Competency Exercise
Leading the Church into Mission and Interpreting the Faith for the Church

For the competency exercise joining Leading the Church into Mission and Interpreting the Faith for the Church, the student will develop a proposal for a new ministry or way of doing ministry in her or his congregational setting that will contribute to leading the congregation through adaptive change. This proposal will be grounded in a congregational analysis as well as in research on the historical and contemporary theological voices who address the central doctrinal questions inherent in the ministry and the change being addressed. (The area of ministry will be one covered in the LM curriculum. Examples might include, e.g., a proposal for a new approach to stewardship that shifts the congregation’s culture from one of appealing for funds to cultivating generosity; a proposal for restructuring the congregation’s governance in order to change from a committee culture to a ministry culture; or a proposal for a new community ministry that simultaneously builds vitality within the congregation.)

The student will turn in to the faculty a portfolio of the following materials, due one week before presenting the proposal to the appropriate body within the congregation:

- a critically written credo (2,000 words) concerning the relation of theology (past and present) and congregational leadership today, which includes
  - a statement concerning the significance and value that theology should hold for contemporary congregational life;
  - a statement about the changing nature of the church and its mission today that shows why adaptive change is needed; this statement will be formulated by drawing both on theological resources and on contemporary discussions of congregational leadership.
  - a statement about the nature and purpose of pastoral leadership in a changing church; this statement will be formulated by drawing both on theological resources and on contemporary discussions of congregational leadership;
- A Congregational Analysis (1,500 words) outlining the results of a congregational study that included data collection, interviews, and direct observation of the relevant ministry area. [Note: This study must either be of a different ministry area than the one studied in LM520 or build significantly upon it.] See attached directions for conducting a congregational study.
- A research paper (2,000 words) that focuses on the experience with and reflection on an issue or issues inherent in the ministry just analyzed. In this paper the student will 1) use both primary theological resources (texts written by the theologians themselves) and secondary resources (scholarly work analyzing the doctrinal questions at the heart of the issue(s)) to develop a theological perspective on the issue(s) (seven eighths of the paper); 2) reflect on how the theological analysis deepens and/or changes the analysis of the ministry and options for responding to it (an eighth of the paper);
- A Proposal (1,000 words) that includes 1) an explanation of the change this proposal seeks to address and the goals and a rationale for why this is the appropriate response to the needed change; 2) concrete suggestions for changes to the ministry or way of doing ministry; 3) an explanation of how this newly proposed ministry or changed way of doing ministry would be implemented—i.e., a budget, identification of staff and resource needs, and an implementation schedule—as appropriate.
The student will bring his or her proposal to the appropriate body in the congregation,
  • leading the body in a discussion or exercise on the change (e.g., leading an appreciative inquiry into the congregation’s evangelism ministries; leading a mapping exercise of the congregation’s governance; leading a theological discussion about the congregation’s stewardship practices)
  • presenting the proposal.

The discussion/exercise and presentation will be video-taped. The video clip should be uploaded and the evaluations be received by the instructors not later than one week after the presentation.

It is not necessarily expected that the proposal will thereafter actually be adopted and implemented. Instead the congregational body will evaluate the student’s pastoral and ethical leadership skills as exercised in the proposal itself and the discussion of it.

Two faculty members (one from Leading the Church into Mission and one from Interpreting the Faith for the Church) will grade the competency exercise, taking into consideration the portfolio materials (above) as well as
  • the videotape, uploaded by the student for faculty viewing; and
  • evaluations completed by the members of the congregational body that received and/or discussed the proposal.

Students will receive two grades for the exercise—one for each curricular area covered. As part of the feedback provided to the student, the attached rubric will be used to evaluate the student in the two areas.