white liberal Protestant or Eurocentric are included. The strong offering of practical courses, either as an emphasis or in the competency for ministry model serves students well in the deepening of spiritual roots and the honing of particular ministry skills.

Educational Resources and Strategies

The Richmond campus provides nicely for the residential and intensive classes. Comfortable classrooms and well-maintained classroom technology allow for the utilization of multiple teaching strategies that support the school's educational philosophy. Online courses utilize Moodle courseware. Faculty develop courses that include a variety of learning activities and foster a community of learning. Regardless of the delivery format, courses expect student engagement and faculty provide ongoing narrative feedback that affirms strengths and identifies growing edges.

With regard to Standard A.3.1.3 , the *ESR Access* program complies with this standard by requiring that 27 credit hours be taken in a residential format. This is usually satisfied with courses offered in a two-week or weekend intensive format.

No more than 1/6 of a degree may be fulfilled through Independent Studies. The faculty recently updated the petition form to reflect this limit, to document how the course connects with program objectives, and to identify the number of times student and instructor will meet during the independent study. A manual for supervised ministry is updated annually by the Director of Supervised Ministry and distributed to students in preparation for the class.

ESR established eight years as the maximum time allowed to complete the residential M.Div. program; *ESR Access* students are allowed ten years, as distance students typically proceed at a slower pace. Coursework from other institutions will not be considered for transfer if it is more than ten years old.

ESR strives to cultivate a vital relationship with its constituents. This occurs through presence at denominational gatherings, offering content such as workshops to build visibility and familiarity, and invitations of key individuals to campus. The Director of Supervised Ministry, in particular, invests significant time in the development and maintenance of relationships with personnel connected to potential ministry sites for students.

ESR maintains select relationships with other theological institutions so that students have additional resources available. The most important of these is its partnership with Bethany Theological Seminary. The open curriculum shared by the schools increases the course offerings and size of the faculty available to students, as well as adds an additional layer of diversity to the educational experience. The school also maintains cross registration agreements with schools where those relationships are valuable (United Theological Seminary, Christian Theological Seminary, Payne Theological Seminary, the University of Dayton, and Carolina Evangelical Divinity School).

Admission

Standards for admission were discussed in Standard 6. ESR will on occasion admit students without a baccalaureate degree but observes the 15% limit specified in the standard. Where such exceptions are made, it is typically due to hardships that have prevented the individual from pursuing the baccalaureate degree. A strong call to ministry must be evident, as well as support from the individual's faith community. In these cases, an interview and a required writing sample help determine the applicant's suitability for admission.

M.A. in Religion

Purpose, Goals, Outcomes, and Assessment

The M.A. in Religion is a general theological studies academic degree. Its goal is to equip students for ministries in teaching and research, such as teaching in Friends or other secondary parochial schools, or as preparation for Ph.D. study. It may also serve those called to peace and justice ministries or other vocations for which the study and research skills of this degree provide an important foundation. Students in the M.A. program may concentrate in one of four areas: Biblical Studies, Christian Theology, Quaker Studies, or Peace and Justice Studies. Following a review of recent M.A. students and the requirements of the M.A. in relation to similar programs and current ATS standards, and consultations with the Board of Advisors, the faculty determined that a combination of greater rigor and flexibility would improve the program of study and meet the needs of the students we serve. The M.A. now requires courses previously considered prerequisites as foundational courses and includes a one-class elective—partially in recognition that Biblical Studies students must demonstrate language competency—increasing the degree from 36 to 48 hours. Practical courses from the M.Div. program are not part of the M.A. design, though students may choose such a course for their one elective option.

During the curriculum revision and assessment processes, the faculty identified these program objectives for the M.A. degree:

Graduates of the M.A. program will:

- Demonstrate an ability to research and think critically.
- Demonstrate an ability to write creatively and constructively at a Master's level.
- Attain a survey-level knowledge of various theological disciplines.
- Attain a focused knowledge in a specific discipline or topic.

Rubrics completed at the conclusion of each course provide evidence of student's progress toward these objectives. As noted in the discussion about assessment, submission of the thesis proposal, the thesis and its oral defense are key points for faculty's evaluation that outcomes have been met. The thesis and its rubric supply data to the assessment committee for program assessment.

Content

Foundational Courses (9 hours)

A basic foundation in Biblical Studies and Theological Studies (Introduction to Old Testament History and Literature, Introduction to New Testament History and Literature, and

Introduction to Theological Reflection) is required for upper-level course work. Students who have studied in these areas have the option of fulfilling the credit requirements by satisfactorily passing a proficiency exam for that course.

Core Requirements (18 hours)

Biblical Studies (6 hours)

These courses must be advanced Biblical courses at the 300-level.

Theological Studies (6 hours)

These courses must be advanced theology courses, at the 300-level, one of which must be Constructive Theology.

Historical Studies (6 hours)

These will be chosen from among the following three major periods of church history: History of Christianity I, History of Christianity II, or American Religious History.

Thesis (9 hours)

Upon the completion of 15 semester hours, the student petitions the faculty for the appointment of an M.A. Guidance Committee and presents a thesis proposal. Approval of the thesis proposal and the appointment of such a committee by the faculty constitute admission to degree candidacy. The thesis project may take one of two forms, each worth nine semester-hours of credit. It may be a major, single piece of research, which results in a monograph with a single, unified thesis. Alternatively, it may be three separate but related papers, which together form a single monograph with three related theses.

In the case of the single thesis, the student will register for thesis credits and do independent research under the guidance of the Chairperson of their M.A. Committee. In the case of the three related papers, the student must root their research in three additional courses beyond the normal M.A. requirements.

Area of Concentration (9 hours)

At the time of petitioning the faculty for an M.A. Guidance Committee, the student will choose to focus his or her work in one of the following areas of curricular concentration: Biblical Studies, Christian Theology Studies, Quaker Studies, or Peace and Justice Studies. Together with the chairperson of the student's M.A. Committee, the student will develop a program of study (Individualized Education Plan, IEP) through 300-level elective courses in the area of concentration. This program should be designed to offer a solid foundation for thesis research.

Elective Course (3 hours)

Students choose an elective. Course work needed to satisfy language or research skills may be used to fulfill the credits for the elective course.

Language Requirement and Research Skills

Students in the Biblical Studies area of concentration must demonstrate reading proficiency in Hebrew or Greek. Students in Theological Studies, Peace Studies, Quaker Studies, or Historical

Studies are normally required to show reading competence in a foreign language if they do research that draws upon primary sources in that language. A requirement in the language can only be fulfilled by examination. However, faculty may require certain competencies in research skills. Students undertaking research with human subjects must assume the obligations for the welfare of those research subjects.

Oral Examination

Upon satisfactory completion of the M.A. thesis as judged by the M.A. Guidance Committee, the student will take a comprehensive oral examination with the Guidance Committee. It will focus both on the student's general knowledge and understanding of the major field of emphasis and on the student's particular project represented in the thesis or three research papers.

Educational Resources and Learning Strategies

As with the M.Div., the Richmond campus provides nicely for the residential and intensive classes. Comfortable classrooms and well-maintained classroom technology allow for the utilization of multiple teaching strategies that support the school's educational philosophy. Online courses utilize Moodle courseware. Faculty develop courses that include a variety of learning activities and foster a community of learning. Regardless of the delivery format, courses expect student engagement and faculty provide ongoing narrative feedback that affirms strengths and identifies growing edges.

No more than 1/6 of a degree may be fulfilled through Independent Studies. The faculty recently updated the petition form to reflect this limit, to document how the course connects with program objectives, and to identify the number of times student and instructor will meet during the independent study.

ESR established five years as the maximum time allowed to complete the M. A. program. Coursework from other institutions will not be considered for transfer if it is more than ten years old.

ESR faculty who chair the respective M.A. committees work closely with students in their research, especially as students reach the thesis writing stage. Faculty review, critique, and return theses drafts for revision until an acceptable product is produced. Likewise, the theological librarian provides impressive support with developing research skills and obtaining research materials needed but not held in the library collection.

Admission

Criteria and policies for admission were discussed in Standard Six. For this degree, ESR does not admit any student who lacks a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent.

Closing Points on Degree Programs

These degree programs serve ESR's audience well. The M.Div./M.Min. permits the breadth of exploration to be relevant to a broad sense of ministry that Quakers embrace. Its design is well positioned for the expanding interest in ministries other than traditional ones that seem to be emerging. The M.A. appeals to a more academic, research-minded, or even secular service-minded individual who wants theological depth as preparation for their next step. The program is small enough that it would be difficult to survive without the courses shared with the M.Div. program.

With that group contributing to a community of learners, along with the personalized attention provided by the students' M.A. committees, the degree functions well.

In each degree, the linked curriculum of foundational introductory courses which prepare for upper level courses serves the programs well. That progression is accompanied by an expectation of movement toward analysis, synthesis, and integration.

Achievements:

- Coherently designed degree programs that deepen learning and prepare for specific areas of ministry, research, or service.

Recommendations:

- Continued adaptation to cultural, demographic, religious, and technological shifts.

CONCLUSION

On a ground level hiking expedition, one can become so focused on maneuvering the trail that one may fail to observe either the beauty or the danger of the adventure. That can occur in the day-to-day operations of a seminary even though most would be quick to acknowledge the importance of being awestruck at beauty and taking precautions for existing or imminent danger. Were one to do that, still lacking would be the view from above, or the type of engagement that comes with examining the microscopic world. A good self-study can have that effect. More than merely stopping to smell the roses, the process invites us to scan the panoramic view from above, and also to examine the smallest details. With this self-study, ESR strove to view its work from multiple perspectives. The process has invited deep analysis and substantial conversations about its past performance, current status, and future plans. This section will summarize these findings as described in the earlier chapters.

Achievements

Purpose, Planning, and Evaluation

- ESR concluded its 2000 Strategic Plan, drafted and began a new plan in 2013.
- ESR revised its programs, both in form and content, to adjust to current challenges in hopes of serving its constituents and demonstrating the continued relevancy of theological education. This included final approval of the distance learning program, the creation of Certificate programs, and the introduction of blended classes using video-conferencing.
- ESR modified its fundraising strategy with significant success. The move to a major gift strategy has suited ESR's size and donor base. Several key programs now have endowment funding to help offset operating costs.
- ESR uses standard evaluation processes to monitor its activity and progress toward goals. In addition to the newly developed program assessment process, it includes regular review of personnel and outcomes.

Institutional Integrity

- Engaged the entire faculty in creating and implementing a culture of assessment.
- Increased scholarship aid in an effort to assist students in their educational pursuits.

Theological Curriculum

- Strengthened the holistic learning process by clarifying objectives, maintaining a healthy balance of spiritual formation and academic rigor, and attention to integration of learning, especially in capstone courses.
- Further embraced a broad vision for ministry which supports degree programs in which students can find their passion and niche while being well prepared in the classical theological disciplines.
- Strengthened student preparation for ministry in areas of global awareness and interfaith issues as part of the overall curriculum revision.

Library

- Updated the Collection Development Policy in 2014 to emphasize acquisition of electronic resources in support of distance education.
- Number of research consultations conducted by Theological Librarian has increased approximately 20–25% per year for each of the past three years.

Faculty

- ESR faculty is committed to on-going assessment of the curriculum and its effectiveness.
- The faculty reflects the broad theological diversity of Quakers, as well as several other perspectives within the wider Christian church.

Student Recruitment

- Re-imagined a strategy of recruitment.
- Enhanced student services, especially with regard to financial support for spiritual direction and writing resources.
- Developed a proactive educational strategy with regard to student borrowing and financing seminary.
- Created digital resources to assist graduates' preparation for entering the job market.

Authority and Governance

- Earlham College updated by-laws to reflect changes in governance structure in light of Yearly Meeting affiliation changes.
- Revised ESR Faculty Handbook, including changes to the timing of reviews of teaching faculty and criteria for promotion.

Institutional Resources

- Remained financially strong during a difficult economic period.
- Formulated a long range plan for maintenance and addressed many deferred maintenance issues.
- Continued improvement and support of technology infrastructure.

Educational Standards

- Obtained approval of a comprehensive distance learning program to expand and complement ESR's superb residential learning experience.
- Developed a substantial assessment process, extending from defining program objectives to curricular design to data collection and evaluation processes.
- Documentation of implementation of recommendations/feedback from the assessment process.

Degree Programs

- Coherently designed degree programs that deepen learning and prepare for specific areas of ministry, research, or service.

Recommendations

Purpose, Planning, and Evaluation

- The school should monitor the effectiveness of the changes implemented from strategic planning and assessment to determine if they help ESR succeed in its mission; no doubt this will need continual conversation and re-imagination.

Institutional Integrity

- Prepare to launch the next strategic planning process in 2018.

Theological Curriculum

- Continue to evaluate program curricula in light of changing realities of spirituality and religion in society and their impact on our graduates.

Library

- Encourage the Theological Librarian and teaching faculty to work more closely together in developing library resources for new and revised courses
- Encourage more faculty to include a "library help desk" in their Moodle course pages (a discussion forum that the Theological Librarian monitors)

Faculty

- As budget permits, increase faculty compensation rates within ranges established by salary benchmarks.

Student Recruitment

- Evaluate the effectiveness of new recruitment strategies to determine their merit.

Authority and Governance

- None

Institutional Resources

- Look for opportunities to collaborate with Earlham College or Bethany Theological Seminary for economies of scale that do not interrupt ESR's mission or distinctiveness.
- Continue with implementation of energy-saving projects.
- Remain current with technology upgrades.

Educational Standards

- Assess the effectiveness of retention strategies.
- Develop a meaningful assessment of the assessment process.

Degree Program Standards

- Continued adaptation to cultural, demographic, religious, and technological shifts.

In closing, this self-study suggests that ESR has a solid operation and even a cause for optimism. With regard to resources, the school is sound. Though the school felt the effects of revenue declines in some years, budgets remained balanced without compromise to the quality of the institution or its mission. Conservative three-year projected budget models look encouraging. Maintenance has been better than adequate. Endowment has grown, making a fiscally sound future more easily imaginable. Faculty work collegially and innovatively. To a person, the teaching faculty has expanded instructional strategies as they contributed to a technologically altered learning environment. New communication strategies are proving effective; program options are attracting their targeted markets in small but steady ways. Admission statistics give us reason for early optimism that our strategic plan implementation is having the desired effect.

This process also confirmed the obvious: seminary education is more administratively onerous than in previous generations in ways that affect all employment levels. Some of these strengthen the quality of ESR as an institution, whereas others feel punitive as the school checks boxes so that others can document their own accountability. One example is a recent requirement to take a content-weak webinar to complete sexual harassment training requirements in order to document to governmental agencies that Earlham was compliant with its standards. Other changes have required a culture shift. Assessment falls into this category. The institution was already a high quality seminary, and now we are better able to demonstrate it. Early in the process, teaching faculty members were enthused about becoming better teachers. Along the way, data revealed interesting

differences with regard to retention. ESR can say without reservation that it learned several useful things from these processes and made changes based on those learnings. Still, the work is time intensive even with an efficient and streamlined approach that ESR designed. Occasionally a lament will be heard that faculty are asked to “teach to the standard.” To the degree that is true, it must be acknowledged that the standards are ours. We designed the curriculum. We selected and agreed to the objectives. Even if the initial motivation comes from external agencies, the standards are ours. ESR must deliver what it advertises—and we do!

As we plan to navigate the future, challenges do exist and they are substantial ones. These largely result from external forces rather than internal deficiencies: changing perspectives on the Church’s place in the metanarrative, if indeed there is one, which affects where and how seminaries offer their services; trends within Church and society leave major questions as to reliable sources for prospective students and donors. The former may prove easier to answer than the latter. We believe the spiritual quest is alive, and an effectively marketed, relevant seminary education will appeal to some of those questers. As planning processes faced the question of relevancy, the school was able to identify new target markets for recruitment. The future strength and configuration of the Religious Society of Friends will affect mission and deployment of resources. There is a tension to be held that balances supporting the needs and vision of the tradition that birthed us with offering prophetic critique that leads to a new vision. As this occurs alongside an increasing number of ecumenical students, the school must be attentive and mindful to the necessities of spiritual formation in traditions other than Quakerism.

As we succeed in that arena, an adaptive spirit is necessary with regard to curriculum and community. Ways of learning continue to evolve. Patterns of engagement change as well, in part due to technology and in part due to patterns of communication and lifestyle. We may expect forms and locations of ministry, and even the values and theologies that undergird them, will continue to develop. We will need the confidence to experiment and the courage to fail without compromising the overarching commitments to mission and accreditation standards.

New donor cultivation may prove more challenging than recruitment or curriculum. Alumni/ae who hold ministry positions may be regular contributors, but it is unlikely they will be major donors. The philanthropic spirit in the U.S. remains strong, but where engagement is lacking, dollars rarely follow. Denominational loyalty—that is, people who identified as Quakers—and who valued the mission of ESR are the reason for the school’s substantial endowment. Research suggests that such loyalty is not a characteristic of the younger generations. This will be an area of challenge in the coming years.

As the school moves forward, a bit more work remains in the current strategic plan. We will move even deeper into institutional and program assessment as additional years of data and experience become available. Pursuing collaborative opportunities, particularly ones that contribute to the vitality of Friends and/or the employability of our graduates remain works-in-progress. Equally important will be the assessment of results from our new marketing, communication, and fundraising strategies. These, along with fresh survey data from our constituents, will provide a starting point for the next strategic plan. By 2018 or 2019, we anticipate another planning process.

The mission that launched the school in 1960 resonates with the current manifestation of the school—preparing persons for ministry. What constitutes ministry continues to evolve, as does the questions of what it means to be a Quaker—or a person of any faith for that matter. Where to find the Church is an open-ended question as well. Yet that is precisely why faculty and staff of ESR are committed to the task at hand!