

# A STRATEGIC PLAN for UNION-PSCE

*Final Version — February 19, 2009*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education equips Christian leaders for ministry in the world—a sacred vocation that requires deep learning, commitment to service, and an ability to read culture and circumstance in the light of the rich resources of scripture and theological tradition.

## **MISSION AND PURPOSE**

The seminary's core mission is to participate in the mission of the church by forming and equipping leaders for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Eph 4:12). As a theological institution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) standing within the Reformed tradition,

- We confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- We weave together distinctive approaches to theological education for pastoral and educational ministries.
- We educate, inspire, and empower leaders for congregational life, theological scholarship, and bold Christian service to the world.
- We serve as a theological resource for church and society.
- We are a catalyst for the transformation of the church, and through the church, the world.

God calls the church to be a "royal priesthood" (1 Pet 2:9, Exod 19:6), whose life in the world is meant to be a blessing to "all the families of the Earth" (Gen 12:3). The church becomes a blessing when it receives its life and work from God's own hand and seeks to be shaped by and for the sake of God's future Reign. That Reign is, by virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, transformative. In discerning even the merest outline of God's Reign, it becomes evident that nothing God touches ever remains the same. Therefore, the seminary will not be content only with the necessary task of investing its students with knowledge; it must inspire in them a passion for witnessing to God's movement in the world.

Seminaries that bear witness to the Reign of God in Jesus Christ dare to imprint upon their students a transformational attitude that forms them in ways that draw more deeply into Christ's own life and Christ's transfor-

mative work in the world. The seminary will help students to discern their callings as members of a church that expects the living God to be at work through it, with it, and (sometimes) in spite of it. The more students learn through their instruction how God has operated and continues to operate in the world, the more prepared they will be to serve the church in discerning and embracing its essential role as a witness to God's power, affirming that the church is a community shaped by the life that Jesus Christ makes present, and to envision and embody the future to which God is calling us.

Union-PSCE will therefore equip pastors and educators who are passionate witnesses to Jesus Christ, having found in his life the courage to love, build bridges, pray without ceasing, and follow faithfully in Christ's mission. These educators and pastors will follow him in loving the world enough to embrace its own languages, whether that be the idiom of technology or the vernacular of the person in the pew. These pastors and educators will seek to be vital participants in God's revitalization of Christ's church. As such, these graduates will be able to address how God is renewing and strengthening the church for this new century, how the larger church can clarify its mission, and how the church can grow in a culture increasingly distracted and indifferent at best or hostile at worst to the claims of the Christian faith.

In order to prepare students who have both the passion and ability to accomplish such a broad, transformative agenda, Union-PSCE will develop, deepen, and nurture the character of its graduates as servant leaders of Christ's church. The seminary will fully equip its students with the skills to become the kind of disciple leader who can operate effectively in the key roles of contemporary church life: pastor, teacher, prophet, theologian, historian, evangelist. These graduates will be trained to work in a variety of settings, including healthy, established single and multi-staffed churches, fledgling or struggling congregations, those trying to re-build and attract new members, and the growing community of global/ethnic churches. The seminary, grounded in Bible, theology, and history, will focus on issues of church mission, worship, education, theological formation in the traditions of the church, social witness, and multi-cultural proclaiming and sharing of the gospel to re-present the reality and power of God's future Reign.

## **A THEOLOGY FOR VISION**

The future, like the past and the present, belongs to the God fully revealed in Jesus the Christ. To understand the future and how we might prepare for it and make use of it, even before we find ourselves living in it, we will therefore begin not with ourselves but with God. Our task is not so much to create our future as it is to comprehend

how God is forming the future as an opportunity for us to respond faithfully and freely to God's movement in the world. Though we can never know the mind of God, we do have clues that help direct us as we seek appropriate response. For a people of Reformed Faith, the chief clue for comprehending who God is and how God is forming the future in our midst is Jesus Christ, to whom scripture bears witness, particularly as scripture describes the Reign of God as the extent of Christ's lordship. This Reign is revealed in his life, death, and resurrection.

In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus of Nazareth preaches that the Reign of God is at hand in his own person and ministry (e.g. Luke 4:16-21; "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.") and that all who hear are summoned to respond to its claims. The future that had been envisioned by the prophets, an Israel restored to a beloved community of peace and justice, is now transformed into a community that includes Gentiles. In this future, the dividing walls that separated races, genders, political entities, economic classes and even religious groupings from one another, implying the superiority of some over others, are broken down. As these dividing walls are demolished by Christ, his Reign – God's future – breaks into the present.

Because the earliest of the Gospels, Mark, identifies this Reign of God as the present ministry of Jesus, a problem of timing immediately erupts. The future, by definition, does not and cannot exist in the present. Mark's intriguing point is that, in Jesus, God has caught hold of the future, dragged it backwards, and dropped it into the present moment. Every time Jesus teaches, exorcises, or heals, the Reign of God is disclosed and makes space in the midst of the present reality of human living for new, unthinkable possibilities. This making of space that his own life incarnates does not illustrate an ideal but instead represents the reality of God's intent for all human life in the present.

As Jesus represents the future in the present, so the church is to represent Jesus. As the Body of Christ, the church is called to bear witness to him and to his future in its teaching and preaching. Just so, its prophetic task is to tell the truth of Christ's transformation of culturally accepted boundaries, representing in its own life and ministry the new creation of a life together set free from preoccupation with self and able now to embrace the boundless opportunities Christ presents to us daily. In its own life, then, the body of Christ bears witness to the future reign of God by participating in Christ's healing of the ruptures that threaten to tear apart the fabric of human community and by exorcising the demonic forces that turn humans against each other and the environment in which they live.

The focus of theological education is the same as the focus of the church: Jesus Christ and his mission in the world. As a seminary, a teaching institution of the church, Union-PSCE seeks to bear witness to the ministry of

Jesus Christ in the present. The seminary's task is to testify to Christ's presence among us and to heed his call to participate in the Reign of God through the power of his Spirit. God's future is already at work among us. It calls us to equip those whom God has called to look for the future disclosed in Jesus Christ, cultivating in them gifts of discernment and study, proclamation and teaching, so that they can live and proclaim the Reign of God and call others to joyful participation in this rule. The seminary's mission, then, will be oriented around and focused on bearing witness to the Reign of God, made known in Jesus Christ in the here and now, through our curricular actions, our stewardship of personnel (board, faculty, students, staff, alumni/ae) and our infrastructure (land, buildings, classrooms, technology, endowment, etc.).

## **UNION-PSCE'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

The goal of a strategic plan is to identify what an institution is trying to do and then lay out a plan to use available resources to achieve these aims. The above sections of this plan reflect the clarifying and sharpening of the mission and purpose of the seminary that has emerged from President Blount's *Catalyst for Conversation* and the engagement of this community with that document as part of the strategic planning process.

For the past decade, Union-PSCE has been living into the results of the federation of the Union Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. This federation brought together the proud histories of these two institutions, but it also brought the challenges of creating a unified whole out of two formerly independent entities. These challenges are still being experienced, and in some ways, have kept Union-PSCE from building on the core strengths of the two schools.

The realities of the wider culture, the church, and the "marketplace" for theological education have been changing for decades. Church membership in mainline denominations continues to decline, and what is needed from seminary graduates differs in significant ways from the time when the current educational programs were established. Clearly, for the seminary to help renew the church, it will start by seeking to be renewed itself.

This seminary is committed to its own and the church's renewal. In fulfillment of that commitment, the seminary will attract, develop and send out scripturally informed, mission focused, theologically grounded, historically informed, spiritually nourished, culturally sensitive, transformation oriented church leaders to serve as pastors and educators in a variety of settings. In the 21st century, church leaders must be equipped with the skills both to administer and maintain currently thriving churches and to revitalize and construct new churches in a transient, technologically sophisticated, spiritually conscious, socially aware, fast aging and yet youth oriented

culture. Though these two emphases at first may seem incompatible, for a teaching institution they are not. Graduates who move to established churches will be expected to equip church members and officers to reach out more broadly; graduates entering start up or struggling situations require the skills to organize and revitalize. And yet, both groups require more than leadership skills; they need a strong grounding in the rich resources of the church throughout the centuries, especially the Reformed tradition, so that the communities they serve have a solid theological foundation.

Thus, renewal and revitalization are not just the themes of a strategic planning process, but signal a vigorous commitment to bear witness to God's transformative power in the present, a power that embraces and renews the seminary's own life and mission. This document intends to describe the shape and direction of this renewal, indicating in specific terms its transformative hopes.

Everyone at the seminary will make decisions based on this plan, including how to use resources. Those decision makers should find guidance here aligning their departmental and programmatic goals with the seminary's mission and resources. The purpose for this plan is to tell where the seminary is going over the next five years and how it will get there.

Objectives of this plan are set forth below in twelve areas of the Seminary's life and work. The achievement of the objectives in these areas is critical to the seminary's ability to fulfill its mission. Those areas are:

- I. **Seminary Resources**
- II. **Board Governance**
- III. **Student Body**
- IV. **Faculty**
- V. **Degrees**
- VI. **Curriculum**
- VII. **Center for Ministry and Leadership Development**
- VIII. **Institutional Advancement**
- IX. **Charlotte Program**
- X. **Richmond Property**
- XI. **Identity and Mission**
- XII. **Media and Technology**

Some of these objectives are self-explanatory. Some, by nature, are incomplete. Others require more analysis than circumstances allow at this time. In sum, they constitute the guiding strategies for this institution as it strives for renewal. They also constitute the framework from which action plans are to be made annually, presented to and approved by the Board of Trustees, and then implemented by the President, faculty and staff.

**Strategic Objective I - Seminary Resources.**

Consistent with its mission, strategic vision and resources, the seminary will achieve a balanced budget by July 1, 2014, based upon a draw on the then available endowment of no more than 5%. While the achievement of this goal will require cost containment and a resulting contraction of school size, a subsequent and parallel focus on increasing financial resources will allow expansion of school and program as funds become available to support such expansion.

- In movement toward the 5% endowment draw goal described above, the seminary will have achieved a balanced budget with a draw rate of no more than 6.75% by fiscal year 2010.<sup>1</sup>
- Beginning with the academic year 2009/2010, the seminary student body, faculty and staff will be annually reviewed by the President, in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board, to insure that size and work of each is commensurate with the strategic vision provided in this document and within the then available institutional resources.
- No later than July 1, 2010, the seminary will implement an ambitious capital campaign, the goal of which will be much larger than that of any previous campaign. The amount will be established by the Board of Trustees. A significant amount of the funds raised will be for endowment.
- By July 1, 2010, the seminary will have drafted and initiated a plan to lower the financial burden associated with its Richmond properties while simultaneously addressing the mission potential of those properties (see Goal X).
- The seminary commits itself and its resources to a two campus location (Richmond and Charlotte) and a vibrant Extended Campus Program.
- The seminary commits itself to maintaining equitable funding from available resources for Educational Ministries.

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<sup>1</sup> Other benchmark amounts and accompanying dates will follow here.

## **Strategic Objective II - Board Governance.**

The Board of Trustees will maintain and refine self-evaluative procedures that focus on assessing its leadership role and practices in order to promote and sustain the highest possible level of institutional governance.

- The Board will ensure a membership composition and size that exhibits an appropriate representation of pastoral ministry, church education, business and financial, and academic leadership skills.
- The Board will ensure a membership composition and size that exhibits a national geographical representation that takes into special consideration geographical representation from the Richmond and Charlotte communities where the two seminary campuses are located and other constituency rich geographical areas.
- The Board will maintain a diverse membership composition that includes representation from appropriate categories such as alumni/ae, traditionally underrepresented constituencies, vocational expertise, educational experience, and visionary thinking expertise.
- In order to ensure the most efficient leadership structure possible, the Board will evaluate and revise as necessary the identity, function, and configuration of its working committees.
- The Board will design and implement through its February retreat format an educational program that will enable increased proficiency and decision making capability in key governance areas: e.g., strategic planning; branding; curricular visioning; financial planning; fundraising; accreditation and assessment planning; investment planning.
- The Board will secure increasing financial support for the seminary through generous individual giving; active “door opening”, advocacy, follow-up; and influence.
- The Board will provide for the long-term success of the President through ongoing Board support and evaluation.

## **Strategic Objective III - Student Body.**

Consistent with its mission and purpose, the seminary will attract and develop scripturally informed, theologically grounded, historically informed, mission focused, spiritually nourished, culturally sensitive, transformation oriented church leaders passionate in their efforts to bring about the renewal of the church through the inbreaking of God’s Reign in the 21st century.

Union-PSCE is the one PCUSA seminary that can truly claim to prepare pastor-educators and educator-pastors. As a result of its historic relationship with the Presbyterian School of Christian Education and because of its recognition of the importance of educational ministry in the life of the church, the seminary affirms a strong commitment to the importance of educational ministries in the preparation of both educators and pastors.

With increased selectivity in admissions, the seminary will emphasize that it is preparing church leaders who are capable not only of surviving, but thriving in the opportunities presented in the unique, post-Christian leaning world of 21st century America. The seminary will demonstrate that it is looking for leaders whom it can train for an extraordinarily challenging time in the life of the American and global church. A time of such difficulty requires a leader equipped for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph 4:11).

- The size of the student body will be commensurate with the goals of the strategic vision and the seminary resources.
- The quality of applicants to the seminary will be enhanced, and the number of applications will increase by 30% over the next 5 years.
- The seminary will more vigorously engage alumni/ae and faculty in the outreach efforts of the Admissions Office.
- The seminary will expand its outreach efforts to include more racial/ethnic universities and colleges as well as churches.
- The seminary will expand its outreach to prospective students geographically. While the seminary will maintain a focus on the regions of Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, and South Carolina, the admissions office will develop and implement a national outreach strategy based on the seminary's national reputation of service to the church.
- The admissions office will continue to develop its ministry of vocational discernment with prospective students not only through its on-campus Weekends to Inquire and its off-campus visits with prospective students, but also through coordination with, and support of, Project Burning Bush (for high school students) and Kindling Weekends (for college students).

Educational Ministries faculty will be responsible for the curricular design of Project Burning Bush and, in conjunction with PBB staff, establish PBB as a model program in youth ministry in which attendees learn skills for discernment, and through which seminarians take credit-bearing courses that include leadership, teaching, and curriculum development opportunities.

- Students admitted or contemplating admission will be invited to participate in Extended Campus Program (ECP) courses introducing fundamental biblical and theological concepts in order to ease students' transition into the seminary.
- To facilitate the matriculation of racial/ethnic students, the offices of Admissions and Institutional Advancement, in collaboration with the President's office, will focus on working with racial/ethnic churches to

establish scholarships specifically aimed to assist racial/ethnic students. Asian American and Asian churches along with African American and Latino/a churches provide a fertile starting ground for such an endeavor.

- Entering students will be assigned to cohorts on both the Richmond and Charlotte campuses and within the Extended Campus Program (ECP) immediately after they accept admission. Cohorts will be assigned faculty and/or staff advisors and a pastoral advisor for the first semester of their matriculation. Following graduation, cohorts will regularly be invited back to a targeted program of continuing education that complements and expands the emphases of the curriculum.

- The seminary will continue to place students in internships and also direct residential students to local service projects such as CARITAS and Boaz and Ruth.

- As a part of the curriculum, each student will participate in a mission project that is not related to an internship, supervised ministry, or Clinical Pastoral Education. This mission priority/endeavor will be developed specifically from the curriculum, highlighting the emphases of the mission statement.

#### **Strategic Objective IV – Faculty.**

The seminary will maintain and build a diverse faculty of national reputation who are in vigorous support of and engaged with the mission of seminary, the renewal of the church and the development of educators and pastors to serve churches.

- The seminary will facilitate a learning climate that emphasizes creative collaboration across academic fields.

- The seminary will encourage a climate for vigorous research. Working from the principle that teaching is more informed, passionate, transformative, and relevant to the demanding needs of the contemporary church when it is grounded in research and reflection, the seminary will provide the support necessary for such research.

- The size of the faculty will be commensurate with the size of the student body, the goals of the strategic vision and seminary resources. While the current financial resources of the seminary mandates a smaller faculty size, as the resource environment improves and allows, faculty size will increase to meet the needs of the expanding seminary vision.

- The existing faculty salary scale will be expanded, as seminary resources permit, so that additional pay levels are available for full professors. A merit component will figure in faculty members' advancement through these extended salary levels.

- Faculty will model effective teaching methods and stay current in research and developments in their respective fields.

- Faculty will engage in professional development experiences that cultivate excellence in teaching.
- Faculty support for travel, research assistance, and instructional support will be included as a key emphasis in new budgets and in the capital campaign.
- To support the development of newer faculty and the publication of their scholarship, all untenured, tenure-track faculty will be eligible for a full year sabbatical following their first three years of full time teaching. The expectations for publication out of that sabbatical will be high.
- A comprehensive look at faculty workload and its impact on seminary resources will take place as the Curriculum Revision Task Force (see Goal VI below) goes about its work.
- Enhancing diversity in the faculty (e.g., theological, individuals from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds) will be a high priority for the seminary.
- New faculty will demonstrate significant competency (or receive immediate training) in the use of media and technology for teaching.
- Faculty presence in the teaching of evangelism is critical to the transformative effort of the seminary to train pastors/educators who will be able to engage in faithful ministry in an environment in which church membership is dwindling and the majority of Presbyterian churches have memberships of 100 members or less. Securing this presence through expanded adjunct teaching will occur as soon as feasible. Partial funding already exists in the McMillan chair endowment; this teaching role is critical enough that the McMillan chair should be fully funded and filled as soon as possible.
- Given the institution's commitment to equip both pastor-educators and educator-pastors, faculty members across disciplines will model support for and address the challenges and opportunities of pastoral and educational ministries as vocational callings. Faculty will therefore need to be aware of and open to the changing dynamics of congregational life.
- In order to be a premier school in educational ministries that meets the educational needs of the church, the institution will maintain a strong faculty in educational ministries who are able to: 1) engage in innovative individual and collaborative research and practice in the field; 2) strengthen course offerings across delivery platforms; 3) attract students; and 4) provide curricular continuity, breadth of scholarly and experiential perspective, and strong advising relationships with those students.
- A full time New Testament professor will be secured for the Charlotte campus as funding is available to endow fully the position.

## **Strategic Objective V – Degrees.**

Consistent with the vision, mission and resources of the seminary, no later than the academic year beginning July 1, 2010, the seminary will offer the following degree programs: M.Div.; M.A.C.E.; M.Div./M.A.C.E. Dual Degree; Th.M.; and Ph.D.

- The M.Div. and M.A.C.E. degrees will remain the core degrees of the institution.
- The seminary will aggressively market the dual M.Div./M.A.C.E. degree program alongside its other two core degrees as a unique degree program among PCUSA seminaries.
- The cohort groups referenced above will be engaged before they enter and after they leave the seminary, perhaps through the programming offered by the Center for Ministry and Leadership Development as set forth below.
- A program of significant financial aid will be developed so that there can be vigorous scholarship support to attract and sustain students, including stipends that extend beyond the cost of tuition.
- The seminary will consider making all program platforms interchangeable for its core programs so that students may utilize the three teaching platforms in creative ways. For example, while one student does the dual degree in four years of residence in Richmond, another may do a year or more in the ECP format, and finish the remaining years' requirements in residence. Still others may build some combination of courses in Charlotte and Richmond, or across all three platforms.
- Admissions to the M.A.T.S. degree will be suspended in 2009-2010. The future status of the program will be referred to the faculty's Professional Degrees Committee for study and recommendation.
- The Th.M. program will be continued with the areas of concentration currently offered, but no scholarships will be available for students unless new financial resources are secured to provide this support.
- The Ph.D. has been and continues to be an integral element of the Seminary's academic program and institutional identity. However, financial and staffing issues warrant a reexamination of the institution's ability to sustain the degree program, and the seminary is suspending admission to it. Based upon faculty deployment, appropriate curricular design, and available financial resources, the seminary will consider resuming admissions in 2010-2011 (and annually thereafter if not then), at half pace (6 admits instead of 12), in three tracks (Bible, History/Theology-Ethics; Christian Education).

As a part of its capital campaign, the seminary will solicit funding for re-admissions to the Ph.D. program in Bible, Church History, Theology and Ethics, and Christian Education. The true cost of sustaining such a program

(a staffing of 3 professors in each discipline, scholarship costs, library costs) will be highlighted as a part of the campaign and funds sought to secure it.

### **Strategic Objective VI – Curriculum.**

All aspects of the curriculum of the seminary will be reviewed and reformed to meet the goals of the seminary mission and strategic vision.

- The credit hours for the current M.Div., M.A.C.E., and M.Div./M.A.C.E. dual degree programs will be adjusted as the new curriculum is developed.

- The credit hours will be intentionally correlated with the proposed offering of continuing education/professional development courses in connection with the Center on Ministry and Leadership Development, particularly the connecting of cohorts to continuing education offerings for five years after graduation.

- The Richmond and Charlotte campus will initiate a shared Fall, Spring, May term academic calendar no later than the end of the 2009-2010 academic year.

- A Curriculum Task Force of the faculty will present its findings for a revised curriculum by the conclusion of the 2009-2010 academic year. The Curriculum Task Force will focus on achieving the emphases outlined in the mission statement and the strategic plan. Thus, the curriculum's focus will be on the preparation of deeply faithful, bold, impassioned leaders with pastoral and educational skills that can spark engagement with a technologically sophisticated, spiritually interested, socially concerned, multicultural world fast becoming more post-Christian by the day.

- In recognition of the importance of Christian education in the life of the church, Union-PSCE affirms a strong commitment to integrating training in educational ministries into the seminary's curricula for all degree programs. In order to realize this objective, President Blount has commissioned a Christian Education Task Force that will bring recommendations to the president by March 1, 2009. The seminary will respond to these recommendations by February 2010.

- The three platforms of Charlotte, Richmond, and ECP will function interdependently. Platform schedules will be synchronized to accommodate cross-platform registration.

- The ECP platform will be extended to M.Div. courses. It will also allow work with cohorts both prior to and following matriculation as well as allow for certification.

- The Libraries at Charlotte and Richmond will adjust their collection development policies to accord with the abovementioned revisions of the curriculum, and they will seek savings from those revisions wherever possible. They will emphasize expanding and building upon the libraries' electronic collection in order to address the

growing space limitations at both locations and to facilitate access to resources for students from both locations as well as off campus. Compact shelving will be acquired at Morton Library as soon as financially possible in order to deal with its space problem. The next capital campaign will seek funding to transform Morton Library's classification system to Library of Congress, or if deemed preferable, to replace the library's integrated library system with one that would make reclassification unnecessary.

**Strategic Objective VII – Center for Ministry and Leadership Development.**

The existing Center for Ministry and Leadership Development (CMLD) will be transformed into a comprehensive institutional platform that will direct all non-degreed programs and initiatives for the seminary.<sup>2</sup>

- The current Director of CMLD will take on additional duties as outlined below. Current seminary staffing will be reorganized so as to create a sufficient workforce to accomplish the Center's goals. Immediate costs will be related to necessary salary adjustments and the potential recruitment of persons to coordinate new or existing programs (e.g., Asian Studies).

- The Center for Ministry and Leadership Development will coordinate existing auxiliary programs, encourage and develop programs that promote the mission of the seminary and discontinue those that do not, as well as evaluate new program opportunities in light of strategic mission objectives. This center will therefore house and coordinate all non-degree programs for the seminary. This would include programs like the Sprunt Lectures, the Howie Center for Art, Science, and Theology, the Institute for Reformed Theology, and the Continuing Education program, as well as all certificate programs. The Center will also coordinate relationships with external programs like the Foundation for Reformed Theology.

- The Center will coordinate all continuing education efforts of the seminary, expanding such efforts beyond the traditional fare of courses for clergy and educators, though this emphasis will remain. Continuing Education seminars will take place in Richmond, Charlotte, and at affiliated church sites. The Center will find ways to move its content out into the churches as well as inviting interested students to either the Richmond or Charlotte campuses. As a part of this effort, the center will revise and re-establish the use of Caravans as a mechanism for church leadership training.

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<sup>2</sup> The Center for Ministry and Leadership Development is described in detail so that faculty, students, and staff will understand the level of transformation and the significant shift in program and responsibility. Because plans call for this shift to take place immediately after the adoption of the plan, the Strategic Planning Committee wanted to ensure that all constituencies had detailed information about the new CMLD in the plan itself.

- The Center will also develop more specialty emphases for its educational programming. Initiatives directed at areas such as first call, mid career, pre-retirement, women in ministry, racial/ethnic issues and concerns for ministry are examples of the possible ways of expanding the programming. The Center will also explore ways of connecting its programming with the programming of the worship center so that the work and teaching of the worship center can also become a part of the center's curricular possibilities.

- The Center will explore partnership programs with organizations and institutions, such as the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE), Montreat Conference Center, and other seminaries.

- The Center will offer "excellence in teaching" workshops (or professional development courses) for pastors, educators, and scholars (including Union-PSCE faculty).

- The Center will invite and house visiting scholars and, as possible, do so in ways that may allow their stay on campus to be integrated into the teaching of particular continuing education offerings. The Center will seek funding to support the stay and work of scholars who would come to do independent research and share their work with the community. Such scholars would make prime candidates for a Great Speaker's presentation (see below).

- Seminary Travel Seminars will be located and directed from the Center. The Center will coordinate such seminars with courses focusing on cultural location and its influences in biblical, historical, theological, and practical studies. It will also integrate such preparatory and follow up courses with continuing education courses where seminary students could be engaged in conversation with practicing clergy, educators, and interested laypersons. The ultimate goal will be a broadening of the travel seminars that will include not only students and faculty but also educators, clergy and laypersons who can participate in the preparatory and follow up courses related to particular travel seminars. In this way, cultural exposure would not be limited to enrolled students alone; it would provide opportunities for students and non-students to engage each other as together they engage new cultural experiences. Such an endeavor would require a broadening of the continuing education program beyond courses exclusively targeted to clergy or educators.

- The Center will house the multicultural initiatives of the seminary. The Asian Studies Program will be located in the center, and new programs for African American and Latino/a programming and research will be established. Strategies for recruitment of underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities will be generated here, as will racial/ethnic programming for black church studies, Latino/a church studies, etc. A program of study and interest in the Global South will be located here as well. Because the Center will have a director who will handle managerial and operational responsibilities, individual efforts directed by the Asian, African American, or Latino/a programs

will not require full time staffing. Instead, faculty whose primary role is teaching will be resources for the programming work and focus in each of these areas.

- Because administration of all of these programs, along with the travel seminars, will be located here, the Center will coordinate connections between program initiatives and travel opportunities so that as curricular initiatives in the various programs emphasize particular cultures, coordinated travel opportunities in those countries can be created.

- The Center will establish and direct a Great Speakers Program that will invite each year a scholar or public figure with an instrumental voice in the life of church and/or society. This speaker program will introduce the speaker through a series of lunchtime conversations on selected readings. The readings and conversations would be advertised to local churches and community as well as students. Readings and discussions could also take place online. The purpose of such events will be to expose students to ideas and thoughts that challenge and unsettle and that are part of the public discourse. Co-sponsorships with area universities and seminaries will also bring students, faculty, and staff from other schools to campus.

- The Center will develop a certification program for Commissioned Lay Pastors on the order of the Educator Certification Program, utilizing the distance technologies used in the Extended Campus Program.

- The Center, working with the Dean and Associate Dean of Academic Programs, will create a cohort program for the Richmond campus and Extended Campus Program (ECP) and work closely with the already established cohort pattern in Charlotte. Once admitted, new students will be assigned to a cohort that ideally will remain in place throughout their seminary career and at least five years after their seminary career (offerings in continuing education and professional development will be directed to such students for five years to complement their degree-program course work). Prior to matriculation into the seminary, the cohort will be assigned faculty and staff advisors. These advisors will be responsible for acclimating students to campus life and expectations prior to arrival on campus. They will facilitate communication between members of the cohort and provide direction for spiritual nurture. They will establish community prior to the cohort members becoming a part of the regular campus community. The cohort and advisors will remain in place throughout the seminary career of the members of the cohort. The Center will establish a curriculum of continuing education that will be made available to cohorts for five years following graduation. This curriculum will aim to complement and further the aims of the revised seminary curriculum.

- Working with the office that directs alumni/ae relations, the Center will create an alum-in-residence program. In this program, alumni/ae will be invited to teach periodic seminars in the May term in an area of their specific

expertise. To facilitate making such a situation possible, the Center will arrange to have seminary faculty and/or staff cover worship, teaching, and preaching duties of the visiting alum-in-residence for the period that he or she is on campus. This will not only allow students to have contact with alums skilled in a particular area and operating practically in that area, but will also increase the exposure of the seminary in churches.

- Working with the faculty in Educational Ministries and Practical Theology, the Center will develop and coordinate a program for recreational ministries. Innovative practitioners of recreational ministry may be recruited to lead workshops. Seminars with instructors whose work extends to various age groups (children, youth, older adults) and populations may be created. Opportunities to explore and experience games, music, dance, etc., from various cultures will increase and model diversity. Opportunities for serving the neighboring Northside community will be explored. The primary audience for these workshops includes pastors, associate pastors, youth directors, and Christian educators working in churches. These workshops also will be provided in a way that is accessible to students enrolled in Recreational Ministry courses.

- The Director of the Center for Ministry and Leadership Development will become Dean of the Center. The Dean will become a member of the President's Executive Staff.

#### **Strategic Objective VIII - Institutional Advancement.**

By the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year, the seminary institutional advancement department will have: (a) completed the planning necessary to begin a comprehensive capital funds campaign for the priorities identified by the strategic plan; (b) created a case for support and communication plan to support the campaign; (c) put in place the staff necessary to conduct the capital campaign; (d) revised and implemented necessary gift policies of the seminary; (e) created a plan for full involvement of Trustees, alumni/ae, faculty, staff, and other volunteers; and (f) developed the programs by which all seminary constituents are regularly contacted and provided means by which their relationships with the seminary are fostered, maintained, and enhanced.

- A Comprehensive Capital Campaign will begin in the 2010-2011 academic year. Feasibility studies will be commenced to determine a realistic funding goal. The campaign will strive not only to cover costs associated with the current strategic plan initiative, but also to ensure the long-term financial health of the seminary as stated in Goal I.

- The seminary will consistently and effectively educate faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae, and congregations about the identity and mission of the seminary to assist in the advancement of the institution.

- Institutional Advancement will maximize relationships with alumni/ae for full participation in sustaining the mission of the seminary. Through the department's work with alumni/ae, coordination with Admissions and Field Education and Vocation (OFEV) will be integrated and enhanced. Working with appropriate church and presbytery committees, alumni/ae will become involved as active student recruiters, interviewers of prospective students, mentors of students during service opportunities and internships, and mentors of new graduates throughout the call process and first years of ministry.

- The Alumni/ae Association, will grow into a vital program of the seminary featuring chapters and appropriate affinity groups.

- Alumni/ae participation in financial support of the seminary will increase to more than 40%.

- Through the coordination of the department, alumni/ae will work with the Center for Ministry and Leadership Development toward the creation of an alum-in-residence program (see Goal VII Center for Ministry and Leadership Development above). Alumni/ae will also have opportunity to offer regular input regarding desired programming, and will participate in continuing education opportunities at increased rates.

**Strategic Objective IX - Charlotte Program.**

The Charlotte campus is a vibrant, thriving component of the seminary's witness and work, consistent with the institution's mission and resources. The Charlotte campus will be more fully integrated into the life of the overall institution.

- By the end of the 2009-2010 academic year, the two campus calendars will be adjusted so that Charlotte and Richmond operate on the same calendar. The adjustment will include the elimination of the Richmond January term and the creation of a shared Fall, Spring, and May terms and Summer sessions.

- Planning will be made for a more efficient interchange of faculty and students between the two campuses.

- The Charlotte Space Committee will secure a facility (either purchased or leased) for the operation of the Charlotte campus and a move to that new location will be implemented by June 30, 2012. The facility will provide space for faculty and staff offices, classrooms, a student lounge area, and perhaps a limited number of apartments for visiting faculty and staff. The facility will also have a fully integrated information technology component for seamless communication with the Richmond campus.

- Faculty travel between the campuses will be encouraged and supported. It is especially encouraged that some faculty exchange campuses during the shorter May terms. As residential housing is being developed on the Richmond campus (either at the Westwood Tract or through the refurbishing of the campus Quadrangle's housing)

and as building facilities are secured for the Charlotte campus, apartment room space will be set aside to accommodate faculty on temporary exchange service.

- Charlotte requires the immediate hiring of a professor of New Testament. This position will be filled when funding is available to fully endow it.

**Strategic Objective X - Richmond Property.**

In furtherance of its mission and consistent with its resources, as soon as possible, but no later than June 30, 2014, the seminary will implement a plan for use and sale of its facilities based on the following principles:

- The current version of the Campus Master Plan will be reviewed and revised as needed to be consistent with the number of students, faculty and staff that will be a part of the seminary community as a result of the implementation of the initiatives outlined in this Strategic Plan.

- The purpose and location of the Newbury Center will be studied to determine if it can be re-imagined as an Educational Ministry laboratory for teaching spiritual formation somewhere on campus. In this way, it will provide an actual testing ground for putting theories about spiritual formation into practice. These practices could then be confidently introduced as teaching models for the young in church contexts across the country. Such a program would invite the research and participation of both faculty and students.

- Students in the M.Div., M.A.C.E., and M.Div./M.A.C.E. dual programs will have the opportunity for internships at the center focused on particular learning objectives.

- If the study mentioned above indicates that the space for such an Educational Ministry laboratory can be contained in the main campus quadrangle, then the current Newbury Center facility may be sold.

- As part of the effort to reduce seminary land holdings, either income will be earned from the 35 acres of the Westwood Tract, and the resources of the seminary used in a way that will have a transformative impact on the life of the community, or the property will be sold.

- Wherever possible, recreational space will be maintained for public use.

- Conversations with neighbors and community organizations will take place as soon as is practical in the development process to ensure a development will be viewed as an asset to the neighborhood.

- Following the recommendations of the Seminary Master Plan (noted above), Dubose and Lingle Halls will be sold by June 30, 2014. The bookstore and food services, now located in Lingle, will be relocated to the Quadrangle.

### **Strategic Objective XI – Identity and Mission.**

By May 30, 2009, the seminary will have concluded the evaluation of its name and will have begun the work necessary to formulate and circulate its name and mission throughout the PCUSA and nation.

- The current name, Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Union-PSCE for short, is under review. Neither of the two former schools denoted by the two distinct components of the present name currently exists; a new, federated institution has taken their place.

- The seminary will adopt a name that reflects its current and future identity and mission no later than the 2010-11 academic year. An appropriate seminary logo will be drafted and the new name, logo and mission of the seminary will be disseminated in as broad a context as possible.

- The seminary will plan appropriate celebratory events to commemorate its 200th anniversary in 2012.

### **Strategic Objective XII - Media and Technology.**

Consistent with resources, the seminary media and technology will provide the necessary support for all aspects of the community to fulfill the seminary's mission in the 21st century.

- Internet, video, and computer technologies will be utilized to build seamless communication between the Charlotte and Richmond campuses. Video streaming, web based instructional tools, and other computer technologies will enhance the ability to share course content across the two campuses.

- Use of these technologies will enable the seminary to share faculty expertise between the two campuses and avoid the need to hire new faculty or unduly burden faculty members with excessive travel demands.

- Computer and internet technologies should also be utilized to enable students to connect to classroom resources like lectures in real time, as well as asynchronous discussion. Developing this technology will be especially important for the Charlotte campus as the obstacles of traveling distances (fuel costs, etc.) become more prevalent and enduring. Such resources will never replace classroom interaction, but they should be developed to augment such interaction, and, where necessary, provide a temporary alternative.

- Faculty will be trained more aggressively in technologies for teaching and learning, especially those associated with the Early Center and the connections to the Charlotte campus. New faculty searches will demonstrate preference for candidates showing facility and ease with using technology in and out of the classroom. Having faculty who can provide competent online instruction and make effective use of other advanced media capabilities for teaching will enhance the seminary's ability to interact with a generation of students whose previous educational programs

have made extensive use of such resources. Such interaction between students and faculty will better position students to make use of these ever present resources for ministry after they graduate.

- The use of resources developed for connecting the Charlotte and the Richmond campuses and the students on the various campuses to their colleagues, professors, and classrooms from home will also be explored cooperatively with local churches. The seminary will endeavor to build “hubs” for video, internet, and computer distance teaching at local churches where educators, clergy, elders, and lay members from a particular community may be invited to engage in teaching activities initiated from either the Richmond or the Charlotte campuses.

- By June 30, 2012, all seminary offices will be operating primarily as paperless offices. Correspondence, archiving of data, communications, etc., will be conducted electronically. Each seminary department should begin immediately developing plans for reaching this 2012 goal. Plans will be submitted to the Director of Media Facilities and the Vice President of Finance and Administration for review.

- In order to facilitate advanced use of and exposure to media and technology for teaching, the seminary will need to upgrade its staff by hiring persons with advanced IT capabilities. A more comprehensive information technology infrastructure is needed that will more efficiently link the needs of student services, the registrar’s office, admissions, the library, and work in the classrooms.

## **THE FUTURE AFTER 2014**

It is not the purpose or intent of this strategic plan to set forth all objectives for the next three to five years and thereafter. Instead, the intent is to provide a plan that will, in the next three to five years, become the foundation for further plans, activities and development. This plan will supply the impetus for annual action plans prepared and presented by President Blount to the Board of Trustees. The Assessment Committee, a committee composed of board members, faculty, administrative officers and students meeting monthly throughout the academic year, will monitor progress toward the goals emerging from the President’s action plan and report its findings to the president. The Strategic Plan as a whole, will be updated and projected for an additional three to five years, no later than June 30, 2012.

Several opportunities for the seminary should be added to this plan in the next 5 years or thereafter, if circumstances and resources permit. Among these opportunities, the following are of particular importance to the mission of the seminary and so are enumerated here.

### **A. Interdisciplinary Ph.D. and the Future of the Church**

A more comprehensive, interdisciplinary Ph.D. on the Future of the Church will be contemplated as a self-funded initiative that will be presented to foundations interested in the work and life of the church. At present, there are no fully subscribed academic programs marshalling their efforts toward comprehending the plight of the contemporary church in the American setting. While there are programs in Bible, Theology, Practical Theology, Christian Education, and Church History across the country, there are no programs in the Future Church. The seminary will propose to church interested foundations and individual churches the creation of a Ph.D. program with such a specific interest in not only learning about the plight of the contemporary church but also maintaining a strong focus on the transformation of the church to meet its unique 21st century circumstances. This program would create a vocational think tank whose objective would be the creation of scholars not only for the academy, but also for the church. The dissertations and papers and books they write will not only assist the church as it meets its 21st century challenges; these scholars would also be uniquely positioned as pastors, educators, and presbytery, synod, and General Assembly (and related denominational) officers who would be particularly trained to assist the church in discerning and navigating the times. Unlike the D.Min., this would be a research oriented degree that required full time residential study and rigorous attention to the history and future of the church. The level of work and the expectations of that work would be considerably higher. Though it would also incorporate the knowledge base of current faculty working in an interdisciplinary fashion, this Ph.D. would need to be self sustaining. Its professors would focus on such matters as church growth, missional emphases, multi-culturalism, urban ministry, spirituality, and evangelism. Grants would be sought on the level of the \$10 million Lilly Grant awarded recently to Emory University for its Initiative in the Graduate Education of Scholars and Teachers in Practical Theology and Religious Practices.

### **B. Worship Center**

Renewed worship that is grounded in the past, connected to the present, and reaching toward the future is a critical ingredient in the life of vibrant and growing congregations. Some persons of both younger and older generations find that current worship practices are unappealing, uninteresting, and disconnected from the experiences of their lives and the needs of the world around them; others prefer traditional models of reformed worship that have served the church for generations. Addressing these challenges provides an opportunity for the seminary to contribute to the renewal of the church by creating a Worship Center to coordinate and model worship practices to address the hunger and needs of a rapidly changing culture. In a transient and fragmented world, the Worship

Center will highlight and develop the significance of building, deepening, and maintaining healthy relationships with God, with neighbors, and with the world around us. The Center will develop worship practices that address the ecological challenges of our world, develop intergenerational relationships, and promote the struggle for justice and equality for all people. Given the rising importance of technology, the Worship Center will incorporate technology in ways that are integrative, foster spiritual growth and theological depth, and lead to active engagement in the work of social justice.

As funding is available, a Dean of the Chapel, ideally a Professor of Liturgics, distinct from the Dean of Students, will be responsible for shaping the Center's direction, working with faculty, mentoring students, and developing campus worship services and resources that address the needs of the community and the church. Interdisciplinary courses that bring together Bible and worship, Christian education and worship, Bible and homiletics, theology and homiletics, and church history and liturgy exemplify the way the curriculum of the center could develop. As no theological institution in the Reformed tradition (in the U.S.) provides for advanced liturgical study, the Worship Center could fill an important void in the life of the church.

The Worship Center will require additional funding for both program and personnel. Raising funding will be a goal of a future capital campaign. The Early Center and Lake Chapel provide an excellent site out of which this kind of Center can take root and grow

### **C. Westwood Tract**

A longer term vision (whose completion is beyond the scope of the current five-year plan, but whose groundwork should presently be laid and whose feasibility will be determined by June 30, 2012) for the Westwood Tract will envision use of the space that will have a transformative impact on the life of the seminary, church, and community simultaneously. Cooperation will be sought with local neighborhood representatives, the Children's Hospital, and the wider community to create a communal space.

The primary focus would be two-fold: 1) housing for students, if that need cannot be adequately met around the main campus quadrangle (particularly students with families), and 2) housing for retired clergy, educators, scholars, and missionaries (thus creating a strong pool of potential alum-in-residence candidates—see Center for Ministry and Leadership Development section: Goal VII ). This senior oriented housing would take precedence and would be mixed with residential single family housing, which could also provide housing for faculty, should there be an extraordinary circumstance where a faculty member could not obtain private housing, and students, should there be insufficient student housing on the quad. A portion of the space would be dedicated to developing

a sliding-scale community health center on the site that would be of service for the broader community. Working with the community, the seminary will generate efforts on the Chamberlayne side of the campus that will create space for complementary support businesses and professional offices that would make it unnecessary for Westwood and other neighborhood residents to travel distances for medical, dental, grocery and other services. Working in support programs like a sliding-scale community health center and working to develop communal infrastructure support services would give opportunity for students and faculty alike to engage in real-life missional work in the Richmond community. The seminary could become in this way a laboratory where students could learn the necessary tools to become change agents in communities where they ultimately are called to serve. Knowledge and experience gained in seeking government grants for housing and the health center as well as in working with community agencies will be directly translatable to communities—urban, suburban, and rural—across the country and world.

Thinking, planning, and work on such a communal objective would engage the seminary in and with the community in ways that would be unique. No other seminary in the country has this kind of direct tie-in between its location and its curriculum/program. Such a missional approach to the seminary's work would position the institution to use its location as a "gift" and gift its students with exposure and training unavailable to them at any other PCUSA seminary.

## **CLOSING: A THEOLOGY FOR ACTION**

A. The primary audience for the work of a seminary is neither student nor church, but God. A seminary's work, the way it establishes its mission, sets up its infrastructure, deploys its people and programs, and envisions its curricula is to bear witness to the reality and power of God's future Reign throughout the present moment in which we find ourselves.

B. Committed to God, we are called to depend faithfully upon the faithfulness of God as we receive that gift in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the ongoing activity of God's Spirit. In light of God's faithfulness to us, we dare to map out our strategy for the future work that we do on God's behalf. The issues before us are daunting. The God who sets the future on its course engages those issues with us. Wrestling with those issues, we trust that we will be given what God has promised us already in Jesus Christ and in him, what God will have Union-PSCE become. We live and work from faith to faith, and so we should not be surprised that here too there is a word for us, even in the midst of our struggles: "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40).