**The Educational Models employed at Grace Theological Seminary**

Education at Grace Theological Seminary follows a scaffolding structure that takes into account the pre seminary educational level of the scholar, the scholar’s personality, and the skill level of the professor. Our educational methodology incorporates Intercultural Competency and Ecumenism into the following structures.

**Baseline:** Seminarians are admitted to Grace Theological Seminary with a minimum of a GED or high school diploma. They must take a full-curriculum that leads to a Bachelor’s Degree. Most of the seminarians at GTS enter with a Bachelor’s degree or Higher. All must take a personality test, the results of which are sent to and assessed by the GTS Life-Coach. She then interviews the scholar to validate the findings, and discusses the findings in the faculty meeting so that every professor has knowledge of the seminarian and can tailor her/his responses and assign coursework in an individualized fashion. Thus, the same course can be individualized for every seminarian. This is especially important during the Pre-Theology year. The current skill levels of the professor are assessed by the Bishop/Rector via discussions and observing the classrooms. The seminarians reflect on the professor’s current skills via anonymous post course surveys. The seminary assesses the professor’s skills via the peer-review process.

**First year (Pre-Theology Level)** seminarians at Grace Theological Seminary who are not admitted with a background in ministry are streamlined into a pedagogical-oriented teaching structure called scaffolding. Scaffolding at GTS teaches basic ministry skills as a foundation for future experiences. First year seminarians at GTS take 2 courses per term for the first and second terms and three courses during the final term of the year. These courses are fundamental to ministry. Biblical Studies-Survey of OT, Biblical Studies-Survey of NT, Pastoral Ministry I, Intro. to Pastoral Counseling, Community Chaplaincy with a 40-hour externship, Theological Writing, and Intro. to Theology. The goal is that the seminarian receives a tightly structured formation in which the seminarian enters in human formation and interacts with his/her peers and professors, on an at least weekly basis, the Dean of Vocational Formation, the Life-Coach, and his/her Spiritual Director on a monthly basis, and the Bishop/Rector at least twice per term. The seminarian generally moves through human formation into spiritual formation within 12 months.

**Second Year (Theology Level)** seminarians who complete the pre-theology level are scaffolded up to andragogical oriented teaching. The goal is to establish enough structure so that seminarians can be self-directed while remaining in ministry formation. The seminarians have now been educated in the fundamentals of ministry service, and are now able to discern their calling with increased clarity. We anticipate that the seminarian is moving from spiritual formation to intellectual formation during the theology level year. Thus, we look for evidence of critical thinking skills and the actions taken to solve problems that arise in life and especially in social justice-sacred activism focused ministries. Second year graduates are ordained to the Diaconate which enables them to move into supervised field placements akin to those of extraordinary ministers, or church volunteers, or working with not for profits… etc. They are asked to declare a ministry specialization.

**Third Year (Resident Level):** In this level the professors move to heutagogical oriented teaching where they act as coaches. The purpose is to create an environment where the seminarians clearly discern their own ministry and its attendant goals, learning paths, and processes. Unlike the pre-theology year where the curriculum is the driver of the process, and the theology year where the teachers act as facilitators, during the third year the seminarian is at the center of his/her own process. It is expected that the seminarian enters the heutatogical level in intellectual formation and advances towards pastoral formation. It is at this point that the faculty, the vocations office, the coach, the spiritual director, and the bishop/rector look for evidence of double loop learning where the seminarian reflects on the problem-solving process itself. The seminarians, through their chosen instruments of ministry focus are expected to gain insight into social justice-sacred activism problem solving, in light of life-experience with innovation, creativity, and the self-directed employment of their abilities, gifts, and skills.

**Alumni Year (Post Grad):** At this level the alumni is expected to synthesize the education, formation, coaching, and spiritual direction into her/his individualized ministry in service of God. With the exception of the Bishop and Spiritual Director who retain their roles, everyone else assumes the role of a trusted coach, and/or a mentor, and/or a friend or colleague.