

The Centre for the Study of Ministry: Governance and Administrative Structure

The text of the proposal was approved by the Toronto School of Theology's Board of Trustees June 9, 2009.

Summary

This is a proposal for the establishment of a Centre for the Study of Ministry (CSM) as an interdisciplinary graduate academic unit housed within the Toronto School of Theology (TST). It will have three functions to:

1. administer TST's Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program, according to policies, standards, learning outcomes, and procedures approved by TST's Advanced Degree Council;
2. promote and support interdisciplinary scholarly research in ministry; and
3. advance education and conversation in the area of ministry among a wider public.

It will be administered by a Director, who will be appointed by the TST Director. Its members will include:

1. TST faculty members with advanced degree status cross-appointed from TST member and affiliate colleges, with the permission of their college heads;
2. University faculty members with graduate teaching status cross-appointed from other departments; and
3. others with like credentials in research and teaching.

Its associates will include faculty members, researchers and persons with significant experience and academic ability in the practice of ministry, but lacking advanced degree or graduate teaching status. It will also have an administrative staff. Its budget will be in whole or in part dependent on the TST budget, as approved annually by the TST Board of Trustees. Its policies and procedures will be closely modeled on those of an extra-departmental unit at the University of Toronto of the type categorized as EDU:B.

I. Description of the Unit

1. Mandates

The CSM will administer the Doctor of Ministry program. Its functions will include the recruitment and admission of students, the cross-appointment of teaching faculty, the approval of courses, the appointment of teaching supervisors and supervisory committees, the supervision and evaluation of students, the administration of comprehensive examinations, the examination of theses and the oversight of other academic administration relating to the DMin program. Programs and academic standards for the DMin program will remain under the jurisdiction of the Advanced Degree Council.

The CSM will promote research in the study of ministry, particularly in Canada, and will support scholarly reporting in appropriate academic journals, including the Toronto Journal of Theology.

The CSM will advance education and conversation in the area of ministry among a wider public through such vehicles as lectureships, conferences, invitational programs and publication in professional periodicals.

2. Reasons for Establishing the Centre

a) The CSM will rationalize the resourcing of the Doctor of Ministry program by the colleges. Members of the CSM will include interested TST faculty members whose commitment has been approved by their college heads. The budgeting process will be highly transparent. We believe that the CSM can attract private funding as well.

b) The CSM will be structured administratively and financially in a way that gives the [TST member] colleges a strong sense of ownership in the DMin program. In particular, the financing of the DMin program will be modeled on the financing of other advanced degree programs at TST (by which student tuition fees and government grant revenues flow to the member colleges, while TST expenses are covered by assessments on the colleges). This financial model will encourage colleges to support the program with educational resources, recruit students for the program and support students in the program with college financial assistance.

c) A Centre structure will make it possible, administratively simple, and attractive to cross-appoint faculty resources from across the University.

d) Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the DMin program, it should be administered by an interdisciplinary unit.

e) The CSM will be structured in a way that facilitates business planning and strategic planning, thus helping to ensure a strong future for the DMin program and for its other functions.

f) The CSM's research function will raise TST's international profile for academic leadership, encourage faculty members in the study of ministry to do the research and publication necessary for them to be qualified for advanced degree teaching, and make TST and the University a richer place.

g) For all these reasons, the creation of the CSM will add strength to TST's application to the Ontario Centre for Graduate Studies (OCGS) for the approval of the DMin program.

h) The CSM will answer a significant need in Canada for original research in the theory and practice of ministry.

i) The CSM will answer a significant need in Canada for academically reputable ecumenical education and conversation in the theory and practice of ministry among academics, clergy, religious, lay professionals and others.

j) According to the report in September 2007 of the Interdisciplinarity Committee Working Group appointed by the Provost of the University of Toronto, "Faculty members and students are attracted to the innovative and exciting qualities of interdisciplinary research and teaching."

3. Units Involved

The CSM will draw its teaching resources primarily from TST member and affiliate colleges. With the permission of their heads of colleges, the CSM will invite the participation of faculty members with advanced degree status in Bible, history, pastoral studies and theology. The CSM will also draw teaching resources from other units of the University, which might include professors with graduate teaching status in such areas as education, law, medicine and medical ethics, music, religious studies and social work.

The CSM may also appoint persons with like credentials from other universities. The CSM will also invite the assistance of persons in an associate capacity who lack graduate or advanced degree teaching status; such persons would include TST professors without advanced degree status and persons with academic strengths and experience who are engaged in the practice of ministry.

II. Process for Establishment

1. Background

In 2007 the TST Doctor of Ministry program began to be offered in a new online learning format. As it seemed wise to evaluate the effectiveness of this new delivery model immediately, the TST Director, at the request of the TST Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, convened a review panel, chaired by Principal Dorcas Gordon of Knox College, for this purpose. Surveys of students and interviews indicated overall satisfaction with the educational quality of the program. Moreover, the high number of applications for admission to the program (whose space is restricted to a cohort of twelve persons a year), and the high retention rate, gave further evidence that the program meets an important need in Canada, is well regarded, and appears to have a strong future. However, the panel's report identified several other issues, most prominently the clumsy administrative structure of the program, the overload on the Director of the program, the thin and undependable faculty resourcing and an anomalous revenue structure.

The TST Committee of Representing Members (CORM - the heads of the member TST colleges) discussed the report of the review panel in May 2008, and asked for a review of these matters, with the objective of creating a viable business plan for the DMin program. In particular, the heads asked that consideration be given to organizing the DMin program in an interdisciplinary academic centre to which faculty members would be cross-appointed, as a way of addressing the issues that had been identified. The committee for the business plan included Terry Donaldson (TST Director for Advanced Degree Programs), Alan Hayes (TST Director), Andrew Irvine (TST DMin Program Director) and Peter Patterson (TST Board Treasurer). This committee met several times during 2008-2009. Its work included interviewing faculty members currently involved in the DMin program, gathering information from Directors of two academic centres (or extra-departmental units) at the University of Toronto (the Centre for the Study of Religion and the Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies) and from the Vice-dean for Programs of the School of Graduate Studies, consulting with the Principal and others from Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, which has an OCGS-approved DMin program and with which TST expects to develop agreements for the sharing of resources, gathering financial data for successive spreadsheet analyses and consulting with CORM. Over these months, progress reports have been given to the Advanced Degree Council and the Board of Trustees. In March 2009 the committee on the business plan reported to CORM its recommendation for the establishment of a Centre for the Study of Ministry. CORM requested further financial projections, which were completed in April 2009. CORM then endorsed the recommendation.

2. Further Steps Towards Approval

[These steps have now been taken: a conditional approval by the TST Board of Trustees on Monday, April 27, 2009; satisfaction of a condition for faculty resourcing, recognized by the Executive of the TST Board of Trustees on Monday, June 8, 2009; and endorsement by the TST Advanced Degree Council on Tuesday, June 9, 2009.]

III. Director

1. University Model

For the qualifications, duties, responsibilities, and term of the Director of the CSM, we intend to follow the model of the University of Toronto for the Director of a centre which conducts programs in which students can enrol.

2. Executive Authority

The Director of the CSM will be its chief executive officer and will report directly to the Director of TST. While the Director may elect to delegate authority to other academic administrators in the CSM, he/she will retain responsibility for the overall direction of the CSM and in particular for authority over the budget and recommendations for appointments. The Director shall consult with the members of the CSM on matters of policy and practice, but is ultimately responsible for all administrative decisions that are within his/her jurisdiction and authority.

3. Qualifications

Directors of the CSM will be appointed for their intellectual and administrative abilities, devotion to education and research, judgment and qualities of leadership.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The Director has responsibility for the management of the CSM and for the implementation of approved policies in all aspects of its operation. In particular, he or she is expected to:

a) administer the Doctor of Ministry program according to the policies, standards, and procedures of the program established by the Advanced Degree Council;

b) administer the other operations of the CSM;

c) administer the budget of the CSM from ongoing TST budgets and from external funding sources;

d) create an environment conducive to the growth of intellectual life within the CSM and maintain the confidence and co-operation of their teaching staff, administrative staff and students;

e) manage effectively and efficiently the external relations of the CSM so as to facilitate support for its educational and research activities;

f) represent the CSM's policies and points of view, while also, an officer of the TST, making independent judgements on TST matters;

g) put the interest of the CSM ahead of his/her own research interest or specialty;

h) promote the teaching, research and scholarship of the teaching staff of the CSM and to ensure an equitable distribution of work;

i) promote the career development of administrative staff;

j) hold regular meetings of CSM members and of its Advisory Committee; and, in developing and implementing CSM policy, to seek the advice of the CSM through its

members (especially in the case of prospective program changes) or Advisory Committee (especially in the case of confidential matters);

k) appoint administrative personnel and academic administrative officers according to TST policies and procedures;

l) request, where justified, research assistance from the TST Director to maintain the continuity of research work; and

m) convey to all stakeholders, regularly and frequently, the accomplishments, progress, and aims of the CSM

5. Term of Office

The term of office of the Director of the CSM is up to a maximum of five years, with the possibility of one renewal up to a maximum of five years. No further renewal after two terms shall be considered except where very unusual circumstances exist which, in the judgement of the TST Director, with the approval of CORM, make such renewal desirable.

6. Absence

In the case of the absence of the Director, the following procedures will apply.

a) During the temporary absence of the Director for up to two months, the Director of the CSM shall recommend to the TST Director the appointment of either an Associate Director or a senior member of the teaching staff to serve as acting Director.

b) In the event of the absence of the Director of the CSM for a period of more than two months or if the office of the Director of the CSM becomes unexpectedly vacant, the TST Director, after consultation with members of the CSM and the TST Director of Advanced Degree Programs, and with the approval of CORM, shall appoint an Acting Director for a period of no more than one year and forward the recommendation to the President who shall thereafter transmit his/her own recommendation to the appropriate body of the Governing Council.

7. Appointment

a) In the appointment of a Director of the CSM, including situations where the current Director is eligible for a renewal of term, the TST Director shall first arrange a review of the work of the Centre.

b) In consultation with the TST Director of Advanced Degree Programs and CORM, the Director shall appoint an advisory committee for the nomination of a Director of the CSM. The advisory committee will normally be comprised of the TST Director of Advanced Degree Programs, a member of CORM, three teaching members of the CSM, one or two students, a University representative appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and a student. The membership of this committee shall be made public. All members and all administrative staff of the CSM shall be informed of steps being taken to appoint a new Director, and they shall be invited to communicate opinions concerning candidates within or outside the CSM and to submit nominations. The committee shall consider the names suggested and also any additional names arising from any other source.

In the event of the resignation of a member of the advisory committee, the TST Director, after consultation with the advisory committee, may replace the member. Should a

member of the advisory committee decide to be considered for nomination, that member shall resign.

c) The recommendation of the committee and the vote shall be transmitted to the TST Director, who shall make a recommendation to the TST Board of Trustees.

d) In the case of the founding Director of the CSM, the nominee of the TST Director is Professor Andrew Irvine. The TST Director proposes, subject to the consent of Knox College, to extend his current three-year term of secondment to TST by an additional two years.

8. Removal

a) A Director of the CSM may be removed only for misconduct, incompetence, neglect of duty or other significant failure to exercise the duties and responsibilities of the position.

b) Where there is perceived cause for removal resulting from a conflict between the Director of the CSM and the teaching staff, or between the Director of the CSM and the TST Director, the procedures of the University of Toronto in like situations shall be followed analogously. Where University policy gives authority to Governing Council, this authority will be exercised by the TST Board of Trustees; where University policy gives authority to the President, this authority will be exercised by CORM; and where University policy gives authority to the provost or dean, this authority will be exercised by the TST Director.

IV. Organization

a) The Director of the CSM shall be accountable to the TST Director. In particular, the Director of the CSM shall make an annual report to the TST Director describing the achievements of the unit, the quality and level of activity including the participation of the Steering Committee, the structure of the unit and its functioning, the adequacy of funding, and other relevant matters.

b) The Director of the CSM shall appoint a Graduate Secretary with responsibility for the DMin program. It is expected that in the early years of the CSM, the Director of the CSM will also be the Graduate Secretary.

c) The Director of the CSM shall exercise his or her responsibilities under the guidance of the Steering Committee.

d) The Steering Committee comprises four or five members appointed by the TST Director in consultation with the Director of the CSM. One member shall be the TST Director of Advanced Degree Programs; one member may be a student; and the other members shall be full faculty members of the CSM. The chief non-academic administrative staff member may be invited to attend. The Steering Committee should meet at least twice a year.

e) The Steering Committee shall:

1. Assist in shaping policies, practices and goals;
2. Foster and develop interdisciplinary research and education programs;
3. Participate in decisions for cross-appointing suitable teaching staff, appointing associates, and appointing adjunct, visiting and status-only faculty members;
4. Participate in decisions for mounting core courses in the DMin program, including the appointment of teachers and teaching assistants, and identifying elective courses;

5. Provide for the administration of such student bursaries as may be in the gift of the CSM;
6. Assist in developing policies for the evaluation of faculty members, bearing in mind that they report to more than one unit;
7. Advise on financial and budgetary aspects of the CSM; and
8. Assist with administrative matters.

f) The CSM shall have no primary rights of appointment of faculty members, but shall have authority to request and implement cross-appointments of members. In the case of cross-appointments of TST faculty members, the request is made to the head of the college in which the TST faculty member is appointed. In the case of cross-appointments of University faculty, the request is normally made to the Dean of the division or the Chair of the department concerned. The CSM will negotiate schedules of faculty commitments from the member colleges so that all parties can do sound academic planning. Teaching members of the CSM may pursue grievances through their unit of primary appointment.

g) The CSM shall have an Academic Committee. The Steering Committee with the Director of the CSM shall appoint its membership, or they may themselves choose to function as the Academic Committee. The Graduate Secretary, if different from the Director of the CSM, shall be a member of the Academic Committee. The Academic Committee shall advise and assist the Graduate Secretary in administering the DMin program according to the policies, standards, and procedures established by the TST Advanced Degree Council, including:

1. Recruiting students;
2. Making offers of admission, subject to decisions of academic eligibility by the TST Director of Advanced Degree Programs;
3. Appointing advisers, supervisory committees, comprehensive examination committees, thesis supervisors and thesis examination committees for students;
4. Approving student Independent Learning Plans; and
5. Making decisions within its authority on student petitions.

h) The CSM shall have an Advisory Council, which shall meet once a year. The Director of the CSM shall appoint its members, who should typically include CSM teaching members and students, members of the wider TST and University communities, persons engaged in the practice of ministry and persons representing ecclesial judicatories and inter-faith partners. The Advisory Council shall:

1. Constitute a forum for regular communications on matters bearing on the effectiveness of the CSM;
2. Provide feedback on the CSM's strategic planning;
3. Assist in directing research and education programs productively; and
4. Assist in external relations and in the promotion of the CSM.

i) The CSM may partner with external institutions.

j) Literature reviews at the University of Toronto regarding interdisciplinary units and experience indicate that successful units are adept at communicating and creating and sustaining collegial networks both within the institution and externally. It will be critical for the CSM to establish a forum where discussions, at both the scholarly and administrative levels, can occur. Such communication needs to recognize and accept disparate disciplinary cultures.

V. The Doctor of Ministry Program

The CSM will administer the DMin program, which is a professional interdisciplinary doctoral program for persons engaged in ministry. Students typically have an undergraduate degree and a Master of Divinity degree, and have been engaged in the professional practice of ministry for at least five years. They are admitted in cohorts of twelve, who, after an orientation, take five core courses together (adult learning principles, critical thinking, research design, research methods, contexts for Scripture and Church). Since the summer of 2007, the core courses have been offered in the format of intensive residentials plus online conversation. Students then individually choose elective courses, complete a comprehensive examination and research and write a thesis. The program is undertaken on a "flexible time" basis, in which the student is registered in full-time studies at least until the thesis stage, but is also continuing to be engaged in the practice of professional ministry. The degree is awarded conjointly by the participating member college of TST in which the student is registered, with the University of Toronto. The degree is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. It has not been submitted to the Ontario Council for Graduate Studies (OCGS) for approval. OCGS-approved DMin programs currently exist at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary of Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, and at St. Paul's University, Ottawa. It is TST's intention to ask the University for permission to seek OCGS approval, subject to strategic considerations of timing, in relation to which we are in discussion with the Office of Planning and Budget at the University of Toronto.

VI. Teaching Staff

Following approval in principle of the establishment of the CSM by the Advanced Degree Council and the TST Board of Trustees, and before final approval by or under the authority of the TST Board of Trustees, a teaching staff of at least ten professors will be identified, in consultation with the TST heads of colleges and others.

VII. Budget

The operating budget of the CSM will be provided annually by the TST through assessments on the colleges according to the general pattern already established for other advanced degree programs. Student tuition fees and government grant revenue will flow to the colleges. CORM has considered and endorsed a business plan for the CSM. According to projections in the business plan for the next five years, revenues to the colleges on account of the DMin program will exceed costs. The change from the current system for financing the DMin program will be revenue neutral in respect to TST.

VIII. Reviews

An external review shall be commissioned by the TST Director at a regular interval, normally corresponding to the term of the Director of the CSM. Its purposes and procedures shall be guided by the University of Toronto's Policy for Assessment and Review of Academic Programs and Units. The process of periodic review can assist to highlight and promote successful initiatives and to modify unsuccessful ones. A part of the review should include a consideration of whether the type and level of activity of the CSM is appropriate to its mission and vice versa. The review document shall be received by the TST Director and is shared with CORM, the TST Board, and other stakeholders for comment.

IX. Space and Facility Needs

The CSM will be headquartered in the TST Building. The CSM may ask colleges for access to classrooms and lecture halls for specific courses and other purposes.

X. Particular Considerations for the TST Advanced Degree Council

1. The Director of the CSM will be ex officio a member of the Advanced Degree Council (ADC).
2. Program requirements, policies, learning outcomes and standards for the DMin program, including cohort sizes, will continue to be determined by the ADC.
3. Persons teaching courses in the DMin program must continue to have advanced degree teaching status as determined by the ADC.
4. At an early date a revised DMin Handbook will be submitted to the ADC for approval.