## II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

### a. Recruitment

Findings

The prospective D.Min. student has not, in general, been the focus of energetic institutional recruiting efforts. Three-fourths of all D.Min. directors characterize their recruiting efforts as minimal or modest [see Directors' VI, question 1]. The other quarter engage in "energetic" recruiting, including personal contacting of persons identified as potentially interested. A little less than half the directors say that their recruitment efforts have increased over the last three to five years. More than half of those who do recruit report positive results (20% -- very good; 37% -- fair), though increases in recruiting effort have not produced notably better results or growth in the pool of recruits. Since persons involved with evangelical programs are more likely to say that they want or expect their programs to grow in size, we checked to see whether evangelical schools are more deeply engaged in recruiting. The differences we discovered were slight and statistically insignificant.

Our case studies and the program materials we have studied suggest that the most common form of recruitment is a published advertisement in the pages of the Christian Century or denominational publications. The two very large programs we studied do not advertise at all, relying on an extensive network of their students and graduates for "word of mouth" publicity to potential applicants. Almost all extension programs do some recruiting: Once a geographic area is identified as a likely site of a colleague group, a group of sufficient size and quality must be gathered. Even in these cases, however, the institution is more like to rely for local publicity on persons in the locale who have instigated the discussion about forming a D.Min. group. Directors and other program personnel are most likely to become personally involved in recruiting, it appears, if their program is the local/regional type that draws its students from the immediate area. In these cases, visits to local denominational gatherings can be a fruitful use of the director's time.

Some examples of highly organized recruiting did appear, but these were the minority. One institution, in response to our request for materials descriptive of the program, sent a recruitment brochure aimed at the congregations of potential students. The pamphlet begins by explaining what an in-ministry D.Min. is, and both raises and answers questions congregations might ask: Does a minister need a D.Min.? Will the D.Min. take the candidate away from his/her full-time ministry? Finally, the brochure offers some straightforward reassurance: "The thrust of the program is evident. The D.Min. candidate is not a student on leave in an ivory tower separated from his/her ministry. Instead the ministerial task is both the base and focus of the program." Other examples of energetic efforts emerged

when we called to request catalogs and program materials from those institutions that had not sent them in response to our earlier request. In the second round of requests, phone calls were made by a research assistant who did not take the time to identify herself as related to our project. Most institutions assumed that the request was from a potential student. In four or five cases, this request evidently tripped off a direct mail process. Duplicate copies of materials, personalized letters inviting calls for more information, and queries about the status of our interest in enrolling in the program continued to be received over a period of several months. In these cases it may be that a specially designated recruiting officer has planned the direct mail strategy for the D.Min. program. In the cases we studied closely, however, the D.Min. director alone was responsible for conducting any recruiting for the D.Min. program, even when the institution had a recruiter for the other programs of the school.

Why are seminaries' efforts to recruit for D.Min. programs generally so limited, especially when compared with many secular programs of higher education for adults that recruit very heavily? One reason is evident in directors' responses to our question about the size of the pool of persons likely to be interested in the D.Min. About 40% of the directors (VI 4;and about one-quarter of the chief executives, I 4) believe that the pool of persons interested is getting larger (and even higher percentages of directors of programs of several types -- campus-based intensive, unique content or method, and extended M.Div. -- view their recruitment pools as growing); another one-quarter of the directors and more than half the chief executives believe that this pool is remaining about the same. No more than 20% of either group believes that the pool is getting smaller. So the absence of recruitment efforts may stem primarily from the lack of a perceived need to recruit. Nor do directors feel the competition of other programs very keenly: Almost none replied to our request that directors identify the institutions they regard as "chief competitors for D.Min. students."

## Discussion

Should Doctor of Ministry programs recruit more energetically? There is very little in our evidence that suggests that a "hard sell" would be beneficial. As we describe later/earlier in this report, positive experiences in D.Min. programs have highly positive effects on clergy morale. To achieve this effect, however, the D.Min. student must make a major investment of time and energy as well as money. Little would be gained we believe, by tactics to lure or pressure clergy not fully committed into D.Min. programs. One can speculate, at least, that failing to make the grade in a D.Min. program is potentially as devastating as success in the program is affirming.

On the other hand, without resorting to highly aggressive marketing tactics, most programs could be far more helpful than they

are currently in the information they make available to inquirers. We collected these materials from all but a handful of the institutions that grant the D.Min. degree. The bulk of these materials fail at one or more of the following points:

-They lack basic information about program structure and schedule. In most cases, we could not discern from the materials we received whether particular programs were intended for persons living near the institution or for a much broader audience.

- The distinctive features of particular programs were rarely made clear. Most program descriptions are far too general, making it difficult for prospective applicants to identify strengths of individual programs and differences among them.

-The descriptions are wordy and laden with jargon.

As we describe more thoroughly in the next section, students and graduates overwhelmingly cite the content and focus of their program, and the reputation of the program and its faculty as the most important factors in their decision to enroll. (By contrast, the location and denomination of the seminary, the availability of financial aid and even the cost of the program are minor factors. See Graduates and Students III, question F.) This suggests that better and clearer information about the focus and strengths of particular programs is much needed and holds promise of, at least, better matching of students to programs if not increased enrollment for those programs that succeed in making their distinctive features known.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

b. Application, Admission and Financial Aid

Findings

Approximately 1350 new students enrolled in in-ministry Doctor of Ministry programs in 1983-1984. [This figure must be inferred, since no source provides it directly. Two methods, however, yield figures in the same range: The comparison of Tables 6 and 19 in the ATS Fact Book for 1984-85; and the multiplication of the average number of new students enrolled in those programs responding to our questionnaire (18 new students) by the total number of programs in 1983-84 (75).] The average seminary received slightly more than 100 inquiries about its D.Min. program (see Directors VII, 1). From these inquiries, on average, 25 completed applications were received and 19 of these applicants were admitted, for an overall admission rate of 75%. Almost all those admitted (18 of 19) enrolled in the program. This last figure is of special significance. Such a high enrollment-to-admissions ratio suggests that very few potential students make multiple applications. Unlike those applying to other kinds of advanced professional programs, D.Min. applicants evidently choose at an early stage the single program they wish to attend.

Given the enormous range in the sizes of D.Min. programs, these average figures of course tell only part of the applications and admissions story. The number of inquiries received, for instance, ranged from 12 to 500; and the completed applications from 5 to 150. The numbers of those admitted also covered a wide range, from 3 to 130 (mean, 19.4). As already noted, enrollment figures are almost identical to admissions: The range is 2 to 130; the mean, 18. These wide ranges and low means suggest that many programs had fewer than the average numbers of inquiries, applications, admissions and numbers enrolled.

Application and admissions requirements are quite varied, though several core criteria are found in the requirements of almost all D.Min. granting institutions. Chief among these are a stated minimum grade point average in M.Div. work in an accredited seminary, and a specified period of ministerial service between seminary graduation and beginning the D.Min. program (see Directors VII, 2). The minimum grade point average is usually 3.0. (The mean for all institutions responding to our survey was 2.93; a few institutions have a lower minimum (to 2.0); a few others have a higher one (to 3.5). The ATS Standards for Accrediting have never set specific admission standards. The general choice of 3.0 or "B" average appears to be the schools' interpretation of the "previous high academic records in A.B. or M.Div. study" that the Standards in force until 1984 call for. The average period of prior ministerial service required by 60 programs answering this question is 3.1 years. At one end of the range is an

institution requiring 10 years; at the other, a small group of institutions require no period of ministerial service. Several of these, however, wrote to us that although they have no fixed requirement, they view intervening service in ministry as highly desirable. (The revision of the Standards in 1984 makes a two year period of service between seminary graduation and D.Min. enrollment mandatory. It also removes the language about "high academic records.") A majority of programs (66%) also require endorsement from the applicants' church governing board or employer. And more than half (57%) require the approval of an ecclesiastical superior. About half require a personal interview, and a few programs that do not require the interview of all applicants require it in special cases.

Beyond these core requirements and the application requirements one would expect for a graduate program (an essay on background, interests and vocational goals, and a set of reference letters), programs reported to us a wide variety of additional criteria and requirements. Approximately ten programs require psychological test results, and about the same number ask for a commitment from the applicant to try to remain in his or her current job until the D.Min. program is completed. Most other requirements are found at only a handful of institutions: GRE tests (the average for five programs reporting they require the GRE was a combined minimum of 870); the Miller Analogies Test (required by seven programs); ordination (an explicit requirement at a few schools); employment in a church or denominational setting (five programs); scores on Readiness for Ministry (one program); the results of a process of career assessment (two programs); and Hebrew and/or Greek. Several programs require a taped sermon. Two others require a bibliography of recent reading; and increasingly, a writing sample beyond the personal essay is required. The impetus for such essays, one D.Min. director wrote to us, is that:

> ...not all pastors with accredited M.Div.s can write. What happens when such a pastor approaches the project phase of the program still struggling to complete the requirements of the seminary phase? Haven't we done the pastor a disservice to offer admission into the program when in fact this pastor cannot complete it? ....We have just changed the admission requirement to include a five-page reflection paper. If serious writing difficulties are spotted in the paper, we will encourage the pastor to engage in continuing education programs rather than the degree program.

At least two programs require the applicant or potential applicant to participate in a non-credit program at the seminary as prerequisite to application. In one case reported to us, this "laboratory" requirement includes career assessment and takes approximately three days. About half the persons who complete the laboratory go on to enroll in the D.Min. program. In another case, the non-credit prerequisite is a comprehensive career and spiritual reassessment, taking six weeks. The program is intended primarily as continuing education for the participants, but all potential D.Min. applicants must participate. As

a result, writes the director of that program, "We know our applicants rather well."

Two-thirds of the directors report that at least one of their institution's stated requirements for admission has been waived at least occasionally (see Directors VII, 3). Though the 3.0 grade point average minimum is nearly universal among D.Min. programs, one-fifth of directors responding report that they waive this requirement under certain conditions. In three of these programs, a student entering with a lower average is placed on probation until an average of 3.0 or better is achieved in the D.Min. program. In the other cases, other evidence of ability and competence may cause the 3.0 minimum to be waived. In these 12 programs, the student who presents such evidence is admitted in good standing. About a third of the institutions reporting will under certain conditions grant M.Div. "equivalency" for those who do not hold the degree. In some cases, the equivalency requirement is clearly stated as a certain number of credit hours of advanced theological study beyond the M.A. level. Other institutions consider equivalency on an individual basis. Some restrict the categories of persons who may establish equivalency to, for instance, Roman Catholic women or foreign students -- that is, persons who have not had access to M.Div. programs. One program will include in D.Min. program groups persons who do not hold the M.Div. but with equivalent preparation; they may, however, participate only on a non-degree basis. Also frequently waived (in 17 programs reporting to us) is the requirement of a specified period of service in ministry. A number of directors reporting this note that these waivers are usually granted only to older or "second career" students.

Other notes about requirements waived pertained to only a few institutions. Two of the small number of institutions that explicitly require ordination say that they have waived this requirement. The institutions that require Biblical languages also will consider waiving at least one. Other institutions report that they will waive various steps in the application process for good reason: If certain kinds of transcripts or letters of reference simply cannot be obtained, this will not constitute a bar to admission; and interviews may be waived for persons living at too great a distance. Interview and other requirements may be waived for foreign students and equivalent requirements substituted.

One special admissions issue was raised with us in interviews. We were told that the admission of whole groups into extension programs may present a dilemma. Most of those admitted easily meet the standards for admission. But the last one or two needed to make a group of adequate size may be marginal. One president who admitted to this problem in his institution's program said that the values of offering the D.Min. in the local setting outweighed, in his view, the difficulties created by the occasional marginal group member.

A small group of institutions noted denominational or doctrinal

requirements for admission to their D.Min. programs (see Directors VII, 4). Most of these ten institutions are theologically conservative, but their requirements are various: That their students be baptized Christians, that they sign a confession or credal statement, or that they have an affinity for the tradition the school represents. One institution asks "loyalty and commitment" to the denomination from students who belong to that denomination, but has no such requirement for its students from other denominations. Another charges higher fees for students who are not affiliated with its sponsoring denomination. One institution specifies that students should be able to accept the institution's liberal theological perspective: "Candidates must be willing to adopt [this institution's] practice of inclusive language and must be willing to explore theological positions openly and critically. We are a progressive institution, and all applicants are expected to be comfortable with this stance."

In about half of all programs (47%; see Directors VII, 5) the admissions decision is made by a committee that has responsibility for several facets of the D.Min. in addition to admissions. In 22% of the programs, the decision is made by a committee specially convened for the function of making D.Min. admissions decisions. This committee may be a sub-committee of the larger D.Min. committee, or it may be entirely separate. In slightly fewer cases (17%), D.Min. admissions decisions are made by the same committee that acts on admissions to the institution's other programs. In two cases, the decision is made by the D.Min. director, acting alone, and in one other by the school's director of admissions, acting alone. In two programs, the entire faculty votes to approve D.Min. admissions. Several programs notified us that, if the committee that makes D.Min. admissions decisions cannot be convened, the director is empowered to act alone or after consulting available faculty members.

D.Min. directors estimate that over the past five years their programs have rejected 17% of the students who completed applications (see Directors VII, 6). The fact that this reported five-year rate is somewhat lower than the 25% rejection rate for 1983-84 cited above suggests that some programs have become more selective. And, indeed, about 40% of directors report (Directors VII, 7) that their programs have become more selective in the last three to five years. The major reason for rejection of applicants cited by almost all directors is evidence of academic weakness. No other single reason was cited by a majority of the directors: Evidence that the program would not meet the applicant's needs (41%); evidence of emotional or psychological instability (31%); evidence of inappropriate motivation (30%); and relative inferiority to other applicants (26%). In addition, a few directors note, some applicants must be rejected because, even though they are personally qualified, their employment does not meet the program's criteria for a "ministry site," or because there are insufficient applicants in their area to form a colleague group for an extension program.

Programs vary in their selectivity. The range of reported rejec-

tion rates was quite broad: From 0 to 67%. But most programs have similar selection rates, and most are not highly selective. Table I incorporates an index of current selectivity and shows the distribution of programs by selectivity. (The index is a ratio of the number of persons who applied to the number who were admitted. Thus the higher the index number, the higher the program's selectivity.) As the Table makes clear, over half of all programs take four or more of every five applicants. Nearly three-quarters take two of every three applicants.

TABLE I Current Selectivity of D.Min. Programs

| Selectivity Ratio (Applications/Admissions) | Percent of Programs |
|---|---|
| 1 (all who apply are admitted) | 14% |
| 1.01 - 1.15 | 14 |
| 1.16 - 1.25 | 26 |
| 1.26 - 1.50 | 19 |
| 1.51 - 1.99 | 20 |
| 2.00 - 3.75 | 7 |
| | 100 |
| | (58 programs) |

We encountered examples of the great variety of admissions policies in our case studies and in the program descriptions we collected. One program that rejects about half of those who apply states in its catalog: "The Doctor of Ministry program is not recommended as further study for all persons holding the M.Div. degree. As an advanced professional degree it is designed only for those individuals who give clear evidence of being able to perform ministry at an advanced level. Hence at the point of application students must give clear evidence of having gifts for ministry, of having the motivation and ability to prosper from advanced study, and of having the theological sophistication that will serve as a foundation for such study." At the other end of the spectrum was the director of a program who wrote to us at length about that institution's perspective on D.Min. admissions: "Our program was first developed along an elitist model -- I think the faculty tended to compare any doctorate to the Ph.D., and were concerned that only the finest pastors should graduate with a degree.... As we have grown in familiarity with the nature and possibilities in a D.Min. program, however, we have changed our stance. We have seen that D.Min work affects the quality of ministry, enriching it considerably. If the seminary is to serve the church, should we not work with any pastor seriously desiring to increase the effectiveness of ministry?" Several programs we visited shared this perspective: Except for a minimum standard (usually a 3.0 seminary grade point average, a minimum sometimes waived), all who apply are generally accepted. And, as noted, almost all of those accepted eventually enroll in the program.

Programs with policies as open as these have no effective brake on admissions unless they choose to limit total program size. Two-thirds of all programs, however, do not do so (Director IX, 2). Theoretically, then, both D.Min. program size and quality of students are in many institutions determined primarily by who chooses to apply and enroll.

About a third of the directors report that the number of applications and the quality of applicants has increased over the past three to five years. About half think that the number of applications and their quality has remained about the same. The others note a decrease in number and quality or considerable variation from year to year (see Directors VII, 8.) A smaller percentage than saw an increase in the number and quality of applications can report an increase in the number of admissions, another indication of some increase in selectivity in recent years. (Overall, 31% of directors report more applications and 38% better ones; but only 23% report more persons admitted. See again Directors VII, 8.) Correspondingly, though applications and their quality are rarely observed to decrease (13% noted a decrease in number and 5% a decrease in quality of applications), 21% observed a decrease in the number of persons admitted. The directors' observations accord with the fact that growth in in-ministry D.Min. programs has been slow over the past four years (approximately 11%, with some of it attributable to a small number of fast-growing programs). If the directors have accurately reported their recent rejection rate (25%) compared to their earlier one (17%), the overall picture we gain from their responses -- more applications but fewer admissions -- is probably quite accurate.

Half the directors attribute the increases and decreases they observe to more or fewer applications (Directors VII, 9). Another quarter trace increase or decrease to policy decisions to limit or expand program size. A correlation of the responses to Directors VII, 8, which asks for observations about the number of persons admitted, and those to Directors VII, 9, which seeks the reasons for changes, shows that, in general, increases in the number of persons admitted are the result of having received more applications; while decreases in number of persons admitted are due to policy decisions to limit program size. Increase in the quality of applicants, though fairly widely observed (by almost 40% of the directors), has not, the directors believe, been the primary reason for increases in admissions.

Tables II and III show changes in applications, admissions and quality of applications by program format type and program philosophy type. Table II shows that applications have increased much more markedly for campus-based intensive programs than for local regional ones. (The figures in the extension column may be misleading. Most of the extension programs have made policy decisions during the last three years to decrease program size. Since applications are not sought or accepted except when a colleague group of sufficient size has been gathered, institutional decisions to limit extension program size tend to show as a decrease in applications. But extension program directors

report a backlog of groups that wish to apply and individuals seeking groups to participate in.) Table II also shows that twice the percentage of campus-based programs report increases in admissions as do local regional programs. Correspondingly, twice the percentage of local/regional programs as campus-based intensive ones report decreases in the numbers of applications and admissions. Interestingly, however, the local/regional programs report a dramatic increase (55%) in the quality of applications, while only 20% of the directors of campus-based intensive programs have observed such an increase.

TABLE II Directors' Perceptions of Applications and Admissions by Program Format Types

| | | Program Format | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Local Regional | Campus Intensive | Extension | Two or More Options |
| Percentage of Directors Saying: | | | | | |
| Number applied | increased | 26% | 42% | 20% | 20% |
| | stayed same | 64 | 56 | 20 | 70 |
| | decreased | 10 | 4 | 60 | 10 |
| Number admitted | increased | 16 | 32 | 20 | 20 |
| | stayed same | 58 | 56 | 40 | 80 |
| | decreased | 26 | 12 | 40 | 0 |
| Quality of applications | increased | 55 | 20 | 40 | 46 |
| | stayed same | 45 | 72 | 60 | 54 |
| | decreased | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 |

TABLE III Directors' Perceptions of Applications and Admissions by Educational Philosophy Types

| | | Educational Philosophy | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Independent/ Specialized | Unique Content | Extended M.Div. |
| Percentage of of Directors saying: | | | | |
| Number applied | increased | 36% | 25% | 30% |
| | stayed same | 50 | 63 | 61 |
| | decreased | 14 | 12 | 9 |
| Number admitted | increased | 21 | 25 | 26 |
| | stayed same | 58 | 63 | 57 |
| | decreased | 21 | 12 | 17 |
| Quality of applications | increased | 47 | 25 | 33 |
| | stayed same | 50 | 63 | 67 |
| | decreased | 3 | 12 | 0 |

Table III shows the relationship of program philosophy types to changes in applications, admissions and quality of applications. The programs we have typified by their "unique content," and those we classify as built on an "extended M.Div." model, have fared similarly. The programs we have classified as based on an "independent/specialized" model have had a somewhat different experience. Their directors are more likely to report an increase in applications, a decrease in admissions, and a large increase in the quality of applications. That combination suggests that the independent/specialized programs are becoming both more attractive and more selective.

Slightly less than half of all programs offer financial aid (45%; see Directors VII, 10), and in fewer than half of these cases is aid available under the same policies that apply to the institutions' other students. Only about one-fifth of all programs, in other words, have financial aid policies that apply equally to the D.Min. and other programs. More than half of all programs (55%) offer no financial aid at all. From figures provided by business officers, it appears that in the minority of schools that grant financial aid, the amount of aid made available is 10.5% of D.Min. tuition and fees. If the total aid figure is averaged over all institutions replying to our financial survey, the student aid expenditure for D.Min. students averages only 5% of total tuition and fees received by those institutions. By contrast, these same institutions gave about 31 cents of every tuition dollar as aid to non-D.Min. students.

Since all students in programs that offer financial aid do not, of course, receive aid, it comes as no surprise that only 12% of students and 16% of graduates (III, I) report having received aid from the seminary. (Aid is also sometimes available from special denominational grants: 24% of students and 16% of graduates received such a grant.) With so little financial assistance available to them, students and graduates are likely to view the D.Min. as, at least, a moderate financial burden (about 60% do so; see Students and Graduates III, J). Even so, however, the cost of D.Min. education does not seem to constitute a significant barrier, nor the availability of aid a significant lure. Students and graduates do not rank cost high among the factors that influence their choice of a program (see Students and Graduates III, f). Further, as Table IV demonstrates, there is no evident relationship between availability of financial aid and changes in the number of applications to particular programs.

TABLE IV D. Min. Students Eligible for Aid?

| | Yes, same policies for all degree programs | Yes, special policies for D.Min students | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Changes in Number of Applications | | | |
| increased | 27% | 37% | 30% |
| remained same | 55 | 44 | 46 |
| decreased or varied | 18 | 19 | 24 |

Several directors wrote in response to our questions about financial aid that their funds are restricted for women, minorities, international students or those who may have special needs. It may be, therefore, that although the availability of financial aid bears no relation to the number of applications attracted, it has some influence on the variety in the student body finally enrolled.

In several cases we studied closely, financial aid funds were available. Decisions were made, in one case by the director and the institution's dean of students working together; and in the other cases by the director alone. There were no uniform criteria for deciding the size of grants. But in all cases the funds were so modest in comparison with the number of students enrolled that formal criteria for allotting aid were not really required. The D.Min. directors we interviewed rarely named financial aid for students as a major need of their program. Several pointed out to us that the cost of the D.Min. is a single year's doctoral tuition. This tuition is quite low and is spread out over three to five years in many cases. Even though clergy salaries are often low, we were told, this once-in-a-lifetime payment is usually affordable.

Discussion

D.Min. directors report that, in general, the size of their programs over the past several years has remained the same or grown only slightly. They further report that the pool of applications has grown larger and that the quality of applicants has considerably increased. While other data, cited elsewhere, dispute the last claim (faculty and administrators connected with older D.Min. programs told us in interviews that the quality of students has decreased since the early days of the D.Min.; and marked improvement in the quality of students is the single change that most of our seminary respondents hope for in the future), the directors have provided quantitative evidence to suggest that many schools have been able to become more selective in admissions while maintaining program size.

Since programs as varied and diverse as those offered under the D.Min. rubric cannot possibly all be suitable for every potential applicant, increasing selectivity in admissions must be viewed as, in many cases, a positive development -- a sign of seriousness on the part of D.Min.-granting schools about matching potential students to the programs for which they are best suited. In this vein we question the adequacy of formal minimum standards as the sole basis for admissions decisions. Even without taking a position on the question of whether the D.Min. degree is a degree potentially for all ministers or better reserved for the very able, it is hard to defend formal minimum standards such as the 3.0 grade point average as especially meaningful in the D.Min. context or predictive of success; or to argue that even the programs that offer the greatest number of options can accommodate all types of students who may choose to enroll. We grant the point made to us in interviews by directors of programs with very low rejec-

tion rates: Students in the process of inquiry, as they learn about the particular features and requirements of a program, often "reject themselves" because they think they will not fit in the program or it will not meet their needs. Nonetheless, the careful selection of students well-suited to a particular program should not be only a matter of self-selection or self-rejection. More than most have to this point, each institution that offers the D.Min. should seek to identify what kinds of students fare best in that institution's D.Min. program; to reflect on what trials and requirements for admission might give the best evidence of the particular aptitudes required; on the basis of that reflection, to adopt admissions requirements and criteria carefully tailored to the institution's program; and, finally, rigorously to apply those requirements and criteria in all cases. ATS Standards should require institutions to develop admissions criteria relevant to their own programs.

We wonder, further about the wisdom of removing from the standards in 1984 any reference to the quality of prior academic work. Academic ability should not be the only criterion in D.Min. admissions, and perhaps not even the most important one, but the D.Min. degree does, after all, offer most elements of its program in academic form and require for completion a project which is at least in part an academic exercise. Students who could not perform above the minimum level required for graduation from seminary will most likely have difficulty with the advanced academic dimensions of the D.Min. Therefore it would seem appropriate to restore to the Standards some prompting to the schools to consider the quality of prior academic work.

Throughout this report we raise questions about the often ambiguous role of the D.Min. director and the conflicting claims laid upon him or her. As we have described, very few institutions leave admissions decisions to the director alone, and this is as it should be. In a number of cases, however, the director may act in the absence of the group designated to make admissions decisions. We recommend that all admissions decisions be made by a standing committee. In those institutions where the D.Min. director has been given the responsibility for maintaining or increasing program size by recruiting, the director should have neither voice nor vote in the actual admissions decision. Where the director is not responsible for recruiting or otherwise "producing" a class of a particular size, a voice and/or vote in admissions decisions may be appropriate.

## II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

### c. Content and Topical Emphasis

Findings

It is extremely difficult to ascertain the content covered in D.Min. programs. Some programs stipulate certain required courses, but the program description does not always make clear what subject areas are covered in those courses. Since about half of all programs are largely elective, in many cases the "content" of the program of a particular D.Min. student is unique to that student and the student's interest.

Though we knew that we would encounter difficulties, from these and other sources, when we tried to ascertain the content of D.Min. programs, we did include in our questionnaires to directors, faculty members, students and graduates a list of content and topical areas. We asked them all to estimate the amount of immersion a student receives in each area (from "great" to "none"), and we then asked directors and faculty members whether they thought that this amount of exposure should be increased, remain the same or be decreased. Correspondingly, we asked students and graduates how valuable they found each area, and we further asked them to designate two areas in which emphasis and coverage should be increased and two areas in which it should be decreased. The results, expressed in mean responses in most cases and in percentages where appropriate, are shown in Tables I and II.

TABLE I Topical Areas: Degree of Immersion as Reported by Directors and Faculty Members (Means)

| | Extent of Immersion (1=great, 4=none) | | Would like exposure changed (1=increase, 2=same 3=decrease) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Directors | Faculty | Directors | |
| Systematic, philosophical historical theology | 2.0 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 1.5 |
| Pastoral or practical theology | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.8 | 2.0 |
| Biblical studies | 1.9 | 2.2 | 1.8 | 1.6 |
| Ethics | 2.2 | 2.4 | 1.6 | 1.5 |
| Church history | 2.7 | 2.7 | 1.9 | 1.7 |
| Spiritual formation | 2.3 | 2.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| Sociological theory | 2.4 | 2.6 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| Psychological theory | 2.1 | 2.3 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Organizational development | 2.2 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 1.9 |
| Ministerial arts, practical studies | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.9 |

TABLE II Topical Areas: Immersion and Value as Reported by Students and Graduates (Means and Percentages)

| | Extent of Immersion (1=much, 4-none) | | Value to You* (1=great, 4=none) | | Emphasize More | | Emphasize Less | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Grad | Stud. | Grad. | Stud. | Grad. | Stud. | Grad. | Stud. |
| Systematic, philosophical historical theology | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 19% | 17% | 30% | 31% |
| Pastoral or practical theology | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 29 | 31 | 13 | 7 |
| Biblical studies | 2.1 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 34 | 30 | 9 | 6 |
| Ethics | 2.5 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 14 | 12 | 19 | 18 |
| Church history | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 6 | 8 | 29 | 29 |
| Spiritual formation | 2.5 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 39 | 37 | 12 | 6 |
| Sociological theory | 2.3 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 6 | 9 | 35 | 40 |
| Psychological theory | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 13 | 10 | 23 | 31 |
| Organizational development | 2.0 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 13 | 17 | 26 | 25 |
| Ministerial arts, practical studies | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 26 | 31 | 7 | 6 |

## Content and Topical Emphasis

The Tables suggest certain uniformities. The directors, faculty members, students and graduates all report that the greatest immersion of the D.Min. student is in pastoral or practical theology, followed closely by various ministerial arts and practical studies. (As will be explored later, pastoral or practical theology and ministerial arts are uniformly the areas in which greatest immersion is reported in all sub-categories of D.Min. program types.) Though perceptions differ somewhat, directors, faculty members, and students and graduates for the most part agree about the other areas that receive most emphasis: Organization development and Biblical studies (faculty); Biblical studies and systematic/historical theology (directors); organization development and Biblical studies (students); and all the aforementioned topics (graduates). There are some differences in preferences for increased emphasis, but also a fair amount of agreement. Faculty members would like to see more stress on systematic theology and ethics, and on Biblical studies and spirituality; directors on ethics, spirituality and sociology; and students and graduates on spirituality, pastoral theology and Biblical studies. Students' and graduates' desire for more attention to spiritual formation in D.Min. programs is marked in both the data and in comments we received. This is an example of a comment from a student:

> With all of the societal experimentation with spirituality, I expected seminaries and theological schools to have made vast changes.... Such is not the case. I think that is unfortunate. I do not and have not heard many people asking for the type of knowledge one gains from academia..., but many ask for spirituality, meditation, holistic approaches to life and social action issues.... I think a D.Min. should produce a spiritually mature graduate.

Faculty members and directors also seem to share with students and graduates a sense of which areas should receive less emphasis: Psychology is high on the list of all four groups, and church history (which receives very little emphasis in any case) appears on three of the four lists. Faculty members could do with less emphasis on organization development and ministerial arts as well, and students and graduates give first ranking, in their choices for less treatment or exposure, to sociology; systematic theology is also proposed by both students and graduates as an area for less thorough exposure.

Though there are patterns in these data, it is difficult to say what is generating them. With all groups, pastoral theology and Biblical studies, areas emphasized in the curriculum, are popular and candidates for even further emphasis. For all groups except faculty members, the various areas that make up ministerial arts (church administration, preaching, education, etc.) are included on this list of areas already emphasized and deserving of further emphasis. Systematic theology, in the view of students and graduates but not faculty members, currently receives more emphasis than it needs. The same, in the view of students and graduates, is the case for sociology. All groups agree that psychology, which currently receives medium

emphasis, could be treated less fully. And all groups but faculty single out church history, which currently is hardly emphasized at all, for even less emphasis. The interest of all groups in much greater than current emphasis on spiritual formation has already been noted.

The pattern of faculty members' responses is perhaps easier to explain than the others. In general, faculty members favor more emphasis on "classical" areas and less on practical ones. It is also the case that faculty members who teach in the so-called classical areas are more likely to report that their subject area is not strongly emphasized in the D.Min. and to feel that it should be more strongly emphasized. This pattern holds in every "classical" area except church history. Faculty members who favor an increased emphasis in one practical area (ministerial arts or practical theology or organization development), are likely to favor increased exposure to other such areas. Faculty members, in other words, tend in the main to favor more classical studies and want to de-emphasize practical ones; or, if they favor some practical studies, tend also to favor others. Their perceptions and preferences follow lines that might be expected of persons whose basic orientation is academic.

But the preferences of students and graduates, and the preferences of directors that may to some extent reflect what the directors know of students' and graduates' preferences, are quite mixed. Pastoral theology and ministerial arts, already strongly emphasized, are high on the list for more emphasis. But so is Biblical studies and spiritual formation. Systematic theology, church history, psychology and sociology are all proposed for less emphasis. The separation here -- for students and graduates -- seems to be between the general and the more focused and particular. The broader or more general a subject area, the more likely D.Min. students and graduates are to feel it should receive increased emphasis. Relatively discrete disciplines are less popular. This pattern holds in the rating students and graduates give various subject areas when they are asked to assess the value to them of various kinds of studies. Quite logically, the areas of most value to them are exactly those they would like to see given increased emphasis.

There were some interesting variations in these patterns, depending on the type of institution with which respondents were associated, or other variables. For instance, faculty members who characterized themselves as highly positive toward the D.Min. are more likely than other faculty to report a high level of immersion in each subject area. Positiveness toward the degree, in other words, seems to make it more likely that the respondents will report more immersion in particular areas. Those who teach in evangelical institutions are slightly more likely to report that more emphasis is given to spiritual formation, organization development and ministerial arts; a similar correlation, though a fairly weak one, exists between teaching in a mainline seminary and reporting that emphasis is placed on ethics, sociological theory and psychological theory. As already noted, faculty are considerably more likely to report that there is little emphasis given

to the particular area in which they teach, and considerably more likely than other faculty to believe that area should receive greater emphasis. Faculty teaching in practical areas are slightly more likely to observe that systematic theology and Biblical studies are emphasized; and faculty teaching in "classical" areas to observe that pastoral theology is emphasized. These two patterns are consistent: There is a tendency for faculty to report more emphasis in the areas in which they do not teach and less emphasis in the area in which they do.

Students and graduates who view themselves as "conservative" are likely to report a higher level of emphasis on spiritual formation, organization development and ministerial arts (paralleling the reports of faculty who teach in evangelical institutions). In addition, students (but not graduates) who identify themselves as conservative are more likely to report more emphasis on Biblical studies. Students who view themselves as liberal are more likely to report an emphasis on psychological theory and such students value this emphasis more highly than do self-identified conservative students. A similar pattern emerges among students if their responses are sorted by the denominational classification of the seminary at which they are studying. Those at evangelical seminaries report more emphasis upon pastoral theology, Biblical studies, spiritual formation, organization development and ministerial arts, and/or they value these studies more highly. Students in mainline institutions report more emphasis on psychological theory, though the correlation is not very strong.

The most interesting patterns emerged among the types we developed from our study of programs' educational philosophies. The type that emerged most distinctly was one we have called "unique content and method." These programs place much more emphasis, according to faculty members, graduates and students, on sociology, organization development and psychology, and notably less emphasis on the traditional subjects of the theological curriculum: Systematic theology, Biblical studies, ethics, church history and practical studies. As might be expected, systematic theology, Biblical studies, ethics, and church history are most emphasized in the programs we have called the "extended M.Div. type." The independent/specialized programs are less distinct, as well they might be, since many of these programs offer wide elective options to those who participate in them. Faculty, graduates and students give different reports, suggesting that the content of such programs is too various to pin down.

There are also some logical connections between the emphases in various programs and what students find most valuable: In the unique content and method programs, for instance, it is the heavily emphasized sociology and organization development, as well as pastoral theology and spiritual formation, that students value most highly. In the extended M.Div. programs, it is Biblical studies and ethics; and in the independent programs, ministerial arts and a variety of other areas. Whether students are drawn to programs of different types because they are seeking different emphases, or whether rather they come to appreciate what they get the heaviest immersion in, is not clear.

Directors and faculty members added a number of items to our list of subject and topic areas covered by the D.Min. Most frequently mentioned were courses in research method now offered by many programs as preparation for the final project. Also mentioned frequently were courses in personal development for pastors -- courses or seminars that focus on issues such as stress and clergy careers. Other areas were listed, though less frequently: Lay education and development, use of media, education, field supervision, missions, church growth and evangelism, urban studies, multi-cultural and ethnic studies, arts and liturgy, rural studies, church and community, and the study of other religions. In most cases these courses were listed because they are currently offered; in few cases, faculty members listed them because they are not currently offered but the responding faculty member would like them to be.

Discussion

The foregoing analysis of content areas, based on the relative ratings given to these areas on questionnaires, in many ways confirms the results and conclusions we drew from our content analysis of materials that describe D.Min. programs: There is no core of content common to D.Min. programs of all types, and the range of subjects to which students may be exposed in different types of D.Min. programs is very broad indeed. As we suggested in our discussion of program types based on that content analysis, one type of D.Min. program focuses on the areas that form the curriculum structure for the M.Div. degree; usually programs of this type, which we have called extended M.Div. programs, require some exposure in most or all such areas. The programs that we called the unique content and method type treat traditional areas lightly, if at all, and focus on some material or method (organization development, church renewal, church growth, or situational case analysis) that is usually not part of the M.Div. curriculum. A third program type, the independent/specialized one, is almost entirely flexible in content, allowing the student to pursue individual interests. A fourth type of D.Min. program, the specialized program in areas such as pastoral care and counseling, is offered by a substantial number of schools, but is not included within the scope of this report.

As we emphasize at several other points in this report, we believe that the lack of any agreement about subject matter of the degree should either presuppose or cover is one of its principal weaknesses. The lack of agreement about subject matter, and the attendant lack of agreement about whether the degree is to be general or specialized in focus, is in our view a major factor in the difficulty the D.Min. degree has had in gaining any certain identity and reputation. The Standards are not of great assistance at this point. They specify that, whether the degree is conceived by a particular institution as a general one or a specialized one, that "it is expected that the utilization of the necessary Biblical, theological, historical and pastoral disciplines at an advanced level will be an essential feature for the development of a critical theory of the practice of ministry."

This and other language in the Standards specifies only that these broad field areas must be "understood" or "utilized," not that they must be specifically studied. Thus there is no guidance for subject areas the D.Min. course of study should cover, much less any specification of what it would mean to do this at an "advanced" level.

To raise the question of the content of the D.Min. degree is to encounter another problem: the degree, from beginning to end, is relatively short. The Standards specify that it must, at minimum, be the equivalent of one year of full-time work. Most programs we examined closely seem to be slightly longer than that, usually a year of course work plus an additional period, of difficult-to-specify length, for completing the final project. In its relatively limited number of credit hours, it is difficult to specify too many content requirements. Thus, we believe, the question of the total length of the D.Min. degree should be part of the conversation about whether the degree should require coverage of any core of content. In our view, there should be some required immersion in most if not all of the major fields of theological investigation -- sufficient immersion to form a basis for study advanced beyond the level usually required for the M.Div. degree. In addition, we believe, the D.Min. should lead to some kind of specialization in the area relevant to the topic chosen for the D.Min. project. To accomplish both these goals, the total number of credits required for a D.Min. degree should probably be increased. The equivalent of two years' work seems to us more realistic, and more fitted to the doctoral nomenclature, than the current one year requirement.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

d. Teaching Methods and Structures

Findings

When we made visits to selected institutions and studied materials describing D.Min. programs, we were struck, as other researchers have been, at the prevalence of certain educational methods, structures and devices. Among the features evident in many programs are learning contracts and other arrangements for "self-directed" study; analysis of cases from the student's ministerial practice; opportunities for persons who are in similar ministerial settings to learn from each other; and courses and seminars that are explicitly interdisciplinary and "integrative" in focus. Though some of these educational approaches and techniques are also found in field education programs and in clinical training for pastors, they have never played the major role in other seminary programs that they do in the D.Min. As other writers (especially Tucker) have noted, they are a sign of how deeply many D.Min. programs are indebted to developments elsewhere in adult education and advanced professional education. Many programs developed over the past two decades for adults have these same features: Emphases on experiential learning, on peers learning from each other, on the motivation and initiative of the learner, and on "growth" as a measure of educational success.

That features like these dominate D.Min. programs is evident from the data displayed in Table I and Table II. All groups agree that "seminars" are the staple educational structure of D.Min. programs. Notes added to a number of questionnaires remind us that "seminar" in many institutions may refer not to a class conducted in the classical sense of the term, with each of the participants giving reports on some feature of a problem under study, but rather to any small class group (as we describe later, most D.Min. classes are quite small in size, and the large lecture courses common in many M.Div. programs are virtually unheard of in D.Min. programs). Also prominent, in the view of directors and faculty members, are the analysis and evaluation of cases from the ministry setting, peer learning, and the use of colleague groups for learning and support. All these are features of a progressive "adult" pedagogy. In the view of faculty members especially, and directors to a slightly lesser extent, many of the features of traditional academic undertakings receive less emphasis, features such as library research, course exams, and qualifying exams. The student view is somewhat different. Graduates and students report that traditional features such as faculty lectures and library research do receive considerable emphasis, though they also report that course and qualifying exams are emphasized very little. It is of considerable interest that directors and faculty members view students as more often and intensely immersed in colleague and learning groups with their peers and in other peer learning activities than the graduates and students themselves report,

especially because graduates and students in extension programs that make considerable use of colleague groups dominate the graduate/student samples. Evidently directors and faculty members are more likely to notice the non-traditional features of D.Min. programs, and graduates and students themselves are more likely to notice some of the more traditional features.

TABLE I Mean Scores of Director and Faculty Views of Present and Desired Program Methods

| | Extent of Immersion | | Would Like Exposure Changed | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Directors | Faculty | Directors | Faculty |
| Methods | | | | |
| Seminar | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Faculty lectures | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| Supervised practice | 2.1 | 2.2 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Case studies | 2.1 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| Library research | 1.8 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 1.5 |
| Analysis/evaluation of ministry setting | 1.6 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| Career assessment | 2.5 | 2.4 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| Colleague/support group | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Peer learning | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Learning contracts | 2.2 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Course exams | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 1.9 |
| Qualifying exams | 2.8 | 3.1 | 1.8 | 1.7 |
| Involvement of laity | 2.1 | 2.2 | 1.6 | 1.7 |
| Adjunct faculty | 2.3 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.0 |
| Off campus courses | 2.5 | 2.6 | 1.8 | 2.0 |
| | 1 = great<br>4 = none | | 1 = increase<br>2 = same<br>3 = decreased | |

TABLE II Graduate and Student Views Regarding Various Program Methods (Means and Percentages)

| | Extent of Immersion | | Value to You | | Emphasize More | | Emphasize Less | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Grad. | Stud. | Grad. | Stud. | Grad. | Stud. | Grad. | Stud. |
| Methods | | | | | | | | |
| Seminars | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 18% | 22% | 12% | 8% |
| Faculty lectures | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 18 | 17 | 20 | 18 |
| Supervised practice | 2.3 | 2.5 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 23 | 21 | 11 | 12 |
| Case studies | 2.1 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 19 | 18 | 17 | 13 |
| Library research | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 9 | 9 | 13 | 13 |
| Analysis/evaluation of ministry setting | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 22 | 22 | 7 | 5 |
| Career assessment | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 30 | 24 | 11 | 9 |
| Colleague/support groups | 2.0 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 17 | 17 | 8 | 5 |
| Peer learning | 2.0 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 11 | 10 | 11 | 10 |
| Learning contracts | 2.7 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 7 | 5 | 15 | 13 |
| Course exams | 2.7 | 3.0 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 2 | 1 | 31 | 38 |
| Qualifying exams | 2.7 | 3.0 | 2.6 | 2.9 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 26 |
| Involvement of laity | 2.2 | 2.3 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 22 | 20 | 5 | 7 |
| | 1 = much<br>4 = none | | 1 = much<br>4 = none | | | | | |

There is additional evidence of this tendency to report greater use of or immersion in a particular educational approach if the respondent is not directly involved with it. Faculty who teach in practical subject areas are, for instance, a little more likely than those who teach in the so-called classical areas to report that faculty lectures and course exams are given emphasis in the D.Min. program; classically-located faculty, by contrast, believe that seminars and career assessment (program activities that focus on the personal and vocational issues of the pastor) are given special emphasis and weight. This parallels the pattern of faculty observations about subject matter emphasis, especially the tendency to report that the areas with which one is most familiar are those that receive less emphasis, and that the ones in which the respondent does not teach receive more emphasis.

As was the case for topical emphases, interesting differences emerge between mainline and evangelical institutions. The methods generally associated with adult education or professional education in other fields -- peer-oriented learning, learning contracts, off-campus courses, and the like -- are found more often in the programs of mainline seminaries, according to the testimony of both faculty members and students. By contrast, evangelical seminaries place more emphasis

on faculty lectures. Our visits to selected institutions confirmed the difference suggested here: Evangelical seminaries, even though the subject matter of their D.Min. programs may be more practical in emphasis than that of many mainline programs, seem to employ traditional academic methods to a greater extent than do programs located in mainline seminaries. Faculty members are more likely to give lectures, and, as noted in subsequent sections, amounts of assigned reading and writing are likely to be greater. Discussion groups, case studies, and programs tailored to the needs of individual students are much less prominent.

As might be expected, there are some notable differences in use of and emphasis on various methods and structures among different format types of D.Min. programs. Programs of the local/regional type, many of which rely on the seminary's standard menu of courses as the mainstay of the D.Min. program, are quite logically more likely to place emphasis on such things as course and qualifying exams. Correspondingly, they are much less likely to make use of adjunct faculty and to offer such special resources for D.Min. students as seminars or workshops that focus on the minister's career and vocational dilemmas. Campus-based intensive programs, according to faculty members, emphasize supervised practice as an element of the program, analysis of case studies and library research (also a strength of local/regional programs, according to faculty members). Like local/regional programs, they are less likely than extension programs to make great use of adjunct faculty and to involve laity in the program in some way. Extension programs are less likely, according to our respondents, to use such traditional methods as supervised practice, library research and course exams, but considerably more likely to emphasize support groups, peer learning, learning contracts, adjunct faculty and off-campus courses. Students report a few variations in the graduate and faculty views of program emphases: Students in extension programs, for instance, are more likely to report that ministry setting evaluations and a focus on the minister's vocational issues are present in their programs than are students associated with the other types. (By faculty members'and directors' report, however, these features are somewhat more likely to be found in <u>non</u>-extension programs.) Students also, interestingly, are more likely to report that their program emphasizes library research if they are enrolled in an extension program. This is a dramatically different view than that offered by faculty members and graduates. Nonetheless, overall, definite patterns emerge: Local/regional programs are pedagogically most traditional; campus-based programs emphasize ministerial practice, but through activities focused on practice, such as case studies, that can be accomplished at some distance from the local setting, rather than those, such as structures that involve laity, that can only be accomplished locally. Extension programs by general report offer the widest array of non-traditional techniques and structures.

Finally, it should be noted that faculty members themselves report that they use different methods or styles of teaching in D.Min. courses than they do in advanced courses for their M.Div. students (Faculty V,

9). Forty percent say that this is the case "to a great extent," and an equal number say that this is the case "to a limited extent." Interestingly, since there are significant correlations between employment in an evangelical seminary and the use of traditional teaching methods, evangelical faculty are very much more likely to say that they employ different methods and styles in D.Min. courses than in those they teach for M.Div. students. It may well be that in mainline seminaries what we have identified as non-traditional methods have made their way into the M.Div. curriculum as well as the D.Min. curriculum. Thus these methods, which are used in evangelical seminaries, though to a lesser extent than in mainline ones, may be more unusual in evangelical seminaries, leading faculty in them to report differences between D.Min. and M.Div. teaching more frequently.

## Discussion

It is clear from our questionnaire data as well as our observations of actual programs that D.Min. programs use a battery of teaching approaches, styles, techniques and methods that were not widely employed in seminaries before the advent of D.Min. programs. Mainline institutions are more likely to employ these methods and they are more often emphasized in extension programs and, to a lesser extent, campus-based intensive programs, but they are found in programs of all types. The use of such methods in programs intended for experienced adults and persons who have already attained professional status is based on considerable research into how adults learn and on substantial theories developed from the research. Nonetheless, though there is evidence that these methods are highly effective in the education of adults (and even some tenuous evidence, in this study, that these methods that stress individual initiative and peer learning account for some of the highly positive impact of the D.Min. degree on students and graduates), there is no proof that such methods are invariably superior in the advanced education of professionally experienced persons. We believe that D.Min. programs should be far more experimental than most are in their use of such methods; and that, by the same token, there should be more tests of the possible effectiveness of some of the academic and professional training methods, such as examinations and supervised practice, that have traditionally been employed in theological education. Some of the few studies that have been undertaken have had unsettling results. Hartford Seminary's study of its two different D.Min. models, one of which was structured to involve laity in the congregational setting in the student's D.Min. work and the other which was not, showed that the structures for congregational involvement, though they made great theoretical sense, in fact produced few of the anticipated results and in some cases were even counterproductive in both the learning of students and the impact on congregations. It is our sense that many Doctor of Ministry programs have bought into educational theories and approaches that they have not fully tested. Again, we believe that more experimentation, testing and evaluation of various teaching techniques and structures is in order.

## Teaching Methods and Structures

A number of institutions have pointed out to us and we have noted ourselves that a fairly strong bias toward theory and techniques of adult education is built into the Standards for accreditation of D.Min. programs. Programs are instructed to provide "for varied kinds of learning" and a list is then provided that includes "self-directed learning," "integrative and inter-disciplinary experiences," "careful utilization of a student's ministerial context as a learning environment, with adequate provision to train supervisors," "structures designed to facilitate peer learning and evaluation," and "opportunities for personal and spiritual growth." This list is rather one-sided. It includes techniques reflective, for the most part, of one educational approach. In so doing, it could be read as dictating a pedagogical approach to the schools. We believe (as so, we would guess, do most ATS members) that in general matters of educational theory and methods should be left to the faculties of individual institutions to choose. It is appropriate for Standards to state the goals and objectives of educational programs that must be met for accreditation, including general areas of content that must be covered and skills and competencies that must be imparted. But to accomplish this is a matter for individual institutions to decide. Where methods are specified, we believe that this should be done as broadly and generally as possible. The list of a variety of specific methods found in the current D.Min. Standards is, in our view, too specific and constricting. The Standards should be revised to remove any bias toward one educational theory or approach and to include provisions that would require schools to test, from time to time, the effectiveness of the methods and techniques they employ.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

e. Courses

Findings

There is enormous variety in what constitutes course work in D.Min programs. As already demonstrated, different program types place different amounts of emphasis on various kinds of subject matter and employ a great variety of teaching methods. There is perhaps even greater variety in the forms of courses in different programs. Table I below gives an overview of the variety. The difference between directors' and faculty members' reports is explainable. Directors were asked what form of course the D.Min. student most typically takes; faculty members were asked what D.Min course they most typically teach. Even if D.Min students in a particular program most typically take a course from the regular course menu of the school (courses most often offered on a through-the-semester/quarter basis), faculty members may have reported on the courses they teach chiefly for D.Min. students, courses that are most often taught on an intensive basis. The Table shows that between 30 and 40 percent of courses most typically taken by D.Min. students are offered in traditional residential academic form, meeting once a week or more often and spanning the semester. The remainder of courses most typically taken by D.Min. students, 6 to 70 percent, are offered in a variety of intensive formats. The "Other" category contained in the Table was illuminated in written comments. These report more than 15 different forms of intensive courses: Courses that meet for a day every other week for six sessions; short term seminars offered end-to-end over a 2 1/2 week period; a day-long monthly meeting; four eight-hour seminars per term; directed studies on an individual basis with stated meetings; four meetings each quarter, each covering three hours on Monday afternoon and two hours on Tuesday morning; three-day meetings four times a semester; two hours each day for a full month; and more.

TABLE I Course Types

| | Typical Course Taught by Faculty | Typical Course Reported by Director |
|---|---|---|
| Weekly, semi-weekly or more frequent meetings over the length of a quarter or semester | 29% | 39% |
| One-week/five day intensives | 15 | 9 |
| Two-week/ten day intensives | 23 | 26 |
| Longer intensives | 20 | 17 |
| Other | 13 | 9 |
| | 100% | 100% |

On average, the typical course taken by a D.Min. student involves between 35 and 40 contact hours (see and compare Directors II, 5a-d and Faculty V, 1c and 2). According to directors, about 14 students are

enrolled in this typical course. Graduates remember 18 students in the typical course (see Graduates IV, N1). Since graduates of larger programs numerically dominate the graduate sample and larger programs are likely to have larger classes, this difference is explicable. Students, for whom the same conditions pertain, report almost the same mean figure as do graduates: 19. Graduates and students both judge that the class size they report is "about right"; fewer than 10% think that their typical class was either too large or too small (see Students and Graduates IV, N2).

Directors and faculty members report that about 18% of the students in this typical course are not D.Min. students. (Students and graduates report that 13% and 11%, respectively, of their classmates in their "most typical" course were not D. Min. students. The figure for students and graduates is lower because participants from larger programs that are less likely to have mixed classes dominate the student/graduate sample. See Students and Graduates IV, N3.) It is important to remember, however, that making up this average figure are many courses for D.Min. students that include no students from other programs, and many others that are thoroughly mixed. Table II shows how greatly different program types differ in their inclusion of non-D.Min. students in courses typically taken by D.Min. students.

TABLE II Percentage of Programs of Different Types Whose Typical D.Min. Course includes Non D.Min. Students

| | PROGRAM TYPES | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Local/Regional | Campus Based Intensive | Extension |
| Programs that include non-D.Min. students | 62% | 11% | 40% |
| | Ind/Specialized | Unique Content | Extended M.Div. |
| Programs that include | 63% | 0 | 13% |

Local/regional programs often (but not always) structure the D.Min to include many courses in the school's "regular" curriculum, curriculum offered to M.A., M.Div. and sometimes academic doctoral students. Thus the percentage of local/regional courses that typically include non-D.Min. students in D.Min. courses is high. Campus-based intensive programs usually exclude students from other programs simply by the way that intensive courses are scheduled. Most often they are held during periods that other programs are not in session. This scheduling arrangement not only fits pastors' busy schedules by condensing course meetings into a single intensive period, but it enables the institution to make productive use of its housing and other facilities during periods when they are not needed for other programs. The apparently high figure for extension programs is an artifact of the low total number of such programs: the 40% represents two institutions that have

non-D.Mon. students in summer or field courses. The second line of Table II shows even more dramatic differences, with respect to inclusion of non-D.Min. students in typical D. Min. courses, among programs with different underlying philosophies. The programs we have categorized as independent/specialized, few of which have requirements and all of which are designed by and for the individual student, usually include as a program element course-taking at a seminary, consortium or university whose advanced courses are offered to students in a variety of programs. A student in such a program is more likely than not to take courses with students in other programs. The "unique content" programs are by definition those that offer an element not taught in seminary M.Div. programs but deemed uniquely appropriate for practitioners in ministry. Typical courses in these programs are planned specifically and usually exclusively for D.Min. students. Students from other programs, as the Table shows, will virtually never be found in these courses. For similar reasons, those programs we identify as built on an "extended M.Div." model are so defined because they offer work in the same areas as M.Div. study but at an explicitly advanced level. Because these courses are conceived as advanced and assume experience in ministry, admission to them of students from other programs is, as the Table shows, quite rare. Not shown on the Table are some other relationships between program types and inclusion of non-D.Min. students in courses. Students and graduates in smaller programs are more likely to report the presence of non-D. Min. students in their courses -- a logical relationship, since small programs often rely for elective variety on courses offered for students in more than one program. Students in programs in mainline institutions are also more likely to report the presence of non-D. Min. students, demonstrating again the concentration of independent/specialized programs and local/regional programs in mainline institutions.

As these great variations in "most typical course" suggest, programs differ greatly in the type of course that dominates. In about half of all programs (see Directors V, 5), a majority of the students' courses are selected from among offerings exclusively or primarily for D.Min. students. In another one-third of the programs, the majority of courses are selected from a wide variety open to students in several degree programs. In the remaining 15% of programs, the majority of the students' courses are self-designed independent study projects or courses taken at other institutions. Consistent with the pattern noted above, programs in mainline seminaries are more likely than those in evangelical seminaries to have "courses for credit open to all students."

Because programs vary much more than we had anticipated when we prepared our questionnaires in the ways they divide work for credit between required and elective activity and among various program components, we found the answers to our questions about requirements and allocation of credit hours difficult to interpret (see Directors V, 3 and 4). The analysis of program descriptions and materials recorded in the discussion of program types earlier in this report provides, however, the information we were seeking: In just under one-fifth of

Courses

D.Min programs are the courses noted in wholly or mostly required: one-third have a mixture of required and elective elements; and half are almost wholly elective. As we noted earlier, however, comparisons based on the categories required courses and elective courses are less useful for our purposes than the notions of broad and limited options, since many entirely elective D.Min. programs, especially of the campus-based intensive type, in fact offer a very limited menu of courses. Half of the 72 D.Min. programs we classified fall into each category. As we noted in the discussion of types, there are logical affinities between campus-based intensive programs and narrow option ones: institutions that offer intensive courses on campus most often offer them in periods when students from other programs are gone and faculty are free to teach an intensive schedule. This means that there is a limited number of students to take such courses, and therefore it is financially feasible to offer only a limited number of courses. The same conditions dictate that few non-D.Min. students will be enrolled in campus-based intensive D.Min. courses. Thus the strong statistical affinity between programs that have limited options and those that have few non-D.Min. students in their D.Min. courses is easily explained. There is an almost equally strong affinity between local/regional programs and broad options for D.Min. course-taking. Thus the total array of course offerings of the school (beyond the introductory level) is available for the D.Min. student who lives within commuting distance of the campus, as the students in local/regional programs must. Charts that show these relationships in detail are included in the section on Program Types.

Faculty members responding to our questionnaires and interview questions provided additional descriptions of the conduct of courses intended, wholly or in part, for D.Min. students: Seventy percent of faculty members responding said that their typical course always requires student preparation before the course begins, and another 13% said that they sometimes make such requirements in D.Min. courses (Faculty V, 1d). As noted earlier, the typical course requires 1300 pages of reading. On average, it also requires 32 pages of written work, a requirement that ranges among the responses we received between five and 150 pages (Faculty V, 1f). There are some notable differences between types of programs and the profile of their typical course. Courses in programs in evangelical seminaries are likely to be longer, to require more preparation before the course begins, and require more pages of both reading and writing. All these features are also more likely to pertain to faculty who teach in programs that have more required courses and fewer elective options. (Most evangelical/conservative programs are also "limited option" programs.) Courses taught by faculty from practical fields of study are also likely to be longer in contact hours, perhaps reflecting the inclusion in this category of extended workshops and practicuums. Faculty who teach in smaller programs are slightly more likely to report that they require more writing.

What effect does the presence of non-D.Min. students have on courses taken by D.Min. students? Neither faculty (V, 2) nor students

(IV, 0) observe much by way of negative effect. Forty-nine percent of faculty and 35% of students think that a mixture has a positive effect on D. Min. students (39% of faculty members and 55% of students say the effect is neutral). Faculty members and students agree that the effect on non-D.Min. students is positive: Six percent of faculty members think this, and 53% of non-D.Min. students. Forty-eight percent of the faculty say that teaching a mixed group has a positive effect on them as instructors, but only 36% of students observe such positive effects (39% of faculty and 57% of students are neutral). Faculty members, in other words, are somewhat more positive than students in their assessment of the values of non-D.Min. students and D.Min. students in courses together.

Faculty members report that in grading they give most weight (58%) to student papers or project reports. The only other major factor is class participation (29%). Only 7% percent of the weight, on average, is given to examinations (Faculty V, 1g). (Course exams were also not prominent in the responses to questions analyzed in the preceding section III B. 2. b. Teaching Methods and Structures.) Faculty members list a wide variety of other factors weigh in grading: class presentations, reports on reading, verbatims, sermons, case studies, self-evaluations, evaluations of peers, completion of a certain number of hours of independent work, and "evidence of application [of the subject matter] in their ministries." The course failure rate is very low. Seventy-three percent of all faculty say that no D.Min. students fail in a typical D.Min. course they teach; almost all the rest of the faculty members (22%) say that only one student fails. If the directors are right that the average course enrolls about 14 students, the overall failure rate is 1.7%.

Faculty members, graduates and D.Min. students have remarkably similar views about the difficulty of courses, as shown in Table III About 40% of each group thinks that D.Min. courses are at about the same level of difficulty as advanced-level M.Div. courses. Fifty percent think that D.Min. courses are more advanced and difficult, and about 10% of each group think that D.Min. courses are less difficult. As Table IV suggests, there are differences by field among faculty member on this question. Generally faculty members who teach theology, ethics or Biblical studies are less likely than others to believe that D.Min. courses are more advanced and difficult, and those who teach in "practical" areas are markedly more likely to think this.

Courses

TABLE III Comparison Level of Difficulty of Advanced B.D./M.Div. Courses to Courses in Your D.Min. Program?

| Faculty | Graduate | | Student | Drop-out |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42% | 38% | About the same level of difficulty | 42% | 45% |
| 51% | 51% | D.Min. courses more advanced and difficult | 49% | 37% |
| 8% | 11% | D.Min. courses less difficult | 9% | 18% |

TABLE IV Course Difficulty By Faculty Field

| Course Comparisons: D.Min course is: | Theology/ Ethics | Bible | History | Pastoral Care, Counselling | Preaching Worship | Social Sciences, Education, Missions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| More difficult than M.Div. | 38% | 36% | 50% | 65% | 77% | 62% |
| About the same | 52% | 48% | 50% | 32% | 18% | 33% |
| Less difficult than M.Div. | 10% | 16% | 0% | 3% | 4% | 5% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| | (29) | (31) | (10) | (31) | (22) | (21) |

One explanation for the very low rate of failure, however, may be that almost half of all D.Min. courses are (in the view of faculty members and students alike) no more difficult than advanced seminary courses in which they achieved the 3.0 average that most D.Min. programs require for entrance.

Discussion

As our case study visits and materials sent to us amply illustrate, different kinds of D.Min. programs, with their different structures and goals, face different issues in the way they conduct course work for the degree. The increasing number of programs that offer course work in intensive form have encountered questions about the impact and value of the intensive course. Some argue that the shorter intensive courses, of one week or less are, as one graduate says, "too short to get anything out of..." Some faculty who have longer intensives express other objections: They argue that certain kinds of learning require reflection over time, the kind of slow absorbtion of knowledge that cannot always be achieved when the student is doing nothing but attending class and preparing for class. It is

this problem that one institution that offers an intensive option is addressing in a recent self-study report:

> Students electing the January/June Option receive syllabi for each semester two months prior to class, with the expectation that reading will be completed prior to the seminar. Application of the work to ministry is assigned to be completed following the class period and must be turned in to the professor within two months. Thus, while the actual 30 hours of class time is condensed into a period of two or sometimes three weeks, the work for each seminar spans a period of more than four months.

In other settings, however, we found strong defenders of the positive values of the intensive course. It was noted that intensive courses for D.Min.'s alone are usually smaller than courses in other forms that admit students from several degree programs. As a result they can focus on the special issues that practitioners bring. One director whose program is conducted entirely in several summer sessions, five weeks each in length, points to the importance of the "strong colleague relationships" that are built during these intense periods. Students and clergy we interviewed were mixed in their views about intensive courses. Several said that they could not see themselves pursuing a D.Min. in any other format, that though it was quite feasible to take two complete weeks away each year, attending courses on a regular academic schedule, one or more days a week for a few hours, could not be easily coordinated with the demands of ministry. Other said that the discipline that must be exercised to do the reading in advance and the course project or paper after the course concludes is difficult to exercise in the parish, and that they might fare better on a steadier, more regular pattern spread over a longer period of time. The fact that these are issues for more than a few students was illustrated by one fairly large campus-based intensive program we visited, one-third of whose students at the time of our visit had overdue papers Those papers that were due several months after the conclusion of an intensive course but which had not been turned in by the deadline.

In the programs we visited that adhere to regular academic patterns of quarter- or semester-long courses, several issues emerged. As noted already, in those programs where students are permitted, encouraged or required to take courses in the "regular" curriculum that are offered to students in several programs, the special interests and issues of the D.Min. students may not fully be addressed. Unless such courses are supplemented by special program offerings exclusively for D.Min. students, the kind of collegiality among D.Min. students that ATS Standards require may not be achieved. But the major problem of such courses, in the experience of the programs we have observed, is simply convenience. Several institutions that have local/regional programs with conventionally scheduled courses told us that they are considering offering intensive versions of some of those same courses in order better to fit into the schedules of practicing pastors.

We also encountered, however, some vigorous defense of a practice of D.Min. students taking conventionally scheduled courses with students from other programs, especially M.Div. students. Besides making possible a much

greater variety of offerings and providing an extended period of time for students to absorb or reflect on course material, courses in the standard curriculum that bring together D.Min. and M.Div. students have, one faculty member told us, a special value:

> The interaction between D.Min. and M.Div. candidates is very helpful -- both for the M.Div. candidates who can hear the D.Min. students reflecting on their experiences in ministry; but secondly for the D.Min candidates to see where they have come since being M.Div. students, what their present understanding of ministry and study are. This is part of the D.Min rationale -- D.Min. students have to understand that they are in fact continuing the process they began in M.Div. work. Although we call the D.Min. a "terminal professional degree," its intent is to plot a trajectory, and you need two points in order to determine a straight line.

The faculty member quoted above teaches in an institution that offers its D.Min. program in two forms, in a local/regional pattern and by extension. Faculty members and administrators offered a number of comparisons between the on- and off-campus versions of their programs, some suspect the grading in the field is more lenient. Others observe that the off-campus cluster groups are more likely to choose, for their jointly-selected electives, courses with practical emphasis. One faculty member also suggested that the treatment of topics was more likely to stress practical issues if the course was offered at a field site. This respondent felt that the greater emphasis on theory in on-campus courses was a benefit to the D.Min. student involved. But extension programs also have many advocates, as described the section on off-campus program activities. Courses taught in these settings have the advantage of peer support and pressure as an aid to pulling almost all members of the group through the course when they might otherwise, if left on their own, falter because of the difficulty of the work or of finding time to do it. Programs that offer their courses in extension setting do indeed appear to have a better record of keeping participants "on track" toward the completion of their programs. The major drawbacks of such courses are the drain they often place on the energies of core faculty members,if core faculty members are engaged to teach them; and, if the program has an elective phase, the necessity of the group deciding together what electives to take. Students and graduates we interviewed were divided about the seriousness of this last problem: some felt that the values of working in a group outweighed the disadvantage of having to take some electives not at the center of their interest; other found the arrangement seriously constricting.

Finally, a number of institutions offer "course work" in forms that do not resemble courses as they are usually understood. Some of these programs permit any kind of independent study and/or course-taking as long as it fits into an acceptable learning plan and contract. Others specify a series of activities to be completed more or less independently. We studied the description of one program whose "curriculum" is made up almost entirely of a series of projects: a written faith statement, in the form of a long paper; an integrative paper, preparation for which begins at the program's beginning and ends before the final project begins; and a number of other

requirements, including a few core D.Min. courses. This program and several others require and offer credit for a certain number of days of short-term workshops, activities that are not credit-bearing in themselves. This particular program operates by extension, and therefore, though the students mold requirements to their particular interests and often pursue them by independent study, the group becomes a setting for reporting and accountability. Most independent/specialized programs that allow self-designed courses and learning units do not, however, have such a group as a regular program feature. One would expect, therefore, that most independent/specialized programs would have special problems in keeping people moving through the program. But this does not seem to be the case [see sub-section , Progress through D.Min. Programs, Independent/specialized programs may attract those who are specially well-disciplined, or may have been successful in selecting those who can handle the considerable freedom these programs offer. Whatever the reason, those who enroll in such programs appear to us to find them almost uniformly good experiences: "The program I am in emphasizes self-designed learning units, with clear proposals, goals, and resources spelled out. I have found the whole process an excellent model for lifetime learning."

No one form of D.Min. course appears to us to have significant advantages over other forms. As just demonstrated, all have their strengths as well as drawbacks. We do think that the trend toward intensive formats should be carefully monitored, and that some carefully controlled research would help institutions to understand what can and cannot successfully be taught in intensive units. We also think that accreditation teams should examine more closely course-completion rate, especially at those institutions that offer intensive courses with completed work due several weeks or months after the course has concluded. We also question the advisability of giving academic credit for non-credit workshops. The workshops may be excellent, but neither the quality of instruction nor the adequacy of participant performance in such workshops is evaluated or certified. If such credit is given, the evaluation should focus entirely on quality of whatever written project makes use of the material learned in workshops. The number of hours spent in non-credit activities should not, in other words, in any way determine the amount of credit given.

## II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

### f. Reading Materials and Library Resources

#### Findings

More than half of all D.Min. programs bring students to campus for only limited periods each year. Extension programs may require only a single period of residency of several weeks duration. Even campus-based intensive programs, all of whose activities take place on the campus may, bring students to campus as little as two weeks a year. Most educational programs, particularly at the graduate level, assume ready access to the institution's own library and often to its well-stocked bookstore. But the majority of D.Min. programs and students do not have such automatic access. The situation has led programs to devise a variety of procedures and devices to make available reading materials for both course work and project research.

The typical D.Min. course requires 1300 pages of course reading (more may be required as preparation for student papers and projects). There is enormous variation in reading requirements, from as little as 20 pages (presumably for courses based on other kinds of materials, such verbatim case reports) to 5000 pages at the other extreme) (see Faculty V 1. e.). We did not find significant variations in the amount of reading required related to the field of study in which the faculty member teaches, the faculty member's attitudes toward D.Min. programs, or program size. We did observe statistically significant relationships for two variables: Programs that require a high proportion of courses or that offer a limited menu of courses -- what we have called "limited options" programs -- require more reading; so do programs in evangelical institutions. This is consistent with findings reported elsewhere in this report: courses in evangelical institutions have more characteristics traditionally identified as "academic" than do courses in mainline D.Min. programs. The difference in this case is marked: The average mainline course requires 958 pages; by contrast, the average evangelical course requires 1798.

What kinds of reading are required? Most likely to dominate a course reading list (see Faculty V, 6) are scholarly books which may be readily purchased. Next most likely to appear on a course syllabus "almost always" or "frequently" (see Faculty V, 5), but very unlikely to dominate the list, are duplicated materials supplied by the instructor. Almost equally prevalent (and second most likely to dominate the list) are reading assignments in textbooks. According to the faculty members who teach D.Min. courses, neither general audience books readily available for purchase nor out-of-print materials or journal articles available only through the library are major sources

for D.Min. course reading. This report makes clear that reading lists are weighted toward those materials -- textbooks and scholarly works -- that are in print and can be purchased. In our interviews and from written comments we collected different perspectives on this situation. A very few faculty feel members that the limitation of much D.Min course reading to materials that the students can buy or the instructor can gain permission to duplicate is a severe handicap. Such comments were offset by another small group that argued with equal vigor that a major benefit of D.Min. programs is the personal library they cause a student to amass. The more common view is that lack of access of students in some programs to theological libraries for course reading is a somewhat constricting factor, but not severely so. Directors point to the arrangements that have been made to minimize any problems. Eighty-six percent of all programs permit students to borrow circulating library materials by mail. One program we visited gave us an impressive brochure, describing library holding and facilities and outlining procedures for borrowing by mail. Two-thirds of all programs offering courses off campus arrange, in all or some cases, for a "travelling library" to be available at the site (see Director II, 7, 8). In addition, students who live a great distance from the seminary campus are urged to make borrowing arrangements at nearby college, seminary or university libraries. The D.Min directors we interviewed argued, and most faculty we talked to agreed, that through this combination of arrangements most course reading needs of D.Min. students can be met. But some students and graduates do not find library arrangements satisfactory. "I do not see how any program, writes one student enrolled in an extension program, "can function effectively where the library is not available."

Do students complete the reading assigned for courses? Faculty, students and graduates differ in their replies to this question (Faculty V, 7; Students and Graduates, IV, I). All respond in the categories "always" and "usually," but faculty place the emphasis on "usually" (74%), and graduates on "always" (66%). Students, whose experience is quite recent, fall in between: 56% say that they "always" complete the assigned reading, and 40% say that they "usually" do. As noted elsewhere, students in and graduates of programs in evangelical schools are more likely to say that they complete the assigned reading. So are students who entered with higher seminary grade point averages. The matter is important because courses taught in intensive style -- increasingly the model that students encounter as campus-based intensive programs become more prominent -- often depend for their effectiveness on a large amount of reading having been completed before the course begins. As a spur to students to complete the assigned reading, a majority of the faculty members we surveyed (85%; see Faculty V, 8) require written reports on reading at least sometimes, and a significant proportion (40% of all faculty teaching D.Min. courses) <u>always</u> require book reports.

More concern was expressed in our interviews about the availability of bibliographic resources and reading materials for the project than about reading materials for the courses. Graduates report

Reading

(Graduates IV, V) that they are more likely to have used primary and secondary scholarly materials, in preparing their projects, than books intended for a general audience. They found it more difficult to obtain the needed reading materials for the major project/thesis than for courses: 83% found it "usually easy" to get course materials; but only 64% found it as easy to obtain materials for the project (see Graduates IV, P). That access to a well-equipped theological library may have been a source of difficulty is suggested by the fact (see Graduates IV, S) that graduates report that the materials source most often used for the project was their personal library (53% say they used it very much and 39% say they used it some). The second most important source is the library at the seminary where they are taking their degree: 43% used the seminary library very much, and 38% used it some. Interestingly, no significant differences in ease of obtaining reading materials emerge among program format types. Living within commuting distance of the seminary library does not seem to be a significant advantage. Perhaps time more than distance limits students' access to library materials.

As noted earlier (see Section II. B. 3. d. Teaching Methods and Structures) directors and faculty members differ about the importance of library research. Nearly half the faculty members (48%) would like an increased emphasis on library research; by contrast, only 20% of directors want the emphasis increased.

Discussion

The role of a theological research library in the Doctor of Ministry program is very unclear. The Standards enforced through most of the history of the D.Min. shed little light on the matter ("the program shall include adequate periods of residency to assure access to and use of sufficient theological library and other learning resources" Bulletin 35, 1982, p. 32). The revised Standards provide even less guidance. Mention of the library is reduced to a single word in a list of "total resources of the institution" to which the student must have access during periods of residency on campus. Whether D.Min. courses require -- as do most other graduate courses and many undergraduate ones -- the use of an academic library is unclear. Whatever faculty members teaching such courses would prefer, it is evident that many of them have adjusted to the fact that in some forms of the D.Min. program student access to libraries will be limited and thus required course reading should concentrate on materials that can be obtained by purchase or private distribution. How this situation ultimately affects the character of D.Min. course work is a matter for further reflection.

The relation of the theological research library to the D.Min. project is also unclear. In addition, there are signs, such as the significant proportion (one-third) of graduates who say they did not have an easy time obtaining materials for the project, that the inadequacies of some current arrangements are evident to the students

and probably to faculty members as well, causing the latter group to advocate increased library research more than any other structural change in D.Min. programs. Certainly the widely expressed hope that reports on D.Min projects can become an important source of research about the church depends for its realization, in part, on the researcher's access to relevant materials. The "applied research project" for which the Standards currently call certainly takes on greater value as a research contribution if the author has searched thoroughly for background materials and for results of similar or comparable projects, and has integrated a critical summary of those materials into the project report.

In light of the value of the thorough use of an academic theological library, it seems to us that the Standards are remiss in their inattention to library issues. Surely there should be a standard that prompts schools to collect material in ministry studies generally and in particular areas emphasized their program, and to arrange the fullest possible access for D.Min students to the library.

## II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

### g. Supervision

#### Findings

Both older and revised versions of the Standards for the D.Min. degree require "adequate provision" for "trained supervisors" as an aid to "careful utilization of the student's ministerial context as a learning environment." The Standards in force before 1984 specify that either faculty should be trained in supervisory methods or that trained supervisors should work with faculty "to help candidates in evaluation of their learning and experience." The current Standards are more cryptic, listing "careful utilization of the student's ministerial context as a learning environment, with adequate provision for trained supervisors," (Bulletin 36, part 3, 1984) as one of the "varied kinds of learning" a D.Min. program must provide.

It is evident that different programs have chosen to interpret these accreditation standards in different ways. As described more fully in section h, Ministry Site Analysis and Involvement, immediately following, the ministry setting is used as a learning environment for courses, special projects and the final project. In the majority of cases, however, supervision of the student's activity in the ministry setting by trained observer is not an element in these contextual learning arrangements. Only about one third of all programs require any kind of supervised practice (see Directors V, 8, b and c). A larger number of programs (29 of 67, or 43%, a figure obtained from cross-tabulation of Directors V, 8, b and c), offer either clinical supervision of counseling or supervision of work in the congregation or other non-clinical setting as non-required options. But a significant number of programs (20 programs, about 30%, figure obtained from the same cross-tabulation) do not offer any opportunities for supervised practice. (Similar figures were obtained when program directors and faculty were asked about the extent to which supervised practice is emphasized in their programs. In each case, more than a third said that it receives little or no emphasis; see, for instance, Directors II, 2, c.) In other words, a sizeable number and proportion of programs simply ignore the requirement of field supervision enunciated in the Standards. There is no evidence from our study of notations imposed in accreditation (see section II. B. 2. Accreditation) that visiting teams or the Commission on Accrediting have penalized schools that do not offer opportunities for supervised practice in their D.Min. programs.

Those institutions that do make provision for supervision usually do it in one of three ways. First, they may require or offer as an option segments of Clinical Pastoral Education for credit toward the degree. Second, they may offer or require supervised practice outside a clinical setting, under the oversight of the institution's own faculty or supervisors otherwise designated. Third, they may view the providing of supervision and oversight for the final ministry project, by a member of the institution's faculty or by an outsider, as providing the opportunity for the student to work under supervision. Of the 40 institutions that described for us the training and qualifications they require of D.Min. supervisors, the largest number specified simply "appropriate expertise." Some other institutions say they permit only their own faculty members to supervise; a group of about equal size (seven institutions) requires clinical training even for supervisors overseeing student's work in congregations or other non-clinical setting; five say that their major requirement is a PhD or other terminal doctorate; and an equal number of institutions offer a special training workshop for supervisors. Because we did not know in advance how variously the supervision requirement is construed, we did not gather adequate information to correlate these different criteria for supervisors with the different functions of supervision in different programs. We do not know, for instance, how many of those institutions that require that supervisors be core faculty members also construe "supervision" to mean supervision of the final ministry project. From the program descriptions we have read, we have the strong impression that those programs that require clinical training for supervisors or that supply their own supervisory training are more likely to be the ones that offer or require a separate unit of supervised field experience to be credited toward the degree.

## Discussion

It is quite evident that the D.Min.-granting institutions and the Standards are at odds over the matter of supervision. Only a minority of institutions require what the Standards seem to envision: supervision of ministerial practice as one educational element of the D.Min. degree. Another group of institutions has fused this requirement to the oversight or supervision of the final ministry project, a project that in some cases (see section m. Final Project and Theses) requires an "active ministry" as part of the project plan. O ne institution in three, however, simply ignores the standard that requires provision of trained supervisors.

Clearly a decision must be made here. Is the supervision of practice an essential element for an advanced degree in ministry? If so, the relevant standard should be more specifically worded,

and institutions should be required to show that they meet it. Is supervised practice, rather, simply a desirable feature of certain D.Min. programs, in light of their specific goals? If so, it should be made optional in the Standards. Is supervision merely a method or instrumentality by which other things, such as reflection on ministerial practice, may be accomplished? If so, mention of it does not belong in the Standards, which should state goals and requirements for the degree, leaving the methods by which these are to be achieved to the individual schools.

In our view of the D.Min. as a degree that leads and attests to advanced competence in ministry, supervised that enables competent critical reflection on practice seems a highly important, ever essential element. Some elements of competence cannot be attested to or developed by written academic work alone. We would therefore favor retention and enforcement of the standard that requires supervised practice.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

h. Ministry Site Analysis and Involvement

Findings

D.Min. programs came into being in an era when the involvement of congregations in theological education was much discussed. In the same period, many field-based or "contextual" experiments were launched as part of M.Div. programs. In-ministry D.Min. programs, most of which require their students to be employed full-time in congregations or other settings of ministry, were natural loci for the effort to bring local congregations and seminaries closer together in joint educational undertakings. As a result, most D.Min. programs aim explicitly to forge a relationship with congregations or other organizations that employ their students. Most programs are linked to congregations in at least one of three ways: the congregation acts as sponsor and/or supervisor of its pastor in the D.Min. program; the congregation becomes a focus of study, experimentation and analysis in D.Min. courses and projects; or the congregation is treated as a beneficiary of the program, along with the student, and is invited to call on the instructional or consultative resources of the seminary.

The most common form of congregational involvement in D.Min. programs is the use of the congregation as a location and object of study for D.Min. course projects and for the final project or thesis. Almost every program that offers courses specifically for D.Min. students requires course papers or projects that focus on the site of ministry, and many additional programs that have no such courses require that the final project be directly or indirectly linked to the ministry setting in which the student is employed. Exactly how this linkage is structured varies from program to program. Sometimes, for course projects or the final project, the student must do something in the congregation, that is, engage in some act of ministry that is then analyzed and evaluated in a written report. In other cases, "ordinary" practice is the focus, with analyses based on case reports or verbatims. A few programs conceive the D.Min. as a degree that prepares pastors to be better teachers in congregations, and in these programs the congregation may be the site at which the student tries her or his hand at various kinds of teaching. In another small group of programs, the student's study of the congregation is entwined with a process of self-study by the congregation. One program from which we received a description requires the student's congregation to prepare and submit both a mission statement and an evaluation of the ministry of the church in light of that statement. "At least to some extent the Mission Statement and Evaluation become important tools throughout the seminar work of the Doctor of Ministry student, guiding application of each seminar's data to the parish situation."

The other major role played by congregations in many programs is that of supervision, oversight and evaluation, usually an informal basis. As noted earlier, about two-third of all programs require that the governing body of the student's congregation give approval of the student's enrollment in the D.Min. program. Many programs also require the formation of a team of laypersons in the congregation or other place of ministry. The functions of this team vary from program to program: in some cases, the team's chief roles are to offer the student "support" meaning both advice and help in communicating the demands and advantages of the D.Min. program to the rest of the congregation. A smaller number of programs ask these teams to give formal approval or consent to the student's choice of courses and/or of a project topic. Other programs, again a minority, ask the team to act as formal evaluator of the student's work. A few programs invite one or more persons from the local team to be part of a seminary committee that oversees the student's work, approves the project proposal, or reads and gives approval to the project report itself.

Finally, there are a very few programs that attempt to educate the congregation as well as the D.Min. student. The most notable of these, and perhaps the most closely studied of any D.Min. program, was the "parish option" of Hartford Seminary. The program was elaborately evaluated in comparison with that institution's "professional option," and the results of the evaluation were published (Marvin J. Taylor, ed., Pastor and Parish as Co-Learners in the Doctor of Ministry program: An Experiment in Theological Education, Theological Education 16, Special Issue No. 2, Winter 1980: 175-265). The parish option, like many other programs, had a "home base group," consisting of four to eight persons from the ministry setting "who meet with [the clergy participants] at least six times a year over a two-year period... to provide general support and critique, and specific response to the pastor's involvement in the D.Min. program." In addition to this rather common structure for congregational involvement, the parish option of the Hartford program also required the formation of a coordinating committee of six to 12 laypersons and the pastor. Unlike the home base group, this committee was to be appointed by the official board of the congregation. The coordinating committee's first task was to administer a parish survey, and on the basis of that survey to choose four elective parish courses as educational and training resources for its own members. Each parish course was 15 to 18 hours in length and held in the parish over several days. The courses available corresponded to those offered to D.Min. students, though they were shorter and somewhat more general. In addition, each participating congregation had a Hartford faculty member assigned to it as "link" between the congregation and the seminary. That faculty member also served as advisor to the congregation's pastor who was the D.Min. student. Though other programs whose descriptions we have reviewed require core seminary faculty members to travel to student's congregations for various purposes, none we know incorporates the extended teaching and consulting relationships found in the Hartford parish option.

The somewhat surprising finding of Hartford's evaluation, recounted at length in Section II. E. 1 of this report, was that the parish option was not significantly more effective in bringing about development or change in congregations than Hartford's "professional option," a separate D.Min. track that did not include the parish-based courses or the extensive consulting relationship. The Hartford evaluators concluded that the emphasis on education for the congregation, though much more extensive in the Hartford parish option than in the other program, was still not enough to make a difference; and also that programs like Hartford's "professional option," particularly if they include site groups and some visits by seminary faculty to the congregation, already provide significant experiences for congregations. One Hartford evaluator remarked that the students in the "professional option," designated as the control group in this experiment, were "getting more than sugar pills." Without an explicit structure for providing it, these students and their congregations were receiving the same kinds of attention as were built into the parish option. And what the parish option congregations were receiving was not sufficiently different, in amount or type of attention, to cause perceptible differences in the impact of D.Min. participation in the two kinds of programs.

Graduates of and students in D.Min. programs report that most members of their congregation know about their participation in a D.Min program (83% of graduates and 69% of students say that all or most persons in their congregation know; Students V, C and Graduates V, D). Students report that about two-thirds are enthusiastic about their participation, and graduates report an even higher percentage -- 71% (Students V, D; Graduates V, E). Most of the remainder, they report, were indifferent. Only a minute number report that the majority were hostile to their participation. In their written comments, graduates and students remarked favorably on the elements of programs that include laity from their place of ministry:

> My D.Min. program required the establishment of an advisory committee made up of members of the congregation. I found this part of the program extremely helpful. I had a very good group of mixed people on my committee who were very interested in my courses, my concerns, ideas, in-congregation projects, etc. They gave tremendous support. Without their on-going support, I would have wondered if anyone in the congregation knew or cared I was in a D.Min. program. Having a local committee prevented me from doing the D.Min. in any ivory tower setting.
>
> I learned some skills for collegial ministry. I was pleased with the way the leaders of that church became partners with me in my ministry.... I enjoyed my D.Min. program and feel that I benefited a lot from it. The members of my site team will testify that they did too.

Not all comments were positive. One student interviewed during a campus visit, an associate pastor, said that she had been counseled by

the senior pastor not to discuss her D.Min. work widely in the congregation, lest members of the congregation feel they were being "robbed" of her time. But such comments were rare, positive views of the relationship of D.Min. programs greatly outweighed negative ones.

## Discussion

Few issues emerge with respect to the involvement of congregations and other ministry settings in D.Min. programs. As reported earlier (section d, Teaching Methods and Structures), directors, faculty members, students and graduates report that analysis and evaluation of the ministry setting is heavily emphasized currently in D.Min. programs; directors and faculty members place it high on the list of elements that should be further emphasized; and students and graduates report that such analysis has been of great value to them. Involvement of laity from the student's ministry setting is not currently emphasized as heavily in many D. Min. programs, but directors and faculties rate it, too, high on the list of elements that should receive increased emphasis. From all evidence we have collected, the variety of structures currently in existence work well, with real benefits for most of the persons involved and few major inconveniences. Our case studies and some comments written to us lead us to suspect that some programs may claim to incorporate a more lively relationship between the D.Min. program and the student's congregation than in fact exists. Programs should be pressed in their evaluative reviews of themselves to discover whether relationships with congregations do in fact work as often and as smoothly as their program descriptions claim. But since there is no evidence to suggest major gaps or failings in this area, we do not believe that the Standards need to include guidelines or criteria for congregational involvement.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

i. Collegiality and Peer Learning

Findings

"Peer learning and evaluation" has a prominent place in both the original and the revised Standards for accreditation of the D.Min. degree. The phrase occurs twice: programs are to provide "structures designed to facilitate peer learning and evaluation"; and students are to be admitted in sufficient numbers to make it possible for "peer learning and evaluation" to take place.

Consistent with this emphasis in the Standards, virtually all programs make some provision for collegial interchange among students. Only 6% percent of program directors (representing four programs) say that their programs make no such provision. But the approaches the majority take to achieve collegiality in peer learning are quite diverse.

Most common (found in about half of all programs) are arrangements to achieve peer interaction and learning through D.Min. students taking courses together. This is accomplished in different ways in different format types. In extension programs, students take many or all of their courses with the same cluster group of participants. Both campus-based intensive programs and local/regional programs make provision for each year's entering class to engage in certain program activities together, annually or more often. Other programs of these two types do not form cohorts of students, but expect peer relationships in learning to develop in those courses offered primarily or exclusively for D.Min. students. In these cases, the group of "peers" is likely to be different in each course.

One-fifth of our respondents described a variety of mechanisms for students working together that we had not adequately anticipated in the question choices we provided. Collegiality occurs, we were told, in small discussion groups organized within courses, in addition to courses, or sometimes by the students themselves; in provisions in some programs for peer consultation on learning contracts or project design; in peer evaluations that weigh in course grading in some programs; in worship during program sessions, and in a variety of other ways, including carpools to save money on transportation and the like. In about one-quarter of programs, there is provision for small groups of colleagues to meet specifically for support and interaction, in addition to or in place of group meetings associated with courses. Such non-credit support groups or colloquia are common in

local/regional and campus-based intensive programs. In addition, many programs provide "natural" gathering points for their D.Min. students. In campus-based intensive programs, meals together and lounges and living quarters become gathering points. In local/regional programs, the D.Min. office may provide a center for students and opportunities for interchange. Not surprisingly, faculty who teach in programs that offer a limited range of D.Min. program activities, programs that, in other words, by their structure keep D.Min. students in close touch and interaction with each other, are more likely to observe a program emphasis on collegiality and peer learning. Faculty members, graduates and students associated with extension programs are also more likely to observe such an emphasis. Further, faculty members differ quite markedly, by program type, in their judgments about how successful are the programs in which they teach in training students to use and rely on collegial support. As shown in Table I, faculty who teach in extension programs are far more likely than those who teach in campus-based intensive programs or local/regional programs to believe that this effect is achieved.

TABLE I Collegiality

| | Local/ Regional | Campus-based Intensive | Extension |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percent of faculty saying that new depth of collegial support occurs frequently or regularly | 62% | 74% | 95% |

## Discussion

In general, the high value placed on collegiality and peer learning in the Standards is shared by schools giving the degree and the students who enroll in D.Min. programs. Like a number of other program features and elements we have discussed, collegiality, valued though it is, must be balanced in different program types with other valued features that may be difficult to integrate into the same format. In extension programs, for instance, collegiality, mutual support and meaningful learning from clergy peers appear to be readily and rapidly achieved. Yet some students we interviewed and other students and graduates who wrote to us complained that peer relationships in these settings developed at the cost of sustained collegiality with seminary faculty members, none of whom could spend substantial periods of time with the group because of its distance from the campus. Other students in the same program, however, felt that a collegiality with faculty was adequate, and that the experience of sustained work with a group of colleagues was irreplaceable. Indeed, extension programs seemed among comments volunteered on our questionnaires to elicit the largest number of highly enthusiastic appraisals in comments on the questionnaires: "Sharing in the process

with ten colleagues (none of whom were my denomination) and having the satisfaction of planning and carrying through a project in ministry .... has done more for me as a person and as a pastor than any other experience of my life (including a seminary)." The reference to ecumenism, incidentally, is not isolated. A mixture of clergy of different denominations, especially where there is ample provision for colleagues to learn from each other, was mentioned in several comments we received as a key ingredient of a rich and successful D.Min. experience. In our travels and from the written comments on questionnaires we collected a number of stories of colleague groups from extension programs that continued long after the degrees were conferred. One graduate says "I went into the program primarily to get the resources and not the degree. That was an added plus. Therefore my goal was to stay in the program as long as possible. I stayed from 1974 to 1981. I would have taken longer if they would have let me." And a graduate whose program did not continue expressed disappointment: "I found the program to be fairly intense for a comparatively short period of time.... I would like to have some kind of refresher course.... The 'collegiality' seemed artificial to me with no continuation." It is also important to recall the comments of students and graduates whose extension, cluster colleague group was not congenial. Comments from such students were extremely negative, even bitter, though few in number.

Campus-based intensive programs often rely on the context -- D.Min. students living and working together intensively -- to create collegiality. In some programs, our evidence suggests, this works well, though in others only a "modest" level of collegiality is achieved. One student who used the term "modes" was enrolled in a program that had no fixed requirements but that allowed students to choose their courses from among a relatively limited number offered each year. All the students and graduates of this program whom we interviewed said they would not trade their freedom and flexibility to choose courses and take them in the order they liked: Students and graduates of a local/regional program we visited had virtually the same view: they did not want to surrender either their freedom to choose courses or additional time in order to meet regularly with fellow D.Min. students.

It should be noted that not everyone associated with the D.Min. feels that collegial program elements are necessary or productive. Some students find colleague groups frustrating and associate collegial activities with those that lack content and substance. An independent evaluation a program with many collegial activities finds the program "uneven from class to class, its level depending on the experience brought to it...," and broadening but "lacking in depth." A small number of institutions say that they simply disagree with the ATS view of the importance of collegiality among students. One program director told us that although the accreditation team for his school had criticized the lack of a "sense of community among D.Min. students," the school's view is that the advantages of a program "tailored and shaped to the individual student's needs seem to outweigh those of a

program of specific courses that bring D.Min. students together." Another institution, addressing a Commission on Accreditation memorandum, argued:

> A distinctive dimension of this doctoral program is a collegial relation between student and committee members [two of whom must be core faculty members]....[This institution] has decided not to build student-to-student learning into the structure of its D.Min. program. The faculty understands that there are benefits from such learning, and there is room in [this] program for it on an elective basis. Collegiality is rooted with the faculty. This does not resolve the problem of "loneliness" in the ministry. It does not enable the establishment of support groups on a local and regional level. [This] faculty has neither the skill nor the energy to do this, and it is unwilling to "give over" the accountability for its D.Min. to others. Its small, limited program is designed for persons who wish the independence, rigor, and collegiality offered by its committee-based design.

There is obviously a sharp difference here between the majority view as reflected in the Standards and the perspective of a few schools. It seems to us that there are compelling arguments on each side. We are impressed by the impact of a variety of student-to-student collegial activities on students and graduates themselves. Clearly, part of the powerful effect of the D.Min. on many of those who complete it is derived from what has occurred in the intense interactions of collegial groups. But, at the same time, there is both enormous variety in the amount of emphasis various programs place on collegiality and the reasons they give for its importance. Many program statements of rationale, like the Standards themselves, simply assume that "peer learning," is a good thing, without arguing for its value . Programs that give lip service to peer learning but make only casual provisions to achieve it seem to escape the disapproval of accrediting teams, while the few institutions that mount an intentional argument against it draw their fire. Thus peer learning seems more an element of piety than of a cogent program rationale and design. Our view is that it is legitimate for the Standards to require the schools to make provision against the intellectual isolation of D.Min. students. Since the D.Min. degree is relatively new and not a well-understood undertaking it seems unfair to the student, however independent, not to make provision for sharing with others so engaged the difficulties and achievements possible in D.Min. programs. For these purposes, collegiality only with faculty members otherwise engaged in graduate teaching and research is not sufficient. But the language of the Standards should perhaps be softened to admit the wide variety of current provisions for peer learning.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

j. Residency Periods and Off-campus Program Activities

Findings

Eighteen of the 75 D.Min. programs in existence in 1983-84 provided some or most of the program activities creditable toward the degree at off-campus sites. As is discussed more fully in the earlier section on program types, a few of these programs are local/regional or campus-based intensive in form but offer some program activities on an annual basis at fixed satellite centers. The others are wholly or in part extension programs, programs that establish temporary program centers if a sufficiently large and adequately qualified group of students in the geographic territory the institution serves can be gathered to participate. In six programs, the extension model dominates; in the other eight, the extension option enrolls half or fewer of the program's total student body. Since one or more periods of on-campus residency is an almost automatic concomitant of extension offerings, we treat these topics together.

Directors of slightly less than one-third of our programs (19, or 29%) report that their programs or one of their program tracks permit students to take a majority of D.Min. courses off-campus (see Directors V, 7). In this group are most of the satellite and extension programs enumerated above (a few did not reply to these questions), as well as a several programs of the independent/specialized type which allow students to do the majority of their work in the form of independent study and/or courses at other institutions. The majority of satellite and extension programs are large, so a somewhat higher proportion of graduates and students have taken the majority of their courses off-campus than one would project from the number of programs permitting offcampus work. (For both graduates and students the figure is 33%; see Graduates and Students III, C.) Students in programs in mainline institutions and students in large programs are more likely to have taken a majority of courses off-campus, demonstrating again the association of mainline denominations, large program size, and the extension model.

Most programs that permit a majority of work to be done off-campus form field colleague groups as centers for communication with students and as sites for certain activities. These field colleague groups may function in any of four ways. If the program has a battery of required courses, these may be taught in and to the field group by seminary faculty who travel to the group. A second pattern, a variation of the first, is to employ adjunct faculty who live near the field site to teach the required courses from a standard syllabus. A third approach, often combined with one of the first two, is to invite the group to decide together which electives they wish to take. These may be selected from a menu of electives the seminary is prepared to offer; or, in other programs, the elective may actually be designed by

the group with the assistance of a seminary representative. A fourth pattern uses the field group as a communications center only, as a place for students in highly individualized programs to keep in touch with the seminary and to obtain helpful criticism of their individual learning plans from a group of peers.

On average, the programs that allow the bulk of work to be completed off-campus require 5.2 weeks of on-campus residency in addition (see Directors V, 7a and b). The range among these institutions is considerable: Half require four weeks or fewer, but more than one-quarter require 8 to 10 weeks. There is also variation in how many times students are asked to come to campus. Six programs require only one campus visit, but seven require four residency periods or more. The average is two.

Further, the purposes of the residency period vary (see Directors V, 7c). Only one-fifth of the institutions use a residency period for initial orientation to the program, and an even smaller proportion use it for evaluation or examination of the completed project. The major uses of the time are for intensive course-taking, either several courses creditable toward the degree or a single core seminar required of all students; and seminars, workshops, library use instruction, conferences with faculty or library research time -- all focused on preparation of the project proposal and/or preparation of the project itself. In the extension and satellite programs we observed, the period of residency had generally been a focus of much study, review and experimentation by those responsible for shaping the D.Min. program. Residency seems to provide an opportunity to address concerns that faculty members frequently express about off-campus programs: That their content is inadequately "theological," that students in such programs are insufficiently exposed to the ethos of the school, and that off-campus students need more orientation and preparation for their projects than students who are in a position to consult on-campus advisors frequently during the project phase. In the cases we observed, residency programs that failed to correct any of these perceived problems seem to be subject to constant revisions.

Both teaching and students' work in off-campus courses is usually judged adequate by both program directors and faculty members. Directors' ratings of off-campus activities are slightly higher than faculty members', but this is consistent with the pattern of higher ratings by directors of almost every feature of D.Min. programs. In further analysis of the faculty response, we discovered that faculty members who teach in the so-called classical fields are slightly more likely to judge off-campus teaching and students' work more negatively. This, too, is part of a consistent pattern: The "classical" faculty tend to judge several non-traditional features of D.Min. programs more negatively. We found, further, that faculty who teach in larger programs rated off-campus work more highly than faculty who teach in smaller programs. As noted earlier, this is probably a vote of confidence by faculty members in their own programs, since many of the larger programs are extension programs, wholly or in part, or have one or more

satellite centers. Faculty who actually teach at extension centers are even more likely, our interviews suggest, to see special values in the proceedings of off-campus groups:

> I have the feeling that the cluster has a way of forming community, and in forming community the rather gifted and talented people tend to pull up by gravity those who don't have as much ability. They don't do the guy's work, but they help that person. That person senses that he or she is behind the pack, and tries harder. This is the kind of person who if they came into the D.Min. program at the school would be quickly discouraged and drop out. But in the cluster, such people tend to stay on because they have a community of people surrounding them. So it is a different kind of academic climate in the cluster.

We also heard in our interviews that the project phase presents more difficulties for at least some students who do not have ready access to the campus, its library and the faculty resident there, though in our survey data differences among program format types on this point are not statistically significant. Comments from D.Min graduates, collected in interviews and volunteered on questionnaires, suggest that the difficulties of preparing the project without regular visits or access to the campus may be enhanced when the project advisor is not a member of the seminary faculty, but rather specially appointed because of his or her geographical proximity to the student and knowledge of the topic or field in which the student is writing. These issues and problems that pertain to the project phase are more fully discussed in the sections below on the thesis/project and on progress through the program.

## Discussion

During the three years of our study we have received a large number of critical, suspicious and negative comments about the D.Min. degree and the way it is currently conducted. By far the largest number of these negative comments focus on programs that conduct extensive off-campus program activities. Seminary faculty and administrators are specially critical of such programs. This was evident at the ATS Biennial Meeting in 1984, during which the only discussion of radically revised standards for accrediting the D.Min. focused on the issue of how many periods of residency should be required -- an issue that affects only extension programs. Vehement discussion of the value and adequacy of extension programs is not new. Presidents of seminaries that have such programs reported bitterly critical comments made to them by colleagues in other institutions. A management specialist and experienced consultant to seminaries spoke to us somewhat derisively about "D.Min. programs on which the sun never sets," a reference to programs that have extension groups in other countries. The negative view of extension programs extends beyond the community of seminary faculty and administrators. A number of graduates of campus-based D.Min. programs whom we surveyed volunteered

comments like these:

> My observation of D.Min. programs offered "off-campus" is that they are of poor quality and demand little in the way of a thesis or professional paper. They cheapen an otherwise good degree.
>
> I am fearful of the stability of the program -- since my day, so many optional methods and off-campus studies. The curriculum should remain in a campus setting, not a retreat.
>
> I am against off-campus programs. I think one value of the D.Min. is to have to spend time studying on a campus....

We collected similar comments from clergy who have not been enrolled in D.Min. programs and from a few lay persons.

In an article, "Examinations and Quality Control," [ J.R. Warren (Ed.) Meeting the New Demand for Standards. New Directions for Higher Education, No.43. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, September, 1983], Joseph P. O'Neill suggests some reasons for the lack of public confidence in extension programs. Writing about undergraduate education he points out that in the U.S. system of higher education certification that the student has qualified for a degree depends entirely on the accumulation of course credits, and thus the ultimate certifiers are faculty members teaching particular courses in which the student earns those credits. In the American system, he writes:

> There is no arms-length relationship at the undergraduate level between the teaching function and the certifying function. Faculty not only teach but in effect guarantee, first, that their teaching meets established standards in both content and quality and, second, that students have learned what the faculty have taught. There is no external mechanism to verify the integrity of the baccalaureate degree. We are so accustomed to the conjunction of the teaching and certifying functions in individual faculty members that even the mention of separation might seem exotic. Yet, this American practice is by no means universal.

O'Neill points out that European systems use national examinations for purposes of certification for degrees. The U.S. system does not, although in many professions (including the ministry, in many denominations) national licensing exams are required before a degree holder can enter professional practice. There is, however, no such certifying exam either to obtain the D.Min. or for D.Min. graduates. As a result, the situation of the D.Min. degree is much like that of the baccalaureate degree about which O'Neill is writing. O'Neill goes on to say that since so much depends on the individual faculty member, higher prestige almost automatically accrues to degrees given by institutions that have very high standards for hiring and promotion, and an intense campus social system in which peer pressure operates to keep grading standards high. By contrast, public confidence is undermined if programs are offered at some distance from the campus, with

its social system and peer pressure for faculty, or offered by adjunct faculty members who have not undergone the same testing and scrutiny as full members of the faculty. It is evident from the comments we have collected that this low level of public confidence attaches to D.Min. extension programs.

It is apparent to us that the public view of extension programs is not always based on solid information about their rigor, effectiveness or integrity. Our own view is that extension programs may be well or poorly designed and conducted, like any other D.Min. programs. We observed one extension program, for instance, that incorporates some of the tightest provisions for educational and administrative control we found anywhere. In that program, virtually all teaching and project advising is assigned to the institution's core faculty members; decisions about students' academic standing are made by regular committees of the faculty, with the program director not voting; and requirements for completion of work are strict. We have also observed extension programs that do not build in these features. Although such programs are not necessarily of low quality, they do certainly invite the kinds of questions and suspicions to which extension programs are subject.

Among the comments we collected from D.Min. students and graduates, the warmest endorsement and some of the bitterest expressions of disappointment focused on programs offered by extension. We must be careful in drawing conclusions from this: As we noted in the discussion of program size, the students and graduates of a few large programs, most of them extension programs, dominate the total body of students and graduates. Therefore their comments are more numerous. But they also do seem to us more forceful, in either positive or negative directions. Such comments suggest that extension programs, especially by means of the collegiality they develop among clergy in a particular locale, offer powerful formative experiences. But if not tightly organized and controlled, they can as easily become occasions of enormous frustration for the students who enroll.

We believe that ATS Standards should address the special issues posed by extension education. Programs that operate by extension should be required to demonstrate that they have effective mechanisms for communicating with students; that they have time limits for the completion of course work and other requirements that are actually enforced; that they have succeeded in keeping a significant proportion of their students "on track" in their progress through the program; and that their students do not experience undue isolation or difficulty at the project phase. Our recommendations pertaining to the use of core and adjunct faculty in off-campus programs will be found in the section on teaching arrangements, below. The recently adopted (1986) ATS policy statement on off-campus programs is not adequately specific on these and other important points. Congruence with institutional mission is the only overarching standard set for such programs. Certainly formal requirements such as those we suggest are appropriate as well.

## II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

### k. Candidacy

#### Findings

ATS Standards both as revised in 1984 and as in force before that time permit schools to distinguish between those admitted to study for the D.Min. degree and those recognized as candidates for it. More than one-third of all programs (42%; see Directors II, 10) either do not distinguish between admission and candidacy or confer candidacy immediately upon admission. The remaining institutions, the majority, admit to candidacy at a variety of points. In about one-third of the cases, candidacy is conferred more or less automatically upon completion of a stipulated number of credit hours or course units with a grade average at or above the level the program requires. In an equal number of programs, candidacy results from the approval of a proposal for the final project. In the remaining programs, there is a variety of arrangements. A minority of programs (16%) require the student to pass qualifying exams in order to become a candidate. A few programs have special processes of review or require an integrative paper to serve as the basis for a judgment about admission to candidacy. One program makes a student a candidate after completion of a brief introductory phase of the program, and a few others confer it as soon as a learning contract or covenant has been completed and approved. Correspondingly a small number of programs confer candidacy very late, just before the writing of the final version of the project, for instance.

In half of all cases, a D.Min. committee charged with oversight of the program makes the decision to admit to candidacy (see Directors II, 11). In the other half of cases, arrangements vary. In one case the decision is made by the academic dean, in three by the institution's regular committee on academic standing, and in five by the D.Min. director, acting alone. There are a variety of other arrangements, ranging from no one making the decision, because it is automatic, to a vote in five institutions by the whole faculty, usually upon recommendation of the D.Min. committee. Where candidacy is tied to the approval of the doctoral proposal, a committee of advisors for the project may also make the decision about candidacy.

Whenever the decision is made, however, and by whatever group or individual, it does not seem in most institutions to be an event of great consequence. The average institution completing our questionnaire admitted 13 students to candidacy last year (see Directors II, 12; note that because a significant number of institutions do not have

a candidacy process, this question was answered by only 37 schools). Three-fourths of these candidates (9.6) were admitted without any conditions; 2.7 were admitted with conditions; .5 were denied candidacy but could reapply and only .2 were dropped from the program as the result of a negative candidacy decision.

Among the institutions we visited, candidacy was an entirely perfunctory process unless it was linked to the approval of or the passing of qualifying exams. Where there was no such link, it was reported that everyone who had ever applied for candidacy had received it, and some questionnaires indicated that this is generally the case, with one institution wanting to change our term, "denied candidacy" to "counselling out the unsuccessful applicant." As elsewhere discussed, project proposals are very likely to be returned at least once for revision, but very few students are explicitly denied the opportunity to become candidates at this point, though a few may become discouraged at repeated rejections and drop out. One institution we visited gives mid-point qualifying exams that have the reputation of being extremely difficult -- so difficult that students and graduates believe that the intent is not to pass on the first try most who take the exams. This institution does not use the term "advancement to candidacy" for the status of those who pass the exams (candidacy is conferred at admission), but passage of the exams is required to continue in the program, and they do screen out some persons who become discouraged about the possibility of passing. Thus they function as mid-point candidacy reviews are intended to in other institutions, though these exams have more teeth than most candidacy processes. Most of our data suggest that actual screening out of anyone at the point of candidacy is very rare.

## Discussion

Candidacy as it currently functions in most programs has very little meaning. In those institutions where it is tied to the completion of courses or particular units of work, the granting of candidacy may serve to notify the institution how many students are seriously aiming to complete the program. (Presumably those who enrolled initially with some ambivalence either drop out early or, by the time candidacy is granted, have made a firm decision to pursue the degree.) Otherwise, in such situations candidacy serves no real purpose. The significant judgments have been made by the awarding of creditable grades for courses or other units of work. Candidacy is merely a marker and entails the making of no separate or summary judgments.

Where candidacy is linked to approval of the project proposal or passing of qualifying exams it is clearly a matter of more consequence. Even here, however, in most programs the student who may face some difficulty in completing the program will be only slowed, not stopped.

It is difficult to see why the admission/candidacy distinction should be retained unless more is made of it. Of those students entering D.Min. programs, most who will not complete them will either

leave during the course-taking phase because the program is not what they expected, or will fall by the wayside just before or during the project phase. Thus candidacy is not the actual point of decision to leave the program, for either the students or for the enrolling institution. Nor, in most schools, is it a point of integration or demonstration of competence that completes the program's first phase and leads into work on the final project.

There is a danger in retaining candidacy as a meaningless form. Some institutions justify the admission of questionably qualified candidates on the basis that another screening will occur at the time of candidacy. Too often, however, candidacy review does not accomplish this screening. Students without the skills to complete the D. Min. at an adequately advanced level will then drift into the project phase of the program. Many of these weak students will either founder or consume unreasonable amounts of faculty and administrative time to "get them through." The problems created can be traced to the lack of seriousness of most candidacy processes.

Important-looking academic forms without any substance behind them lead to both the kind of internal problems just recounted and also to cynicism about the integrity of programs among both external constituencies and the programs' own students and faculty. Therefore, something should be done about the prevalence of inconsequential provisions for candidacy. One solution would be to eliminate this step from the Standards, since the majority of schools have not found a way to make candidacy meaningful. A second solution would be to require that schools using the language of candidacy make use of it as a point where something is either done by the student, to demonstrate readiness to proceed in the program, or is actually decided on the basis of the adequacy of prior work. A third possibility, and our preference, is more fully discussed in section III. B. 4, The Quality of D.Min. Programs: D.Min. programs should be required to make a serious mid-point assessment of the student's general knowledge, performance in the program to date, and capacity to complete the project, an assessment after which either the institution or the candidate might decide that enrollment should not continue.

## II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

### 1. Advisement and Learning Contracts

Findings

A learning plan or contract, developed by the student in consultation with advisors and sometimes with peers, is a mainstay of adult education. Almost half the programs we studied are of the independent/specialized type that sometimes employs such a plan to organize the student's entire program. Some programs of other types modify the concept, requiring whole extension groups to develop a joint learning plan, or requiring an individual learning plan for some phase of a program that may, in its other dimensions, have extensive required elements. Altogether, about 60% of all programs (see Directors II, 3) use a learning plan or contract in one way or another. Of these, about a third say that plans are always adhered to once they are made; half say they are usually adhered to; and a smaller number say that they are not treated as binding. The plan required at one institution we visited was to contain the following elements: a theme, a description of the student's ministry context, a description of a pivotal issue in ministry, learning goals, a scheme of courses and other "learning units" leading to the goals, methodology for the project, criteria for evaluation of course work and the project, a time schedule, themes for qualifying exams, and a proposed bibliography for the whole program. This is, obviously, one of the more complete designs for a learning plan or contract and was, in fact, viewed as onerously detailed by those enrolled in the program

Since half of all programs offer the student the opportunity to use courses and program activities from a broad menu of offerings, the advisor during the course work phase plays a crucial role. In just less than half of all programs (see Directors II, 13), the D.Min. director acts as advisor. In slightly fewer cases, a regular seminary faculty member is assigned to this role. In the directors' view, this advisement is always (33%) or usually (62%) adequate (see Directors II, 14). In the programs we studied closely, the program director tended to serve as advisor if the program format was based on the extension or intensive model. Faculty members were more likely to serve as directors before the project phase in programs that are local/regional in format. These arrangements make sense. Students who live at a distance from the campus find it easiest to maintain communications with a single, central office and with a person such as the D. Min. director who is likely to be on campus during D.Min. program events there.

We did not ask students and graduates directly to evaluate the quality of advisement they received, but we did glean a good deal of information about the student view of advisement from interviews and volunteered comments on questionnaires. Several students and graduates

identified a key teacher/advisor as the most important element in their programs. Others blamed the lack of a congenial advisor for their difficulties in the program. One pointed to a severe lack of adequate advice: "My program experience points up one major short-coming as far as I am concerned. In spite of D.Min. students being 'mature professionals,' I believe an assigned faculty advisor from the outset and for the duration of the program would help avoid many misunderstandings, frustrations and 'failures' (i.e. falling behind)." Overall, however, there were few complaints and, in fact, surprisingly few comments in response to our questions about advisement. It is evident that for practitioners like D.Min. students, the advisor is a much less important program element than is the case for most full-time graduate students. As noted below in the section on Final Projects and Theses, advisors become more important during the project phase.

## Discussion

We found little evidence to suggest that the pre-project advisement dimension of D.Min. programs needs to be changed or improved. The most strenuous expressions of unhappiness and disappointment were aimed at D.Min. directors who, acting as advisors, promised extensions or other special arrangements that they could not finally convince faculty members or other school officials to grant. In several different settings, we heard that D.Min. directors "bend over backwards" to try to keep students in the program, often promising to secure exceptions and accommodations that cannot, ultimately, be delivered. These, and a very few remarks about "condescending" faculty advisors, were virtually the only complaints we collected. We conclude that pre-project advisement as practiced in D.Min. programs is not an issue and does not require major attention.

II B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

m. Final Projects and Theses

Findings

The Standards in force until 1984 required D.Min. programs to include "the design and completion of a project of significance and substance which is sensitive both to the theory and practice of ministry and which normally will include written presentation and oral evaluation. Applicable criteria: a) ability to identify a specific concern in ministry, mobilize appropriate resources, develop a method for addressing the concern, and evaluate the completed result; b) ability to reflect depth of theological insight in its relation to ministry; and c) ability to function responsibly under supervision appropriate to the project." The current Standards contain substantially the same formulas, with the addition of the phrase "applied research" to modify the noun project when it is first used.

There is little uniformity among D.Min. programs in their definitions of the nature and purpose of the major project, its appropriate methods and form of presentation, and its style and length. The Standards clearly envision a project that has as its centerpiece an activity in ministry that "mobilizes" resources. The majority of programs require this "action" dimension, but some programs have protocols for the major project that place the emphasis elsewhere, for instance, on the analysis of cases in ministry that are not experiments designed by the student, or on the analysis and development of some concept or theory that has application to ministry. (In the Discussion section below we explore at greater length the problem of the nature of the D.Min. major project.) The directors of half of all programs report that they will accept as a final project "a dissertation in scholarly form on a theological and/or practical topic." Almost three quarters report that their final project permits or requires "an experiment or project in the local setting." A substantial number of directors (15) write that their final project requirement amalgamates elements of the action experiment and the scholarly dissertation. Nine percent (six programs) will accept an extended essay that neither incorporates an action experiment nor takes the form of a scholarly dissertation (see Directors II, 15). Some programs do not require a single, final major project, but have broken up the project requirement into a series of shorter undertakings of various kinds, some involving both activity and written report, others in the form of extended reflective papers.

Fifty-four percent of graduates (see Graduates IV, Q) report that their final project or thesis took the form of "an experiment or project in the local setting, followed by a written project report." Thirty eight percent characterized the project as "a dissertation in scholarly form on a theological and/or practical topic." Seven percent

wrote extended essays "without full scholarly apparatus." The difference between the graduates' reports and the directors may be explained by the fact that the emphasis on "experiments in ministry" has become stronger in recent years; the projects of some of the graduates reporting to us may date from before these changes. The result has been greater variety in types of projects. It is evident from the current reports of directors and accounts of recent graduates that there is no unanimity among programs about the nature of the major project.

There is more substantial agreement about the purpose of the project. Directors of 80% of all programs identify the project's basic purpose as a demonstration of the student's level of accomplishment in ministry and/or capacity to integrate knowledge and skills gained in the program (see Directors II, 16). Only eight percent agreed that the chief purpose of the project is "to make a contribution to knowledge." A small but sizeable group (directors of eight programs) argued in write-in comments that the project is intended as a contribution to ministry, or that its purpose is both to demonstrate and summarize student accomplishment and to form an addition to what is known about ministry. From time to time persons and groups have identified the body of D.Min. final projects as a source of case information about ministry. To make this resource available, the American Theological Library Association sponsors an on-going project, Research in Ministry, that abstracts and indexes D.Min. research. [The project is currently conducted by Ruth Frazer and Thomas Davis, 5600 South Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637.] Another group, the Theological Research Exchange Network (5420 Northeast Glisan Street, Portland, Oregon 97213) has undertaken the microfilming of D.Min. projects, although the American Theological Library Association has raised some questions about the value of that effort. Views about the value of D.Min. projects as sources of data about or reflection upon ministry vary greatly, as we shall show below.

Two-thirds of all programs require students to attend a seminar or workshop that is intended to orient them to the major project and to provide research tools and other resources they will require (see Directors II, 19). About half the remaining institutions make such a seminar or workshop available on an elective basis. What transpires in these workshops or seminars varies a great deal from program to program, as does the length of the workshop. The institutions we visited illustrate the variety. Upon returning from a site visit to an institution whose D.Min. program has no required courses and allows students to, in effect, design their own programs, our researcher wrote as follows:

> Since the debacle several years ago in which the majority of proposals submitted in one year were turned back by the D.Min. Committee to the students who had submitted them and professors who had endorsed them, a non-credit proposal development seminar has been required. The seminar meets seven times and, according to its leader, 'socializes people in discussions of what can be

> done....' [The leader] listed the major reasons that proposals had been returned for revisions in the past, problems against which the new seminar is intended to guard: Topics were too large; the idea was 'stupid' (the favorite example -- a proposal for a project to measure the effects of prayer on blood pressure); the method to be employed was not clear or the implications of the method to be employed not clearly understood. [The leader] says that it has become clear to the D.Min. Committee that not all faculty members know how to superintend a project, and the point of the seminar is apparently to guard against poor faculty advice that may be given to students.

In another institution we visited, students have a choice between a "dissertation," a very long essay which may incorporate a planning document or case report; and a "ministry project" that involves a planned activity and a short (40- to 60-page) evaluative report. Those planning to write dissertations are required to attend a single tutorial session at which their proposals are reviewed by peers before being sent to the committee that will approve them. But those planning supervised projects are required to take a credit course called Theology of Ministry, intended to substitute for the substantial written theological reflection the dissertations contain. Another program, also on the extension model, requires students to spend a "library period" on campus, meeting with the project advisor and compiling bibliography as a step in proposal preparation. Some instruction in the use of the library is common in proposal preparation workshops; most also include orientation to the institution's requirements for the project. Some incorporate short courses in empirical research method. We learned of one arrangement whereby several D.Min.-granting seminaries of the same denomination banded together to commission the creation of a short workshop on research methods. Each seminary now offers this workshop annually. It is taught by the outside consultant who developed it annually to students who are preparing to begin a project. Though somewhat less common, short theology courses or theological reflection sessions like the one described above also form a significant part of the proposal preparation seminars and workshops in some programs. Since the Standards do not require schools to provide the kind of preparation for writing project proposals that seems to be widely offered, such preparation must have developed of necessity, because of difficulties students have encountered in understanding the concept of the project and in actually conducting it.

From almost every quarter we heard that the process of getting the project proposal approved constitutes a genuine hurdle. In about half of all programs, this approval must be given by the D.Min. committee; in slightly more than one-quarter, the proposal must be accepted by the faculty member or members who will serve as advisors (Directors II, 17). In a few cases, no approval is required. Elsewhere a variety of arrangements obtains: In some cases, the faculty advisors are joined by the D.Min. director or the academic dean in making the decision. In others, a committee of the faculty other than the D.Min. committee

either makes the decision or makes a recommendation to the full faculty; and in a few cases, fellow students make the decision with faculty members. The stringency of many of these processes is indicated by the fact that almost two thirds of the directors say that proposals that have been submitted for final approval are frequently turned back for revision (see Directors II, 18). (Directors of programs whose current selectivity is low [see II. B. 3. b, Application, Admission and Financial Aid] are even more likely to report that proposals are turned back frequently.) As Table I shows, D.Min committees are almost twice as likely as faculty advisors to turn back proposals "frequently."

TABLE I Frequency Final Project Proposal is Returned for Revisions by Who is Responsible for Giving Final Approval

| | Final Approval of Project Proposal | |
|---|---|---|
| | D.Min. Committee | Faculty advisors |
| Returned for Revisions | | |
| Frequently | 70% | 39% |
| Sometimes | 27 | 56 |
| Rarely | 3 | 5 |

We suspect that faculty advisors who assist in proposal preparation get caught between their responsibility to assist the student and even to advocate the student's interest, on the one hand, and the responsibility to apply the institution's standards for the project proposal on the other. One institution we visited, where the D.Min. committee makes the decision whether to accept the project proposal, reported a considerable tension between the committee and some faculty advisors who, the committee feels, do not take time to understand the nature of the project, and therefore give students poor advice.

Most students and graduates we interviewed reported that getting the proposal approved was a major undertaking. Both faculty advisors and D.Min. committees were characterized as "tough," though the more memorable stories of great difficulty usually had to do with D.Min. committees. Students varied in their opinions about why proposal approval is so difficult to obtain. Some admitted that their basic research and writing skills are weak and that their proposals probably reflected that. Others felt that the institution had failed to make clear or they had failed to understand the nature of the project and what it requires. A group in one institution characterized the process more cynically, as "part of the academic game." In their view, several returns for revision were likely no matter what the quality of the proposal. (Our researcher did, however, meet at least one student in this institution whose proposal had been accepted on first submission.) As noted elsewhere, Directors estimate (Directors III, 6) that about one-quarter of all students who leave D.Min. programs do so during the process of trying to draft the proposal or gain approval for it. This

suggests that the process of proposal approval is, in many institutions, more than a ritual roadblock.

In the great majority of programs, advisement during the project is offered by a member of the seminary's core faculty. In a handful of programs, adjuncts are appointed as advisors, and in one program the D.Min. director is advisor for all students. The appointment of other than core faculty members as project advisors is more common in the larger programs. Our case study visits and written comments from students and especially from graduates suggest that such arrangements are frequently unsatisfactory. Students in and graduates of the program in which the D.Min. director serves as project advisor for most students said that this is the feature of the program they most want to see changed. Several told of their fear of beginning the project and of the various devices that they had developed for support. Most tried to keep in close touch with a colleague. One reported that he had put together a committee of members of his congregation who had earned doctorates themselves and who agreed to help him through the process. One program that uses adjunct faculty requires students to find their own advisor. The program, which operates by extension, bases this requirement on the claim that the D.Min. should teach people to find resources in their own locale. Students and graduates, however, find the requirement extremely burdensome and the advisors they turn up for themselves sometimes not helpful enough. Another large extension program avoids the use of adjunct faculty by assigning a member of its core faculty as advisor for all the projects of members of one field group. The faculty member then travels to the locale of the group for relatively frequent meetings with advisees.

D.Min. graduates are more likely than D.Min. directors to be concerned about the problem of adjunct faculty as project advisors. This difference is caused by the fact that graduates of large programs are a substantial portion of our graduates sample, and some large programs are among the few that do not use core seminary faculty members as project advisors. D.Min. directors (see Directors II, 14) evaluate project advisement almost as positively as they do advisement before the project: Over 90% say that students in their programs "always" or "usually " receive adequate guidance during the project phase.

There are great differences among programs in their requirements for the length and form of the written report. Many directors did not answer the question about minimum acceptable length. Of those who did, the average minimum length of an essay, thesis or dissertation was reported to be 100 pages (the average minimum length of a report on a ministry project or experiment, 81 pages; see Directors II, 20). Even fewer reported a maximum length: The nine directors who gave a maximum for an essay or dissertation reported an average of 250 pages; for reports on ministry projects or experiments, 200 pages. The average length of the essay or dissertation, reported by a more significant number of directors, was 134 pages; the average length of reports on ministry projects or experiments was only slightly shorter: 125 pages.

Final Project

In our perusal of project handbooks for students and of actual project reports, we found great variety in the forms, structures and styles of project reports. Some programs require that theses or reports follow a uniform structure or format that gives an order for (and sometimes stipulates the length of) such segments as an account of methods employed, theological reflection, project evaluation, and the like. Other programs require that certain elements be included, but leave the ordering of the elements and the balance among them up to the student. Many other programs are vague about both form and table of contents. Frequently students are referred to a collection of completed projects, usually housed in the library, that serve as models for form and style. A relatively recent innovation is the short project report, a form connected with a project in ministry. These "thesis articles," as one program calls them, are considerably shorter than the average thesis or ministry report. The ones we had an opportunity to read were 40 to 60 pages in length. They have generated considerable debate in some institutions. In one that we visited, faculty members were almost unanimous in their agreement that shorter reports were much superior to the longer ones from an earlier day. But in another institution, the dean told us that many faculty were worried that the short reports represent a "dilution" of the D.Min. degree. Several directors of programs that still require longer reports told us that they have noticed the advent of the article-length report and want to study the advisability of shorter reports. At least one program that has adopted the shorter form requires that the article be "publishable," though there is no specific definition of publishability or, yet, any information on how many articles actually have been or are slated for publication.

Faculty members and program directors differ significantly in their assessment of the overall quality of projects and theses. As shown in Table II, 90% of directors but only 60% of faculty members say that projects and theses are, overall, "excellent" or "good." The mixed reviews that faculty members give written project reports were evident in our site visits. One faculty member who recently served as thesis advisor to an extension group evaluated the work of the group's members: "Four members of a group of 17 wrote articles that were first-rate. Eight in the group were reasonably good, creditable. Two were sub-standard, and three persons did not complete the program." In another program, one structured on the independent/specialized model, most faculty members were quite negative. In a discussion with a faculty group at this institution, one faculty member, with the concurrence of others present, likened the papers to "an M.Div. senior essay, with an application in ministry." Another characterized them as "big term papers in a course." As a sign of its discomfort with the projects, the faculty as a body made a decision several years ago to discontinue the practice of binding the project reports and making them available in the library. Project reports are still collected by the library, but they are kept in a cage in the librarian's work area. There they are available to students who want to peruse them, says the librarian, "for form only. They are not cataloged, because the faculty

do not feel good about them." Faculty members still have the choice of recommending particular theses for binding and cataloging.

TABLE II Assessment of Overall Quality of Projects/Theses

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty | 9% | 52% | 33% | 5% |
| Directors | 14 | 76 | 8 | 2 |

TABLE III Overall Quality of Project/Theses by Program Type (Percentages of Faculty and Directors Saying that Projects are Good or Excellent)

Format Types

| | Local/ Regional | Campus-Based Intensive | Extension/ Colleague |
|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty | 57% | 63% | 85% |
| Directors | 85 | 92 | 100 |

Educational Philosophy Types

| | Independent/ Specialized | Unique Content | Extended M.Div. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty | 60% | 60% | 64% |
| Directors | 90 | 88 | 92 |

Denominational Types

| | Mainline | Evangelical |
|---|---|---|
| Faculty | 64% | 56% |
| Directors | 91 | 90 |

Size

| | 10-25 | 26-46 | 47-86 | 87-721 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty | 64% | 55% | 61% | 69% |
| Directors | 92 | 89 | 83 | 100 |

As Table III shows, directors' and faculty members' assessments of the overall quality of projects and theses varies to some extent by program type. Both directors and faculty members associated with extension programs are far more likely to make highly positive judgments of the quality of projects and theses. The underlying educational philosophy of programs, however, does not make any significant difference in the way faculty and directors view the quality

of projects and theses; nor is denominational type a major factor, though faculty members in mainline institutions are somewhat more likely to rate projects and theses highly than are faculty members in evangelical institutions. (Usually there is no significant denominational difference in faculty evaluations and attitudes.) There are some variations by size. Faculty members and directors associated with the smallest programs make slightly more positive judgments than those associated with medium size programs; and, consistent with a pattern seen elsewhere, those associated with the largest programs make the most positive judgments. The types associated with the highest ratings -- extension programs and large programs -- are the most widely criticized forms of the D.Min. degree. It may be, as we speculate elsewhere, that the directors and faculty members of such programs are somewhat defensive. Or it is possible that, knowing the view of their programs in the educational community, they take more steps to insure program quality -- with positive effects -- than do the directors and faculty members programs that are less criticized and less scrutinized.

Directors and faculty members agree about which elements of projects and theses are better and which are worse. They differ greatly, however, in how positively or negatively they evaluate particular elements. Both groups, as shown in Table IV, think that projects and theses are good or excellent in their relevance for ministry, and that they are somewhat less effective -- but still very effective -- as demonstrations of ministry skills. Over half the faculty and over three-quarters of the directors also evaluate the written expression of the projects and theses and the evaluations they contain of the ministry project as either "good" or "excellent." Except for the first item, however, faculty members and directors are far apart in their quality judgments. No element of the project/thesis is judged less than "excellent" or "good" by less than 63% of the directors; but only three items are similarly judged by more than 63% of the faculty members. More than half of all faculty members judge the use of primary sources, theological methods and methods and ideas from the human sciences as "fair" or "poor." Faculty members who teach in the practical fields are more likely than those in "classical" areas to evaluate various elements of the thesis or project positively, and, again, faculty members associated with extension programs give higher ratings.

TABLE IV Quality of Project/Thesis Elements (Percentage of Faculty and Directors Saying Excellent or Good)

| | Faculty | Directors |
|---|---|---|
| Use of primary sources | 49% | 72% |
| Use of secondary sources | 72 | 94 |
| Use of theological methods | 40 | 71 |
| Use of human sciences | 45 | 63 |
| Relevance for ministry | 90 | 100 |
| Demonstration of ministry skills | 76 | 95 |
| Written expression | 57 | 76 |
| Evaluation component | 52 | 76 |

How capable are students of carrying out the project without undue difficulty? Again, faculty members and directors disagree, but the range of disagreement is less than on questions of project quality. Fifty-seven percent of faculty and 67% of directors, as shown in Table V below, judge that all or most students are capable of carrying out the project without undue difficulty. We note here, however, that one-third of the directors -- the group that gives the most positive estimates -- say that half or more of their students have difficulty carrying out the project; and 44% of faculty members have this view. There are some variations by program type. Faculty members in institutions that have extension programs are somewhat more likely to rate student capacity to carry out the project higher, though directors associated with such programs rate them lower on this item than do directors of other kinds of programs. Most directors and faculty members associated with independent/specialized programs are likely to give students in these programs markedly higher ratings in their capacities to carry out the project than do directors and faculty members associated with "unique content" or "extended M.Div." programs. (This is one of the few features of independent/specialized programs that is very positively evaluated.) Mainline directors and faculty members give higher ratings. Again, directors and faculty members in the smallest programs and the largest give somewhat higher ratings, though for faculty members especially the differences among size categories are not great.

TABLE V Faculty and Director Perceptions of the Percentage of Students Capable of Carrying Out D.Min. Project Without Difficulty

| | All | Most | Half | Some | Few | None |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty | 2% | 54% | 26% | 14% | 4% | -- |
| Directors | 3 | 64 | 25 | 6 | 2 | 1 |

Graduates themselves generally feel well prepared to undertake the project or thesis. Forty-nine percent (see Graduates IV, U) say that their preparation for this purpose was excellent, and another 42% rate it good. In a pattern resembling some of the directors' and faculty members' judgments, students in independent/specialized programs were more likely to report themselves well prepared than students in the "extended M.Div." programs (students in the small number of "unique content" programs rate themselves almost as well prepared as do the students in independent/specialized programs). Students in local/regional programs are most likely to rate themselves well prepared, which parallels the director's view but contradicts the pattern among faculty members, where the highest ratings are usually given by those associated with extension programs. Relationships between level of self-reported preparation for the project or thesis and other factors are not strong. There is no significant relationship between seminary grade point average, for instance, and reported quality of preparation to undertake the thesis or project.

The thesis is, undeniably, the most taxing phase of most D.Min. programs. As explored more fully below in section II. B. 3. q, Progress Toward the Degree, directors estimate (see Directors III, 7) that at least 10% of those whose proposals have been accepted will not complete the thesis; and that of all students who drop out of or fail to finish D.Min. programs, more than one- third (see Directors III, 6) will leave the program after the project proposal has been approved but before a project has been completed.

In the majority of institutions (see Directors II, 24), final approval of the completed thesis project is given by a project committee, consisting of two or more readers. In an additional 20% of the programs, the D.Min. committee makes the final judgment about the adequacy of the thesis. In six institutions, only the single faculty advisor judges. In a few institutions, there are a variety of practices: In one the whole faculty reads all theses, in another the academic affairs committee of the faculty does this; and in another members of the colleague group and congregational site team join in making the judgment. Nearly three-quarters of institutions require oral defense of the thesis or project report (see Directors II, 25). In a few institutions, the defense is less important than a comprehensive examination that follows the review of the project and focuses on all features of the student's work in the program.

Directors report (II, 26) that about one-quarter of all completed projects and theses were returned for more than minor revisions after they had been submitted for approval. There is little evidence, however, that any substantial number of completed projects failed to gain approval eventually.

Of what value is the major project or thesis from the student's perspective? The majority (56%; see Graduates IV, W) say that the project or thesis was very valuable, but not the most valuable feature

of their D.Min. program. Thirty-seven percent name it the most valuable feature. Graduates of programs in mainline seminaries are very slightly more likely to make this claim. Though directors and faculty members almost unanimously (see Table IV above) judge D.Min. projects highly relevant for ministry, students are somewhat less positive about the usefulness of the skills and abilities required to complete their projects in their continuing ministry: 57% say that these skills and abilities will be useful to a great extent, 38% say they will be useful to some extent, and 5% say they will be of little or no use. During our site visits, students talked to us about the great difficulty but also the considerable rewards of conducting and completing the project: Projects in one institution were variously described as "hard, but not unhappily hard," "exhilarating," and as yielding "a great sense of accomplishment." About another institution, the researcher wrote "the graduates expressed a great deal of pride of accomplishment over the completion of their projects, while admitting that it was an ordeal that led some to contemplate dropping out. Said one graduate, 'designing, carrying out, and evaluating the project has provided me with a paradigm that I will use throughout my ministry.'" Some comments written to us by D.Min. graduates echo these themes:

> The Doctor of Ministry degree helped me to work out this thesis, and to bring it to my congregation as my chief 'thank offering' for a long parochial ministry. I am grateful for my year-in-residence at [the seminary]. It is a highlight in my life.
>
> The discipline of completing the thesis was a lot of pain. But now I have joy in seeing I was able to complete it. To go back to the seminary and do serious study was a challenge and a joy.
>
> Writing the thesis and defending it was the most difficult, yet the most educational part of the D.Min. program.

Yet a surprising number of comments were proposals for the elimination of the project or thesis:

> In all earnestness, the disappointment of needing to do my major project/thesis in scholarly format was a great time waster and exacted much undue pain with virtually no return. I would have benefitted far more from taking two to four more seminars and their accompanying practical projects of shorter duration. I felt the school had to keep up their image of 'religious scholarship,' and cared more about that than the success of my learning.
>
> The dissertation project was the most frustrating because of the time involved, lack of supervision, location of the seminary in relation to my parish and little communication between the faculty advisor and me.... I believe that a D.Min. study could best be served to enhance a person's ministry by eliminating the dissertation and in its place adding other theological study

> courses.... Far too much time was spent in my case on the study, preparation, and writing of the dissertation.
>
> The D.Min. degree at [name of institution] was excellent except for the writing project. The reading, seminars and field supervision were excellent. Trying to make the D.Min. academic research done like a Ph.D. is counterproductive. Instead of this approach to projects a standard set of projects should be selected as the only ones available. This would eliminate months of thrashing about in search of something both you and your supervisor like.
>
> Regarding the requirement of a major thesis/project in the context of my school in ministry, I do not see its paramount importance. I think an option should be given to the student when he/she becomes a doctoral candidate, based on his/her interest and skills. I see the options to be in one of three areas: 1) a major thesis/project, 2) a research dissertation, 3) extra courses in lieu of a major thesis/project or research dissertation.

These and similar comments suggest that for some the project did not prove to be worth the investment. The exact size of this group is hard to determine, but we suspect it is less than the 5% or so who indicated that the skills and abilities used in preparing the project were of little continuing value in ministry.

## Discussion

There is no consensus about the nature of the project that should conclude the Doctor of Ministry program. The problem is not so much disagreement about the nature of the project as great vagueness about what kind of research is appropriate for a program like the D.Min., what methods are germane, and what form of presentation should be required. Here are two descriptions, drawn from published program materials, that illustrate the lack of precision common to most such descriptions.

> Description one:
>
> The central element of the D.Min. program which gives it unity, thrust, and the major basis by which it is evaluated is the project. The project must be relevant to ministry, broad enough to be significant, and limited enough to be manageable. The student must show ability to research, analyze, acquire necessary knowledge and skills, apply appropriate theoretical structures from several disciplines, come to some conclusions and suggest a practical ministerial response appropriate to the project chosen. Finally, the student must be able to write up his/her research and results so that others may profit from the work and be able to describe and defend the work before the final evaluation committee.

Description two:

There are several interlinked purposes for the dissertation project:

A. To learn the skills of problem identification and conceptualization and the logical steps necessary in planning and implementing a process designed to address the problem;

B. To cultivate a high level of motivation and self-initiative, thus enhancing the capacity to initiate and conduct significant activities of inquiry;

C. To acquire the values and skills of coherent, clear, logical and objective modes of thought and research, which are demanded for competency in ministry;

D. To produce a high level of mastery in one particular focused arena of the ministry;

E. To gain facility in the art of written English composition and usage;

F. To deliver, into the life of the church and its ministry, important, relevant and useful information, reflection and skill;

G. To be able to bring together into a useful locus the processes of thought and analysis of several academic disciplines, including the theological.

H. In sum, the purpose of the dissertation/project is to help you become an "expert" in some important phase of the church's ministry.

The first description is so generic and broad that it is hard to discern what kinds of undertakings would be excluded. It is difficult even to pin down how the term "project" is being used. This is an ambiguity that afflicts many such descriptions: "Project" sometimes refers to an actual programmatic undertaking in ministry, an activity generated specifically for the educational purposes of the D.Min. Usually a plan for this project is required, as well as an evaluative and sometimes theologically reflective report on it. At other points the term "project" is used to include all these activities: Not only the planned act of ministry (the "project" in the other sense of the term), but also the processes of design, evaluation, theological reflection and written report. The first description is equally vague in its use of other key terms: What kind of "research" is called for? What does it mean to "write up his/her research and results"? Is the "research" the experimental undertaking in ministry? Is it background reading prior to that undertaking? Is it analysis and conclusions

based upon the experimental act of ministry? Is an actual activity in ministry implied here at all by the phrase "practical ministerial response"? The first description is vague at all these points. It is also typical of many such descriptions. The terms it collects -- relevant to ministry, significant, research, appropriate theoretical structures from several disciplines -- are widely employed. The failure to define these terms and express with care the relationships is a common fault.

The second description employs many of the same terms but with the addition of the adjectives typically invoked when descriptions of the D.Min. project are converted into standards or criteria for its successful accomplishment. Levels of motivation and "self-initiative" are typically "high"; thought and research are to be "coherent, clear, logical, and objective"; and the information to be produced must be "relevant and useful." There is nothing wrong with these modifiers, of course, but there is a danger that their impressive overtones may drown out the great difficulty of using them as actual bench marks of accomplishment.

Both descriptions contain the one motif common to virtually all project or thesis requirements: The project or thesis should have some link or relationship to the practice of ministry. As suggested above, this means in some cases that an activity in the ministry setting must be undertaken specifically for the purposes of the program. In other cases, the project consists of the analysis of ministerial activity, not necessarily an activity especially planned and organized as an element of the project. Here the project report may contain case studies of the student's own or other ministers' day-to-day activities in ministry. Or the project may have as its centerpiece a survey of ministerial practices in a wide variety of settings, or of opinion on some issue pertinent to ministerial practice. Elsewhere, relevance to ministry may be taken to mean that the topic chosen should be about ministry or have importance for ministers. In these cases, the "research" may involve the program experiment, cases or surveys; or it may be permissible to do only library research, as long as the topic or focus has significance for ministry or ministers. Some programs specify how "ministry" should come into play in the structuring of the project or thesis. Most descriptions, however, are unclear at this point though it is possible that some institutions have attained a clarity, as they help students prepare project proposals, that has not yet made its way into the published description. And among institutions, as far as we can see, there is little clear agreement beyond the broad statement that the D.Min. thesis or project should have something to do with ministry.

What kind or kinds of research and/or "project" are appropriate for the culminating phase of a D.Min. program? Again, there is no apparent explicit or implicit agreement, and seemingly little clarity. Some descriptions of the project or thesis attempt to define the nature of it negatively, by stating that D.Min. research projects are different from those required for "academic" or "research" doctoral

degrees. This approach to the problem overlooks the fact that a great range of types of research may be permissible as Ph.D. or Th.D. dissertations. Some fields, institutions and programs require that the Ph.D. dissertation offer constructions, corrections or syntheses of "theory" (theory itself having different definitions in different fields); other fields, programs and institutions invite or permit a much wider range of forms of academic inquiry in the Ph.D. project, including even such "secondary" activities as annotation or translation of texts. Some forms of research, such as program evaluation, are less likely than others to appear as academic doctoral dissertations, but even these may be admissable if the research design is carefully drawn and the implications for theory adequately explored. Thus, because the academic doctoral dissertation may take so many research forms, it is difficult to begin a definition of the D.Min. research project with the notion that it is fundamentally different from research for the Ph.D. or the Th.D.

The mode or genre of research deemed appropriate in a particular D.Min. program is rarely stated. One document we found, a continuation of the second description quoted above, does distinguish among possible genres:

1. A research/investigation, as in the social sciences;

2. An academic research activity, such as an exegetical look at some portion of the Scripture, the history of the church in a region, or a study in systematic theology;

3. Action/research on an activity of ministry, such as church administration, Christian education, or liturgy;

4. A creative piece, such as a novel, play, or filmstrip.

Unfortunately, the purpose of this listing is to invite the student to construct a dissertation/project which may be <u>any</u> of these! Other programs are not so specifically prolix. But often, by failing to specify what forms or types of research may be admissable, the effect is the same: To invite just about anything. In our perusal of D.Min. projects shelved in the libraries of the institutions we visited, and in our review of lists of projects provided to us from various sources, we found enormous variety of kinds of research <u>within</u> single programs. And the range across programs is even more varied. We have read highly abstract treatments of theological issues, which contain only passing references to ministry; detailed studies of very narrow historical topics; various types of investigations of ethical issues, including undocumented essays of opinion, and sophisticated, well-researched constructive studies; an array of social surveys, some designed and properly analyzed, but many conducted clumsily; numerous evaluative accounts of experiments in ministry (the evaluations were conducted in many different styles); and a number of other types, including some projects that seem to have <u>no</u> underlying method or approach. Some of the documents presented as projects or theses appeared in fact to be a

collection of papers from various earlier points in the D.Min. program. One was simply a bound volume of a year's worth of Sunday bulletins, with a few notes appended to each. Others were curriculum materials for use in children's or adult education; and not a few were intended as manuals, guides, advice or research instruments for other pastors who might encounter issues like the one that served as the focus of the writer's project. In short, the projects and theses we looked over or read about in program descriptions seemed to cover almost the entire range of possible forms of and approaches to ministry research. (It has been noted above but it should be reiterated here that this variety does not attach to all programs. Some have very clear, even rigid protocols for the project and accept no variations. Even in some of these cases, however, the criteria or guidelines are more in the nature of a table of contents for the final report than a description of the kind of research to be undertaken and the methods to be employed.)

Amid this variety there is, if our somewhat haphazard project reading experience can be trusted, one form of research project that is more common than the others. It entails the identification of an issue or problem, most often in the student's home ministry setting, the making of some plan of action to address the issue or solve the problem, reading of background materials that will in one way or another shed light on the problem, the formal evaluation of the activity planned, and a written report that describes the problem or the issue, the plan of action, the experience of implementing the plan, the results of the evaluation, and the student's reflection on a variety of matters, including the illuminative power and helpfulness of various theological and theoretical perspectives.

In our site visits, in letters that have come to us and in written comments on our questionnaires, three issues about this "common form" of the thesis/project have been raised repeatedly. First, it is pointed out that many students are confused and some programs give mixed signals about the purpose of the planned ministry activity. The question arises whether the success of the project depends on the success of the activity, or whether -- rather -- the project will be judged on the quality of reflection on and learning from the activity, regardless of whether the activity works out well. Students for whom this matter is not settled are uncertain about where to invest their energies: In making the activity they plan "successful," or in evaluation and analysis of why the activity turned out as it did? Second, several program directors and faculty members expressed concern about the students' lack of skills in empirical research. In most cases, the competent evaluation of a planned ministry activity (and, even more, the surveys and other social research techniques sometimes employed in other forms of thesis/projects) demands such skills, which ministers rarely have and D.Min. programs rarely teach enough of. One academic dean wrote about this problem as follows:

> Frequently, Doctor of Ministry projects attempt to bridge theological understandings and issues related to the Social Sciences. The normal understanding in higher education is that doctoral

> level work is conducted from the base of the Master's degree. [But] there is no Master's level understanding in the area of social science to which they are relating. Bridging two fields at once is difficult enough but when that bridging is attempted without a firm foundation in one of the areas it does not seem to me possible to conduct a project of depth.

Third, and most frequently noted, is the problem of integration of theological and theoretical perspectives, on the one hand, and the descriptive evaluation of the ministry project on the other. This problem was apparent to us as we read theses and project reports in seminary libraries: The segment of Biblical or theological reflection seems tacked on to the rest of the paper. All three issues suggest that the "common form" of the ministry project/thesis does not solve the question of the nature of the D.Min. final report, but rather raises it more sharply.

It does not seem fair to lay the blame for any of these three persistent problems on the student writers, though many faculty members and program directors from whom we have collected comments almost automatically do so. It is true that some programs do spell out clearly the role and function of the ministry project, emphasizing that it is an educational undertaking finally to be judged on the quality of analysis and reflection it stimulates. In practice, however, it seems much more difficult for the student to make the separation between a project that "works" and one that can be learned from. Especially because students are urged to identify a critical or significant area in the life of their congregation or other ministry setting, much more may be at stake from the student's perspective than from the school's. If experiments in ministry are, for educational purposes, to be designed to entail risks, the seminary may have to give the student additional assistance in designing such an experiment in ways that minimize the potential disruption to the congregation or the relationship between student/pastor and congregation. Many institutions -- perhaps the majority, if one judges by written descriptions of the ministry project -- are not at all clear about the major criterion for judging the project: Is the judgment to be made on the basis of the cogency of the design and competence with which the project was conducted, or on the quality of the written report and the reflection it contains? What constitutes a demonstration of ministerial competence? A "successful" experiment or act of ministry, or an insightful analytical report? The question goes to the heart of the problem of the nature of the D.Min. degree. That the question lurks in so many programs is another sign of the continuing identity crisis of many D.Min. programs.

The lack of adequate skills in empirical research to analyze or evaluate the ministry experiment or activity is apparently an endemic problem. There have been various responses to the problem -- the development of the workshops and seminars described above, for instance, and the recent appearance of a manual, the Handbook for Doctor of Ministry Projects (Richard E. Davies, University Press of America,

1984). A rapid review of this volume leads us to conclude that it is clearly written but spotty in its coverage of topics. It is hard to imagine that the Handbook alone could supply a student untutored in social research or statistics with sufficient information and techniques to design and complete an empirical research project.) Seminary faculties by no means automatically include one or more persons competent to teach the skills of empirical research. Even if they do include such persons, whoever teaches in this area may not have time to deal on an individual basis with each student constructing a D.Min. project. Also problematic is the amount of time a D.Min. program -- the equivalent of one full academic year -- can afford to devote to social research perspectives and techniques. Most D.Min. students have had no orientation to social research in seminary. Yet such an orientation, plus skills in research design and quantitative analysis, and the necessary critical dimension -- what kinds of information such research does and does not yield -- takes time to teach. Most programs do not make allowance for this. Research workshops and seminars are usually quite short. Resident here, we think, is another basic issue of the D.Min. degree. There seems, at least at the project phase, a modicum of agreement that the project, reflecting the demands of advanced competent ministerial practice, requires skills of social and organizational analysis along with others. M.Div. education does not teach or even build the basis for teaching these skills. Seminary faculties do not routinely include a person who brings social research competence. How can the emphasis of a number of D.Min. programs on the need for empirical skills and the difficulties seminaries have in providing these skills be reconciled?

The problem with the loose relationship between theological reflection and the rest of the project also points to a basic issue. Program descriptions as well as many directors and faculty members who spoke to us in person are imprecise about the respective roles of theology, theory, and program or case analysis. The fuzziness of the relationships among these terms is suggested by such phrases as these from the ATS Standards: "...a project ...which addresses both the theory and practice of ministry"; "...ability to reflect depth of theological insight in its relation to ministry." Most students, we think, need models or guidelines for practical theological reflection. Student writers' skills as theological reflecters on practice will only improve when those responsible for the design of D.Min. programs have better conceived how theological reflection is related to practice and provided some examples of how, specifically, to forge the relationship. We liked, for instance, the description provided in an interview by one faculty member of the kinds of theological competence he hopes that student projects will demonstrate. He looks, he says, for a "constructive component, which includes the ability to derive new visions and pictures of various aspects of the Christian faith from one's practice and experience; and the ability to imagine and construct new pictures of aspects of the Christian faith that open up one's experience." He also hopes that projects will give evidence of "a critical component, which includes the ability to ask on the basis of experience and practice whether this doctrine is meaningful; and the

ability to ask if this practice is appropriate in light of Christian doctrine." Few written descriptions of the theological segment or component of the project were as specific as these comments. This kind of specificity would, we believe, be of great assistance to students preparing the "theological" portion of their project thesis.

It does not seem appropriate to make a singular recommendation about what should be the nature of the D.Min. thesis or project. As already noted, finally a decision in this matter depends on other decisions about the purpose of the degree and the pedagogical means deemed appropriate for it. It does seem appropriate, however, in the present situation of unclarity about the project, to list some questions that are currently unresolved that should be addressed by any more coherent definition. For instance, it must be determined what is the project's primary purpose. Is it chiefly an occasion for the demonstration of student competence or accomplishment? Or must it also make a usable contribution to knowledge about ministry? The latter implies a fairly high conceptual, bibliographic, technical and literary standard. Some research (for instance, many student papers in courses) is not sharable research. Implicit here is, yet again, a basic question about the D.Min. degree: Is it a symbol of the student's personal progress or of the attaining of some widely agreed upon standard? Another critical question, or set of questions, has to do with the functions of "theory" and "theology," two terms frequently tossed around in discussions of the project/thesis but rarely precisely defined. How should the project relate to theories from the secular and theological disciplines? Is it enough for the project to be cognizant of those that bear upon the problem on which the project focuses? Should a D.Min. project test some theoretical construct that explains individual or social behavior? Is the D.Min. project/thesis best conceived, in other words, as some form of "basic" research that builds or corrects theory, or as a version of "policy" research that answers a pressing question, using theory to illuminate its findings but not necessarily commenting critically upon the theory employed? Likewise, the protocols for the D.Min. thesis/project should specify what it means for the project to be theologically engaged and relevant. Should the theological traditions be mined for perspectives or commentary on the problem the student has chosen? Is theological construction required of the student? Finally, the matter of the relationship of the project to ministry must be clarified. A number of the problems in specifying this relationship are outlined above. A definition of the project that is clear at these points -- basic purpose, role of theory and theology, and relation to ministry -- would, we believe, produce much more satisfactory products than are now in hand.

In addition to the basic issues about the definition of the D.Min. thesis/project, issues related to questions about the nature and identity of the degree itself, several other problems and questions emerge from the data we collected. Most pressing and obvious is the fact that there is a substantial body of opinion that judges many projects and theses to be of mediocre or poor quality. Even the most

consistent supporters and favorable judges of D.Min. programs, the program directors, acknowledge that project quality is a problem. Almost half the faculty we surveyed and at least that proportion of those we interviewed think that most projects and theses are no better than "fair." Our own judgments are similar. Our experience in the various institutions we visited was remarkably uniform. Almost every D.Min. director can point to several recent projects of outstanding quality, usually including one or more that has been published in book form. We read some of these projects and skimmed others, and we agree that they contain work of extraordinarily high quality. A random approach to perusing theses and projects, however, yields depressing results. During each campus visit we spent several hours in the library, looking at an assortment of theses and projects. Most of those we happened upon were of fair or poor quality. Generally, we found deficiencies in writing, including major errors of syntax, usage, spelling and form. In some cases, it appeared that no one had copyread the final draft (this varied more from institution to institution than from project to project). Many projects seemed to us muddled or confused in conception. And, as noted above, the range of things acceptable as a project or thesis was extraordinarily broad.

The poor quality of so many projects and theses raises a question about the desirability of the shorter "thesis article" recently instituted in several programs. Will these shorter accounts be better? Should the occasional but persistent student/graduate complaint that the dissertation-style project report is an inappropriate obstacle to the D.Min. degree be seriously considered? There are obviously arguments on both sides. On the one hand, to require a report of several hundred pages simply to maintain the project as a hurdle of substantial difficulty makes no sense. On the other, it is possible that the poor conception of a project or the failure to conduct background research or subsequent analysis at sufficient depth may be obscured by the "thesis article" as short as 40 pages. Our inclination is to suggest that such short final reports should not be admissable unless accompanied by additional papers that record other dimensions of the project, such as background research. But finally, it seems to us premature to talk about the length or form of the project report when basic issues about the project are unresolved.

Library access and advisement of the project phase are continuing problems for some programs. However the project/thesis is currently or eventually defined in a particular institution, access to an adequate research library seems to us a necessity. Extension and campus-based intensive programs that provide a total of only a few days direct access to such a library (unless the student can find a substitute for the seminary library close to home) should examine whether the bibliographic needs of students are really being adequately met. As noted in section II. B. 3. f, Reading Materials and Library Resources, programs of all types must also examine their holdings in the area of ministry studies, which is the area most pertinent to most D.Min. projects. Provisions for library access will mean very little unless holdings are adequate in the relevant areas. Currently the Standards

are, as noted before, almost silent on matters of library holdings and access. In the interest of more competent project/theses, the Standards must be strengthened at these points in the ways earlier proposed.

The Standards should also address persistent issues having to do with project advisement. The continuing practice in a few schools of using as chief project advisor persons who are not members of the core faculty should, we believe, be discontinued. If the project is intended as a demonstration that the student has achieved the necessary competence for the degree, the undertaking should be both guided and judged by those who have considerable experience of the norms and standards that institution has adopted. In unusual cases, no member of the core faculty may have the expertise necessary to guide a particular project. In these cases, a special, temporary appointment may be appropriate, though we would question the practice of regularly granting degrees in fields or topical areas that are not represented on an institution's core faculty roster. Further, it should be recognized that problems persist even in many institutions that use core faculty members for project advisement. Our data suggest that problems are especially prevalent in campus-based intensive programs whose students live at a great distance from the campus. (Theoretically, extension programs should have many of the same problems, but our data do not regularly show a relationship between thesis-related problems and extension programs.) Poor communication between advisor and advisee is sometimes reported, and the tendency of some students to fall seriously behind schedule during the project is evident. The Standards should require programs to develop effective advisement systems, especially at the project phase, and to demonstrate that these systems do in fact work to the satisfaction of both faculty members and students who are preparing projects.

Finally, attention must be paid to the way the thesis/project, from the point of proposal preparation to completion, serves as a "bottleneck," a point of great difficulty in many students' progress through their programs. We do not think that the project/thesis should be made "easier." If anything, standards should be raised with respect to the quality of the final product. We do, however, think that it is incumbent on the schools to offer adequate preparation to undertake the project. Programs that are relatively casual in their evaluation of course work and that include no serious mid-point assessment or qualifying trials and that then spring upon the student a set of standards that have not been in play in the student's program to that point are operating unfairly. The rigor of the project should be evident in degree requirements from the first, and students beginning the D.Min. should be clearly warned about the special demands on time and energy that the project will entail.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

n. Teaching Arrangements

Findings

From the inception of D.Min. programs there has been debate about the extent to which the D.Min. should draw upon an institution's core faculty as teachers, whether such faculty members' involvement should be part of their regular assignment, and how much use of adjunct faculty members is necessary and desirable. The Standards in force for much of the life of the D.Min. clearly anticipate the need for adjunct faculty:

> Schools offering the D.Min shall have available instructional personnel in such numbers and with such varied competencies as are required to staff the program. Where such competencies are not available in the regular faculty, it is expected that adjunct faculty shall be utilized. Whenever adjunct faculty and/or supervisors of individual students are engaged, they shall be provided such training as is appropriate to orient them fully to the purposes and expectations of the D.Min. program, and their role should be performed in an integrated manner with residential faculty. [Bulletin 35, Part 3, 1982, page 34. The Revised 1984 Standards contain an almost identical provision.]

Despite this provision, in most programs core faculty are heavily involved in D.Min. teaching and/or advising (about twice as many advise students regularly or read theses as teach D.Min. student regularly in courses) and most teaching of D.Min. students is carried out by core faculty. Directors report that, on average, 80% of their institution's core faculty teach and/or advise students in the D.Min. program (see Directors X, 1; "core faculty" on the questionnaire was defined as "persons with full faculty status [usually but not always full-time and appointed for more than one year], eligible to teach several or all of the school's academic programs"). Further, 82% of all courses offered to D.Min. students are taught by core faculty. Thirty-nine of 67 institutions report that, on average, 16% of their courses are taught by adjunct faculty from other seminaries or universities; and 25 institutions (of 67) report that 18% of their courses are taught by adjunct faculty whose primary profession is not teaching (see Directors X, 2). Though there is wide variation in the practice of different programs (some institutions use as little as 20% of their core faculty in D.Min. teaching and advising, while a number involve the whole faculty; and the percentage of courses taught by core faculty ranges very widely as well. Overall the involvement of core faculty in D.Min.

activities is high, and D.Min. teaching and advising are carried out for the most part by core faculty.

There is considerable variety in the structural arrangements for core faculty involvement. In half the programs, course teaching of D.Min. students is part of the faculty member's regular load. In institutions that do not offer separate courses for D.Min. students, this would naturally be the case; but a number of institutions that do offer separate D.Min. courses also count the teaching of these courses as part of regular load. One fifth of all programs provide extra compensation for teaching courses in the D.Min. program. The remaining one quarter of the programs count some D.Min. teaching as part of regular load and some as additional work for which extra compensation is paid. Some institutions pay for teaching D.Min. courses during the summer but not for those courses taught during academic term; others offer compensation for courses taught off-campus but not for those offered on site. The advising of D.Min. students is more likely than course teaching to be part of a core faculty member's regular assignment. In 70% of all programs, this is the case (see Directors X, 3).

Those institutions that do offer compensation to core faculty pay, on average, $1300 per course. (As noted elsewhere, the average course entails 40 contact hours, most often in the form of a ten-day intensive.) The relatively small number of institutions that pay core faculty for project advisement offer, on average, $320 to chief advisers or first readers; the even smaller number (ten institutions) that pay core faculty to be second readers offer an average of $75 for this task. Though the range in amounts institutions pay is considerable (from $200 to $3200 for a course, and from $100 to $1200 to an advisor or first reader), the average amounts paid are quite small -- less, we suspect, than many of these institutions would pay the instructor of a non-credit, two-week continuing education workshop. It may be that, in those institutions that continue to pay faculty for D.Min. teaching, the payments are by now more symbolic than substantial, vestiges of a time when D.Min. programs were novel experiments demanding great investments of energy and ingenuity. The low payments may, in other words, be a sign that even in institutions that make special arrangements with core faculty members for D.Min. teaching, such assignments are moving toward inclusion in "regular load."

About three-quarters of all programs make some use of adjunct faculty (see Directors X, 6a-e). In most cases, appointment procedures are relatively informal. In about one-third of all cases, adjuncts are appointed by the D.Min. director; and in almost an equal number of cases, the D.Min. committee gives final approval. In about one quarter of the programs, the academic dean approves the appointment of adjuncts. In only ten percent of the programs does the faculty or an appointments committee of the faculty approve adjunct appointments.

Teaching Arrangements

Most adjunct faculty appear to have backgrounds and formal credentials commensurate with the demands of teaching in an advanced professional program. Directors estimate that about 80% hold the academic doctorate and the remainder the D.Min. degree. Nearly 90%, by the directors' estimate, have had experience in the practice of ministry, and 80% have had prior teaching experience in a seminary or university. In most cases, orientation of adjunct faculty is extremely limited. Only 15 of the approximately 50 programs that make use of adjunct faculty offer an orientation to the D.Min. program on campus for adjuncts. Two-thirds of these orientation sessions are only a single day; none is longer than three days. Several institutions note that they use adjuncts primarily as members of teams that include core faculty. In these cases, orientation occurs in the course of planning the team's work. In a few other cases, directors write that they meet individually with adjunct faculty members to orient them to the program.

Nor is regular evaluation of the teaching of adjunct faculty members the norm. About half of 30 institutions reporting rely for this purpose on written student evaluations. A small number arrange for the regular observation of courses taught by adjunct faculty. But nearly half those responding say that most typically they rely on informal, oral evaluation from students or conduct no evaluations at all.

Fees paid to adjunct faculty members are relatively low. Thirty-eight institutions reported paying fees for course teaching. Among them the average was about $1200, a little more than $100 less than the average for core faculty who are paid to teach D.Min. courses. The average fee for adjunct faculty acting as project advisor or first reader was, however, higher: almost $450, compared with $320 for core faculty performing the same function. The fee for second readers, about $110, was also higher than the fee for core faculty performing equivalent service. (Again, there was considerable range, from $400 to $2500 for course teaching and from $50 to $1200 for an advisor.)

The trend overall in D.Min. programs has been toward the more extensive use of core faculty and less heavy use of adjunct faculty (see Directors X, 7). Over one quarter of programs have tended to use core faculty more heavily, but only 7% percent have made heavier use of adjunct faculty. Though the direction of these trends is, for the most part, the same for all program types, there are significant differences in degree. Local/regional programs are, as shown in Table I, much more likely to have made more extensive use of core faculty in recent years; extension programs are much more likely than those of the other two types to have increased their use of adjunct faculty. The table also shows no extension programs functioned without some adjunct faculty.

The faculty members who completed our questionnaire are not, because of sampling methods we selected a random sample of all faculty teaching in D.Min.-granting schools. Nonetheless they incorporate much of the diversity in faculty backgrounds and modes and levels of

involvement. For instance, 11% percent of those returning our questionnaire are adjunct faculty. Directors report that 20% of courses taught to D.Min. students are offered by adjunct faculty, but since our group intentionally included some core faculty involved only in D.Min. advising or governance, and some not involved in D.Min. program

TABLE I Trends in Use of Adjuncts by Program Format Type

| Trend | Local/Regional | Campus-Based Intensive | Extension |
|---|---|---|---|
| More core, fewer adjunct teachers/advisors | 39% | 15% | 20% |
| Ratio had remained the same | 33 | 61 | 60 |
| More adjuncts, fewer core teachers/advisors | 6 | 8 | 20 |
| No adjunct teachers/ advisors | 22 | 11 | 0 |
| Program new, no evidence | 0 | 4 | 0 |

in any way, our respondents are probably a fair representation of faculty who have some influence on D.Min. programs, whether through direct or indirect involvement.

Of those who returned our questionnaire, 58% hold the rank of professor and an additional 23% the rank of associate professor; 66% of the respondents are tenured, and an additional 19% are tenure-eligible (see Faculty VI, 1 and 2). The group is, in other words, a relatively senior one. In the year of this survey, according to the ATS Fact Book (1983-84) 51% of all full-time faculty in accredited seminaries held the rank of professor,compared with 58% of our respondents. Fifty-six percent of our respondents teach in the so-called classical areas: theology, philosophy of religion, Biblical studies, history and ethics. Of those who teach in so-called practical areas, one-third teach in the area of pastoral care and counseling. Three-quarters hold the Ph.D. or Th.D. degree; an additional six percent the S.T.D. or Ed.D.; and eight percent hold the D.Min. as the highest degree earned. Ten percent do not hold a doctoral degree. Almost three quarters (72%) have at one time served full-time in the parish, and an identical percentage have served part-time in a parish (see Faculty VI, 4, 5 and 6).

Teaching Arrangements

Most have been involved in their institution's D.Min. program in one or more ways (see Faculty VI, 7). Almost all have acted as advisor for major D.Min. projects or theses. And an even higher percentage have read and evaluated such projects or theses at least occasionally. One-quarter regularly teach courses primarily or exclusively for D.Min. students, and another 30% occasionally do so; one third regularly teach courses that include D.Min students, and an additional 25% occasionally do so. Almost three-quarters regularly or occasionally advise students as they initially plan their programs. In addition, two-thirds (see Faculty VI, 8) have served as member or chair of the committee that oversees the D.Min. program in their institution. A majority (68%; see Faculty VI, 9) say they know "a great deal," about their institution's D.Min. program. Twenty six percent say they know something about the program, and only 7% percent say they know little or nothing.

The variety and extent of faculty involvement in D.Min. teaching, governance and oversight varies to some extent by program type. Institutions that have programs built on the local/regional model involve a significantly higher percentage of their faculty in D.Min. activities than do campus-based intensive programs or extension programs. This association makes sense: intensive programs and extension programs usually require faculty to be available to D.Min. students at times or in places other than those in which they perform the rest of their teaching, advising and committee work. It is usually feasible financially to involve only a portion of the total faculty in campus-based intensive and extension programs. Faculty who teach in practical field areas are also likely to be more heavily involved, and in a greater variety of activities, than those who teach so-called classical subject matter. Institutions that offer a broad range of options for earning D.Min. credit (rather than restricting credit-bearing activities to a few required courses or a limited menu of courses) in so doing involve faculty members more extensively in a great variety of D.Min.-related activities. Faculty involvement is also more extensive in mainline seminaries that offer the D.Min. degree, a finding explained by the fact that local/regional programs and broad option programs are more likely to be found in mainline institutions.

Generally faculty members are satisfied with their level of involvement in D.Min. programs (see Faculty I, 6 and 7; and Directors X, 5). Seventy-two percent would like to sustain their current level of involvement with the D.Min.; 17% would be willing to have greater involvement and 11% want less. Directors' estimates of faculty preferences came close to this: 63% satisfied, 21% wanting more and 17% less. Faculty guesses about <u>other</u> faculty members' preferences are more conservative: 54% satisfied, 18% wanting more; 29% less.

Students' and graduates' ratings of the quality of teaching are high, especially for "full-time faculty from the seminary." Seventy one percent of graduates and almost as many students (see Students and Graduates IV, G) rate teaching by seminary faculty "excellent." Half of each group rates adjunct faculty "excellent" and about 40% rate

adjunct faculty "good." Graduates of small programs and of programs in mainline institutions are very slightly more likely to judge the teaching of full-time seminary faculty as excellent; by the same small margin, current students in evangelical seminaries rate the teaching of seminary faculty more highly. There are no significant differences at all in the ratings of the teaching of adjunct faculty. The differential in the evaluation of the teaching of full-time seminary faculty and adjunct faculty is, however, worth noting. Especially because adjunct faculty are frequently engaged to teach ministry related topics that seminary faculty may not be competent to teach, and because practical subject matter is generally very popular with D.Min. students, it seems to us notable that evaluation of the teaching of adjunct faculty is, nonetheless, markedly lower.

## Discussion

Several issues having to do with arrangements for D.Min. teaching are raised in comments written by students and graduates, in accounts of our case study visits, and in self-studies and other in other program materials shared with us.

Notable in the comments from students and our interviews with them during site visits is the paucity of comments about teachers and teaching. Several students wrote to us testimonials to a particular influential faculty member who molded their program and made the whole experience worthwhile. A smaller number -- a mere handful -- wrote bitterly of low quality teaching or of being patronized by seminary faculty. In general, however, neither in the comments nor during our visits were remarks about particular faculty members notable. D.Min. students and graduates seem to view and judge the faculty in their programs as a class. This may be due to the great variety built into most programs and the short duration of all programs: rarely will a D.Min student have the opportunity for sustained study with a single faculty member. But the overall evaluation of the quality of teaching is impressive. Here is an account by one of our researchers of an interview with current students in one program:

> Student ratings of the teaching are excellent. Most of these are references to the teaching of [the institution's] regular faculty members, who teach 80% of all D.Min. courses. Students note the faculty member's interest in us as persons and as children of God. The church is the important thing to them. The grades they have to give are tertiary. Faculty are characterized as genuinely concerned and willing to push hard so that students learn. One student noted that regular faculty come to the D.Min. courses with a listening ear to what is happening in the churches. Sometimes they seem to be a little apprehensive, a little anxious about working with those of us who are on the 'firing line.' Another student notes that faculty members are almost invariably prepared for courses and rarely accept 'mickey mouse' in student work.

There were also references to the faculty members' supportiveness and integrity.

General evaluation such as these and the lack of any substantial number of negative comments about teaching suggests to us that the quality of teaching and advisement in D.Min. programs is high.

Our discovery of the high level of satisfaction with D.Min. teaching, especially by full-time seminary faculty, was a mild surprise. We had been led to expect by some critics of the D.Min. degree that the practitioners in ministry who are D.Min. students and graduates would find seminary faculty lacking in several respects, particularly in their abilities to teach professionals and to relate their subject matter to the ministry setting. As just noted, there is very little evidence to suggest that D.Min. students and graduates harbor these views. We were even more surprised to discover the attitudes of most seminary faculty toward D.Min. teaching. When our study was first announced, we were engaged in several casual conversations and addressed by letter by faculty members, or those who purported to know the faculty view. Those who sought us out were disgruntled with the D.Min. program in which they taught, or claimed to know faculty members who were discontented. We expected to find that many faculty members participate in D.min. programs only grudgingly, viewing the programs as (in the words of one faculty member) "an administrative concoction" necessary to balance the school's budget or improve its public relations. The overall picture suggested by our data is dramatically more positive. Not only are most seminary faculty members supporters of the general concept of the D.Min. degree, but a larger percentage, as shown above, would like to be more involved with the degree than would like to be less involved; and the great majority are content with their level of involvement. Evidence from our site visits suggests that the level of faculty enthusiasm for D.Min teaching and advising is quite high. At one institution we visited, many faculty said that they like teaching in the D.Min. better than in the M.Div. program. "It's fun," said one faculty member in this seminary, "and it sure beats being on committees." The director of another program, one that pays an additional stipend for D.Min. teaching, says that the extra compensation is not the major motive for faculty participation: "They do it because they like it. The pay-off is in the immediate effect on the churches." The president of this institution adds that faculty members participate because D.Min. teaching affords "a quick, regular return on investment, providing more motivation for the teacher."

We did uncover some negative faculty opinion as well. One faculty member told us that there is in his institution a small but solid block of faculty opinion that views D.Min. teaching as "a frustrating experience. One can affirm the theory of the program, uniting theory and practice, but few of the students can do that. It takes someone with a good background, a thinker and well-read." Another, noting his institution's propensity to develop numerous new programs, complained

that faculty work in the D.Min. program goes unrewarded in the promotion system. It must be stressed, however, that in all the data we gathered such opinions are very much in the minority. The general faculty view of D.Min. teaching and advising is highly positive and the general faculty experience in these activities is reported by faculty members themselves to have been excellent.

Programs that demand off-campus teaching present special problems. One institution we studied succeeded in deploying its core faculty to teach field-based courses, most of which had in an earlier period been taught by adjunct faculty. Encouraged by how smoothly this transition was accomplished (a requirement was instituted for each core faculty member to devote a certain portion of teaching load to the D.Min. program), the institution proceeded to replace most non-faculty project advisors with core faculty members. That second major shift, in the view of several faculty, caused what one characterizes as "a serious crunch." It is evident in that institution that the time and attention of faculty members can be stretched only so far to include teaching and advisement responsibilities off-campus. In another program, our researcher noted,

> ...though the course professors teach in the cluster is the same course they would teach in the school as far as general content, reading and written assignments are concerned, and though it is equal in total contact teaching hours, it is almost certainly more exhausting to teach in the clusters. Professors not only have to travel to the site and stay a couple of nights, but they have to be "on" morning, noon, afternoon and night for the three days they are there. If they are not teaching, they are using coffee breaks, lunch and dinner times, all too often, not to relax but to counsel and advise students. But although professors "come back worn out, it is exciting," and most who teach in the clusters enjoy it, as long as they are not asked too often.

Yet another institution reports that "the use of faculty in satellite programs makes it increasingly problematic to maintain the luxury of [three-week intensive courses on our home campus]. For the satellite programs, therefore, we have condensed the 30 class hours into a one-week period per course. We have built in the safeguards of pre-class reading expectations and post-class application assignments....our question: is the one-week condensation pedagogically effective?"

One solution that is evidently not under consideration by programs currently facing strains like these caused by satellite and extension arrangements is the increased use of adjuncts. It is increasingly evident that, despite the language in the Standards that encourages the use of adjuncts to augment core faculty strength and to repair weaknesses, the schools themselves view the extensive use of adjuncts as a threat to the integrity of the D.Min. degree and to its reputation. Program publicity and announcements contain some statements which sound almost defensive, for example: "To preserve the

integrity of its D.Min. program and to give substance to [this institution's] role as the degree-granting institution, D.Min. course work is never farmed out nor operated beyond the careful supervision of [this institution]. Each semester, assigned members of the Seminary Faculty go to the Satellite station to teach." Some faculty members at institutions we visited that have extension or satellite arrangements express their views vehemently:

> We just don't believe the School has the right to offer the D.Min. degree if it is not taught by people who are not part of the School. The faculty have said they would flatly not offer the degree unless it is taught by core faculty. This makes the faculty have to work a lot harder, but there is a doggedness about the faculty that I admire. If they teach in the clusters, then we know they can guarantee what they have taught -- which they could not do if they had farmed off the teaching to someone who does not know what the story is on campus.

Strong opinions about the use of adjunct faculty for course teaching and advisement are much less often expressed with respect to programs conducted entirely on campus. This may be because it is judged that adjunct faculty who teach on campus will more readily learn and adopt the institution's standards and perspectives. Or the negligible number of comments may simply reflect the fact that use of adjuncts in campus-based programs is declining. In any case, it seems to us that provisions for the orientation and evaluation of adjunct faculty members in all types of programs are inadequate. As Joseph O'Neill points out in the article cited earlier, public distrust of extension, satellite and continuing education programs can be traced to, among other factors, the extensive use of adjunct faculty who have not been "socialized" to adopt the institution's norms and standards and who, because continued employed may depend on their popularity with students, may have little motivation to enforce standards strictly. As noted above, O'Neill believes that in the American degree system, where certification for degrees depends entirely on course credits accumulated and thus ultimately on the judgment of the grade-giving faculty member, the background, credentials and on-going relationship to the institution of the individual faculty member becomes the critical ingredient in public trust in the integrity of a particular degree program. The inadequate orientation and evaluation of adjunct faculty thus compromises the integrity of degrees, particularly those programs are conducted off-campus. It seems to us that most seminaries have figured this out. In general, as a consequence, they have moved away from use of adjunct faculty. If the Standards are to reflect accurately the most responsible practice of the schools themselves, they should probably more explicitly require orientation for adjunct faculty, especially those who teach off-campus, and evaluative review of their work. Our recommendation applies both to adjuncts who teach courses and to those who serve as project advisors, though the special problem posed by the use of adjuncts as project advisor are discussed fully in section m, Final Projects and Theses.

The continuing practice in many institutions of paying additional compensation for D.Min. teaching and advising by core faculty presents a quandary. On the one hand, as long as such arrangements continue, the D.Min. will in some institutions have the status of a special, optional project. Even where such arrangements do not reflect the institution's actual assessment of the importance of the D.Min., the practice of extra compensation to core faculty gives the program the appearance of a special activity, added on (observers suspect) for the purpose of financial gain or improved constituency relations. The continuing danger, in other words, is that the practice will serve as a signal to those within the institution and those outside it that the D.Min. program is a less-than-completely-serious undertaking. For these reasons, we are tempted to recommend that the practice of extra compensation for core faculty be prohibited in any program that has developed beyond an initial, experimental stage.

Our inclination is complicated, however, by the fact of the unusual structure of many D.Min. programs and the special demands they place on institutions and their faculty. The regular faculty contract does not at present include, in most institutions, teaching during summers or teaching at sites distant from the campus. Further, increasingly faculty members expect to earn some additional income from summer and off-campus activities. It may be the case, in fact, that faculty salaries are predicated on the assumption that most faculty have and will take advantage of such outside opportunities. Given these circumstances, it becomes difficult, especially for those programs that incorporate off-campus and/or summer teaching, to require the participation of core faculty members as an element of their regular teaching load. Further, to do so would require an expansion of the number of core faculty in some institutions -- an expansion that would almost inevitably require a greater outlay of funds than the payment of relatively modest honoraria for extra work. Because of these complications, it does not seem feasible to recommend that all mature programs define D.Min teaching and advising as an element of regular faculty load and that they be prohibited from paying extra compensation to their own faculty for these activities. It does seem sensible to urge that whenever possible institutions move toward the definition of D.Min. teaching and advising as an element of regular faculty load.

## II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

### o. Administration

Findings

There is great variety in the arrangements for administration of Doctor of Ministry programs. The majority of programs have a few administrative features in common. Most institutions designate a program director, and in the majority of cases (86%; see Directors XV, 8) the assignment is part-time, usually combined with other responsibilities in the institution. Almost all directors (95%) have faculty rank. Most programs also have one or more clerical employees specifically assigned to do D.Min. work. In about three-quarters of all programs, this clerical assignment is part-time. In most institutions (again about three-fourths; see Chief Executives II, 2) the program director reports to the institution's chief academic officer; in the remainder, the route for reporting is directly to the chief executive officer (20%) or, in a few cases, to a subordinate of the chief academic officer. Beyond these few points of commonality administrative structures are as diverse as programs themselves. About one-third of all programs involve cooperation with other seminaries (see Directors V, 1). In the more elaborate joint programs (Toronto, Minneapolis) a single director is jointly appointed by the participating schools. At other sites (for instance, Atlanta), each institution provides its own director.

Directors' assignments vary greatly in amount of time assigned to the D.Min. and in combinations with other responsibilities. As noted, nine programs (14%) have a full-time director, and five of the larger programs have one or more additional full-time professional administrators assigned only to D.Min. responsibilities. Among the part-time directors, the average amount of salaried time spent directing and teaching in D.Min. programs is 43% (see Directors XV, 7), but the range is great from 10 to 80% Almost three quarters have general teaching responsibilities in the institution in addition to their D.Min. assignments; and slightly more than half have administrative responsibilities unconnected with the D.Min. program. A few institutions have no designated program director or assign that title to the dean or associate dean. A little more than one-third (38%; see Directors XV, 8c) of all directors receive additional compensation for directing the D.Min. program.

In comparing the number of full-time equivalent administrative staff to the enrollments of particular D.Min. programs, we found that, on average, the D.Min.-granting institution assigns one full-time professional staff person for each 126 D.Min. students. (This calculation is based on total number of D.Min students enrolled. The ratio

of full-time equivalent D.Min. directors to full-time equivalent D.Min students would be even more informative, but full-time student equivalency in D.Min. programs is, as noted elsewhere in this report, virtually impossible to calculate.) The range in this ratio is very great: One program provides the equivalent of a full-time administrator for seven D.Min. students; at the other extreme, the ratio is one full-time equivalent administrator for 750 students. The average ratio for full-time equivalent clerical staff to students enrolled is similar, 1-to-136, with a range almost as great (from 1-to-12 to 1-to-675). In most programs, however, the ratio of staff-to-students is more favorable than the average. A few programs with unfavorable ratios weight the average. If one program that has an extremely low professional-staff-to-student ratio is omitted, for instance, the average ratio overall is 1-to-114. Still, however, there is considerable variety. It is evident that no consensus has been reached among schools about how much professional and clerical staff is required to support D.Min. programs of various sizes.

The D.Min. directors themselves are a varied group. Half served chiefly as seminary professors before taking up the D.Min assignment; the other half came from a great variety of prior positions: other seminary administrative posts (13%), the pastorate (11%), directorships of seminary field education programs (8%), deanships (6%), and D.Min. directorships in other institutions (5%). Almost all hold doctoral degrees: In most cases (76%) this degree is the Ph.D. or Th.D., but sizeable groups hold the Ed.D. (10%) and the D.Min. (12%) as the highest degree. Over half list their field of academic specialization as one of the "classical" areas: 30% were trained in theology or philosophy; 12% in Biblical studies; 5% in history; 8% in ethics; and the others in practical areas, including 18% in education and 13% in the social sciences. Currently, about one-third teach in the "classical" areas. The remainder are now assigned to teach in practical, pastoral or ministry areas. Almost all have faculty status, with 54% holding the rank of professor and an additional 39% associate or assistant professor. Over half (56%) are tenured and an additional 18% are on tenure tracks. One quarter have faculty status but are not eligible for tenure. A very high percentage -- 88% -- have at one time served full-time in a parish setting, and almost as great a number have served a congregation part-time. The directors have considerable longevity in their positions: The average length of service is just over five years. At the time the directors completed their questionnaires the average age of a D.Min. program was about nine years, so many directors have headed their programs for the majority of years it has been in operation. With three exceptions, all the directors are men.

This profile of D.Min. directors is not dramatically different from the profile of seminary faculty obtained in our survey of them. As Table I shows, the faculty group is only slightly more senior than the D.Min. directors: The faculty group has a slightly higher percentage of professors, but the total of professors and associate professors is almost the same. D.Min. directors are disproportionately

likely to be drawn from the fields of theology, philosophy, ethics, social sciences, and education; and disproportionately unlikely to be drawn from Biblical studies, history, and pastoral care. But the overall balance between "classical" and "practical" areas is the same for both groups. The major difference between the two groups is that the faculty members are noticeably more likely to hold tenure than the D.Min. directors. They are also noticeably less likely to have served as full- or part-time parish pastors or associates.

TABLE I Description of Directors and Faculty Respondents by Rank, Tenure Status, Field, Parish Service and Highest Degree Earned

| | D.Min. Directors | Faculty |
|---|---|---|
| **Rank** | | |
| Professor | 54% | 58% |
| Associate | 29 | 23 |
| Assistant | 10 | 11 |
| Instructor | 0 | <1 |
| Lecturer | 2 | 1 |
| Other | 5 | 7 |
| **Tenure Status** | | |
| Tenured | 56% | 66% |
| Tenure eligible | 18 | 19 |
| Not eligible | 26 | 15 |
| **Field** | | |
| Theology/philosophy | 30% | 20% |
| Biblical studies | 12 | 23 |
| History | 5 | 10 |
| Ethics | 8 | 3 |
| Preaching, worship | 3 | 13 |
| Social sciences | 13 | 2 |
| Education | 18 | 9 |
| Pastoral counseling | 8 | 16 |
| Missions, world religions | 2 | 3 |
| **Parish Service** | | |
| Served as full time pastor | 88% | 72% |
| Served as part-time pastor | 83 | 72 |
| **Highest Earned Degree** | | |
| Ph.D., Th.D. | 76% | 75% |
| S.T.D. | 0 | 2 |
| Ed.D. | 10 | 4 |
| D.Min. | 12 | 8 |
| B.D., M.Div., S.T.M., Th.M., S.T.L. | 2 | 11 |

Some interesting conclusions can be drawn from these data. The post of D.Min. director does not seem to be routinely assigned to persons more "junior" in status than faculty overall. There is also evidence that D.Min. directors are not drawn disproportionately from "practical" teaching areas. The conclusion about seniority is, however, more dependable than this second observation. Our faculty group is not a random sample. It was possible, however, as noted in section II. B. 3. n, Teaching Arrangements, to check the seniority of our faculty group against the actual figures for all seminaries as provided in the ATS Fact Book. By those calculations, we discovered that our respondents are slightly more senior than ATS faculty overall. By the same comparison, so are D.Min. directors (54% of D.Min. directors are full professors versus 51% for all ATS accredited schools). ATS does not, however, provide a breakdown of seminary faculty by fields. Therefore we have no way of knowing whether our faculty group is adequately representative by field of all ATS faculty.

Given administrative arrangements as various as those recounted here, it is understandable that there is no generally accepted job description for the D.Min. director. In the institutions we visited and in others whose directors we questioned, it is usually the case that the D.Min. director has a broader range of responsibilities for the D.Min. program than other academic administrators have for the programs they superintend. The D.Min. director is frequently required to provide both academic oversight and a range of student services for those enrolled in the program. Tasks and responsibilities divided, at the M.Div. level, among academic deans, deans or directors of student services, financial aid directors, recruiters, admissions directors and counselors or chaplains are often centralized in a D.Min. director. Below we comment on the serious conflicts we believe such centralization can entail.

## Discussion

Several issues arise from the information we collected about program administration. First, the enormous variation in administrative arrangements, and especially in staff-to-student ratios, raises the question of what constitutes adequate administrative attention to a D.Min. program. The same variety that raises these questions, however, also makes it impossible to evaluate the arrangements that currently exist. Programs with extremely low staff-to-student ratios, may, for instance, assign relatively few functions to D.Min. staff, locating them instead with other academic and student services administrators or in committees of the faculty. Nonetheless, we would urge programs to scrutinize themselves with respect to the adequacy of their administrative arrangements. Those that fall below the average (the equivalent of one full-time professional staff person for each 126 students), especially if they are programs that pose unusual administrative challenges, such as extension or intensive programs, should be able to demonstrate that a number of functions often assigned

to D.Min. professional and clerical staff are, in that particular institution, covered by other persons or groups.

When we undertook this study, we wondered whether we would find that a significant number of D.Min. directors were seminary faculty members or administrators who had had the D.Min. assignment foisted onto them. We found very little evidence that any significant number of directors is serving unwillingly. In fact, our interviews combined with the overall pattern of highly positive and enthusiastic responses by D.Min. directors to almost all our descriptive and evaluative questions about the D.Min. suggest that D.Min. directors are not only serving quite willingly but also have a high level of commitment to what they do. What we did not expect to find, and what raises for us the major issue with respect to D.Min. program administration, is the great number and variety of tasks that many D.Min. directors are assigned. In many programs, the D.Min. director is the chief recruiter of new students, has a major role in admissions procedures and decisions; serves as academic advisor to most or all students through the course-taking phase; offers the kind of informal counseling usually available to seminary students from a chaplain or dean of students, dispensing vocational advice and sometimes psychological referrals; teaches a D.Min. core course or colloquium, or even a series of such courses; conducts the workshop or seminar that orients students to the project; has the key role in recruiting, appointing and evaluating adjunct faculty members; serves as staff to the D.Min. committee; and exercises academic oversight of the program, monitoring student progress, identifying students in academic difficulty, making or assisting in making judgments about their continuance in the program, and negotiating or announcing decisions to terminate students from the program. In a smaller number of programs, the D.Min. director has even more functions. In some, for instance, the program director and clerical staff act as registrars for the D.Min. programs, keeping official academic records for D.Min. students while the seminary registrar keeps records for students in other academic programs. Some D.Min. program staff members are asked to take special responsibility for collecting unpaid tuition and fees. A number prepare and publish their own publicity, even though publicity for other academic programs is prepared by an office of the central administration.

Two problems arise from the inclusive job descriptions given to many D.Min. program directors and staff members. First, and less serious, the D.Min. director may have limited expertise in some of the assigned areas -- promotion, for instance, or record-keeping, or collection of unpaid tuition. Much more serious are the role conflicts that arise. The job of a program recruiter and promoter is to generate interest among as many potential recruits as possible. The role of the academic officer for admissions, however, is to limit the roster of students admitted to those who clearly meet the institution's established standards. Some D.Min. directors tell us that they are expected by the institution to "produce" classes of a certain size by their promotional efforts, but at the same time they are given key roles in the admissions process that require them to make judgments of

suitability in marginal cases. Under such circumstances, decisions to accept rather than to reject marginal cases are understandable. An equally difficult conflict may arise between the roles of counselor to and academic monitor of students enrolled in the program. Because in many programs student contact with faculty members is somewhat limited, the D.Min. director may become the major resource for support and encouragement of students who are encountering some difficulties. At the same time, however, the program director may have chief responsibility for procedures of academic discipline. It is frequently difficult for the same person both to encourage and support struggling students and to issue official academic warnings and impose penalties. Conflicts can arise also between the need to keep program enrollment and thus income at an adequate level and the requirement to enforce rules with respect to students' progress through the program. As noted elsewhere, the students and graduates we interviewed and some who wrote to us mentioned fairly frequently the disposition of many program directors to bend or break the academic rules they are charged with enforcing in order to accommodate students who have fallen behind. Some of the same pressures sometimes create a situation in which directors do not give students adequate warning about difficult hurdles that may lie ahead. In their desire to maintain student morale and to keep students from dropping out of the program, some directors minimize the difficulty of steps like project proposal approval, making these difficult turning points in the program even more difficult for some students by adding the element of surprise.

The strong urging that the role of the D.Min. program director be made more parallel with other academic administrative roles in the seminary is one of the major recommendations of this study. D.Min. programs should not, we believe, be any more segregated administratively than an institution's M.Div. program or other major degree programs. In many institutions this will mean that the director's chief responsibilities (like those of a dean or associate dean with chief responsibility for the M.Div. program) will be program development, faculty recruitment, orientation and supervision of faculty, administration of academic policy and enforcement of decisions on student standing. Major policies governing the program should be finally approved by whatever mechanism -- vote of a curriculum committee or of the whole faculty -- governs the M.Div program. Major gate-keeping decisions should not be made by the director alone. Final decisions on admissions should be made by an office of admissions and/or faculty committee, whichever is the school's general practice. Final judgments about student standing and/or termination should be made by the chief academic administrator and/or a faculty committee on standing, whichever is the school's established mechanism. In those few institutions where final approval of the project proposal or of the completed project itself is left to the director alone, that responsibility should be lodged elsewhere, preferably with a committee of faculty members. And, in those institutions which have qualifying exams or which decide to institute them, the director should not act as sole or final judge of the adequacy of the students' performance. In short, there should be a clear division between the director's appro-

priate general responsibility for retention, which includes structuring the program so that students are not unreasonably prevented from completing it, and offering help and encouragement to students as they proceed, and the specific responsibility of making judgments about student continuation or termination in individual cases, a responsibility which should be shared among faculty and administrative peers.

Last, if major efforts are required to publicize or recruit for the D.Min. program, these should be assigned to others. Good promotion and publicity take special skills, skills that most D.Min. directors do not have, and the requirements of adequate promotion can easily distract from or conflict with the director's major responsibility for program development and enforcement of academic standards.

The current problematic structure of many D.Min. director's assignments is understandable. D.Min. programs are a relatively recent development, and at the outset there was reluctance to incorporate their various functions in the "regular" mechanisms of the school. Most programs are now, however, quite firmly established. As we shall discuss at greater length in a subsequent section on the future of the D.Min. program, almost all institutions view their programs as permanent. Since this is the case, program features that may have been appropriate for experiments or novel undertakings must now be regularized. The future of the D.Min.'s reputation for academic integrity depends on this. In some programs, we believe, there is a problem in reality as well as in appearance: The D.Min. director's job description is so manifold that the soundness of the degree is imperiled or already damaged. The Standards should be amended to include the requirement that adequate administrative resources be devoted to the D.Min., and that such administrative offices and departments that exist in support of other D.Min. programs take responsibility for the appropriate D.Min. functions as well, leaving the director free to pursue the major tasks of program development, oversight and application of academic policies.

Another holdover from the early days of the D.Min., when many programs were initiated amid considerable faculty indifference or suspicion, is the almost militantly positive evaluation of almost every feature of the D.Min. by almost all program directors. Consistently in our data directors evaluate quality of students, of work done in D.Min. programs, and of the programs themselves much more positively than do faculty members, chief executives or sometimes even students and graduates. In interviews and written comments directors sound, our research team has frequently noted, more like boosters or "cheerleaders" for D.Min. programs than like academic administrators with a balanced view of their programs' strengths and weaknesses. Of particular concern to us is the great gap between their judgments of the quality of the work students do and the overall judgments of faculty members. In most institutions, academic standards and criteria are established by the faculty and enforced by academic administrators and faculty members in their individual courses. Directors who make

judgments so different from those of faculty members evidently do not have in mind the criteria or the level of performance the faculty has adopted (most often by informal consensus) as the basis for judging academic work. Directors who hold such discrepant views are not in a good position to interpret the demands of their programs to students or to act, as many of them do, as the program's major academic advisor up to the point of the project. Thus directors should be sought who, while deeply interested in and committed to the D.Min. program and its constituency, also understand and in good measure concur with the criteria and standards of quality that the majority of faculty employ in making judgments about work done in the D.Min. program. This is not an area in which specific guidelines can be recommended. When assigning responsibility for the D.Min. program, however, institutions can be careful that the persons designated have a double set of capacities: First, to act as strong advocates for the program in the faculty as a whole and with individual faculty members who may not understand the D.Min. program's special demands; and second, to understand the basis for faculty criticisms of the quality of student work or program resources and to take action to correct the program's weaknesses and flaws.

One other vestige of the D.Min. as a program innovation remains in a few institutions: The lodgement of the program outside the boundaries of the school's academic structure, as an auxiliary enterprise treated in administrative and faculty proceedings in markedly different ways than other academic programs are treated. Such arrangements, in our view, are not acceptable for degree programs except (perhaps) during the first few years of their existence. The Standards should not permit D. Min. programs to operate under different academic rules and procedures than the institution's other degree programs.

We found, in general, that D.Min. program administrators are quite popular with their clientele. Directors are usually viewed as highly sympathetic, understanding and sometimes lenient at points of academic pressure. The overall profile of the directors we have met suggests to us that institutions frequently choose D.Min. program directors for their warmth, appealing personalities and degree of empathy with clergy. Technical administrative skills are, we guess, secondary, especially for the directors of small programs. But large programs also manage to impress their students as friendly and caring. We visited one, a program with several hundred students, in which the professional and clerical staff used the program's picture directory to memorize the names of each student about to arrive on campus to take courses. Being greeted immediately by their first names, having their own lounge well-stocked with D.Min. program materials and suggestions for recreation while on campus, and the general responsiveness of the staff had a profound effect on the students. Treatment of students was so highly personalized, in fact, that almost all the current students we interviewed expressed surprise at how large the program actually is. Most were under the impression that they were part of a moderate-sized, somewhat intimate undertaking. A handful of programs have evidently had severe administrative difficulties -- an inability to secure an

adequate director, or a number of directors who decided to leave in quick succession. From students in these progams we collected some comments like this:

> The administration of my own D.Min. program is not good. Some, but not all, examples: (1) There are at least three different sets of rules for completing the thesis, all of which are printed and easily obtainable from the office and there are two or three significant differences therein. (2) Obtaining books for courses from the sources the seminary gave was difficult. After the first year I found my own sources. (3) The steps for getting the degree are clearly laid out, but the administrators seem to make up new steps along the way.

But the examples given of administrative ineptitude and rigidity are fewer than the examples of kindness and special efforts on students' behalf. As D.Min. program administration is streamlined and tightened as we recommend above, every effort should be made to preserve the excellent relationships that now exist between D.Min. students and D.Min. administrative staffs.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

p. Governance

Findings

Internal oversight of D.Min. programs is, in almost all cases, lodged in a committee (Directors XI, 1). Almost all these committees (90%; Directors XI, 1a) are faculty committees, or at least committees on which members of the core faculty have a majority of votes. (one or two of the other cases appear to be consortium arrangements where faculty from several institutions share in governance so that no one school's core faculty members are a majority; the rest, three or four cases, are institutions where students, adjunct faculty and alumni representatives outweigh core faculty members in voting.) In most cases (82%; see Directors' XI, 1b for this and subsequent figures) the director is a voting member of the committee; in all cases at least some core faculty members are voting members; and almost two-thirds of committees (62%) have current D.Min. students as voting members. Also frequently members of such committees are academic deans (79%) and other D.Min. administrative staff (50%). Adjunct faculty members are members of only about one-quarter of all D.Min. committees, and members of the institutions's board and ministers not involved in the D.Min. program are rarely members. In most institutions (90%) there is not a special committee of the board to oversee the D.Min. Half of all institutions reporting use a general educational policy committee in the board for ultimate oversight of the D.Min. degree (40% of institutions do not have a board committee with such responsibility or [7%] do not have a board).

The D.Min. committee usually has a double set of responsibilities. It is, primarily in most institutions, the committee that makes decisions about particular student cases. Frequently this committee has responsibility for D.Min. admissions, for deciding equivalency issues at admissions, for approving students' program plans in the more flexible programs, for making decisions on admissions to candidacy, for approving project proposals, and, in a number of cases, making or ratifying the decision about the acceptability of the final project. The committee's decisions may also include those having to do with student standing, the granting of leaves, termination of students in the program and the granting of extensions and deadlines. In addition to actual decision making in these many areas, most committees are also charged with general curriculum and program oversight, that is, with making or developing for faculty consideration the policies that govern the D.Min. degree. Though only one-quarter of directors in our survey feel that their D.Min. committee has "not enough" time for policy discussions, most of the directors and committee members we interviewed complained that larger questions about the shape of the D.Min. program and its policy are neglected because of the press of the day-to-day decisions that must be made about student admissions and progress.

## Discussion

The assignment of the typical D.Min. committee, responsible for almost every kind of decision affecting D.Min. students and the program as a whole, seems to us an analogue of the manifold program director's job description we found in too many institutions. Both are signs of an early stage of program development, of the kinds of administrative and oversight structures that are created before new program experiments are fully integrated into the life of an institution.

Most D.Min. programs are, we believe, now mature enough that, if the institution intends indefinitely to go on granting the degree, the structures of oversight as well as administration should be regularized. This means that admissions decisions should in many cases be given to an admissions committee; decisions on student standing to whatever faculty committee makes such decisions for the school's other programs; decisions on the adequacy of a thesis project to a group especially convened to make such decision in particular years. Operating decisions -- in other words, those about individual student admissions and progress -- in a mature program should be taken away from the omnipurpose D.Min. committee and given to committees that carry out those decision functions for the other programs of the school. Such a move will leave the D.Min. committee (or the larger educational policy committee if there is no D.Min. committee) free to focus on such major issues as program purpose, goals, curriculum, size and evaluation. If such a move is not feasible or does not fit the normal governance pattern of the school, then the policy oversight function of the D.Min. committee should be given to some other group. Whichever way is chosen of separating the two major kinds of functions of the D.Min. committee, the point should be to leave some group free enough of day-to-day decisions to exercise responsibility for policy oversight and development. The aim is also to remove the members of the D.Min. committee from the difficult position of both having to do the work of decision making with respect to the D.Min. and then having to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

In general, we believe, the place of the D.Min. director is as staff to whatever group exercises policy oversight. Though as chief administrator for the program the director will no doubt be present and participating when decisions are made about admissions or progress of individual students, we believe that, in general, the director should not conduct such meetings. Whether or not the director votes in such decisions is a matter for schools and their different policies to decide. Whatever the arrangement, however, it must be clear whether the director is to act as an advocate for students or, rather, to function chiefly as critical monitor of their work. Once the role of the director with respect to decisions about student admissions and standing is determined, the structure should be arranged so that it is feasible for the director to exercise that role without constantly

being asked or tempted to slip into another one. The cleanest arrangements we have observed are those in which decisions about individual student admissions and standing are made by committees of which the D.Min. director is not a member except as he may rotate into membership as part of regular faculty responsibilities. In such programs there is no question about conflicts between the director's need to support students and maintain program size on the one hand, and the school's legitimate interest in maintaining program standards and quality on the other.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structure

q. Progress Toward the Degree

Findings

Early in our study, it became evident that many students and some institutions view as a major issue the difficulty students encounter as they attempt to complete their programs. Such difficulties are almost inevitable: Virtually all D.Min. programs now are designed to be pursued part-time, requiring focused academic work of persons who also have full-time jobs. Many of these persons will have lost, during the period of service in ministry required for D.Min. admission, the habit of regular study, reading and writing. In addition, some programs become more stringent in their requirements as the student advances through various program stages. Thus it is not surprising that program directors as well as students and graduates talk frequently of the problems of "getting people through."

A first look at our survey data suggests that most students stay very much on track. The graduates we surveyed took, on average, 3.4 years to complete the degree. Sixty percent of them had finished the degree before reaching the four-year mark; another 20% finished by the end of the fourth year; and a final 20% took four years or longer (see Graduates III, B). A sizeable group (26% -- possibly including a few in-sequence graduates) finished in two years; a small handful (2%) took between eight and 16 years to finish. Though the students surveyed are, by definition, not yet finished with their programs, a similar pattern emerges in the tabulation of the lengths of time they have been in D.Min. programs: 37%, as compared with 40% of the graduates, have been enrolled for four years or longer (Students III, B). These figures closely match those that the directors provided for the lengths of time various programs should take to complete. The average ideal program length is 3.3 years (graduates, immediately above, took 3.4 years); and almost exactly 40% of programs require four years or more to finish.

Other data, however, lead us to suspect that students do not keep as exactly on track as these figures suggest. Because many institutions could not distinguish in the lists of their graduates between those who had pursued the D.Min. in sequence and those who had taken the in-ministry option, our graduate sample contains a number of in-sequence graduates from the first years of D.Min. programs. Almost all these in-sequence graduates completed their programs in one year, thus lowering the average completion time for our whole sample. If those who completed the D.Min. in one year or less are omitted from the calculation, the average completion time rises to 3.6 years. In these revised calculations, slightly more than half of all students finish on schedule. A very small group, less than 10% of all graduates, finish early. One-quarter of all graduates take one extra year before

graduation; one-fifth of all graduates take longer than a year beyond the recommended period of time (see Directors III, 1).

In addition to the almost one-half of all D.Min. graduates who take longer than the recommended time to complete the degree, there is another group in virtually all programs who will never finish. Overall, directors estimate that 23% of students who enroll do not complete the programs (see Directors III, 4). The completion rate varies considerably from program to program, with rates as low as 1% and as high as 75% reported in our survey. Data from the Presbyterian Panel yield a similar figure: Of the clergy responding, 21% are D.Min. students or graduates and 6% are dropouts, close to the three-to-one ratio the directors report. These apparently precise figures belie a fact we uncovered when we requested from the schools lists of persons who had terminated their enrollment: Many programs do not keep careful records of students' status. One program we studied closely, for instance, reported to us that in the preceding year more than one-half of students enrolled had not taken courses for credit. The non-course-taking students were, we were told, in one of three categories: Students who had matriculated but had not yet taken their first course; students whose work for a previous course was incomplete and who could not register for a new course until the earlier work was completed; and students at work on the final project. But the school had no statistics at hand to show what proportion of the non-course-taking students were in which category. A number of other institutions had similar difficulties in analyzing why, for instance, the number of credit hours earned toward the D.Min. was disproportionately low for the number of students enrolled; or why the total number of students in the program is ten or more times greater than the number admitted each year. At the other end of the spectrum, several programs showed us their elaborate mechanisms for tracking student progress. One such analysis of a relatively small program, for instance, shows 57 admissions over a ten year period, 24 graduations, 17 students still in progress and 16 withdrawals and resignations, two of these at the behest of the school, the others for an assortment of reasons, including "priority change" (the most frequent), resignation from the ministry, death, and failure to complete the program's requirements within the maximum time allotted. In this particular program, 28% of all students who enroll do not complete the program. This and similarly high figures for other programs that keep careful records lead us to suspect that, when all "inactive" students are accounted for, the non-completion rate may be somewhat higher than the 23% the directors currently report.

This possibility is also suggested by some admittedly rough calculations based on figures provided by ATS in its Fact Books. Table I explains the basis for our calculations. Entering enrollment figures taken from the Fact Book in three selected years are multiplied by 77% (the percentage of students that directors say finish the D.Min. program). The D.Min. graduation figure for three years after each entering date is then adjusted as explained on the Table. The adjusted enrollment and graduation figures are then compared.

Progress

TABLE I Ratios of Actual to Anticipated Numbers of Graduates for 1978, 1982, and 1984

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A. | Anticipated graduation figure in 3.6 years, based on 1975 enrollment | 793 |
| | Computed graduation figure based on actual graduation figures for 1978 | 926 |
| | Ratio of actual to anticipated graduations | 117% |
| B. | Anticipated graduation figure in 3.6 years, based on 1979 enrollment | 1140 |
| | Computed graduation figure based on actual graduation figures for 1982 | 1123 |
| | Ratio of actual to anticipated graduations | 99% |
| C. | Anticipated graduation figure in 3.6 years, based on 1981 enrollment | 1264 |
| | Computed graduation figure based on actual graduation figures for 1984 | 1171 |
| | Ratio of actual to anticipated graduations | 93% |

NOTES:
Enrollment figures are taken from the ATS Factbook.

Enrollment figures are divided by the average number of years for program completion as reported by program directors (3.6 years), and multiplied by program directors' reported completion rate (77%).

Computed graduation figures are obtained by multiplying actual three year graduation figures by 1.2 to correct for the fact that only three year graduation figures are available, but the D.Min., on average, requires 3.6 years to complete (3.6/3=1.2).

As the Table shows, for the earliest period studied, 1978 to 1981, the graduation figure is higher than expected. For the second period, the graduation figure is almost exactly on target. But for the most recent period, 1981 to 1984, the actual graduation figure is only 93% of the expected figure. The first two periods' figures include, we believe, a number of "in-sequence " D.Min. students who completed their programs in as little as one year. Since in-sequence programs have now almost disappeared, the most recent figure is probably the more accurate

reflection of actual graduation rates from in-ministry programs. These calculations suggest that either directors' drop-out and program duration figures are somewhat optimistic, or that some inactive students are present in this program who have neither dropped out nor graduated, but who may never finish. Later, in a discussion of the effects of D.Min. programs on seminaries (and also in a separate report on the financial aspects of D.Min. programs, which will be distributed separately), we note that, when total tuition revenues in some institutions are divided by the number of students enrolled, the resulting amount paid per student is very low -- as low in some cases as 5% of the total tuition the student will have paid when the degree is completed. Though these low per-student-revenue rates can be due to a number of causes, dramatically low rates such as the one just cited also suggest a much slower than average completion rate and/or a substantial number of inactive students. At the very least, schools with very low per-student-revenue figures or lower than expected graduation rates should attempt to understand the reasons for such figures.

Why do so many students -- almost half -- fall behind the recommended schedule? Directors report that those who eventually drop out of D.Min. programs most often give "job pressures" as their reason: Evidently, even though most D.Min. programs are designed with the student's full-time job responsibilities in mind, some students cannot coordinate full-time work and study for an academic degree. (The second and third reasons directors say that drop-outs give, change of job and personal or family problems, are unrelated to the focus or structure of the D.Min., that is, they are the kind of factors that account for attrition from all kinds of degree programs. See Directors III, 8.) There is also some evidence that students fall behind because some programs fail to enforce their time requirements and deadlines. As Table II shows, graduates are more likely than current students to say that rules and guidelines were <u>always</u> strictly enforced. But both groups acknowledge at least some latitude.

TABLE II Students and Graduates Reports of Enforcement of Guidelines and Rules in Programs

| Were guidelines and rules: | Students | Graduates |
|---|---|---|
| Always strictly enforced? | 22% | 38% |
| Usually enforced? | 57 | 52 |
| Enforced in some areas, not in others? | 10 | 5 |
| Rarely enforced? | 10 | 2 |
| No rules | 2 | 2 |
| | 100% | 100% |

In our case study interviews and in written comments we received, there were frequent student comments about the failure of program directors

and instructors to enforce deadlines and other academic rules. Returning from a campus visit, one of our researchers wrote:

> Students find the pace of the program grueling, but they point out that there is some distance between the rhetoric of requirements and their enforcement. Though there is strict language suggesting that grades for courses in which work is incomplete will be changed to failing grades, those who actually encountered difficulty find administrators and faculty "flexible, probably too flexible."

A current student wrote to us: "I value my D.Min. program. I only wish there was more bite in it to force my completion." Another complained of "students who are left on their own until after the completion of course requirements," suggesting that a full-time D.Min. director would solve that problem in this student's institution. But the students we interviewed in programs with full-time directors and other professional staff spoke appreciatively but critically of the tendency of program staff to bend or break rules in order to keep students in the program. The students who spoke to us recognized that they had asked for the accommodations and extensions they received; but they suggested that they might have been better off if their requests for special concessions had not been granted.

The lack of firm deadlines for program completion may also be a factor. Most institutions have a maximum limit (average: 4.8 years), but over half report permitting extensions beyond it (average: 2.5 years) and only eight have an absolute maximum beyond which no extensions are permitted. The flexibility of many programs may tempt students who are busy with many things to dawdle in their D.Min. work.

Our data strongly suggest that students encounter increasing difficulty as they progress through stages of their programs.

TABLE III Difficulties Encountered in Program Stages
(Means based on 1 = Great Difficulty 4= No difficulty)

| | Students | Graduates |
|---|---|---|
| Course taking phase | 3.4 | 3.0 |
| Qualifying exams | 3.5 | 3.0 |
| Preparing project proposal | 3.0 | 2.4 |
| Researching and writing the project | 2.6 | 2.2 |

Those who have been participants in D.Min. programs report least difficulty at the initial, course-taking phase, more in the preparation of the project proposal, and most as they begin research and writing for the project. (Difficulty with qualifying exams falls in between, but these are not a feature of a great many programs.) Students in programs in mainline institutions report slightly more difficulty in the writing phase than students in programs in evangelical schools. Understandably, students who entered their programs with a lower

seminary grade point average and those who have been ordained for longer periods of time report slightly more difficulty at both the proposal preparation and writing stages. The reports of graduates are not significantly different for any of these variables. Consistent with a pattern of somewhat rosier reports on program details from graduates than from those who are currently students, they report slightly less difficulty at most points.

The amount of difficulty students encounter in keeping on course does not correspond in any phase to the size of the program in which they are enrolled. There are, however, slight but consistent differences, not statistically significant, among program format types: Students in extension programs report slightly more difficulty at all phases (except qualifying exams, a feature many extension programs omit); and those in campus-based intensive programs report slightly less difficulty at all phases.

Our site visits provided some examples of the problems and advantages of different program arrangements. All three major format types have developed strategies for keeping students on course during the initial program phase. A local/regional program we visited, for instance, a program with no specific D.Min. course requirements, insists that students take 18 of the 30 credits required for the degree during the first three semesters after matriculating. This insures "impact on the student," the director told us, and also that the student will be less likely to drift during the program's early stages. Campus-based intensive programs (and some local/regional programs that have a high level of requirements) require the student's presence on campus for certain periods each year. And extension programs in which members of a group take courses together provide a structure to keep all participants moving ahead at the same pace. A director of an extension program told us, however, that students who fall behind or away from their groups have great difficulty catching up, a factor that may account for slightly greater difficulty at the course-taking phase reported by extension program graduates.

Students in and graduates of programs of all format types encounter increasing difficulty in the process of submitting project proposals for approval. Again, the difficulty is slightly greater for students in extension programs, perhaps because they have had less contact with the faculty members who are making judgments about the adequacy of proposals.

The major difficulty students encounter is in researching and writing the project once approved. More than half of all students who drop-out, directors report (see Directors III, 6), do so after they have completed all their course work, and the largest number of these drop-out after the proposal is approved but before the project is completed. A few programs (nine of our respondents, see Directors III, 9) offer a certificate for those who complete all requirements but the final project.

## Discussion

The data we have collected on student progress through D.Min. programs suggest to us a problem that must be solved and an issue that remains ambiguous.

The problem is that many D.Min. programs do not carefully track the progress of their students through the program. Such tracking is a special challenge for large programs and for extension programs, but such programs did not seem substantially more delinquent in record keeping than programs of other sizes and types. Directors of small programs are better able to account anecdotally for all students in the program, but few programs seem to us to keep adequate records and statistics on student progress. The self-studies for ATS accreditation visits that were shared with us rarely mention such matters as the difference between recommended and actual program duration. Since such statistical comparisons can uncover serious problems in program design or conduct, we believe that all programs should be required to keep such statistics and to review them frequently.

An attendant problem, one whose solution also seems quite clear, is the failure in a number of programs to enforce deadlines and requirements for completion of work. Such deadlines were instituted, one assumes, to keep students from drifting aimlessly. If particular deadlines and requirements have proved too stringent for a majority of students, then they can be changed. Those that are, however, deemed reasonable should be enforced. Again, accreditation review can be a spur to self-discipline on the part of D.Min. programs: The Standards should be rewritten to require programs to show that deadlines and time limits, pertaining both to particular phases and to the total duration of the program, are set at reasonable levels and are uniformly observed and enforced.

It is far less clear how to interpret and comment upon the fact that a significant proportion of students who enroll in D.Min. programs do not complete them. On the one hand, one would not expect that all those who enroll in a demanding graduate program would complete it. In this context; a non-completion rate of between one-fifth and one-third seems quite reasonable. In fact, if one takes into consideration the fact that the degree is now always pursued part-time, one might conclude that it is surprising that a higher proportion of students is not distracted or deflected over the fairly long period of time it takes to obtain the degree while also engaged in full-time work.

But on the other hand, the fact that such a high proportion of failures occur at the project phase gives us pause. Granted, dropping out at the project phase is common in other kinds of doctoral programs, too. Still, we find unsettling D.Min. student reports that standards for project proposals are much higher than those imposed in courses before the project phase. These reports are complemented by those of some faculty members who told us that not until the project proposal,

and, in a few cases, even the project itself, did they realize their students' inadequacies in conceptual work, research skills and writing. We strongly recommend that programs with high drop-out rates in the project phase or whose students take substantially longer than the recommended period to complete their projects carefully examine the progression of activities and requirements leading up to the project: Do courses and other activities leading to the project incorporate the same standards that will govern the project itself? Do core faculty members have adequate opportunity to judge student work in the early program phases? Do students who do not have the research and writing skills the project will require have an opportunity to develop these skills before they begin the projects? Do students come to depend on a high level of attention, structure and support during the program's early phases and then have difficulty doing without this support during the project stage? Again, the Standards should require schools to scrutinize themselves at this point, to determine statistically whether the project is a major roadblock in their program, and to build in at earlier stages resources students require for the project's successful completion.

II. B. 2. Program Elements and Structures

r. Accreditation

Findings

Accreditation of the D.Min. degree began after the adoption of Standards in 1974. The first batch of accreditation decisions were made during the Biennium ending in 1976. Table I reflects something of the pace of early accrediting activity. Over two thirds of all notations imposed to date were imposed in the first two years of accrediting. In the recent period, both the imposition of notations and the removal of those placed earlier has slowed to a crawl.

TABLE I

| | BIENNIUM | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 76 | 78 | 86 | 80 | 84 | Total |
| Notations | | | | | | |
| Imposed | 115 | 17 | 23 | 9 | 5 | 169 |
| Removed | 17 | 66 | 19 | 223 | 3 | 128 |

Based on data published by the
Association of Theological Schools

Chart I, reproduced in the Appendix, shows the frequencies with which various notations have been imposed and removed. The notations most frequently imposed have been:

D.M.1: Objectives and goals are insufficiently specific....

D.M.2. There is no articulation of what constitutes a high level of excellence or competence in the practice of ministry....

D.M.5. The Biblical, historical and theological disciplines are insufficiently central to and integrated into the program.

D.M.7. There is insufficient use of field oriented learning experiences jointly supervised by resident and adjunct faculty.

D.M.14. The program is insufficiently integrative, interdisciplinary and functional in its orientation.

D.M.15. The process of student evaluation is insufficiently comprehensive and vigorous.

D.M.37. There is insufficient provision made for a D.Min. curriculum.

As Chart I in the Appendix shows in more detail, each of these notations has been imposed 10 to 14 times. D.M.2, D.M.15, and D.M.38 (inadequate utilization of library resources) are still outstanding in four or five cases each. If the pattern of notations suggests the major concerns of accrediting teams and the Commission on Accreditation, evidently these include clarity about the D.Min. program, its academic content, professional content, the integration of these latter elements, the quality of evaluation of student work and the failure of some institutions to provide appropriate special resources for the D.Min. Overall, both the notations list and the pattern of awarding notations seem about equally balanced between traditionally "academic" and traditionally "professional" concerns. There is one sequence of notations, D.M.24 through D.M.30, that all focus on issues having to do with adjunct faculty. Among them, these notations have been awarded 28 times. The number of institutions making substantial use of adjunct faculty is quite small, so a number of these notations may have been awarded to the same programs. This might account for expressions of discontent we heard from some associated with extension programs, that the standards and procedures of accreditation are not adequate to or potentially sympathetic enough toward extension education and the kind of flexibility it requires.

TABLE II Have ATS Visiting Teams Gained Adequate Understanding?

| | Chief Executive | Director |
|---|---|---|
| Yes, to a great extend | 49 % | 49 % |
| Yes, to some extent | 35 | 23 |
| No | 5 | 9 |
| Don't know | 11 | 20 |
| | 100 % | 100 % |
| Have you made substantial changes? | | |
| | 29 % | 36 % |
| | 71 | 64 |
| | 100 % | 100 % |

(Based on Directors XIII, 1 and 2 and Chief Executive V, 1 and 2.)

In general, both program directors and chief executive officers feel that accreditation procedures have worked adequately in their particular cases. Only small percentages are convinced that ATS visiting teams did not understand their situation. There were several complaints about actions that the Commission on Accrediting took overturning the report of a visiting team, but none, interestingly, about teams themselves. One chief executive did remark that, since the

Standards for the D.Min. are so vague, members of the visiting team seem to him to be using the D.Min. programs at their own institutions as a basis for comparison. The suggestions the team made, however, were in his view extremely helpful. A judicatory official who wrote to us when he heard we were undertaking this study also sounded this theme of vague criteria: "There are over 80 such programs available in the United States at this time, but most of them are not receiving accreditation because ATS simply has not found the criteria nor the necessary data to be able to make valid judgments. This leaves us in the peculiar position of not knowing which seminaries are offering such programs that are theologically sound, educationally sound, and administratively sound."

About-one third of chief executive officers and directors report substantial changes made in response to reports of accreditating teams. The kinds of changes reported are extremely varied and fall into few patterns. Three chief executives say that they clarified their program goals in response to accreditation, and four others say that they changed the length of the residency requirement or added a residency requirement. Five directors report changes or improvements in the project requirement. In addition, a long list of changes is mentioned once or twice each: improvements in evaluation of students, clearer policies on the M.Div. equivalency basis for beginning the D.Min.; more core faculty involvement; improvement of the theological component of the degree; improvement of library resources and accessibility; better supervisory training; tighter deadlines for completion of work; the addition of seminars for D.Min. students alone; administrative improvements; tighter selection standards; elimination of an "in sequence" option; and more. Two institutions report that the most substantial changes in their program came in response to evaluations that were not accreditation reviews, but sought by the school for its own purposes.

Our survey was in the hands of D.Min. directors and chief executive officers at the same time that a major revision of the Standards for the D.Min. degree was being considered and adopted. It was surprising to us, therefore, that 44% of the directors and 41% of the chief executives said, in a response to our question about their views about these revisions, that they had not "studied the revised Standards closely enough to comment." (Chief executives of non-D.Min.-granting institutions, surveyed somewhat later, were even more likely to report that they had not studied closely the Standards, which presumably many of them had voted to approve: Seventy percent said that they had not studied the new Standards.) In all groups, most of those who have read the new Standards favor the changes contained in them. Comments we invited on further changes that should be made elicited a variety of responses. The majority of comments from chief executives pushed in the direction of enhanced program quality, more academic emphasis, the need to make a decision about whether the D.Min. is for "the few or the many," and (four comments) the need for special controls for extension programs. A smaller number of comments urged that the Standards should be further revised to provide for more

flexibility and a more professional emphasis. One commentator would like to see a change in nomenclature to a non-doctoral name for the degree.

Directors' concerns were different. The largest number of them to comment on any one issue said they seek more clarity on M.Div. equivalency. Roman Catholic women were mentioned as a constituency of persons who do not have the M.Div. degree but who could often establish equivalency if ATS requirements for equivalency were clearer. Another group (three) called for more control of off-campus programs, and others (one or two each) asked for more uniformity in the standards for the degree and more specificity, elimination of the in-sequence option, more specific library standards, higher standards for the project, more professional emphasis, more provision for flexibility, a specific requirement of supervised field activity, and a multi-cultural emphasis. The range of issues covered by the directors' comments was, in other words, similar to the chief executives'.

## Discussion

There is little evident dissatisfaction with the process of accrediting D.Min. degrees; nor does there seem to be substantial bias built into the notation system or the teams' procedures. The only persons who feel that they were dealt with less than fairly are those connected with extension programs, and it does seem that the suspicion about the solidity of these programs has been to some extent shared by those who have drafted the Standards, awarded notations, and visited schools. Otherwise, the procedures seem to have worked fairly evenhandedly, pushing some programs toward greater "academic" solidity and others toward greater professional accountability. Thus we conclude that the process of accreditation of D.Min. programs is not an arena in which there are substantial problems.

The problem in our view is in the Standards themselves rather than in their application. As we have noted repeatedly in the sections of this report that have reviewed program elements and structures, the standards fail adequately to define the D.Min. degree, to specify the standard of competence that earning the degree is supposed to signify, to indicate any core body of material the degree presupposes or should cover, to define the nature of the final project, and to require schools to establish and enforce strict procedures for the conduct and administration of the degree. Further, the Standards incorporate elements of some learning theories and ignore others, and in so doing may impinge on the schools' prerogative to choose educational theories and methods.

We believe that the Standards must be substantially improved, and made more specific. This process can be accomplished in two stages. First there is needed an immediate revision of the Standards to include stricter requirements for quality control. (A list of specific additions and changes to consider in such a revision is included in our

"Summary Report," printed separately.) Then later, after more basic discussions of the purpose and scope of the D.Min. have produced results, the conclusions of these discussions should be integrated into Standards that states, far more clearly than the present one, what the degree prepares for, for whom it is intended, and what it requires.

## II. C. Characteristics and Motives of Students and Graduates

### 1. Characteristics of Students and Graduates

Findings

Who is the typical D.Min. student? Why does she or he enter the program? Are the ablest clergy entering D.Min. programs? We address the first of these questions in this section and turn to the issues of the motives and perceived quality of students in the sections that follow.

Faculty members and administrators we met during case study visits gave quite different descriptions of D.Min. students, though most told us that male students overwhelmingly predominate, that students come from churches of medium size, and that students are typically the sole or senior pastors of these congregations. Most also expressed the opinion that few "high steeple" church pastors were among their students. This designation can refer to churches of either large size or high status, or both.

Though we have no measures of church status, we can test several of the other impressions against data from our surveys. (Most of the following comparisons are taken from the Students and Graduates VII and Clergy V.)

As faculty members suggested, current D.Min. students are overwhelmingly male, by a margin of more than nine to one. This distribution is similar to that of non-D.Min. clergy. Since in the years the D.Min. has been offered women have entered ministry at an increasing rate, it is not surprising that when the graduate sample is broken down by the year that graduates started the program, the number of women entrants increases significantly as the years advance, especially in 1978 and 1979. We expect the proportion of women in D.Min. programs to continue to grow as the number of women clergy with requisite years of pastoral experience for entry increases. Current students are also overwhelmingly white (93%). Among non-whites, blacks are the largest group, although they are significantly underrepresented when one considers the total number of black clergy in both historic black denominations and predominately white denominations. To meet the needs of non-white students, at least one of the large programs has formed an entirely black cluster group, and there have been several attempts to offer bilingual resources for Asian-American students. Further, D.Min. programs at predominately black schools give special attention to the issues black ministers face. An administrator at one predominantly black school said that D.Min. students at his institution are seeking a high level of professional skill. They are, he told us, "young black clergy who recognize that the black church cannot continue to do business as usual" and want the skills to help their churches function more effectively.

## Characteristics

In Table I, we summarize the age distribution for current students, for graduates and for clergy not involved in D.Min. programs. The table gives current age, not the age of students and graduates at the time they entered a D.Min. program. The mean age of current students is 43 years, but 41% are less than 40, and almost one-fourth are over 50. This confirms the observation of one veteran program director that there are two major categories of students: younger, more aggressive pastors, and older pastors who want additional resources near the end of their careers, either "to go out with a bang" or as background for post-retirement interim work with troubled churches. Current students are slightly younger than our non-D.Min. clergy and, as might be expected, they are younger still than graduates. Further analysis also showed that students in mainline seminaries are older than those in evangelical schools.

TABLE I Age Distributions of Students, Graduates, and Non.D.Min Clergy

| Age | Students | Graduates | Clergy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 40 | 41% | 15% | 38% |
| 40-49 | 35 | 36 | 27 |
| 50-59 | 20 | 36 | 25 |
| 60+ | 4 | 12 | 10 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Mean Age | 43 | 49 | 45 |

Mean Age of Students and Graduates Combined: 46

It is often said that in its early years the D.Min. attracted a large number of older clergy who had not had previous opportunity to pursue a similar degree. These older clergy, it is hypothesized, form a kind of "backlog" that has been bolstering D.Min. enrollments but will someday be used up. When we break down the graduate sample by year of entry into the program, however, we find no age trend. Comparing entering students in the earliest and latest years and at several points in between shows that the average age at entry varies between 39 and 41. There is no evidence, in the data on students' and participants' ages, that supports the backlog theory. It may be, especially since our sample contains some persons who had completed the D.Min. "in-sequence" as a fourth seminary year, that the samples for earlier periods were weighted toward youth (in-sequence programs were much more common ten years ago than they are now). Or it could mean that older clergy were not recruited into early D.Min. programs at the same rate that they are now. This would accord with other evidence we have found that the D.Min. population is becoming more diverse. Or it may be that there is a backlog, but it has not been used up. Probably

the lack of a discernable trend in age is the result of some combination of these factors.

Table II, which tabulates number of years ordained, gives further insight into when, in a clergyperson's career, he or she is typically involved in a D.Min. program.

TABLE II Years Ordained: Students, Graduates, and Non-D.Min. Clergy

| Years | Students | Graduates | Non D.Min. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 10 | 31% | 8% | 38% |
| 10-19 | 40 | 32 | 26 |
| 20-29 | 21 | 37 | 22 |
| 30+ | 8 | 23 | 14 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Mean Years Ordained | 16 | 23 | 16 |

Mean Years Ordained of Students and Graduates Combined: 20

Again, we refer to the number of years ordained at the time of the survey, not at the time of entry into a D.Min. program. If the average clergy career ranges between 30 and 40 years (assuming retirement at age 65 and allowing for the increase in second career clergy), most clergy are involved in a D.Min. program during the first half of their career, especially in the second decade following ordination (30% have been ordained less than 10 years, and 40% have been ordained 10 to 19 years). The latter figure is out of proportion to the number of non-D.Min. clergy at this career stage. As was also apparent in the age comparisons, however, older clergy also are enrolling, with almost 30% in the last half of their career.

The denominations from which students and graduates come are quite diverse, representing approximately 80 groups. It is, therefore, difficult to describe them succinctly by affiliation. In Table III we have broken out the two groups by current denomination, listing individual denominations represented by at least 2% of either the student or the graduate sample. Denominations with less than 2% of either are grouped together as "other." From this, it can be seen that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), combining clergy in the former UPCUSA and PCUS denominations, has the largest representation, followed by United Methodists and Southern Baptists. Clergy from each of these denominations constitute more than 10% of the student and graduate samples. Considering the smaller size of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) relative to the United Methodist Church and the Southern Baptist Convention, it is evident that the D.Min. has had an appeal for Presbyterian clergy substantially out of proportion to the denomination's size. There are different theories about why the D.Min.

has had special appeal for Presbyterians. One view is that the denomination historically has emphasized an educated ministry, and a D.Min. degree is one way to honor that norm. It is also the case that two Presbyterian institutions, San Francisco and McCormick, launched large extension programs early in the history of the D.Min., and each has graduated large numbers of students who are Presbyterians. It is not possible to sort out how much of the high level of Presbyterian participation can be attributed to denominational character and how much to the historical accident of the establishment of these programs. Roman Catholics are considerably underrepresented, and some of the Catholics in the study are without doubt laity (women religious and permanent deacons) rather than priests. The "other" category for current students is 5% larger than for graduates, suggesting that clergy in smaller denominations have begun to enter D.Min. programs in larger numbers than was the case earlier in the program's history. We suspect also that the number of Roman Catholics will grow, including both priests and lay ministers who are members of pastoral teams.

TABLE III Current Denominations of D.Min. Students and Graduates

| Denomination | Students | Graduates |
|---|---|---|
| Seventh Day Adventist | 2% | 2% |
| American Baptist Churches | 5 | 8 |
| Southern Baptist Convention | 11 | 12 |
| Other Baptists | 1 | 2 |
| Christian Churches & Ch. of Christ | 2 | 1 |
| Christian Church (Disciples) | 3 | 5 |
| Church of the Nazarene | 2 | 1 |
| Lutheran (ALC, AELC, LCA) | 5 | 5 |
| Lutheran, Mo. Synod | 4 | 2 |
| United Methodist | 16 | 18 |
| Presbyterian (USA) | 18 | 20 |
| Episcopal | 5 | 4 |
| Roman Catholic | 5 | 4 |
| United Church of Christ | 5 | 6 |
| All Others | 16 | 11 |
| | 100 | 100 |

Because denominational affiliations are so diverse, we reclassified the denominational affiliations of graduates and students into mainline and evangelical categories, using a classification scheme similar to the one used for seminaries. (Again we included Catholics in the mainline group.) Of the graduates, 76% are in "mainline" denominations and 24% are in "evangelical" denominations. Students are only slightly less likely to represent a similar split: 67% are mainline in affiliation and 33% are in evangelical denominations. The increase among evangelicals is 11% when students are compared with graduates, probably an accurate reflection of the growing number of

students from evangelical denominations entering the D.Min., partly stimulated by the growing number of evangelical seminaries offering the degree. Clergy from evangelical denominations who are current students still, however, attend mainline seminary D.Min. programs in considerably larger proportion than they do evangelical seminary programs: 77% of clergy from evangelical denominations are students in mainline seminary programs, while 33% are in evangelical schools. The distribution of graduates is approximately the same: 78% of the graduates from evangelical denominations attended mainline schools, while 32% were in evangelical seminary D.Min. programs.

The three groups of clergy -- students, graduates and non-D.Min. clergy -- do not differ substantially in educational background or achievement as measured by degrees earned or grade averages, though there are minor differences worth noting (Students and Graduates VII, P, U and V; Clergy V, M, R and S). Ninety percent of the graduates and non-D.Min. clergy have B.D. or M.Div. degrees; 86% of current students do so. Students are somewhat more likely, however, to report having earned an M.A., S.T.M. or Th.M. than the other two groups (22% of students have done so, but only 13% of non-D.Min. clergy). This greater number of current students with masters degrees other than M.Div. no doubt reflects the entry of laity, especially Roman Catholic women, into many programs. (Also reflecting this trend are comments from D.Min. directors: when asked what changes they would most like to see in accrediting standards, directors frequently said clearer guidelines for granting equivalency for those who do not hold the M.Div.) Non-D.Min. clergy are slightly more likely to have an earned doctorate than either of the other groups.

The college grade average for each group does not differ significantly from the others -- all report an average grade of B. Both students and graduates, however, report a seminary grade average slightly higher than that of non-D.Min. clergy, with the three groups ranging between a B and B+. The differences are small but statistically significant. Since the D.Min. requires a grade point average of B or above for entry (though some graduates and students reported a lower average), we further compared graduates with only those non-D.Min. clergy with seminary grade point averages of greater than C+. When we did this, the differences remained. The mean for graduates was 2.88; for non-D.Min. clergy it was 3.13 (the lower mean represents a higher grade point average).

The measurement of theological position by means of a structured questionnaire is never entirely satisfactory; nevertheless we asked respondents to categorize their theological perspectives on a scale from "very liberal" to "very conservative" (Students and Graduates VII, H; Clergy V, F). The modal category for all three samples is "moderate" (42% to 46%); both current students and non-D.Min. clergy, however, are significantly more likely to characterize themselves as "conservative" or "very conservative" than is true for graduates. This probably reflects the growth of D.Min. programs in evangelical seminaries in recent years and the attendant increase of more theo-

logically conservative students than it does a conservative turn on the part of the clergy generally. Indeed, there is a very strong positive correlation between theological conservatism and participation in a D.Min. program of an evangelical seminary. It may also be true that D.Min. graduates are more liberal than the other two groups because of a liberalizing effect of D.Min. involvement, regardless of the type of seminary in which the person was enrolled. In a related question on the faculty questionnaire, faculty members were asked to describe their D.Min. students theologically in comparison with M.Div. students. Three-fourths characterized them as about the same, and 17% believed D.Min. students were more liberal.

At the time of entry into the program, the majority of students were sole pastors of a congregation or pastoral charge (51%), with the next three types of positions represented (12% or 13% each) being senior pastors (with other ordained clergy on staff), associate and assistant pastors (Students and Graduates VII, A). Graduates had a relatively similar profile at the time they entered the program, although there are slightly more assistant/associate ministers among current students than among graduates (13% to 8%).

In Table IV we compare students, graduates and clergy in pastoral positions. (Our clergy sample includes only those who serve in congregations. Students and graduates figures have been adjusted to be comparable.) Slightly more non-D.Min. clergy now than students and graduates at the time of entry into D.Min. programs are sole pastors, and slightly fewer are senior pastors of multiple staff congregations.

TABLE IV Parish Position at Entry Into D.Min. Program of Students and Graduates Compared with Non-D.Min. Clergy

| Position | Students | Graduates | Non D.Min Clergy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sole Pastor | 64% | 66% | 72% |
| Senior Pastor (with staff) | 17 | 21 | 14 |
| Assoc./Assistant | 16 | 10 | 12 |
| Min. of Education | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Pastoral Counselor (in congregation) | <.1 | 1 | <.1 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | (N= 588 | 638 | 642) |

Chi Sq. significant at .0001

A few more graduates than current students were senior pastors of congregations with multiple staffs at the time of entry into the program; more current students were assistant or associate pastors at

the time of enrollment. This suggests that the D.Min. now attracts clergy from a broader spectrum of positions than was true in earlier years, but the differences overall, though statistically significant, are not dramatic.

The average salary (Students and Graduates VII, D; Clergy V, D) for students at the time of their entry into the D.Min. program was only slightly higher than that of non-D.Min. clergy in 1982 ($22,284 and $22,029 respectively). (We used the 1982 figure on the assumption that it would more closely correspond with the average time of entry into the program of current students.) D.Min. graduates' entering average salary was lower, as might be expected, since a large number of them entered the program several years ago when salaries, on the whole, would have been lower.

Students and graduates (but not non-Min. clergy) were asked how satisfied they were with their position at the time they entered the D.Min. program, and whether it offered them maximum opportunity for expression of their talents (Students and Graduates VI, E and F). There is little difference between graduates and students in satisfaction with their position at time of entry. Almost half were very satisfied; another 4 out of 10 were moderately dissatisfied. Graduates were significantly more likely to say that their position on entering the program offered maximum opportunity for expression of their talents for ministry (graduates 47%; students 39%).

The three samples of clergy were asked to rate their innovativeness as ministers (Students and Graduates VI, J; Clergy IV, J), since the idea of "innovativeness" has frequently figured in studies of professionals' motives for continuing education (see Cyril O. Houle, Continuing Learning in the Professions, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1980). Graduates and current students showed quite similar profiles; just under 30% see themselves as highly innovative and another 60% as moderately so. For non-D.Min. clergy the comparable figures were 18% and 59%. Thus those associated with D.Min. programs are significantly more likely to consider themselves more innovative than is the case for those who do not enter. We cannot determine whether this self-perception is a consequence of D.Min. participation or a factor predisposing to it. The self-perception of being innovative may be partly related to what was implied by several directors and faculty members when they described their students as more "aggressive" than typical clergy, as "high energy people," or as "success-motivated entrepreneurs".

We noted earlier that faculty members have the impression that the majority of students come from churches of medium size and that few large church pastors participate in D.Min. programs. We can test this assumption by comparing the church size at time of entry into the D.Min. program of students and graduates with the size of congregations of other clergy.

Characteristics

The comparisons of the church size at time of entry for graduates and students and for the immediate past parish of non-D.Min. clergy are shown in Table V. The Table shows that the sizes of the churches served by graduates and students at entry are not significantly different from each other or from clergy who have not entered the program. If our non-D.Min. clergy sample is at all representative, then there is no tendency discernible for the D.Min. to draw disproportionately from pastors of smaller or larger congregations. The table shows also that, among our six size categories, the modal church size for those entering the program is between 200 and 400 members -- what some refer to as "midsize" for Protestant denominations. Only about 15% of graduates and students were serving churches of over 1000 members (presumably the "high steeple" clergy referred to above); the percentage is approximately the same for the non-D.Min. sample.

TABLE V Comparison of the Size of Congregation at Entry into the D.Min. Program for Students and Graduates with non-D.Min. Clergy (Size of Immediate Past Congregation)

| Congregational Size | Students | Graduates | Non-D.Min. Clergy |
|---|---|---|---|
| <100 | 13% | 9% | 12% |
| 100-199 | 20 | 19 | 19 |
| 200-399 | 26 | 28 | 27 |
| 400-699 | 18 | 21 | 20 |
| 700-999 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| 1000+ | 15 | 14 | 15 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | (637) | (675) | (642) |

Chi Square not significant. p.=.48

Since the overall D.Min. and non-D.Min. figures included assistant/associate pastors, and since there are Roman Catholic priests (whose parishes are typically quite large) in the student and graduate samples, we further compared only those who were sole or senior pastors at entry by the size of church at that time. Again, we used the size of the immediate past parish for non-D.Min. clergy. Table VI shows the comparisons. As noted in the Table, the differences among the three groups fall just short of being statistically significant. There is, however, a slightly greater tendency for current students to have been sole or senior pastors at time of entry than was true for graduates and for non-D.Min. clergy in their previous pastorate. Likewise, slightly fewer current students were in congregations of 700 members or larger

than was true for graduates at entry or for non-D.Min. clergy. Thus, there may have been a trend in recent years towards a slight increase in sole/senior pastors of small congregations entering the program and a slight decline in the number of large church sole/senior pastors.

TABLE VI Church Size at Entry into D.Min. Program of Students and Graduates and Non-D.Min. Clergy Who Are Sole/Senior Pastors

| Church Size | Students | Graduates | Non-D.Min Clergy |
|---|---|---|---|
| <100 | 15% | 9% | 12% |
| 100-199 | 24 | 22 | 21 |
| 200-399 | 31 | 31 | 29 |
| 400-699 | 19 | 22 | 22 |
| 700-999 | 6 | 8 | 9 |
| 1000+ | 5 | 8 | 7 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | (N= 463 | 533 | 540) |

In sum, faculty members are correct in perceiving that the majority of entrants in D.Min. programs come from mid-sized congregations. Pastors of large churches, however, are represented in the D.Min. in proportions that reflect their numbers in the general clergy population; although our current student data suggest that the proportion of sole/senior pastors from these larger congregations may have declined slightly in comparison to graduates.

Several other characteristics of the congregations of students and graduates at time of entry can also be noted (Students and Graduates VII, G; Clergy V, E). Their congregations were more likely to be in small to large cities than is true for non-D.Min. clergy. Whether these differences are a function of greater distance of rural clergy from available programs, or of the fact that rural charges are frequently held by young clergy not yet eligible for some "in service" programs, or of a lack of appeal of D.Min. programs to pastors of rural churches is not clear from the data.

Students and graduates are somewhat less likely (by 7% and 9% respectively) to report that their congregations were growing and developing at the time of entry than were non-D.Min. clergy referring to a period comparably long ago, and students were more likely by 7% to report being in declining churches at entry than were non-D.Min. clergy. For both current students and graduates, however, the largest proportions reported being in growing or stable congregations at the time of entry.

Characteristics

Finally, when both students and graduates entered the program, their congregations were somewhat more likely to have a larger proportion of college educated members than is true for the congregations of non-D.Min. clergy. Nine percent of students and 11% of graduates indicated that 75% or more of the members of their congregation held college degrees, while none of the non-D.Min. clergy reported that this was the case in their congregations. On the other hand, approximately half of the students and graduates estimated that 25% or fewer of their congregation's members were college educated. Black theological educators have sometimes spoken of the "push-up" effect of higher educational levels of black church members on black pastors, motivating those clergy without formal seminary training to seek it. Perhaps a similar "push-up" effect, making D.Min. enrollment more likely, is operating in the case of pastors in highly educated congregations.

Discussion

We have made such a large number of comparisons in this section that it may help to draw a profile of the "typical" D.Min. student/graduate. He is a white pastor in his early forties and approaching mid-career. He is most likely to be Presbyterian, or perhaps United Methodist or Southern Baptist, and he is likely to describe himself as moderate theologically as well as somewhat innovative in his ministry. He is most likely to be the sole pastor of a mid-sized congregation in a small city. The congregation is typically described as growing or at least holding its own.

The data also show that students/graduates differ in some ways from the sample of non-D.Min. clergy, though none of the differences is especially dramatic. Nevertheless, we can note, in summary fashion, those factors which seem to distinguish between those who have entered a D.Min. program and those who have not.

| | |
|---|---|
| Race: | Non-whites, especially blacks, are underrepresented in D.Min. programs. |
| Age: | Current students are slightly younger on the average than the non-D.Min. clergy sample; there, however, does not seem to be any <u>trend</u> when the ages of current students at the time of entry are compared with graduates when they entered the program. |
| Years Ordained: | Students are more likely to be in the second decade of their career (ordained for 10-19 years), disproportionately so in comparison to the non-D.Min. clergy sample. |
| Position: | Current students especially are more likely to be associate/assistant pastors at the time of entry into the program than either graduates (at the time of entry) |

or non-D.Min. clergy; senior ministers are also slightly overrepresented among students and graduates in comparison to non-D.Min. clergy.

Church Size: There do not seem to be differences between the size of congregations of graduates and students when they entered the program and the size of congregations served by the general clergy population. There has been, however, a slight increase in entrants from smaller congregations in proportion to those from churches of other sizes.

Church Location: Graduates and students are more likely to be located in small to large cities and less likely to be in rural areas than is true for non-D.Min. clergy.

Members' Education: Graduates and students are more likely to have more college educated members in their congregations than is true for non-D.Min. clergy.

Our study of the characteristics of D.Min. students and graduates and our comparison of them to a group of clergy not involved in D.Min. programs yields two observations and conclusions.

First, students who enroll in and graduate from D.Min. programs are what statisticians would call "modal" clergy. They are, in other words, typical clergy, very much like those who do not pursue D.Min. degrees. This finding supports the widespread impression that the D.Min. attracts clergy from "a middle group," neither the very brightest and most successful, as a rule, nor the least competent or most demoralized. (Obviously there are individual exceptions to all these statements. Every D.Min. director can cite some students who are extraordinarily able or who are pastors of large and influential chruches; and every program has probably also encountered its share of students of limited ability and some who have had great difficulty in their ministerial careers.)

Second, it is evident that the group of clergy interested in D.Min. programs is becoming more diverse. More women are entering D.Min. programs, more lay church professionals, and, at a much slower rate, clergy from racial and ethnic minority groups. With the rapid growth of programs in evangelical institutions, the total population of D.Min. students and graduates is becoming more diverse theologically. The variety of positions held by students at the time they enroll in programs is also increasing. In our view, programs should prepare themselves for this diversity. Like M.Div. programs several decades ago, D.Min. programs have in the recent past encountered a highly homogeneous population. Like M.Div. programs more recently, D.Min. programs must be reshaped for a more diverse student body.