



St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary

**“May God ... supply and multiply the seed you have *sown*
and increase the fruits of your righteousness.”**

Institutional Strategic Plan 2016-2020

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

The primary mission of the Seminary lies in providing the necessary theological, liturgical, spiritual and moral foundations for Orthodox men to become, as God so wills, good shepherds of His Holy Orthodox Church. At the same time, however, the Seminary also recognizes that many individuals choose to enroll in a professional theological training program for the fulfillment of needs other than those of ordained ministry.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From an accreditation review of the Seminary in November of 2009, the Board of Commissioners on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) strongly recommended that St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary develop a comprehensive and systematic strategic plan that would guide the Seminary into coming years. Taking that charge very seriously, on October 21, 2011 the Seminary's Board of Trustees adopted an institutional plan – “A time to plant, and a time to harvest what has been planted” as a roadmap to help guide the seminary over the years 2011-2014. The plan sought to build on the strong institutional foundation laid by previous generations, by focusing on three major goals:

1. To build a more ideal institutional ethos for our seminary community.
2. To commit to a proactive system of institutional evaluation and assessment that is comprehensive, ongoing, and data driven.
3. To enhance the distinctive strengths that our Seminary community already possesses.

Using these three goals as focal points for institutional planning, the strategic plan provided clear objectives to be accomplished in reference to each of the major goals, as well as provided corresponding action steps to be performed in achieving the plan's objectives.

With this plan having run its course amidst transitions at the seminary just having celebrated its 75th anniversary, the Board's Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the carefully developed points within each goal area to assess fulfillment. This review laid the foundation for this next generation of strategic planning, culminating in the following plan for the years 2016-2020.

INTRODUCTION

The ninth chapter of the Apostle Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians indicates that we must each carry out that which we discern to be needful, with the exhortation to sow bountifully so that a bountiful and fruitful harvest may be realized. The Apostle states: "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness." (II Cor. 9:10)

As St. Tikhon's Seminary looks ahead to the coming years, many challenges will likely complicate the effort to sow the seeds of: "necessary theological, liturgical, spiritual and moral foundations for Orthodox men to become, as God so wills, good shepherds of His Holy Orthodox Church," as well as provide formation for those seeking to serve in positions of lay leadership. This strategic plan sets out five strategic imperatives to aid in guiding the seminary in sowing the seeds of theological formation fruitfully, realizing that it is God ultimately who will bless and multiply our efforts.

The five imperatives are:

1. Enhance our current focus on spiritual formation in preparation for ministry, and foster a vibrant community life.
2. Review, reimagine, and redesign the M.Div experience, including curriculum re-design, to develop even greater strength in pastoral formation and liturgical training, while also exploring extension of the seminary's educational offerings for the benefit of the entire Church.
3. Develop and execute an enrollment management strategy, which yields an M.Div. class size of at least 15 and several non-degree students per year.
4. Raise the public profile of the Seminary through a multi-faceted series of events, media strategy, and alumni engagement.
5. Increase the effectiveness of our stewardship of the human, physical, and financial resources of the seminary.

By actively tending to these imperatives (sowing), it is our hope that the coming years will reveal a more bountiful and fruitful harvest of persons equipped and desiring to serve as future pastors and leaders of our Church, by a seminary community that has likewise grown in God's wisdom and righteousness.

Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Strategic Imperative No. 1: Enhance our current focus on spiritual formation in preparation for ministry, and foster a vibrant community life.

Related Strategic Initiatives

- A. Hire and support a new Director of Student Life (DSL) to foster a stronger, more vibrant community life. *(Fall of 2016, Trustees, Dean, Administrative Team)*
- B. Revise the parameters of the spiritual father relationship, increasing opportunities for deeper mentoring and stronger relationships. *(Fall 2017, Rector Dean, DSL)*
- C. Enhance seminarians participation in the liturgical life of the monastery church. *(Fall 2017, Abbot, Dean, DSL, Music Director)*

Strategic Imperative No. 2: Review, reimagine, and redesign the M.Div. experience, including curriculum re-design, to develop even greater strength in pastoral formation and liturgical training, while also exploring extension of the seminary's educational offerings for the benefit of the entire Church.

Related Strategic Initiatives

- A. Continue to enhance our culture of assessment and responsiveness to the changing realities of pastoral formation. *(Fall 2018, Faculty, Dean, Assistant to Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA))*
- B. Taking into account data and insights from assessment processes, review and redesign the M.Div. curriculum, giving greater time and attention to the praxis oriented areas of pastoral formation, as well as curricular and co-curricular means of more fully developing skills for serving liturgically. *(Fall 2019, Faculty, Dean, ADAA)*
- C. As part of the curriculum review, consider developing course electives or elective tracks within the curriculum that would allow students greater flexibility and the ability to specialize in an area related to their future ministry. Formalize and promote one-year certificates focused on specialized training and formation (e.g. choir directing or religious education). *(Fall 2019, Faculty & Dean)*
- D. Establish a more structured field education and internship program, including a Clinical Pastoral Education component. *(Fall 2018, Dean, CPE Advisory Committee)*
- E. Expand non-credit offerings for alumni and lay leaders, including continuing education, diaconal formation program development, and possibly programmatic initiatives that build on our strengths in pastoral formation, spirituality, and liturgical training. *(Fall 2018, Rector, Dean, DSL, ADAA)*
- F. Pursue a partnership for an undergraduate option with another accredited institution. *(Fall of 2019, Dean, ADAA, DSL)*

Strategic Imperative No. 3: Develop and execute an enrollment management strategy, which yields an M.Div. class size of at least 15 and several non-degree students per year.

Related Strategic Initiatives

- A. Establish a wider array of recruitment events throughout the year, including “open houses” on campus and moving the vocations retreat to the Fall. (*Fall of 2018, DSL, Director of Mission Advancement (DMA)*)
- B. Develop a Student Ambassador Program, by which current seminarians visit select parishes, colleges, OCF gatherings, and other ecclesial events with a specific goal of promoting the school and encouraging applications. (*Fall 2018, DSL*)
- C. Better equip those who are traveling on behalf of the seminary to identify and refer possible candidates to the Admissions Committee for contact and follow-up. (*Spring 2017, Rector, Dean, Admissions Committee, Spring 2017*)

Strategic Imperative No. 4: Raise the public profile of the Seminary through a multi-faceted series of events, media strategy, and alumni engagement.

Related Strategic Initiatives

- A. Develop an integrated strategy and visitation schedule, which incorporates mission choir trips, faculty lectures, student ambassador visitations, and off-campus events. (*Spring 2017, Board, Dean, DMA, Faculty*)
- B. Expand and improve the Seminary’s digital footprint, including its website, as well as its printed materials. (*Spring 2017, IT, Dean, Admn. Team*)
- C. Incorporate alumni representatives and materials in both of the initiatives listed above; strengthen alumni regional representative interaction (*Spring 2018, Dean, Alumni Chair*)
- D. Increase the practice of holding high-profile public events, and engagement with surrounding communities and churches. (*Fall 2017, Board, Dean, Faculty, Admn. Team*)

Strategic Imperative No. 5: Increase the effectiveness of our stewardship of the human, physical, and financial resources of the seminary.

Related Strategic Initiatives

- A. More fully address faculty development, including compensation policy, service to the institution, professional development; and develop a succession plan. (*Fall 2018 Board, Rector, Dean, Faculty, CFO, Admn. Team*)
- B. Complete Married Student Housing project. (*Fall 2020, Board, DMA, Admn. Team*)
- C. Continue to develop and execute comprehensive fundraising and financial planning schemas. (*Spr. 2017, Dean, DMA, CFO, Board*)

- D. Identify and complete smaller remodeling projects necessary to promote a solid campus (e.g. renovating the dorm and re-doing the main kitchen), and develop a longer-term solution for capital improvement and regular maintenance needs, in partnership with the monastery. (*Spring 2017, Board, Dean, CFO, DMA*)

- E. Building governance strength by expanding the number and depth of engagement of Board members, and implementing the processes called for in the Board Handbook. (*Fall 2018, Board, Rector, Dean*)

Conclusion

May God grant us wisdom, grace, and strength to pursue the goal areas outlined in this strategic plan that St. Tikhon's Seminary may continue to pursue its mission of preparing pastors and leaders for our Orthodox Church in the years to come.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, May 27, 2016.