

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM

For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Evaluating

San Francisco Theological Seminary

September 25–28, 2017

Team Roster

Robert Duke (Chair)
Dean, School of Theology, Azusa Pacific University

Dennis Johnson (Assistant Chair)
Professor of Practical Theology, Westminster Seminary California

Darryl Lycett, Chief Financial Officer, Catalysis Capital Management

Tatiana Nazarenko, Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness, Westmont College

Jonathan Rothchild, Associate Professor of Theological Studies, Loyola Marymount
University

Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President, WSCUC

The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT	3
A. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History	3
B. Description of Team’s Review Process	4
C. Institution’s Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence	4
SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS	6
A. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions	6
B. Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators	8
C. Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of degrees	20
D. Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation	22
E. Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation	24
F. Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence	27
G. Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment	28
H. Component 8: Optional essay on institution-specific themes (not applicable)	29
I. Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement	29
SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS (Substantive Change to MATS online, approved by WSCUC September 2017)	30
SECTION IV – COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW	30
APPENDIX: Federal Compliance Forms	32
1. Credit Hour and Program Length Review	32
2. Marketing and Recruitment Review	34
3. Student Complaints Review	35
4. Transfer Credit Review	36

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History

San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS), founded in 1871, is a theological seminary affiliated with the Presbyterian Church(USA). Its mission statement, revised in 2013, states: “Moved by God’s love in Jesus Christ, San Francisco Theological Seminary prepares women and men for transformational ministries of justice, peace and healing, which advance the church’s hopeful, loving engagement with the world.” This statement reflects a response to the PCUSA’s declining need for full-time parish ministers and marks an expansion of mission to address broader needs of society.

SFTS provides graduate theological education to students on its San Anselmo campus and online. A Southern California campus in Pasadena was closed in 2012, following a teach-out plan with the School of Theology at Claremont, which had been approved by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) in 2011.

In 2016–17 SFTS had eight full-time faculty and ten part-time faculty. In September 2017 one full-time faculty member left the seminary to accept a teaching position at an institution in Europe.

Degree programs offered by the seminary are Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS), and Doctor of Ministry (DMin). In addition, SFTS has several certificate and diploma programs. In 2015–16, total (head count) enrollment in SFTS courses was 204 (102 FTE). One hundred one students were enrolled in the DMin program, 56 in masters programs, 26 in certificate and diploma programs; and 21 students were unclassified.

SFTS is a founding member of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), a consortium of eight graduate schools of theology in the San Francisco Bay Area. The seminary participates in master’s and doctoral degree programs offered by GTU. SFTS students are entitled to use the extensive collections of the GTU Library, located in Berkeley, California, as well as the branch GTU library at SFTS. The seminary also shares student services, student records, information technology (including online instruction), and other resources through the GTU consortium. (SFTS is in the process of transferring its student records to the seminary’s own, recently acquired, Populi system.)

WSCUC first accredited SFTS in 1973, and reaffirmed the seminary’s accreditation most recently in 2008. The Commission requested an interim report addressing financial management, program review and assessment, and communication and support for change across the SFTS community. This interim report was received in 2010. The WSCUC panel letter in response to this report brought attention to the issues of financial sustainability, enrollment

and graduation rates, assessment of student learning and program review, and strategic planning. Further interim reports addressing these issues were requested by WSCUC panels and submitted by the seminary in 2012 and 2013. In response to a fourth interim report, received in 2015, the WSCUC panel's letter again expressed concern over the issues of financial sustainability, enrollment, and strategic planning, while recognizing SFTS's progress in assessment and program review.

SFTS has also been accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) since 1966.

In September 2017 WSCUC approved the seminary's substantive change proposal to offer the MATS degree completely online. The seminary intends to launch this program in academic year 2018-19.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

SFTS filed its institutional report with WSCUC in January 2017. Through a Box account, team members had online access to the report and supporting evidence. The team completed a composite Offsite Review (OSR) team worksheet and held its OSR meeting on March 8-9. After the OSR and its concluding video-conference call with SFTS representatives, the team finalized and sent to SFTS a summary of Lines of Inquiry, including a list of requested additional materials to be made available prior to the accreditation visit (AV).

During the visit, team members interviewed the president, ALO (dean of the seminary), director of institutional research, director of information technology, SFTS accreditation steering committee, senior administrative staff, faculty assessment committee, CFO, vice president of advancement, vice president of enrollment, student services administrators, director of the Center for Innovation in Ministry, director of diversity, director of human resources, director of maintenance & facilities, full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, support staff, trustees who chair board committees (budget & investment, audit), additional members of the governing board, and (via phone calls) the seminary's auditors and the GTU online instructional design consultant, whose services SFTS shares with other GTU-affiliated seminaries. Open meetings were held for DMin and MDiv students to share their perspectives and experiences with the team. A confidential email account inviting comment from SFTS constituencies was established. The account was monitored before and during the AV by the team's assistant chair. Five emails were received before the completion of the AV, and their content was communicated to the team. Additional documentary evidence in hard copy was available to and consulted by the team during the AV. Information communicated in interviews prompted the team to request further items of evidence to review, and these were promptly provided by SFTS personnel.

C. Institution's Reaccreditation Report: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

The SFTS institutional report is comprehensive and clearly written. Under the leadership of the dean of the seminary/ALO, a committee composed of members of the administrative cabinet, other administrators, faculty members, and students met at least monthly (at points more frequently) to evaluate SFTS in light of WSCUC standards and to develop the institutional report. The governing board was not represented on the WSCUC steering committee, but trustees indicated that they had been made aware of the contents of the report before it was submitted to WSCUC. The steering committee saw its task as not only to produce a reflective, evidence-based report but also to exploit the self-evaluation process to expose areas needing improvement in seminary policies, structures, and operations. In other interviews during the visit, steering committee members mentioned specific improvements in their areas of responsibility that had been instigated through the self-study and report-preparation process.

With reference to organization, SFTS chose to combine discussion of components 3, 4, and 6 into a single component. This decision is permissible according to the *Handbook of Accreditation*, p. 27. It also made sense in view of the thematic and evidentiary overlap among degree programs (component 3), educational quality (4), and student success (6). But it complicated the team's task, since the team's report to the Commission is required to reflect the eight- (or nine-) component structure defined in the *Handbook*.

Throughout the electronic version of the report, hypertext links to exhibits facilitated the team's review and verification of SFTS's self-description and self-evaluation.

The conclusion of the institutional report is very brief (one paragraph of eight lines). It does not summarize the seminary's identification of its strengths and exemplary institutional performance, except in general terms. It alludes to "deep-seated challenges which transcend this particular institution" but which SFTS must engage. But the conclusion does not sum up what SFTS had learned through institutional review process (though previous components identify these). Nor does it forecast concrete next steps to be taken in response to what has been learned. One such "next step" that might have been mentioned (and was, earlier in the report) is that SFTS was exploring the development of fully online degree programs, intended to address both enrollment and financial concerns. As previously noted, between the filing of the institutional report in January and the team's visit in September, this planning process had produced a Substantive Change proposal for an online MATS, which has received approval from WSCUC.

The report gives evidence that SFTS capitalized on the review process for reaffirmation of accreditation to focus attention on challenges currently facing the institution (notably, enrollment and financial sustainability), to analyze the changing landscape of its primary constituencies and theological education generally, and to respond to its academic and ecclesial environments with prudence and boldness.

The self-evaluation in the report reflects a frank acknowledgement of significant issues concerning ongoing institutional viability. The narrative of actions taken to address these issues demonstrates creative and responsible leadership and an institutional commitment to flexibility

and innovation for the sake of maintaining and reconfiguring SFTS's service to current and potential constituencies.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

In June 2008, when WSCUC reaffirmed the accreditation of SFTS, the Commission identified three issues requiring focused attention: (a) financial management, planning and enrollment; (b) implementation of student learning assessment and program review; and (c) improvements in communication and support for change. WSCUC requested that SFTS submit an interim report in fall 2010. The WSCUC panel's response to that report commended SFTS for "good progress in each of these three areas." The Interim Report Committee subsequently requested and SFTS submitted further interim reports in 2012, 2013, and 2015. This ongoing dialogue between WSCUC and SFTS continued to address changes made and further improvements needed on the issues of: (a) financial stability and sustainability, (b) enrollment (retention, graduation rates, recruitment), (c) assessment of student learning, (d) degree program review, (e) strategic planning, and (f) (in 2016) marketing.

Letters from the WSCUC panels reviewing the four interim reports over its current accreditation cycle recognize the seminary's significant progress in the areas of assessment and program review. The 2010 panel letter commented, "Currently SFTS falls short of...expectations" regarding program learning outcomes, assessment of student learning through direct and indirect evidence, and a process for improving areas of concern identified through assessment. In 2012, the panel letter recognized that program learning outcomes had been developed, but methods of assessment and use of assessment results were lacking; and "SFTS has yet to implement a program review for any of its degrees or departments." The panel reviewing the 2013 interim report noted that SFTS "has substantially strengthened its assessment and program review process and has used the result to improve curricula." The panel reviewing the 2015 interim report "commended the institution's solid program review process."

On the other hand, the 2008 WSCUC letter reaffirming SFTS's accreditation and the subsequent panel letters in response to interim reports (2010, 2012, 2013, 2015) identify financial sustainability and, related to it, enrollment, as areas of ongoing and deepening concern:

2008: "...the comprehensive strategic plan, improved fundraising, and better financial management have alleviated serious concerns over the short term. In the long term, SFTS will need to make progress in addressing enrollment challenges"

2010: "The panel appreciates how painful it has been for SFTS to make budget cuts, especially reducing faculty and staff FTE...during a time of turnover in key leadership positions.... While SFTS has laid a solid foundation to improve its financial situation, it will take time to determine whether plans will be successful. Key issues are the amount of funds SFTS will need annually from its endowment

and the results of plans to sell or redevelop property and retire bank debt.... The data provided with the report seem to show a downward trend in both enrollment and graduation rates, though the reviewers heard on the call that recent retention rates are good.”

2012: “...the panel was concerned about the shortfalls in contributed revenue (by several hundred thousand dollars) and the increase in the projected deficit for this fiscal year (by several hundred thousand dollars). The financial trends for SFTS are not yet on a consistent upward trajectory toward the goal of financial equilibrium by 2016.”

2013: “SFTS continues to be in deficit, estimated to be \$863,000 this year. The financial trends for SFTS are not yet on a consistent upward trajectory toward financial equilibrium. Three sets of significant reductions in staffing and expenses since 2009 have limited what else can be realistically cut. In terms of financial planning, projections are accurate on the expense side but shortfalls in revenue persist.” The letter mentions the launch of a \$6M fundraising campaign, commitments of the board to raise \$1.5M and of the Alumni Council to raise \$1M, and plans to sell property outside the central campus.

2015: “SFTS continues to operate with a deficit, estimated to be \$1.8M this year. Three sets of significant reductions in staff and expenses since 2009 have been undertaken and the institution is calling for another \$1M decrease in expenses, going forward.... SFTS has sold all of its property outside of the central campus and consolidated faculty and student housing, which has helped some with the institution’s financial position. However, SFTS remains financially fragile. (CFR 3.4).... Enrollments have dropped dramatically from 2008 to 2013, reflecting national trends.... Since 2013 there has been a modest uptick in enrollment.”

In sum, the dialogue between SFTS and WSCUC since the reaffirmation of the seminary’s accreditation in 2008 reveals significant progress in the areas of assessment of student learning and program review, but also ongoing concern with respect to financial sustainability. SFTS has taken various steps, including personnel changes and staff downsizing and program initiatives, to address its financial condition, but panels reviewing its interim reports concluded that these steps had not brought about the positive turn in SFTS’s financial position that the seminary and the Commission want to see.

Since WSCUC’s reaffirmation of accreditation for SFTS in 2008, the seminary has undergone various changes of personnel and initiatives, many of which are related to the challenges it faces with respect to financial sustainability and enrollment. With respect to personnel, in 2011 the current president took office. In 2013, the current dean of the seminary (vice president for academic affairs) returned to the office after a four-year hiatus. In 2016, a new vice president for enrollment management was appointed. In 2016, The Center for Innovation in Ministry was launched under the leadership of its current director. In mid-2017, a new vice president for advancement began work with SFTS.

The (previously-mentioned) closing of SFTS's Southern California campus, sale of local properties other than its San Anselmo campus, and downsizing of faculty and staff were among the seminary's efforts to reduce expenses and balance its annual budgets. To increase enrollment and income from tuition and fees, SFTS initiated certificate and diploma programs in 2013-14. With respect to advancement through donations, in 2014 SFTS launched a campaign to raise \$6M. After raising almost \$2M, the campaign "was unable to create sustained interest," and it was discontinued in late 2015 (institutional report, p. 9).

The seminary's revised mission statement, which emphasizes "justice, peace, and healing," expresses SFTS's purpose to expand its focus (and thus its potential student constituencies) from preparation for ordained congregational ministry to preparation for a variety of forms of engagement in society beyond the church. Recent initiatives flowing from this expanded institutional mission include the certificate and diploma programs and The Center for Innovation in Ministry. SFTS has shown responsiveness to past Commission and Interim Report panel recommendations and its sincere efforts to address its financial and enrollment challenges, though with limited success.

Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

A. Review under the Standards

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purpose and Ensuring Educational Objectives

SFTS celebrates its Presbyterian tradition, while also being mindful of its own social location and contemporary calling. The institutional report states, "...no other school balances the Christian Church's commitment to the twin goals of social justice and spiritual growth quite the way SFTS does." The institution is located in the greater San Francisco area and is committed to being engaged with its surrounding culture.

Institutional Purposes

The mission statement of SFTS reflects the tension that theological educators experience in the current educational environment, since many of the traditionally denominationally-based seminaries no longer need to provide as many clergy for their own denomination. The broadened mission of SFTS reflects this reality. The revised mission statement is expressed in the establishment of The Center for Innovation in Ministry (CIM) and has the goal of contributing to the public good. From the CIM purpose statement:

"We seek to stimulate collaborations and ignite positive breakthroughs. We link up individual innovators and partners with congregations, educational organizations, and groups seeking to act positively in the world. Together we create, discover, incubate and disseminate effective responses to our common challenges."

SFTS is committed to helping students be prepared to face the needs of society in both curricular and co-curricular activities (CFR 1.1).

SFTS has clearly articulated educational objectives for the degree programs and data about student achievement is publicly disseminated (CFR 1.2).¹ In addition, institutional research has been much more robust over the past couple years with the appointment of a director of institutional research (DIR). All levels of SFTS are using data to inform decision making.

Integrity and Transparency

SFTS has a culture that is highly collaborative and accessible. SFTS fully subscribes to the academic freedom statement of the AAUP (CFR 1.3). SFTS also values the rich diversity of its own faculty/staff and student body, and sees its location in the greater San Francisco to be vital to their mission and goals (CFR 1.4). The institution made noticeable strides in promoting inclusiveness and diversity on campus. The seminary is committed to full inclusion of LGBTQ students. SFTS runs accommodation programs for students with disabilities. When meeting with the team, students reported easy access to disability services. The Diversity Committee developed the SFTS Statement of Diversity and is seeking its approval by the Board of Trustees (CFR 1.4). Although SFTS has a Presbyterian heritage and connection, at all levels the seminary sees itself as an educational institution that is free to develop programs that fit its unique social location and inclusive commitments (CFR 1.5).

The institution functions with integrity and has been very open and honest with its areas of concern. Regarding transparency with students, SFTS operates with a high level of concern and provides the necessary information to those considering enrolling and those already attending (CFR 1.6). The major strides in the use of institutional research has been welcomed by both administration and faculty, and these advances help to make the realities within SFTS more accessible. One area of concern is the completion rate for the DMin. The institution is aware of the length of time many of the DMin students are taking to complete the degree and is taking steps to reduce the length of time to degree.

The financial outlook is the major concern for the institution, particularly to guarantee long-term sustainability of the institution. In the institutional report and in interviews during the visit, these concerns were made known in an open and honest way. The finalization and publication of the 2017-2020 Enrollment Management Plan will help the institution communicate internally and externally about its commitment and path forward to help increase enrollment. This will be one of the key foci for the institution to strengthen its financial future. The business practices of the institution are sound, and SFTS is planning to shift resources to marketing and outreach (CFR 1.7). The Center for Innovation in Ministry has been one of the major outreach initiatives that SFTS has launched. CIM has already been able to secure outside funding and promises to be a major focus for seeking large grants and donations. The team recommends that SFTS review the relationship of CIM to all entities within the seminary to clarify roles and objectives. Also, the relationship between the Alexander Montgomery Foundation, which receives grant funding for CIM, and SFTS as a faith-based educational institution needs to be clear, to avoid confusing

¹ <https://sfts.edu/about/accreditation/>

those within or without on how the Foundation functions and in what capacity it administers such funding.

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 1.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

The team's review of SFTS under Standard 2 did not find any major issues or concerns. The institution has committed administrators, faculty, and staff to ensure the achievement of the seminary's educational objectives. The professional (MDiv, DMin) and academic (MATS) programs of the institution are appropriate in content, program learning outcomes, standards of performance, rigor, and nomenclature for the degree level awarded. The programs are staffed by sufficient faculty members and the institution has a low student-to-faculty ratio of 6:1 (FTE) or 16:1 (HC). All fulltime faculty have either terminal graduate or professional degrees suitable for courses taught; the majority of them also serve as core doctoral faculty at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU). Adjunct faculty have either extensive practical experience, master's degrees, or terminal degrees (CFR 2.1). The institution has admission policies that support its mission and purpose (CFR 2.2). SFTS is a graduate only institution and the requirements for faculty pertaining to scholarship are defined in the faculty handbook (CFR 2.9).

Teaching and Learning

All SFTS's master's and doctoral degrees are clearly defined with admission and graduation requirements posted on the institutional website. The institution also provides students with sufficient information about the Doctorate in Theology (ThD) and Doctorate in Philosophy (PhD) degrees offered in conjunction with the Graduate Theological Union. In order to graduate, students are required to complete coursework and an array of curricular and co-curricular activities (such as field educational experiences, internships, projects at the Center for Innovation in Ministry, or collaborative curricular projects through the GTU) that are well aligned with the seminary's mission and educational vision. Students also are required to be engaged in professional practices and scholarship. All academic programs are subject to peer review through the external review component of the program review process and the programs are regularly revised and modified (CFR 2.2b).

The administrative responsibilities for assessment fall to the position of Dean of the Seminary, who appoints faculty to the Assessment Committee and provides support for their work. Recently, the position of Director of Institutional Research (DIR) was added to the dean's office. SFTS has established an effective process for program review, although some variability was evident in the process across the different programs. Program reviews are conducted every five years at the doctoral and master's level. The most recent program review was conducted in spring 2015 for the DMin program. In addition to program reviews, the degree programs collect annual assessment data for one program learning outcome (PLO), and the MDiv program files an annual assessment report. All programs have assessment plans. Both MDiv and MATS programs have developed curriculum maps and established benchmarks for student learning; however, the DMin program still needs to set benchmarks for student performance. The team learned that the DIR is instrumental in collecting, organizing, and presenting assessment data to

faculty for analysis, interpretation, and decision-making. Faculty, and especially members of the Assessment Committee, expressed their appreciation of the DIR.

All degree programs use various assessment methods for assessing student learning in relation to the PLOs. Capstones, thesis papers or dissertation projects, and sermon evaluations are utilized as direct assessment methods. Internship evaluations by supervisors and students, as well as the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) graduating student questionnaire, are used as indirect assessment methods. The institution has developed adequate tools for assessment purposes (assessment templates, rubrics, and questionnaires) (CFR 2.4).

Student learning outcomes are established and clearly stated for all programs; they are posted online and included in course syllabi. However, upon meeting with students (master's students constituted 90% of all students attending the meeting) the team concluded that students are not well familiarized with their respective PLOs. The students are more aware of the learning outcomes of specific courses, which are introduced to them by instructors at the very beginning of their academic courses. There is a need for better communication and intentional guidance in linking the required course learning outcomes and course assignments to the PLOs that students are expected to fulfill by the time of graduation. It may be prudent to address this issue during advising sessions (CFRs 2.4, 2.6).

The team also noticed that some program learning outcomes are not well aligned with the revised institutional mission, specifically with its "justice, peace, and healing, which advance the church's hopeful, loving engagement with the world" component (CFRs 1.2, 2.3). The team was told by SFTS that faculty will address this issue in the foreseeable future.

Based on analysis of the program review materials and interviews with administrators, faculty, and students, the team concluded that assessment results are effectively being used for improvement in pedagogy, curriculum, or resource allocation. Examples of such improvements include changing the sequence of foundational DMin seminars and moving the Dissertation/Project seminar to the beginning of the coursework. In the MDiv program, the assessment results prompted the development of new curriculum with a reduced number of semester units (from 81 to 72), which allows students to complete the program in three years. The MDiv biblical language requirement was modified from studying both ancient Hebrew and Hellenistic Greek, to taking only one biblical language, since most denominations do not require the knowledge of both languages. As a result of SFTS's assessment and program review efforts, more of the degrees will have data-guided curricular changes when needed (CFRs 2.3, 2.4).

Upon reviewing the institutional report and the program pages on the SFTS website and interviewing students, the team concluded that SFTS students are challenged through a variety of learning experiences, both in and outside of the classroom. Feedback and formative/summative assessments are in place so that students can track their knowledge and skill development. While meeting with the team, SFTS students expressed their satisfaction with the rigor and quality of their education and the opportunities to develop professional skills

through ministries and internships. There is an appreciation of the faculty's commitment to pedagogical innovations and teaching, as well as their accessibility, support, and guidance. Only a few things were mentioned as possible areas of improvement, namely, requests to continue offering a writing lab, to increase the range of hands-on ministries, and to teach more courses on apologetics. Students also expressed their appreciation of the programming offered by the Center for Innovations in Ministry (CIM) and hope that the scope of the CIM's programs and projects will be extended in the near future (CFRs. 2.5, 2.6).

Scholarship and Creative Activity

The seminary has expectations for research and scholarship for all categories of faculty and doctoral students. Faculty's engagement in research is supported by a sabbatical policy. The administration also provides funding for faculty conference participation, while the GTU supports fellowship programs for graduate students. Additionally, the seminary utilizes the diverse expertise of their professors emeriti who serve as SFTS research professors and fellows (CFRs 2.8, 2.9).

The seminary's faculty body is small; it is comprised of eight full-time faculty members (one faculty member accepted a faculty position at another institution and was moving out of her campus office during the team's visit). Two senior administrators, the president and the dean, carry a teaching load as well; and approximately 10 adjuncts are employed every semester. The small size of the SFTS faculty body appears to stretch faculty resources thin. The faculty load for all SFTS teaching faculty is two courses per semester. In some cases, faculty teach a GTU course. The four-course-per-year-load includes GTU teaching. In addition to their teaching, faculty members sit on standing committees, conduct assessment and curriculum reviews, and participate in ad-hoc committees, task forces, and other activities pertinent to shared governance. The two faculty members who are administrative faculty may teach fewer than four courses annually and do not participate in the GTU doctoral program. Some faculty members assume administrative roles without compensation, such as Director of Diversity. The team encourages SFTS to be mindful of the demands on faculty when setting and reviewing expectations for research and scholarship.

Student Learning and Success

SFTS has a clear definition of student success, which is aligned with the institution's mission and character. SFTS strives to prepare candidates to become theological educators, professional ministers, non-profit or seminary administrators, and pastoral counselors in a religiously and culturally diverse world. SFTS faculty and staff ensure that students understand their degree requirements and track their progress towards degree completion. Recently, the Associate Registrar implemented a degree-audit report that supports faculty tracking of student progress. The seminary utilizes a faculty advising model, and students have the opportunity to meet with their advisers at least once a year. According to student input, faculty advisers are accessible and available by email and in person. However, students also reported variability in the quality of academic advising (CFRs 2.10, 2.12).

The institution uses retention rates, graduation rates (both for the normative time to completion and four or six years from matriculation depending on the program), and average time-to-completion as three primary metrics of student success. The retention and graduation data are disaggregated by gender and race. The disaggregated gender data show slightly higher retention rates for female students as compared with male students. The disaggregated race/ethnicity data represent a relatively small sample size for each racial group and therefore may not be statistically significant. In the team's meeting with students, time-to-degree was not an issue of concern. The seminary also tracks placement rates for graduates of the seminary's degree programs and reports those placement rates annually to the Association of Theological Schools (CFR 2.10).

The seminary remains committed to monitoring student debt and providing additional support for students in financial distress. In 2013, SFTS adopted and implemented a loan default prevention plan which has proven to be effective. SFTS supports student progression by providing scholarship and need-based grants for students seeking a master's degree; it also offers student housing for 1/3 of the market price (CFR 2.13).

Consistent with its purpose and educational vision, SFTS offers co-curricular programs that are aligned with the seminary's mission and academic goals. Additionally, SFTS supports students' emotional well-being and spiritual formation during their seminary experience. Students seeking a master's degree are eligible for subsidized vouchers for counseling and spiritual direction at an independent counseling center adjoining the campus. Doctoral students may also participate in the voucher program at the discretion of the Associate Dean of Student Life/Chaplain. Students' spiritual and emotional needs are also supported through regular chapel worship in a variety of formats and styles. In their meeting with the team, students expressed their appreciation of diverse chapel worshiping styles, spiritual growth support, and interfaith activities offered by the seminary (CFR 2.11).

The effectiveness of student services is evaluated bi-weekly at the student services staff meetings and is driven by student concerns. The seminary utilizes the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Entering Student Questionnaire and Graduating Student Questionnaire to gather feedback and information from students. It also plans to implement the ATS Alumni Questionnaire. The institution has demonstrated a good level of effort in developing the assessment of co-curricular programs and student services, but further work along this line is required. The team recommends that SFTS continue to strengthen its assessment of co-curricular programs and student services and the use of assessment outcomes to inform further improvement of its service to students (CFR 2.13).

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 2.

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

Faculty and Staff

Despite the challenges presented by the continuing enrollment decline at the institution, SFTS has continued to demonstrate its commitment to institutional effectiveness and student learning outcomes by maintaining appropriate levels of qualified faculty and staff. Over the course of the past several years, SFTS has made some difficult decisions that have resulted in the elimination of some faculty and staff positions. However, the institution recognizes the need for qualified individuals in key leadership roles of the organization that will help them execute on the strategic plan and will lead them through key initiatives to grow enrollment and advancement functions and reach financial sustainability.

SFTS has experienced turnover in some key positions; but as of the time of the team visit, SFTS has successfully recruited for the Vice President of Enrollment Management, Vice President of Advancement, Director of Institutional Research, Director of Marketing, and the Director for the Center of Innovation in Ministry (CFR 3.2).

The team inquired about faculty and staff performance reviews and merit increases. The team was informed that performance reviews are conducted annually and that merit/cost of living increases were evaluated at that time. Over the past three years the organization has completed performance reviews; and, despite the financial challenges, there have been merit/cost of living adjustments granted in various forms/amounts (CFR 3.2).

The team suggests that the institution carefully examine its lines of communication and representation of adjunct faculty such that expectations, evaluations, incentives are aligned with teaching needs, to assure sufficient number of faculty qualified for the type and level of curriculum offered. As SFTS continues to develop and implement the new online MATS program, it will be vital that all faculty are properly prepared and trained to support the new learning modality to ensure that course learning outcomes (CLO) and program learning outcomes (PLO) are achieved (CFR 3.2).

SFTS recognizes the need and benefit of supporting faculty and staff development. The team learned that there is a Professional Development program in place for both faculty and staff. Faculty may receive an annual allowance of \$1,250 per person, to offset travel costs for attendance at professional association meetings. Despite the enrollment decline and financial challenges, the seminary has been able to maintain and support that program. As a learning organization, SFTS also administers the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ), which is designed, among other things, to provide critical feedback to the faculty and the organization as a whole (CFR 3.3).

Fiscal, Physical and Information Resources

Fiscal Resources

SFTS has continued to experience a significant decline in enrollment and revenue over the past five years. From 2012 to 2016, SFTS total student population has declined from 313 to 204, a decline of 35%. During that same time, SFTS revenue has declined from \$6.3M to \$5.1M, a

decline of 19%. While total revenue for the institution has been bolstered by proceeds from its investment portfolio, as of FYE 2017, SFTS does not have the enrollment revenue or other sources of revenue to meet its annual operating budget needs. To meet current cash flow requirements, SFTS has been borrowing on a Portfolio Loan Agreement (PLA) that is secured by the investment portfolio. As of FYE 2016, the balance owed on the line of credit was ~\$11.5M (CFR 3.4).

It is clear that the declining student enrollment, as well as the significantly lower revenue from advancement and fundraising, has left SFTS in the unfortunate and unsustainable position of an unbalanced budget for a protracted period of time.

For the past five years (2013 – 2017) the institution has operated with an annual loss of \$(1.7M), \$(2.3M), \$(2.5M), \$(3.3M), and \$(2.9M) respectively, an aggregate total operating loss of \$(12.7M). This operating loss has been funded by the proceeds of off-campus real estate sold by SFTS, as well as the growing balance on the PLA that had a balance of \$11.5M as of FYE 2017. The team met with the institution's chief financial officer and learned that the balance on the PLA is projected to grow to ~\$14M by the end of FYE 2018. It was noted that the current limit on the PLA is \$15M.

It is important to note that the interest rate on the PLA was 2.47% and 1.72% for FYE 2017 and FYE 2016 respectively. As interest rates continue to rise, the spread between the investment portfolio return and the amount of interest paid by the institution shrinks, putting additional downward pressure on the institution's total revenue.

As part of its long term strategic planning, SFTS leadership has not yet developed a comprehensive plan for how the seminary will return to a position in which it is operating within a balanced budget. For FYE 2017, draft financials indicate that SFTS concluded the year with an operating loss of \$(2.9M). In addition, the Board of Trustees has approved a budget for FYE 2018 that shows the organization losing \$(2.3M) for the year. It is imperative that SFTS develop a realistic long term plan that brings SFTS back to a balanced budget and long term sustainability (CFR 3.4).

Audits

The institution engages an independent auditor to perform an audit of its financial statements on an annual basis. These audits have resulted in an unqualified opinion. As part of the audit process, the auditors prepare a management letter that notes areas for improvement. In the last two audit cycles, the auditors have identified a deficiency in internal control. The SFTS response to this audit finding is as follows:

Management concurs with the finding and has implemented certain procedures, such as the review of budget to actual reports by department heads, to help mitigate the risk over this area.

While SFTS has taken steps to remedy this significant finding by implementing some procedures, the team urges SFTS to identify and take the steps necessary to properly create

the segregation of duties that will reduce the risk associated with not having said procedures in place (CFR 3.4).

Resource Planning

To SFTS's credit, the leadership team and the Board of Trustees recognize the need to develop and implement a business model that is realistic and achievable, and that allows the organization to operate within a balanced budget. To that end, a special sub-committee of the Board has been created to evaluate a number of options open to the institution.

The SFTS Board of Trustees and leadership team are to be commended for the sense of urgency they exuded during our meetings.

It is this team's recommendation that SFTS leaders continue to act quickly and deliberately to develop and implement concrete plans as follows:

1. Take vigorous steps to address declining enrollments by updating, finalizing, implementing and widely communicating the 2017-2020 Enrollment Management Plan that includes:
 - a. Specific enrollment goals by degree programs, including the recently approved MATS online, and any anticipated modifications to existing degrees;
 - b. Specific enrollment goals by non-degree programs, including the various CEU initiatives, certificates, and diplomas (CFRs 3.4, 4.7).
2. In light of very serious and long-standing concerns related to financial sustainability of SFTS, develop concrete, detailed plans that include:
 - a. A comprehensive operating plan by program and department that demonstrates how SFTS will achieve financial stability and a balanced budget;
 - b. An annual review process for course correction;
 - c. A contingency plan to be implemented based on the annual review;
 - d. A detailed advancement plan that includes specific actionable strategies and fundraising goals by category;
 - e. A reevaluation of tuition, fees, and discount rate in comparison to peer institutions in order to increase the percentage of revenue from these items (CFRs 3.4, 3.7).

Facilities

SFTS occupies a beautiful campus in the city of San Anselmo, located in the North Bay area of Marin County. The team was impressed with the beauty and stateliness of the buildings and the serenity of the campus. Several of the buildings including the Administration and Library building date back to when the seminary first opened. As part of the property sale proceeds from when SFTS sold all of its off-campus real estate holdings, a new Student Village was constructed and several faculty houses were rebuilt. The campus and its facilities appear to be in good condition with no significant deferred maintenance required. The location serves the institution and students well as a place to think, learn, reflect, and grow.

From a campus facility perspective, the seminary has more than adequate resources to support the current student population and has the capacity to add more. However, the team learned

that there are only 10 additional student housing units available. This is not an issue today, but as the institution continues in its efforts to grow enrollment, it will be important for the institution to be aware of its limited ability to provide more on-site student housing (CFR 3.5).

From an IT and technology perspective, SFTS appears to be able to support the needs of its faculty, staff, and students with both on-campus resources and resources made available to the seminary through its relationship with GTU. SFTS also recently invested in several new software platforms in support of student learning as well as organizational efficiency, including a new Student Information System, Salesforce for Marketing, and Intacct for Accounting, Budgeting and Planning (CFR 3.5).

During a time of financial budgetary constraints, SFTS is to be commended for its commitment to the safety and security of its faculty, staff and students and ensuring that all campus facilities are properly maintained.

Organization Structures and Decision-Making Processes

SFTS's mission, restated vision, and core values speak volumes in terms of the type of culture the leadership strives to maintain within the seminary. This was evident in the team's meetings with the seminary's Board and administrative leadership, and it was also confirmed from the feedback that the team received from the faculty, staff, and students (CFR 3.6).

SFTS provided an organization chart that depicted reporting relationships. While the document provided some guidance in terms of information flow, it was not clear, based on what was documented and team interviews, precisely where decision-making responsibility exists within the organizational structure. For key processes like the annual budget and the strategic plan, it was clear that the development of those deliverables is an integrated process that is ultimately approved by the President and Board of Trustees. But for other processes, such as policy creation, review and approval, it was not as evident how those processes work within the organization.

From an accountability perspective SFTS leadership has implemented new procedures to better engage and inform the functional leaders of the organization by providing the leaders with monthly P&Ls for their review and feedback. The team commends SFTS for taking these steps and encourages the seminary to continue to develop those processes and procedures in a formal way, including the development of the annual budget and periodic forecast updates during the year. This will reinforce the importance of transparency and accountability among the various functional leaders of the organization (CFR 3.7).

SFTS has a full-time chief executive officer who joined the organization in 2011 and just started his 7th year with the organization. SFTS also has a full-time chief financial officer who has been with the seminary for approximately two years and whose full-time responsibilities are to the institution. While there has been some turnover in key leadership position in the past two years, all key leadership positions have been filled with qualified professionals to provide effective educational leadership and management (CFR 3.8).

SFTS has a fully independent Board of Trustees that provides oversight, guidance, and approval authority over the seminary's operations. The Board of Trustees also provides the President with an annual performance review and holds complete purview over his performance and continued employment as the President. The President just signed his third employment agreement, which covers a three-year term of employment. The team commends the Board of Trustees for its significant commitment to the success of SFTS and for strong evidence trustees are engaged in and accept responsibility for the future strategic planning of the institution and for the quality education the seminary seeks to provide its students (CFR 3.9).

SFTS faculty members are actively engaged and exercise effective leadership to ensure both academic quality and fulfillment of the institution's mission. SFTS has also taken strides to establish process, procedure and structure in support of faculty governance and leadership. While each program has a full-time chair, from our interviews, it appears that some members of the faculty team are new to this type of leadership role. As such it will be imperative for their individual success as well as the collective success that they receive the coaching, training, and feedback needed so that faculty members clearly understand how they are expected to contribute to the success and continued development of new/modified programs (e.g., the new online MATS).

As such, the team suggests that SFTS further refine and document a well-developed plan, process and structure in support of the faculty and to prepare for the transition to online and or modified Continuing Education Units (CEU) courses. This plan would also include mechanisms that support faculty training that would enhance the skills of faculty, to ensure that they are prepared to be effective in their new roles as online educators (CFR 3.10).

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 3.

Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committee to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

Quality Assurance Processes

The appointment of the Director of Institutional Research (DIR) has significantly bolstered SFTS's capacity for institutional research and data-informed planning and decision-making (CFR 4.2). The DIR has enhanced SFTS's commitment to quality assurance and improvement based on data and evidence (CFRs 4.1, 4.2). The DIR's shift from manual processes to electronic forms of gathering student assessment and reporting will improve efficiency and dissemination of assessment results to the seminary community. The DIR will play a critical role in providing transparent and effective assessments of the curricular changes and necessary improvements in enrollments and advancement. The gravity of SFTS's ongoing financial situation, however, impacts support structures and can destabilize regularized assessment practices and the overall institutional effectiveness. During the accreditation visit, many

members of the SFTS community commented on the pervasive ways in which the financial challenges impinge on their work.

Institutional Learning and Improvement

SFTS continues to improve its commitment to quality assurance, institutional learning, and improvement in response to recommendations from WSCUC. In light of its ongoing financial instabilities and enrollment shortcomings, SFTS is acutely aware of the changing higher educational environment, particularly within graduate theological and ministerial education for free-standing seminaries and the national decline of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (CFR 4.7). SFTS has been developing innovative programs and initiatives (e.g., the recently WSCUC approved MATS online and the Center for Innovation in Ministry) in response to these challenges, though further work needs to be done in terms of integration and assessment, to ensure quality assurance and effective institutional learning. Furthermore, the aligning of curricular and programmatic learning outcomes with the 2013 revised mission statement (and its emphasis on justice, peace, and healing) is underdeveloped; further efforts are needed to revise key priorities and future direction in light of this revised mission statement (CFR 4.6). Further reflection needs to address questions such as: How does the mission inform SFTS's reimagining of theological education? What is the process of evaluating the context that produced the emphasis on justice, peace, and healing? In what ways is the curriculum aligned with these priorities?

SFTS has a vibrant and collegial community, where reflection and planning involve multiple constituents, including administrators, faculty, staff, the Board of Trustees, members of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) consortium, alumni, donors, community partners, and other stakeholders (CFR 4.6). Previously, there was a lack of centralized communication to help facilitate coordination among these different entities.

Through five-year cycles of program reviews, including those for the MDiv, MATS, and DMin degree programs, SFTS has conducted systematic assessment of teaching and learning (CFR 4.3). SFTS employs a deliberate set of quality-assurance processes in periodic reviews of academic programs, assessment of student learning, and other forms of ongoing evaluation. It has established a process of tracking and monitoring the results of assessment reviews. Evidence-based data, for example, supported the creation of a Director of Diversity. SFTS's ongoing inquiry into teaching and learning to improve curricula, pedagogy, and assessment has made enormous strides even as it remains an area of growth (CFR 4.4). Faculty have been consistently involved in assessments of the curriculum (CFR 4.5).

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 4.

Federal Requirements. See the Federal Compliance Forms in the appendix.

Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) reflects the faculty's collective responsibility for setting student learning outcomes and standards, assessing student learning, using the results for improvement, and conducting a program review for each degree program.

The team reviewed San Francisco Theological Seminary's IEEI to understand how comprehensively and successfully this institution addresses both the quality of its students learning and the quality of the learning and assessment infrastructure. In this regard, the team found the submitted IEEI accurately reflected the educational effectiveness efforts and results of the institution. The educational effectiveness efforts the institution has put in place are: developing formal learning objectives and outcomes for all academic programs and publishing them in the appropriate handbooks, program syllabi, and on the website (CFRs 1.2, 2.4); defining levels of student achievement for each program (CFR 2.2); developing and using assessment tools, such as: rubrics, signature assignments in capstone courses, project evaluations, sermon evaluations, surveys, and interviews to assess student learning in relation to every program learning outcome (CFRs 2.2b, 2.3); and establishing processes and procedures for interpreting the evidence (CFR 2.4). All academic programs offered by the institution undergo a systematic program review. SFTS collected the required evidence of student learning and demonstrated that its graduates consistently achieved the established learning outcomes (CFR 2.6). The assessment results are used to improve pedagogy, curriculum, and resource allocation (CFR 2.7). The institution is in the process of developing a systematic review process for student services and extra-curricular activities. These efforts need to be continued.

Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality and Integrity of the Degrees

SFTS offers three traditional graduate degrees, one collaborative degree with the Graduate Theological Union, and several diplomas and certificates. The three traditional graduate degrees offered at SFTS are the Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master of Theological Studies (MATS), and Doctor of Ministry (DMin). All of these degrees have clear guidelines accessible on the website.

For the Master of Divinity (MDiv), the following are the learning outcomes for those who complete the degree:

- Lead and order services of Christian worship.
- Reflect theologically on Christian faith, the church and the world.
- Provide pastoral care and spiritual formation for individuals and communities.
- Equip churches and communities for mission and ministry in a multicultural and pluralistic context.

For the Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS), the following are the learning outcomes for those who complete the degree:

- Know a selected theological discipline.
- Analyze and comprehend major questions in the field and alternative solutions to them.
- Formulate and effectively explain an original solution to a theological problem.

For the Doctor of Ministry (DMin), the following are the learning outcomes for those who complete the degree:

- Reflect independently, critically and theologically upon the issues in society, mission, and ministry today.
- Build relationships based on trust and cooperation among peers in ministry.
- Use interdisciplinary and research skills to develop innovative approaches to ministry and pastoral work.

Just prior to the visit, SFTS was approved by the Commission to offer the MATS degree in a fully-online modality. Administration at SFTS is still finalizing the roll-out plan for the MATS, which may include face-to-face, hybrid, and fully online options. This transition to online will be facilitated by the collaborative partnership SFTS has with GTU in shared information technology (IT) resources and personnel and by support from GTU IT personnel. Due to robust training and support of SFTS faculty in moving instruction online and the expertise available through GTU, the team does not anticipate issues that would hinder the development of the MATS online program.

In the degree programs offered fully at SFTS student learning is assessed and the programs are reviewed in a systematic way. The addition of the new institutional research staff will increase the capacity and quality of assessment. The overall enrollment in these degrees has gone down, but the ability to assess them has increased. SFTS is in a good position in ensuring the overall quality of the degrees as its enrollment goals are realized.

SFTS additionally has a collaborative relationship with the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in offering several degrees, including a Master of Arts, a Doctor of Theology, and Doctor of Philosophy. General information for these degrees is displayed on the SFTS webpage. These degrees are reviewed in the assessment process of GTU.

SFTS also has several non-degree programs. The three diploma programs are the diplomas in Spiritual Direction, Pastoral Studies, and Executive Leadership. SFTS has two certificate programs in Trauma & Spiritual Care and Spiritual Direction, Formation, and World Engagement. Also, SFTS has begun to offer Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Though the seminary is not required to assess these programs, assessment of their effectiveness in delivering learning to students would be a good addition in the future, particularly as more revenue is being projected to come from these non-degree programs. SFTS representatives indicated that a task force will be assembled to explore what kind of assessment will be used for used for non-degree and extra-curricular programs.

Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation

In response to previous recommendations from panels reviewing interim reports (2010, 2012, 2013, 2015), SFTS has worked to develop program learning outcomes (PLOs) and their corresponding assessment rubrics (2012) as well as program curriculum maps for the MDiv (2013), MATS (2013), and DMin (2015) degrees. SFTS clearly articulates its degrees in terms of entry-level requirements and levels of student achievements necessary for graduation (CFR 2.2). Moreover, SFTS's student learning outcomes (SLOs) and standards of performance are developed by faculty and widely shared among faculty, administration and staff, and students (CFR 2.4). Course syllabi coherently state the course SLOs; in a session with approximately 25 current students during the accreditation visit, the team repeatedly heard students confirming that SLOs are clearly and consistently communicated by professors during the course of the semester.

At the program level, SFTS carried out program reviews for each of its degrees: MDiv (2013); MATS (2012); and DMin (2015). These program reviews were systematic in their analyses of the programs' learning outcomes and retention and graduation rates (CFR 2.7). Faculty conducted curriculum mapping, and they have now put in place a formal assessment program to ensure the continuation of regular review cycles. Faculty are to be commended for their efforts with often time-consuming assessment practices, given the dramatic reduction of fulltime faculty from 26 to 7 as part of a concerted downsizing effort to reduce costs.

SFTS has done a thorough job of establishing and proficiency levels and benchmarks. In 2015, the faculty added the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) to the MDiv assessment program to improve the consistency of collecting indirect student data. GSQ data provided supporting evidence related to student achievement of competencies identified by faculty for students' capstone experiences: MDiv capstone paper (70% rated proficient or highly proficient); internship final evaluation (70% rated effective or exceptionally effective); and internship sermon evaluation (70% rated good or excellent). Faculty indicated that they are content with students' achievements of these competencies. The recent diminishing enrollment numbers for the MATS degree have necessitated a general suspension of its assessment program, though SFTS still maintains a thesis paper benchmark and GSQ survey to evaluate competencies for the three PLOs for the MATS degree. For the DMin degree, SFTS has not yet identified benchmarks. Such benchmarks will be need to be established in order for SFTS to evaluate student achievement of competencies during the program and at graduation.

Additionally, the team urges that in the next cycle of program reviews SFTS attend more fully to certain aspects of their learning outcomes and retention and graduation rates. For example, there are currently four program learning outcomes for the MDiv program, but each of those outcomes respectively has four, four, five, and three sub-learning outcomes. Such a large

aggregate number of learning outcomes complicates the implementation of coherent and efficient assessment practices. Moreover, as SFTS observes in its institutional report, there is a need to realign the MDiv PLOs with the seminary's revised mission statement (2013). Though the report signals that the faculty and accreditation committee had planned to take up revision of the MDiv PLOs during the 2015-16 review cycle, it was not evident that such revisions had been undertaken. SFTS did make curricular revisions, namely, reducing the required number of semester units for the MDiv degree from 81 to 72 and making optional the one-year internship. These revisions were borne out of the program review, including concerns for student retention and student debt, a desire to provide students with more flexibility in designing their curricula to fit their vocational goals, and data from comparative schools (showing that a 72 unit MDiv is common). Assessment of these revisions—including their impact of students' vocational, intellectual, and spiritual development—will be critically important in future review cycles.

In the case of the MATS program, SFTS is committed to—and now has received formal Commission approval for—moving toward a 100% online MATS program. As the SFTS institutional report notes, such a shift would require resources to be used to revise the assessment program for distance learners. This recognition is important given the ongoing financial instability at SFTS. It may, however, be difficult to dedicate resources to develop an assessment infrastructure adequate to assess student learning for online learning (as required by CFR 2.6). Additionally, the rationale for moving to a fully online MATS degree could be strengthened by assessment-driven data. Since, according to the SFTS institutional report, the MATS is intended to be a feeder program for the MDiv, what forms of evidence-based data support the claim that students in an online MATS program would then matriculate in a residency-based MDiv program? During the accreditation visit, faculty indicated that outside consultants would be brought in to develop assessment rubrics for the online program.

In response to declining enrollment numbers and achievement gaps, SFTS is committed to certain assessment actions. For example, during the accreditation visit, SFTS's WSCUC Steering Committee explained the emerging roles of project-driven assessment and data-based assessment. The committee identified practices such as having all degree students complete ATS Entering Student Questionnaires (ESQs) and Graduating Student Questionnaires (GSQs). Other areas—such as integration of the mission statement—are still in need of assessment actions. In 2013, SFTS revised its mission statement to focus on transformational ministries of justice, peace, and healing and the church's hopeful, loving engagement with the world. This mission statement has become a catalyst for the foci of innovation, spirituality, and justice at SFTS. Yet, the revised statement has not been adequately engaged in terms of reframing the PLOs and other aspects of teaching and learning (which has implications for CFR 4.3). Perhaps more significantly, there does not seem to be a closing of the loop on the causes for declining enrollment numbers in each of the degree programs. For example, 31 students entered the MDiv program in 2008, whereas eight and 13 students respectively entered the MDiv program in 2013 and 2014. In 2009, six students entered the MATS program, whereas one student entered the MATS program in 2014. Finally, in 2009, 40 students entered the DMin program, whereas 18 and 22 students respectively entered the DMin program in 2014 and 2015. SFTS is aware of the changing and challenging landscape of graduate theological education, but there could be

more data-informed analysis of the relationship between the declining enrollment numbers and the expected standards of performance among graduates (CFR 2.6).

More data-informed analysis would also help evaluations of the average time-to-degree, particularly in the DMin program. For graduation year 2013, the average time-to-degree in the DMin program was 4.1 years; for graduation years 2015 and 2016, the average times-to-degree had respectively increased to 5.3 years and 5.4 years. SFTS's report identifies several causal factors, including personal and family health issues, changes in employment, and financial challenges. SFTS implemented several strategies to address students' delaying or abandoning their studies, including better communication with students, improved tracking of student progress, and the reiteration of the refresher Writer's Workshop. The success of these strategies will depend on numerous factors, and the establishment of benchmarks in the DMin program would be helpful. SFTS will need to continue to assess the efficacy of student advising and its implications for student learning and success. Moreover, SFTS should continue to disaggregate data according to race, ethnicity, gender, age, economic status, disability, and other factors in order to get a clearer impression about student leaves and overall student retention, graduation, and time-to-degree rates. SFTS should work more systematically to analyze its retention and graduation rates against its own aspirations and the rates of peer institutions (CFR 2.10).

Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation

SFTS's unique educational objectives within a reformed intellectual and spiritual tradition are widely recognized throughout the institution and consistent with the school's mission and educational vision. The SFTS faculty, staff, and administrators demonstrate a deep commitment to the mission of the institution and to students' success in master's and doctoral programs (CFR 1.2). According to the institutional report, student success means that students are fulfilling their intended program learning outcomes and objectives while moving steadily and successfully through the programs and graduating close to the normative time-to-degree. The Student Services staff's definition of student success included graduation with as little student debt as possible.

Upon reviewing the institutional report and meeting with faculty, staff, students, and administrators, the team concluded that the seminary creates diverse opportunities for student learning in the classroom and beyond; the seminary also supports student engagement in professional activities, scholarship, and ministry. The team noted the school is successful at attracting domestic and international students from diverse cultural, racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds and supporting diversity and inclusiveness on campus. SFTS also succeeds in providing ample opportunities for all students to broaden and clarify their experiences and perspectives through GTU courses, initiatives of the Center for Innovation in Ministry, weekly interdisciplinary lectures, integrative conversations, and other venues. Additionally, through the school's membership in the GTU, SFTS students are exposed to a diverse Christian community that fosters spiritual growth and interfaith experiences (CFRs 2.2b, 2.11).

The report provides direct and indirect evidence of student learning, as well as a well-organized and complete data set on student success for master's and doctoral programs. Measures of student success include retention rates, graduation rates, and average time-to-completion (CFRs 1.2, 2.10). The retention and graduation data is disaggregated by gender and race. The disaggregated data shows slightly higher retention rates for female students than for male students. It also represents a relatively small sample size for each racial group and, therefore, may not be statistically significant. The seminary's effectiveness in supporting student success is corroborated by student placement rates within 12-15 months after graduation across five categories: vocational placement, non-vocational placement, continuing in further study, seeking placement, or other. The seminary has begun implementation of the ATS Alumni Questionnaire to obtain broader data relevant to assessing graduate success.

Master's Degrees

Currently, 46 students are enrolled in the MDiv program and only 3 students in MATS. The number of incoming MDiv students has doubled over the past few years (from 8 in 2013 to 16 in 2016), although the number of students in the MDiv program has not increased over the last three years and remains far below the MDiv enrollment (133) at SFTS's last accreditation reaffirmation in 2008. Enrollment in MATS has been steadily declining from 13 in 2008 to 3 in 2016.

The one-year retention rate for MDiv students has held relatively steady at around 90%, which is the seminary's one-year retention benchmark, with a drop to 79% for the cohort of 2012. The graduation rate for the MDiv program within six-years varies between 67% and 82%. The average time-to-degree in this program constitutes 4.2 years, which is comparable to the average rate for students completing similar degrees across all ATS schools. Nevertheless, the seminary remains committed to monitoring the average time-to-degree to ensure students steadily progress towards the completion of their program. The first-year vocational placement rate for MDiv graduates has almost doubled in the past several years and remains strong at 70.80% (CFR 2.7).

The average time-to-degree in the MATS program is 3.8 years, which is almost two times higher than the normative time-to-degree (two years) for this program. The graduation rate within six years fluctuates between 67% and 100%, and the first-year placement rates remain below 50% in most categories (CFR 2.7). In reviewing the MATS data, the team recognized that it represents a small set, and therefore should be interpreted with caution.

Doctoral Degrees

Presently, 101 students are enrolled in the DMin program, including 22 who entered the program in 2015-16. The number of entering doctoral students has declined by almost half, but their retention rate remains relatively stable. However, the average time-to-degree in the doctoral program has increased from 4.1 years to 5.4 years over a four-year period, and the graduation rate within a six-year period remains low, below 40% (CFR 2.7).

To address this low percentage and to better support students at the dissertation/project stage, the institution initiated an array of steps aimed at establishing clearer guidelines and improving communication with its students. As with its other degree programs, the seminary also tracks placement rates of the DMin graduates. The first-year placement for DMin program graduates remains strong (above 68%) in the vocational category.

In response to a steadily declining enrollment in the MATS and DMin program, the seminary is exploring an online delivery modality with the goal of offering online or hybrid versions of these degrees. The decision to go completely online with the MATS program, made by the Online Education Task Force, was fully supported by the seminary's faculty and administrators. The Commission granted approval to offer the MATS program fully online by the fall of 2018. Several faculty members, who are experienced in online teaching, have already begun tweaking their MATS courses for online delivery; others are being trained to deliver content in the online modality. The seminary created ample professional development opportunities for faculty interested in online instruction. These opportunities ranged from an intensive workshop offered by the GTU Director of Digital Learning, to training provided by an external consultant (supported by an ATS grant), to individual consultations regarding online instructional design and troubleshooting with the GTU doctoral students. The online methods of delivery pursued by the seminary could have a positive effect on students' ability to successfully enroll and complete the doctoral program (CFRs 2.2, 2.2b, 2.10, 4.7). The seminary has yet to develop a detailed implementation plan for moving the MATS program online by the fall of 2018 and for identifying the ways in which online and hybrid courses would impact curricular offerings, faculty, and the entire institution.

The institution also shows sensitivity to residential students' needs for various and flexible pathways to a degree. With both academic and cost/student debt concerns in mind, and prompted by assessment results, SFTS faculty designed the new MDiv curriculum, which has an option of completing the degree in three years instead of four by doing coursework concurrently with the internship or field education and completing 72 credit hours instead of 81. Those curricular adjustments were well received by SFTS students, who provided their input to the team (CFR 2.10).

SFTS provides a broad array of support for student success and works to adapt and implement new structures and services in response to changing student needs. Since 2014, a degree-audit report that supports faculty tracking of student progress has been utilized. The SFTS team is dedicated to assisting students in completing their degrees and programs close to the expected time-to-degree and with minimal student debt. To accomplish these objectives, the seminary created a new consolidated position of Associate Dean of Student Life and Chaplain and increased Student Services staff from 3.5 FTE to 5 FTE. The team noticed a strong collaborative spirit and collegiality among the participating seminary professionals, who work diligently to support student academic success, spiritual formation, and emotional well-being. The team also noticed some apprehension concerning the availability of resources necessary to ensure quality and sustainability of student support within the changing educational environment.

The team recommends that SFTS develop an assessment plan for evaluating its co-curricular and student services as it has for its academic programs.

Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program Review, Assessment, Use of Data and Evidence

The team met with the Faculty Assessment Committee, which is constituted by four full-time faculty members. The Faculty Assessment Committee meets frequently and presents at the monthly faculty meetings. The committee explained its use of various assessment practices, including cross-reading of rubrics from signature assignments used to evaluate specific course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. The faculty emphasized that SFTS has increasingly adopted a culture of evidence in its approach to the curriculum and pedagogical outcomes (CFR 4.3). Faculty commented that there are more deliberate efforts to inform and inspire students and part-time faculty regarding the centrality of the learning outcomes.

SFTS has used the outcomes of program reviews to improve instruction and student learning. In completing its program review of the DMin program, SFTS carried out an assessment of student learning that informed decision-making, planning, and improvement. SFTS recently completed assessment of standards of performance and quality assurance and improvement. A good illustration of such improvements was a change to the sequence of the Foundational Seminars in the DMin program. Taking student feedback (indirect evidence) and incorporating an assessment of student work product at later stages of the DMin program, SFTS reconfigured the Foundational Seminars to begin with a critical awareness of the self (Pastor as Person), moving to theology (Theology of Ministry), and finally to community (Cultural Milieu and Church Mission). Continued evaluation still needs to be done regarding assessment of the program learning outcomes (PLOs). As noted in the SFTS report, the DMin PLOs have not been revised since the new SFTS mission was adopted in 2013.

During the visit, the team was made aware on several occasions of anticipated plans for a hybrid DMin program with fully-online components. It was not evident to the team that such considerations emerge from data-informed decisions. The team encourages SFTS to undertake more concrete and detailed rationales for conceptualizing, designing, and implementing a hybrid DMin program. Several faculty reflected on the potential challenges of a hybrid DMin program, primarily in terms of maintaining community among the diverse group of DMin student, since both faculty and DMin students value community among colleagues in ministry as among the chief strengths of the program. A two-week intensive course as part of a DMin hybrid degree could address some of these concerns, but SFTS will want to carry out data-informed analyses of the projected impact on student retention and graduation rates.

SFTS has significantly increased its capacity for and reliance upon on institutional data since the hiring of a director of institutional research (DIR). The department of institutional research provides a wealth of data pertaining to admissions, enrollment, placement, student learning

outcomes and assessment, retention and graduation rates, and institutional effectiveness. Moreover, the department functions as a clearinghouse and streamlined disseminator of information internally and externally in a timely manner (CFR 4.2). This helps galvanize the institution's collective responsibility for establishing standards of performance and demonstrating through assessment the achievement of these standards and underpin the assessment infrastructure (CFR 2.4, 2.6). The work of the DIR also provides quality-assurance processes in both academic and non-academic areas that encourages collaborative sharing of data and data-driven evaluations (CFR 4.1).

During the visit, faculty members elaborated more fully on the role of the DIR. An important step recently undertaken by SFTS is a transition from a manual process of student assessment and reporting to an electronic method. Student work product is now kept and disseminated electronically via SharePoint files. The DIR prepares the data and enables faculty to review data by class, semester, and other categories in order to construct coherent narratives regarding the curriculum. The DIR comes to the annual faculty retreat at the beginning of the academic year to help support decision-making and to stimulate campus-wide conversations among the faculty, staff, and administration regarding improvements based on the results of inquiry, evidence, and evaluation (CFR 4.3). These are positive steps in an area that was underdeveloped for years at SFTS. However, SFTS will need to continue to expand the role of the DIR in terms of its use of data and evidence for future decision-making regarding the curricular and programmatic priorities of the institution.

As SFTS continues to exercise innovation in theology and ministry education and to re-brand itself as an inclusive seminary for a diverse communities, it will need to use institutional data to adapt to the changing environment. With substantial revisions to its degree programs (e.g., the MATS online and, potentially, the DMin hybrid) and the growth of non-degree programs housed in the Center for Innovation in Ministry (CIM) as SFTS's primary strategies for increasing enrollments and stabilizing the financial situation, SFTS will need to operationalize and leverage assessments and data-informed decision-making in productive ways. In various conversations with SFTS administrators and faculty members during the visit, the team received a range of answers to questions about SFTS's future (e.g., where will SFTS be in 5-10 years?). Some responses clustered around expanding the curriculum to address ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue.

Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment

As noted in previous sections of this report, SFTS has experienced a protracted decline in enrollment. Despite significant efforts to grow on-ground enrollment, the seminary's student population has continued to decline over the course of the past five years. SFTS has commendably attempted to respond to this shift but their efforts and investments have not produced the desired outcomes.

As a result, SFTS has been running an annual operating deficit for an extended period of time with the last five years of aggregate operating loss totaling \$(12.7)M. This has forced the seminary to sell assets, leverage part of its endowment, and borrow against a line of credit in order to pay ongoing operating expense. In the short term, the institution has the ability to operate at a deficit using its unrestricted balance sheet assets. However, in the long term, this is simply not sustainable.

The long-term financial viability of SFTS is dependent on several key factors as follows:

- The ability to remain relevant in terms of the programs and teaching modalities it offers to students.
- The ability to successfully develop and implement an enrollment strategy, scholarship plan, and advancement program that deliver sufficient revenue to cover the seminary's ongoing annual operating expense.
- The foresight and vision to explore in earnest alternative plans and opportunities.
- The ability to recognize when previously developed strategies and initiatives are unachievable and need to be abandoned.
- The fortitude to make and act on tough decisions that must be made to ensure the long term sustainability of the organization.

The competitive landscape in rapidly changing and time is of the essence. Like other seminaries and institutions of higher education, SFTS is at risk of losing its relevance and must adapt to the changing landscape of religious studies. The Board of Trustees and leadership team are to be commended for understanding this sobering reality and making a deliberate call to action to secure their future (CFR 3.7).

Component 8: Optional essay on institutional specific themes

SFTS did not write an optional essay on institutional-specific themes.

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

SFTS is to be commended for an honest reflection on their current realities. The team did not sense any hesitancy from all levels of the seminary to address the current challenges in enrollment and finances. Difficult decisions do face SFTS, and the team is confident that these can be made with the board, administration, faculty, and staff all working together. The areas of enrollment and finances must receive intense focus in order for SFTS to remain viable in the future. The recommendations below centralize these critical issues. SFTS has the components in place to have a strong educational institution moving into the future, if it can enroll more students in all the various degree and non-degree programs that the school offers.

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS (Substantive Change to MATS online, approved by WSCUC September 2017)

As reported above, the Commission approved the substantive change proposal from SFTS to offer its MATS program in an exclusively online format. The team reviewed the substantive change proposal and the evidence of research that informed the seminary's planning for the launch of this new delivery format for the MATS. In light of the WSCUC approval of this substantive change and the fact that the MATS online will not launch until Academic Year 20182019, the team saw no need to offer further evaluation.

SECTION IV –COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As this report has addressed, SFTS has many strengths from which to face the challenges the institution faces. Theological education has many challenges nationwide and SFTS is realizing some of these challenges. The commendations and recommendations below will help SFTS navigate going forward. The enrollment and financial challenges are difficult and should be a focus for all levels of the organization. The team witnessed an institution that is willing to face these challenges with new directions going forward and that provided the team with all necessary material in order to offer these commendations and recommendations.

Commendations

The team commends SFTS for:

1. Reviewing and revising its institutional mission in light of developments and trends in ecclesial, social, and academic environments.
2. Pursuing new opportunities to serve wider constituencies (e.g., programming of the Center for Innovation in Ministry, Continuing Education Units (CEU) for medical personnel) without losing its traditional foundation.
3. Adding qualified leaders in key positions to address significant challenges in financial and enrollment areas.
4. Developing capacities to assess educational effectiveness and student learning (e.g., degree program assessment plans, processes, and instruments).
5. Valuing and integrating institutional research in decision making at all levels
6. Cultivating an engaged, active, and diverse board.
7. Building a community that embodies SFTS's values and mission.

Recommendations

The team recommends that SFTS:

1. Take vigorous steps to address declining enrollments by updating, finalizing, implementing and widely communicating the 2017-2020 Enrollment Management Plan that includes:
 - a. Specific enrollment goals by degree programs, including the recently approved MATS online, and any anticipated modifications to existing degrees;
 - b. Specific enrollment goals by non-degree programs, including the various CEU initiatives, certificates, and diplomas (CFRs 3.4, 4.7).

2. In light of very serious and long-standing concerns related to financial sustainability of SFTS, develop concrete, detailed plans that include:
 - a. A comprehensive operating plan by program and department that demonstrates how SFTS will achieve financial stability and a balanced budget;
 - b. An annual review process for course correction;
 - c. A contingency plan to be implemented based on the annual review;
 - d. A detailed advancement plan that includes specific actionable strategies and fundraising goals by category; and
 - e. A reevaluation of tuition, fees, and discount rate in comparison to peer institutions in order to increase the percentage of revenue from these items (CFRs 3.4, 3.7).

3. In light of the revised mission statement and the role of the Center for Innovation in Ministry (CIM) in realizing that mission, establish a clearly defined role and objectives for the CIM that align with the mission, strategic imperatives, and operational and functional aspects of SFTS (CFRs 1.1, 4.7).

4. Develop and implement an assessment plan for co-curricular and student services and use the results for data-informed improvements (CFRs 2.11, 2.13).

APPENDIX: FEDERAL COMPLIANCE FORMS

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	<p>Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, where is the policy located? SFTS website/Policy Statements & Handbooks/Academic Course and Classroom Policies (https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Academic-Course-and-Classroom-Policies_2017.pdf) Semester length (15 weeks) indicated in SFTS/Student Life/Academic Calendar: Sept 5 – Dec 15, 2017; Jan 29 – May 18, 2018 (https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/02-Academic-Calendar-FINAL-2017-18-3.pdf)</p> <p>Comments: (One class hour + 2 hours outside class) x 15 weeks = 45 hours = 1 semester hour</p>
Process/ periodic review of credit hour	<p>Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>SFTS website/Policy Statements & Handbooks/Academic Course and Classroom Policies (https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Academic-Course-and-Classroom-Policies_2017.pdf): “Courses and their respective credit hour assignment are reviewed as a part of program review.”</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: Policy requiring review of credit hour assignments for courses as part of program reviews had not been adopted prior to the most recent MDiv Program Review (2011-12), MATS Program Review (2012-13), and DMin Program Review (2014-15). The dean/ALO assured the team that all future program reviews will include review of credit hour assignments. https://wascsenior.app.box.com/s/lksdkh68lbu3k1csdn6vzk7chf0oxho1 https://wascsenior.app.box.com/s/vakvdml6jrspy3s20xlyzueux8y87w7g https://app.box.com/file/118455562394</p>
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when	<p>Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>

they meet	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? Two
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Online
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Church History, New Testament
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: HS-8010 Christianity from Jewish Sect to Colonial Religion NT-8450 Gospel of Matthew in Contexts https://app.box.com/file/118473821433
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? One
	What kinds of courses? MDiv Field Education/Pastoral Internship Manual
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Pastoral Internship
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: FE Manual accessed at: https://app.box.com/file/118473586077 Pastoral internship requires extensive ministry experience in a church setting, as well as classroom instruction in worship, pastoral care, etc.
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? Three
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? MDiv (graduate pastoral education); MATS (graduate theological studies); DMin (postgraduate professional doctorate in ministry)
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Biblical studies, theological studies, church history, ministerial studies
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: MDiv & MATS Student Handbook accessed at: https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2017-2018-SFTS-Student-Handbook.pdf DMin (Advanced Pastoral Studies) Student Handbook accessed at: https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/DMin-Student-Handbook_Final-161209.pdf

Review Completed By: Dennis E. Johnson
Date: September 26, 2017

2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations* on recruiting students? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>VP for Enrollment confirmed that SFTS complies with HEA, Section 487(a)(20).</p>
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: Time to degree for MDiv, MATS, DMin programs posted on SFTS website at: https://sfts.edu/about/accreditation/ For overall cost of degrees, see MDiv & MATS Student Handbook, p. 71: https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2017-2018-SFTS-Student-Handbook.pdf and DMin Student Handbook, p. 16: https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/DMin-Student-Handbook_Final-161209.pdf</p>
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments: Information on vocational outcomes and placement rates of MDiv, MATS, DMin programs posted on SFTS website at: https://sfts.edu/about/accreditation/</p>

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

**Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: Dennis E. Johnson
 Date: September 26, 2017

3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's student complaints policies, procedures, and records.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? MDiv and MATS Student Handbook, pp. 83-135 ("Community Policies") accessed at: https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2017-2018-SFTS-Student-Handbook.pdf
	Comments: The MDiv and MATS Student Handbook is distributed to all students, including DMin students, since policies in this handbook apply to students in all degree programs. The associate dean for student services explains the student complaint policy and other policies in new student orientation for MDiv, MATS, and DMin programs.
Process/procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: Complaints may be filed with any of five (identified) seminary officers. Investigatory processes are described in detail in the MDiv MATS Student Handbook.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? The associate dean for student services maintains hardcopy files of complaints in secured filing cabinets in his office. Complaints are stored separately in three categories: Title IX complaints; housing-related complaints and appeals; other complaints and appeals of SFTS faculty or administration decisions (e.g., grading).
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: The associate dean of student services monitors the investigation of each complaint through to its resolution, preserving complete documentation in a distinct file folder.
	Comments:

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Dennis E. Johnson, September 26, 2017

4 – TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publicly available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? MDiv MATS Student Handbook, p. 62: https://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2017-2018-SFTS-Student-Handbook.pdf
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: A maximum of 24 semester units may be transferred from an incomplete MDiv or MATS program at another institution. The dean evaluates transcripts of coursework completed elsewhere.

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

- (1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and
- (2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Dennis E. Johnson
Date: September 26, 2017