



APDP Curricular Review

*Research to Understand the Range and Effectiveness of Curricular
and Co-Curricular Program Elements of Accelerated Pastoral
Degree Programs*

Tom Keppeler PhD
Tom.j.keppeler@gmail.com
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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade the Kern Family Foundation has been involved in promoting renewal and innovation in theological education. At a very practical level this involvement has entailed significant financial investment in seminaries and theological institutions with a view toward promoting ministerial training that effectively prepares and equips people for pastoral ministry while at the same time reducing the cost and time for students involved in such training. Since 2011, the Foundation has invested \$30.3M to 40 institutions. A 2019 internal Foundation summative report identified five essential elements of successful accelerated pastoral degree programs (APDP): 1) A passionate program director devoted to the APDP at least half-time, 2) Broad institutional ownership by faculty and administration, 3) A cohesive student cohort experience for formation and camaraderie, 4) Spiritual and pastoral formation through seminary and church partnerships and 5) Marketing/Recruitment/Creating awareness within and beyond the institution.¹

Given nine years of significant investment in a growing number of institutions and in view of the five essential elements that have been identified as contributing to APDP success, this research initiative sought to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the range and effectiveness of the various curricula and co-curricular activities used by the schools that are part of the APDP program. Gaining this understanding will inform the future scope and direction of the APDP program with new institutions.

METHODOLOGY

FWE staff provided the researcher access to the grant applications (and when applicable, follow-on applications) of 28 APDP schools for review. Review and analysis of these grant applications was done in view of the following questions:

1. What are the total number of credit hours to complete the combined bachelors/masters' program and what is the range of credit hours among the schools offering Bachelors/MA and BA/MDIV programs?
2. In a given school's total required credit hours, how many of those credits are for non-classroom, practical field work (described using varied terms such as: residency, field work, practicum, internships)?
3. In what way and to what extent did the schools refer to or mention "co-curricular" activities that they deemed essential to the overall APDP program but NOT part of the actual credit-hour curriculum?
4. How do schools measure outcomes and what criteria have schools identified to assess effective curriculum design?

Subsequent to the review of the 28 APDP grant applications, an interview protocol was developed in conjunction with the FWE team and was used to interview APDP program directors. The interview questions were formulated based on initial findings from the analysis of the grant applications and were designed to help the researcher gain a deeper understanding of program directors' views related to priority program outcomes, how schools measure those outcomes and how program directors perceive both curricular and co-curricular activities as contributing to overall program effectiveness. Participation was voluntary and 21 of the 28 institutions' program directors <PD's> responded to the invitation and agreed to participate in the interviews. Interviews took place over the course of three weeks in spring, 2020 and were done either through video-conference or by telephone. What follows is a discussion of the research findings, beginning with the findings from program director interviews.

1. PRIORITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Q1: What does APDP program success look like for you and your team? What two or three outcomes do you see as "priority outcomes" in that understanding of success?

Q2: How does your institution measure key APDP program outcomes (those mentioned) plus others that are held important?

¹ Internal Summative Report on the Foundation's Investments in Accelerated Pastoral Degree Programs, p. 22.

In analyzing participants' answers to the question of key program outcomes, responses gravitated into five discernable categories. What follows is a brief description of each category and several illustrations of interviewee responses. Respondent answers to Q2 will be outlined in section *1E. Discussion of Summary Observations*.

A. PRIORITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES – *Spiritual Health, Conviction and Awareness*

The first major category of priority outcomes was expressed in various ways by respondents but all related to students' personal spiritual formation, health, conviction, calling and awareness. Twelve PD's expressed a priority outcome in terms of ***Spiritual Health, Conviction and Awareness***. The examples below are representative of the way respondents expressed outcomes. Worthy of note is that three PD's specifically mentioned clarity of calling as a priority outcome within this category:

- *We want our graduates to experience deep, personal, spiritual formation.*
- *Graduates are able to be both self-aware in ministry and be able to practice self-reflection.*
- *Students experience deep spiritual formation and maturity.*
- *Graduates are able to develop and maintain a life of self-care and spiritual-care.*
- *Students graduate with an unparalleled realism with respect to ministry.*
- *Students have a clear sense of their calling by the time they graduate.*
- *Our graduates are healthy, flourishing people in ministry.*

B. PRIORITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES – *Pastoral Skills and Capabilities*

The second category that emerged in respondents' answers was ***Pastoral Skills and Capabilities***. Eight PD's described in various ways a priority outcome being a graduate's ability to execute one or a set of diverse skills or abilities relevant to a ministry context. Below is a sample of actual or paraphrased responses from several different schools that fall into this priority outcome category:

- *Graduates are able to teach and preach in a Gospel-centered way.*
- *Graduates are able to lead a church--preach, teach, shepherd and manage.*
- *Graduates have theological vision and are able to connect biblical foundations to contextual living and ministry.*
- *Graduates are high capacity shepherd leaders for the local church.*
- *Graduates are able to articulate a ministry plan for developing a ministry in any context they choose.*
- *Grads have learned how to learn and can exegete their context.*
- *A priority outcome for us is longevity in local church pastoral ministry for the long-haul. . . how many grads will be in pastoral ministry 10-12 years post-graduation? So, related to that we prioritize vocational discernment from the very beginning.*

C. PRIORITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES – *Retention or Recruitment*

The third category of priority outcomes that emerged from responses is ***Retention or Recruitment***. In various ways, PD's articulated program success in terms of the rate of student retention from program start to program finish, or for several schools early on in program, in terms of growing recruitment numbers of new incoming 1st year students. Nine institutions expressed program success as having to do with either student retention or recruitment. Below is a sample of how several program directors expressed this:

- *In our combined track we want to reach the point where we are graduating 12 students yearly and recruiting a minimum of at least five students per year in each track.*
- *We want to see more students transition successfully from year 4 to year 5 in the program. Thus, we also need to see more students coming in as first year students. I assess yearly the actual number of students entering year 5 from year 4 as well as whether we are bringing in more new students in each year.*
- *Our goal is a 90% retention and graduation rate from those who start the program. We track these statistics and know that if we can get students to complete successfully their second year where they take the biblical languages, that our retention rate is over 90 percent of those who successfully complete year two.*

D. PRIORITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES – Graduate Placement & Cohort Cohesion

Graduate Placement in Local Churches is the fourth category of outcomes that define program success for APDP programs and seven institutions expressed this as a priority. Finally, four schools specifically mentioned strong **Cohort Cohesion** as a priority program outcome. Two schools highlighted a strong cohort experience that includes but extends beyond students’ tenure at the school, emphasizing the importance of graduates having an on-going peer-network for mutual encouragement and support in pastoral ministry. Significantly more respondent-institutions made reference to the important role the cohort model has in their overall program, but four schools actually mentioned it as a priority outcome that defines program success.

E. PRIORITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES - Discussion of Summary Observations:

i. Student Transformation: Spiritual Health and Pastoral Skills

The first two categories of outcomes when taken together, focus on the actual change, transformation and development that takes place within students from the time they enter the program until they graduate, five years later. **Spiritual Health, Conviction and Awareness** (12 schools) and **Pastoral Skills and Abilities** (8 schools)—both categories focus on the change, growth or transformation that takes place within the life of the student during their tenure in the APDP program. For ease of discussion, we will refer to these two categories as “*skills*” and “*spiritual health*”. Of the schools that identified *skills* and/or *spiritual health* as priority outcomes, 5 schools identified BOTH as priority program outcomes, yielding a net of 15 of the 21 PD’s understanding program success at least in terms of one or both of these two outcomes.

The ways schools articulated approaches to assessing either of these two outcomes vary and is primarily qualitative. Nine PD’s indicated they assess spiritual health through a combination of a mentor ecosystem (at least starting with program director, but usually including faculty and other mentors) and various curricular-related means including courses specific to spiritual health/development or student learning outcomes related to spiritual health integrated into course offerings. Three schools indicated that assessment of *spiritual health* is done primarily through one-on-one interactions with the program director or through a community of mentors that includes the program director. It is worth noting that nobody interviewed suggested that faculty alone bear the responsibility for assessing student transformation but are part of a broader ecosystem of individuals contributing to assessing skills or spiritual health.

Several schools have developed frameworks or rubrics used in assessing evidence of skills and spiritual health in students, whether through curricular (courses) or co-curricular activities or a combination of the two. Most often, these assessment frameworks include an intentional relational component with a mentor or ecosystem of mentors, including the program director. Below are examples of approaches used by two different schools:

Students do a self-assessment using a LIKERT scale and then the mentor team that is around the student assesses student competency using a CONTENT-CRAFT-CHARACTER rubric. The mentor team is given a framework and they then develop the capstone or master assessment for the student's competency assessment. <SF>

Assessing spiritual and professional maturity is both a science and an art. The student's pastoral and faculty mentors pay attention to five different areas of development in assessing maturity: Relational acumen, theological vision, pastoral identity formation, Christ-like virtue and pastoral skill formation. Students self-report as well and we look at progress over time in terms of those five elements. (GCU)

One PD emphasized their approach to assess both skills and spiritual health noting the interplay and combination of intentional course sequencing whereby the courses build upon one another together with a community of mentors, a lead mentor (often the program director) all working together throughout the duration of the program. He gave the example of how courses in biblical theology, exegesis and homiletics are intentionally sequenced to ultimately help the student develop skill in effective biblical preaching: *Students must demonstrate sermon writing and delivery both in class and spilling over into field internships where their internship supervisor also provides assessment and feedback. As program director, I then have conversations both with the student and internship supervisor. We believe strongly in the coherence and sequencing of courses that build upon each other <skill-wise and knowledge-wise> to take students to actual ministry practice effectiveness (CoIrv).*

An important finding of this research is 15 of the 21 schools interviewed highlighted in one way or another student transformation (*skills and/or spiritual health*) as a priority outcome of the APDP program. Defining priority outcomes in these terms is solidly in alignment with the MDiv degree program standards set in place by the ATS Commission on Accrediting in June 2020. Article 4.3 in the newly revised accreditation standards states: *The Master of Divinity degree is broadly and deeply attentive to the intellectual, human, spiritual, and vocational dimensions of student learning and formation in ways consistent with the school's mission and theological commitments*². The standards for the MDiv stipulate learning outcomes that address four areas: (a) *religious heritage . . . (b) cultural context. . . (c) personal and spiritual formation including development in personal faith, professional ethics, emotional maturity, moral integrity and spirituality; and (d) religious and public leadership, including cultivating capacities for leading in ecclesial or denominational and public contexts and reflecting on leadership practices*³.

These standards reflect the importance of developing strong spiritual and personal health and integrity as well as the requisite skills and capacities for church and public leadership. Further emphasizing the importance ministerial skill development, Article 4.4 states that the MDiv *requires supervised practical experiences (e.g., practicum or internship) in areas related to the student's vocational calling in order to achieve the learning outcomes of the degree program*⁴.

As institutions that exist for the purpose of equipping future pastoral leaders for churches, the change and transformation that happens within the life of a student in terms of character, skills, knowledge, abilities and overall spiritual, relational and emotional

² *ATS 2020 Standards of Accreditation*; The Association of Theological Schools – The Commission on Accrediting; p.5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

health must be at the core of one's understanding of overall program outcomes. The ATS accrediting commission recognizes this as an essential program emphasis for accredited MDiv programs and it is encouraging to see these emphases articulated by a large number of APDP program directors who see student transformation at the forefront of program outcomes.

ii. *Retention, Placement and Recruitment*

Two of the outcome categories that emerged from the interview data, *graduate placement in local churches* (7 schools) and *retention and recruitment* (9 schools) of students in the APDP program are measured and assessed quantitatively against benchmark goals that institutions set forth. Of the schools that identified either of these as priority outcomes, 4 schools identified both as priority program outcomes, yielding a net of 12 of the 21 respondent-institutions understanding program success at least in terms of one or both of these quantifiable outcomes. The tracking of such data is quantifiable, however, many of the schools are in the early stages of the APDP so data has either yet to emerge or is just emerging from graduates that have completed the programs in the last year or two. For the institutions identifying either or both of these as priority outcomes the tracking of such data is done at the program director level. Taken together, these two priority outcomes represent a quantifiable and measure-able set of outcomes to monitor. In short, in identifying either of these two outcomes as priority, schools are in essence saying at least one of a number of things:

- *The program is successful if it retains through to graduation a high proportion of students who start the program—<the retention rate schools identified range from 75-90%>. One program director emphasized he is less focused on retention and more attentive to seeing an increasing recruitment pool size resulting in an actual net increase in the number of graduates from year to year.*
- *The program is successful if graduates are stepping into pastoral roles in local churches within at least 12 months of graduation.*
- *The program is successful if there is an increasing number of new students entering the APDP each year.*

Recruitment, retention and placement are strong priorities for the Foundation as evidenced in the discussion in the *2019 Summative Report* (pages 9,10). The findings of this research highlight the importance of program directors keeping in view both the importance of seeing an increasing number and percentage of students successfully complete the accelerated degree program as well as graduates finding pastoral roles in churches upon graduation. A degree program designed to equip pastoral leaders must have in view seeing successful graduates placed in churches upon completing their degree program.

iii. *Graduate Placement and Beyond – Digging Deeper*

Though program directors defined graduate placement in local churches as a priority outcome, later in the interview they were asked: *What information, if any, do you get about graduates of the APDP? What is the source of that information and over what range of time?*

Of the twenty-one program directors interviewed, only three indicated they are actively tracking graduates of the APDP program. One of those schools tracks graduates through their first year of post-graduation ministry and beyond that, they are tracked informally; five years post-graduation, this same school sends a survey to graduates. Indiana Wesleyan has had four cohorts graduate and stays connected to the students

through a two-year coaching arrangement that continues after graduation. This ensures that the institution can stay connected at least for two years with students post-graduation.

Another three schools indicated that since they are in the early stages of seeing students graduate from APDP's, their tracking of grads is still anecdotal. One director quipped: *I have three graduates so tracking them is easy.* Seven institutions are early on in their programs and have yet to see their first graduates but nonetheless indicated their *intent* to track their graduates anywhere from one to three years post-program.

We are still developing this because the wider pastoral program is being developed. Our hope is that we walk with our pastors throughout their careers. Hopefully as least the first three years post-graduate. (APU).

We intend to walk with them during their first call and assess how well they have been equipped. We want to maintain that relationship and track graduates once we have them as we look one, three and five years out. (EMM)

Three other institutions indicated they have no plans as of yet to track students once they graduate and two other institutions indicated that tracking of graduates from their institution is done by the alumni office so that eventually information on APDP grads will come under the responsibility of that office. One program director indicated their intent to collaborate with the alumni office which already tracks graduates of all programs.

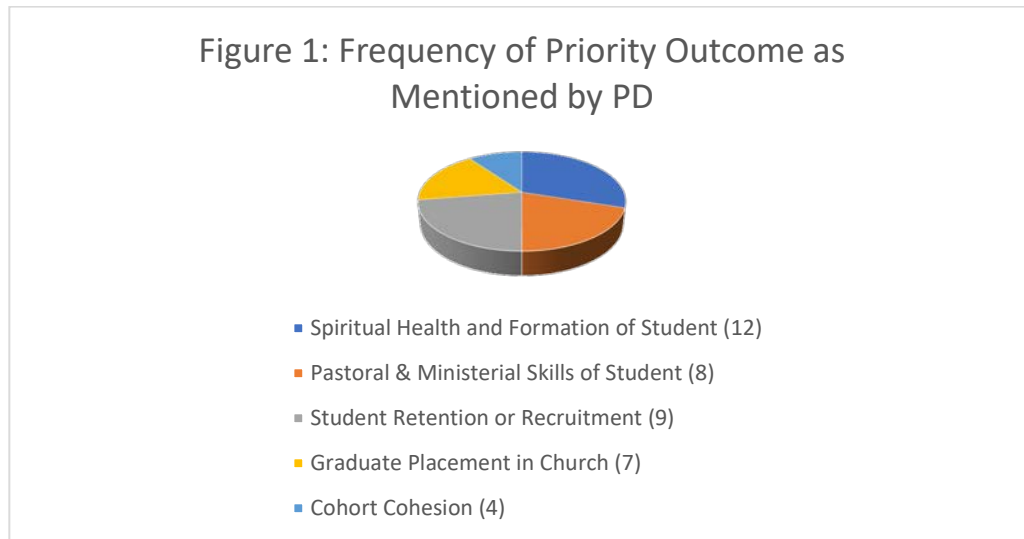
In general, most of the schools participating in the interviews are still early on in their program, with only a few having graduated students completing the APDP. Those that did express intent did not indicate any concrete plans or structures in place to foster the continued connection to and tracking of graduates of the APDP's. Given the Foundation's commitment to thoughtful, data-driven approaches to recruitment, retention and pastoral placement, this area of tracking graduate placement represents a significant growth area for APDP's.

iv. *Other Observations*

Four program directors identified *cohort cohesion* as a priority program outcome. Though the priority of the cohort model was an oft-repeated and prevalent priority as a co-curricular activity, seeing this emerge in the discussion of priority outcomes does suggest its perceived high level of importance in overall program design. However, the cohort model and cohort cohesion, though an integral part of program design, is essentially an "input" toward seeing outcomes achieved. Attention to inputs on the part of program directors is important, however clarity and precision related to program outcomes is essential for program directors, given their strategic role in guiding program growth and success. No clear discernable assessment method emerged to measure cohort cohesion other than informal and subjective observations by either the program director, or the program director together with other on-campus mentors. Cohort cohesion expressed as a priority outcome is not surprising since it is one of the 5 essential elements that the Foundation has identified as necessary for a successful APDP.

Three of the respondent-institutions spoke of priority outcomes in ways that were unclear or more in terms of program inputs. One program director articulated a priority outcome in terms of seeing the undergraduate institution more connected to the graduate institution. This outcome has little to do with students' success in the program and more to do with the institutional structure. Another respondent also expressed as a priority outcome having a "well-rounded MDIV program", highlighting a lack of clarity and

precision in articulating program outcomes. Figure 1 provides an overview of priority outcomes articulated by program directors.



v. *Summary Comments*

Respondents were limited by the interview question to identify only two or three priority outcomes that define program success. In general respondents focused on student retention, pastoral placement, recruiting (especially if they are just beginning APDP implementation) and seeing students develop as they move through the program in terms of skills and spiritual/personal health and well-being (expressed in different ways). 12 of the schools identified priority outcomes in terms of students' program completion or pastoral placement. 15 of the schools identified priority outcomes in terms of student transformation either in terms of skills, spiritual health or a combination of the two. In general, most program directors had strong clarity on what defined program success; several (2-3) struggled with articulating clear priority outcomes and several were not clearly differentiating between program outcomes and the inputs necessary to see outcomes achieved.

Ten of the program directors were able to discuss outcomes assessment with ease and articulated well their institution's approach to overall assessment. Three of the program directors were not clear in their articulation of curriculum or program assessment and seven directors were able to address assessment adequately in a general sense without articulation of detail. This raises the question whether PD's have adequate knowledge of and input into ensuring that assessment strategies and methods are indeed tied to program outcomes—the very programs they are charged with overseeing.

F. PRIORITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES – *Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations*

1. Invest in helping schools build capacity for tracking alumni beyond initial placement post-graduation.
 - a. Identify best practices among current APDP institutions already tracking alumni after graduation in terms of alumni vocation and pastoral longevity.
 - b. Assist schools in developing a framework, methodology and capacity for tracking pastoral retention among graduates.
2. The priority of spiritual health and formation emerged as a key priority outcome and is also one of the 5 essential elements identified by KFF of a successful APDP program. As well,

many PD's see themselves playing an important (albeit subjective) role in assessing the spiritual growth and development of students. Indeed, assessment of spiritual health and formation has by its very nature a very qualitative and subjective dimension to it. Explore ways to assist schools in developing a set of evaluative rubrics (perhaps in conjunction Dr. Chris Adams and APU's *Flourishing in Ministry* project) that schools and particularly Program Directors can use to more effectively assess spiritual development, health and resiliency of students.

3. Though *Cohort Cohesion* was articulated as a priority outcome by some PD's, this finding underscores its importance and priority as a key element of a successful APDP. Assist schools in developing a set of metrics for assessing *Cohort Cohesion* that aid PD's to intentionally monitor and improve upon this key element of the APDP.

2. CURRICULUM AND OUTCOMES

Q3: How do you see your curriculum helping produce those outcomes and what measures do you use to assess curriculum effectiveness in doing so?

Though several program directors had difficulty with this question, the majority were able to discuss their curriculum in terms of ways they saw it contributing to the priority outcomes cited in the previous questions. Respondents' answers clustered into three major areas that sometimes overlapped: *Sequence, integration and rubric.*

A. CURRICULUM AND OUTCOMES - *Sequence*

In the cluster of answers centered around *sequence*, program directors talked mainly in terms of broad curricular focus areas each year that build upon one another as a student progresses through the five years. In some instances, this was articulated very specifically as program directors outlined the curricular emphasis and focus given in each year during the students' tenure in the program. Examples of responses below illustrate ways PD's referred to *sequence* as an important way that curriculum contributes to outcomes.

There is a high degree of intentionality in how the students move through the program year by year. We are wild about students so there is high relational connection and intentionality throughout with students' three different adult mentors. The first two years focus on the personal shaping of the ministry leader and the mentors work hand-in-hand with the flow of the curriculum. Years three and four are more skills-based development like leadership, cultural engagement, youth or children's ministry. . . <JU>

In year one we focus on spiritual development, going deep with God. In year two we focus on pastoral development—what makes for a good pastor. Year three we focus on leadership development; then for credit in graduate school they have a spiritual formation class and spiritual direction and we cycle back to what they had in year one. Because of the grueling demand to finish 196 credits in five years, anecdotally, we are hearing back that these students have figured out in ministry how to do things more efficiently and quicker without sacrificing excellence. <IWU>

Our outcomes are very focused on students' ministry competency and we are very intentional about the coherence and sequencing of the courses building upon one another over the timeline of the whole program. . . the intersection of the courses, their sequencing and order, a community of mentors and a lead mentor that is throughout the program. (CoIr>

In year one at the front end we help them put their whole life on GOOGLE calendar and help them with time-management training because we want to set them up for success; we want them to be fully present they are in a course or wherever. In spring of year two they are transitioning from

the BA to the MDiv, from general courses to calling-specific courses. At end of year 2, we have built in an interview with the Dean of the College and program director where we assess multiple things . . . but where we also want to learn how they've experienced the first two years. Year three focuses on pastoral ministry classes and we assess their communication and preaching ability. Year four, I would say the focus is on pastoral enhancement and we dive into issues around "what I didn't learn in seminary". Year five is where they participate in three mentored internships and are boots on the ground—we want them to be at a local church in a ministry. <SeB>

B. CURRICULUM AND OUTCOMES - *Integration*

Another cluster of answers emphasized an intentional effort toward *integration* in the curriculum and program directors discussed this in different ways: integration between individual courses or between broader subject matter areas such as biblical studies and practical theology, integration of curricular and co-curricular elements, integration of faculty roles—faculty member as teacher and faculty member as mentor. Respondents expressed integration as it pertains to curriculum and outcomes in variety of ways:

Many faculty are plugged into church ministries so we have invested pastors who are part of our faculty which creates a healthy integration of our curriculum with practice. We want to tease out faith-integration, though I'm not always sure what that means. But the important question is how does our seminary help students think about their progress and life in the faith? We strive to integrate the disciplines together, for example assessing biblical studies courses through a practical theology lense; even our rubrics for assessment have an integrative nature to them. Our niche is to educate people for ministry. We are very concerned about people's connection to the ministry of the church, this is our ethos. <APU>

We try to be integrative throughout the curriculum. We also try to connect what we do in our cohort program to academics as much as we can, but not exclusively. For example, in one particular freshman class that focuses on spiritual disciplines, vocation and worldview, while they are taking that class, we will address these things in the cohort as well. We connect a lot of our mentoring topics and questions to the topics they are engaged with academically through the program. (Ev)

There is an official measurement in the course on spiritual formation in the PPM major, but there are also assessments associated with each class in the area of spiritual formation. But this is also assessed informally through the relationship with the program director. (Bio)

A key distinctive of our curriculum is its integrative nature. At the undergrad level, the integration of character, knowledge and skills is very intentional. In our 16 core classes at the MDIV level, courses are taught in dyads or pairings in a very intentional way. <PBA>

C. CURRICULUM AND OUTCOMES - *Rubric*

The final cluster of answers focused on *rubric*, understood as a common grid or set of collective criteria used to assess any curricular or co-curricular activity. *Rubric* was most often discussed as an evaluative grid through which courses, internships and field experience or a variety of co-curricular activities should be assessed and evaluated. The rubric or evaluative grid was spoken of in terms of the extent to which the set of factors comprising the rubric were seen as evident in the life of the student. Example of this include:

*We try to quantitatively and qualitatively assess how each class achieves its purpose in terms of **content, competency, character and calling**. Each class has to touch each of these four areas in some way and it is measure through artifacts. Every class has an "applied ministry evaluation*

report” <AMER> where a student explains how they take that they learn in class and apply it in ministry. Except for the biblical language classes, every class requires an AMER report. <ERSK>

The curriculum is the backbone for our focus on five elements of pastoral formation: **Relational acumen, theological vision, pastoral identity formation, Christ-like virtue and pastoral skill formation**. These 5 elements echo throughout the curriculum. In the first two years students experience four 1-credit ministry labs where we bring in practitioners to lead conversations around these five areas. These five elements haunt the student throughout their five years with us and are reinforced by their mentors and ministry coaches throughout. <GCU>

Our MDIV has 9 outcomes, and our MA has 6 outcomes. We basically have really good assessments around program outcomes. Learning goals become the competencies. **Content, character and craft** is the rubric that drives all our assessment. . . . We are in a world now, where content is no longer in the room. Our model focuses on getting a mentor team that can help learners curate content. . . they become guides on the journey. It is the role of the 3-person mentor team (consisting of a personal, ministry and faculty mentor) to drive our assessment loop. As a school, we are creating frameworks for learning to happen and we resource the mentor team. We will have new curriculum documents by August 2020 and we will start with a one-page framework. . . where student goes through a lot of questions at the outset. . . then mentor team goes to the resource list and builds the journey with the student. <SF>

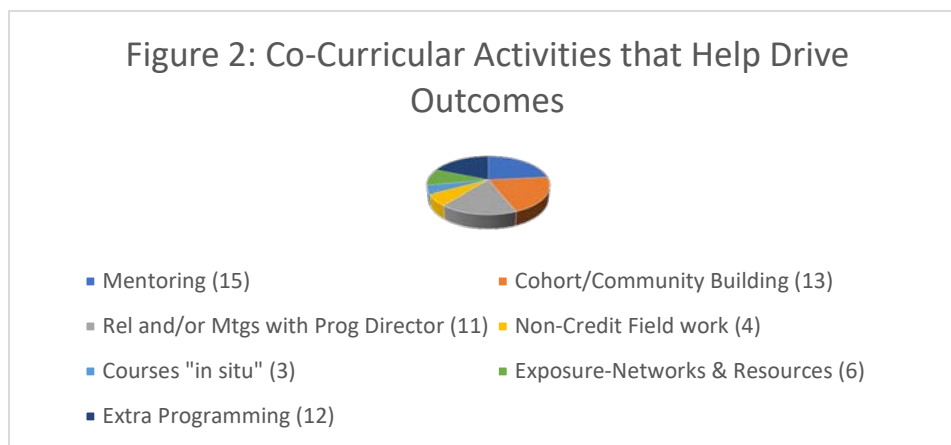
D. CURRICULUM AND OUTCOMES - Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Two areas of further research to explore:
 - a. In what way and to what extent are PD’s aware of the way in which *the curricular content* is tied to and coherent with the ultimate and broader program outcomes that PD’s have in mind as most important as they lead and guide the APDP’s.
 - b. In what way and to what extent is there effective communication or interface between PD’s and those in leadership that oversee the shaping of curricular content and sequence.
 2. Some PD’s expressed a more well-articulated understanding of the focus and intent of each year of the APDP—the curricular focus for that year, and how the emphases in each year build upon precedent years (*sequence*) to drive outcomes (e.g. Judson, IWU, Southeastern). Do all APDP schools have a clear and robust articulation of each year’s focus and associated student milestones and progress, particularly in relation to skills development and spiritual formation? This could aid both program directors, faculty and mentors as they walk with students to facilitate their transformation and growth over the course of the APDP.
 3. Encourage and assist APDP schools to articulate and operationalize a clear and well-defined *assessment rubric* that can be used to assess both curricular and co-curricular elements of a program is recommended. Dr. Jason Hiles’ statement concerning Grand Canyon University’s rubric illustrates this well: *Relational acumen, theological vision, pastoral identity formation, Christ-like virtue and pastoral skill formation haunt the student throughout their five years with us at GCU and are reinforced by their mentors and ministry coaches.*
- 3. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES - What co-curricular activities contribute most to the effectiveness of your curriculum and overall program and what measures, if any do you use to assess co-curricular activities?**

Twenty-four of the twenty-eight institutions referred to co-curricular activities as an important aspect of their overall APDP program in their initial or follow-on grant proposals. Subsequent to the analysis of APDP grant applications, 21 schools participated in interviews and readily discussed a variety of co-curricular activities they see as an important aspect of their overall APDP program. For the interviews, co-curricular activities were defined as *those activities and learning experiences that are intentional and intended for the benefit and growth of the student but outside of the accredited curriculum.*

The three most commonly referred-to co-curricular activities in the interviews were references to *intentional mentoring* and *cohort or community building* and *regular meetings with the APDP program director*. Fifteen of the 21 respondents referred to some form of intentional student mentoring as an integral part of the APDP program—peer mentoring, mentoring by faculty, mentoring by ministry or pastoral leader, ministry coaching, etc. Thirteen respondents referred to the importance of the “*cohort model*” or “*community building*” as another important element of the overall success of the APDP program. Ten program directors mentioned both mentoring and the cohort model as significant co-curricular activities. Eleven respondents referred to regular meetings between students (both individually and as a group) with the program director as a significant co-curricular activity. Such meetings often included academic advising as well as personal mentoring, spiritual guidance and in some cases assessment.

Other co-curricular activities schools embrace and that were mentioned by respondents include: required (but non-credited) ministry internships or fieldwork, course work taking place “*in situ*” while immersed in full-time ministry, intentional exposure of students to professional networks and resources and extra programming such as retreats, spiritual enrichment programs and ministry-oriented travel. Figure 2 summarizes co-curricular activities of the 21 institutions that participated in the interviews. Three of the four co-curricular activities that were the most frequently referred to have the commonality of being highly relational in nature. Further discussion and implications of this finding will be addressed later in the report.



4. PRIORITIES REFLECTED IN ASSESSMENT - What priorities do your measures of curriculum and co-curricular activities reflect?

In posing this question to program directors, the research sought to uncover what schools value or place as a priority when it comes to understanding and assessing the effectiveness of both curricular and co-curricular aspects of the overall APDP program. Several program directors struggled with answering this question, however noteworthy is that many program directors are not directly involved in curriculum assessment and the degree of involvement and understanding on the part of program directors related to assessment varied among the 21 respondents. Fourteen of the respondents articulated multiple priorities, six respondents mentioned a single priority and one director had difficulty with the question and was not able to answer it. Not surprisingly, these priorities mirror to a degree the priority outcomes expressed in the first research question discussed earlier.

The priority of practical ministerial skill and capabilities. Twelve of the PD’s expressed in various ways the priority of a student being able to minister effectively and practically in a local church context. The way these priorities were expressed portray a range of ways that PD’s view the priority that program elements be evaluated in terms of how they equip students in their abilities to minister practically. Below is just a sampling of responses:

Are students actually able to serve in the local church?
Does the student exhibit a growing capacity for effective practical ministry?
Can the student preach biblically?
Can they engage diverse perspectives with civility?
Do they exhibit leadership ability?
Are the grace-filled leaders who can minister effectively in the parish?

Though expressed in varied ways, the over-riding priority was ensuring that curricular and co-curricular activities effectively contribute to students' ability to work, serve and carry out a range of duties within local church ministry including preaching, addressing issues of contemporary culture, exhibiting leadership, effective verbal and written communication, and overall being able to serve the local church—and assessing curricular and co-curricular activities in light of these priorities. Related to the priority of practical ministry skill and capability was the priority of *the church*.

The local church. Though only mentioned specifically by three PD's, the priority of the local church, its flourishing and the ability of graduates to contribute to the health of local churches was seen as a driving priority informing assessment:

Are graduates able to contribute to increasing the health of local churches?
Are they contributing to flourishing churches in our region?
Will graduates get a pastoral job in a local church after graduation?

The priority of personal spiritual and ministerial formation and growth. Twelve respondents indicated that the personal character, development and formation of the student is a priority that informs the assessment of curricular and co-curricular activities. Again, expressed in various ways, respondents talked about identity formation, growth in spiritual development, growth in depth and maturity, an emerging and growing sense of call and pastoral identity and growing in resiliency—being able to endure in ministry for the long haul. An obvious concern with this priority is the personal and spiritual health of the student as a disciple and as a pastoral leader. One respondent articulated the priority underlying assessments as to whether students exhibit an integration of ministerial abilities and skills, character and knowledge in their life.

The priority of academics and intellectual development. Six respondents talked about priorities that inform assessment in terms of academic achievement or matters of the intellect. Three specifically referred to academic success or progress and three others talked in terms of theological acumen, development or understanding. While somewhat surprising, this does not necessarily imply that intellectual and academic prowess are undervalued, but rather perhaps assumed within the overall context of the higher priority of ensuring that the hand (ministerial skills) and the heart (spiritual formation and character) necessary for resilient pastoral ministry remain at the forefront of the theological education task.

5. PROGRAM ELEMENTS & IMPACT IN OUTCOMES - *What one or two program elements contribute most to successful program outcomes?*

Analysis of responses revealed that an overwhelming majority (17 out of 21) of program directors cited factors centered on ***building strong relational connections*** between students and each other as well as between students and mentors—whether they be faculty, the program director or mentors outside the institution.

As a subset to this finding, respondents often cited ***the cohort model*** as a strong contributing factor to program success. Indeed, 13 of the 21 PD's interviewed cited the cohort model as an important and significant co-curricular element to the overall APDP program. As well, over half (11) specifically cited regular meetings between the student and the APDP program director as an important co-curricular activity, several citing such meetings as key and determinative to program success. Several responses from program directors highlight different ways this factor was discussed:

The biggest factor is cultivating relationships at all levels – among cohort members, relationships within students’ own ministry contexts as well as students’ faculty relationship experience. If we can achieve strong relational connections at all levels, I will be very pleased! <ERK>

The Cohort Model! This works because we focus not just on a five-year learning environment but rather on a 50-year relationship with peers that students will hopefully take with them when they graduate. We emphasize this from day one as we are trying to mold and bond that cohort. <IWU>

We have a commitment to investment in students at all levels, especially through the three mentors they receive starting in freshmen year. Also, their academic advisor doesn’t usually change in the years they are here. Their personal mentor is critical in their development during their time with us. <JUD>

We try and cultivate great faculty-student relationships and try to build relational capital in everything we do! We invest in relationships. That is one of the most important factors that leads to program success. Our cohort program includes three cohort mentoring meals per semester as well as faculty mentors that do one-on-one’s with students. In this context we work on issues like the student’s prayer life, their biblical understanding, their vocational goals, but also issues like personal life struggles. This aids our retention process—both the faculty/student relationships and the students’ relationships with one another. <EVG>

The relational connection is key to program outcomes. The different cohort opportunities as well as the one-on-one’s I have with students as program director. This is the feedback they’ve given me as well. (CoIr)

Two other factors emerged from program directors’ responses related to what they see as most contributing to program outcomes. Namely, **practical ministry opportunities for students during their time at seminary** and **faculty engagement with students in and beyond the classroom**. Eight PD’s indicated that practical ministry opportunities of various kinds are critical to program success. These range from students taking ministry leadership roles on campus, volunteering in area churches, or more formally in field work and practicums that, as one leader put it: *gets them out of the books and into the church*. In several cases, respondents added that such practical ministry often takes place in conjunction with mentors walking alongside them. One respondent put it this way:

The practical internship component within the church is a key program element contributing to our outcomes. In the internships, they have 10-15 hours in the local church, we provide a training for the supervisors who invest as well in developing the student. The course is tethered to and cooperates with what they are learning. We are tracking 80 competencies over the 4 semesters during which their internships take place. <CBap>

Seven PD’s talked about *faculty engagement* with students in ways that include the classroom context but also go beyond it.

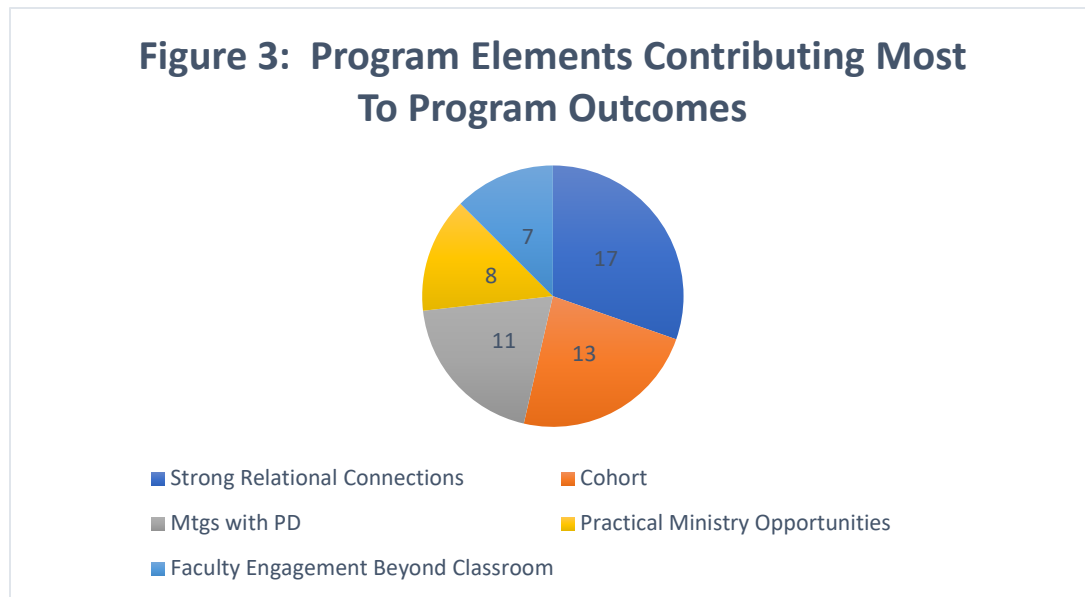
We have invested pastors who are part of our faculty. Many faculty are plugged into church ministries which creates a healthy integration of our curriculum into practice. Collaboration exists across university systems and within the school of theology as a number of people have become invested in the success of these students including the president! (APU)

All of our faculty are not only committed to students’ intellectual growth, but also attentive to their spiritual growth. (NOR)

We have a seamless program with the same faculty at the undergraduate level and graduate level, so we know where students have been and where they are at. It's seamless. (IWU)

Almost all of our faculty in the school of Christian ministry have been in pastoral ministry. They are scholar/pastors. They invest in the students in the classroom and 1 on 1. We get feedback from the students too. This helps us a lot with retention. <CBap>

Figure 3 below provides an overview of the program elements that directors described as contributing most to the outcomes set forth in the APDP.



It is helpful to understand and interpret these findings in the context of research done not only on student retention in higher education but also related to factors contributing to seminary student success. In a 2014 qualitative study, Wong interviewed several focus groups of seminary students to understand students' lived experiences associated with retention⁵. Wong's research identified 4 themes that emerged from student responses related to their seminary experience and their persistence in continuing in their academic programs:

- connectedness between students
- community within the classroom
- course format and services
- interaction with faculty

Interpreting his study, Wong suggests *that the central theological concept that helps seminary students continue in their academic programs is their ability to create and nurture a sense of community, Community is shaped and sustained through relationships and processes* (Wong, 159). He concludes by suggesting that students prefer a learning environment where they participate in worthwhile tasks within a meaningful community and given that learning is social and relational in nature, having a sense that they belong to a community of learning is important for students and a key factor in retention (Wong, 161).

In his reflections on *Challenges of Relevance in Theological Education*, Smith recounts his experience of being greeted by name by the professor in a large introductory sociology class that changed

⁵ Wong, A. 2014. *What Factors Help Seminary Students Continue in Their Academic Programs? A Qualitative Case Study*. The Journal of Adult Theological Education, Vol. 11, No.2, November 2014. 150-164.

the course of his academic career. *I was stunned that he knew my name. And it changed my whole perspective about who I was in that course. I was no longer anonymous. And although I cannot explain all the factors involved, I know that I had a whole different understanding of myself as a student*⁶. Smith suggests that educators should not underestimate the importance of relationships in addressing students' hunger for relevance. He writes:

When we take seriously how students are motivated by relationships to overcome their resistance to or intimidation by theological education, we no longer just see them on a scale between "smart and slow" or "energetic and lazy". We see them as our companions, who are encouraged by our active and caring presence in their journey (Smith, p. 96).

The importance of sensing one is known and part of a community of learning also spills over the way numerous PD's spoke of *faculty engagement* with students as a significant factor in successful program outcomes. As well, eleven of the APDP program directors interviewed indicated that regular meetings for either advising or mentoring between students and the program director were seen as important and significant co-curricular activities of the overall program.

Wong's findings in his qualitative study underscore not only students' desire for meaningful interaction with faculty both inside and outside the classroom, but also that meaningful and frequent engagement between students and academic advisors would impact positively student retention in seminary. The findings in our research with APDP program directors suggests that the relationship, regular interaction and intentionality of the APDP program director with students in the program is a significant factor in determining student retention and overall APDP program success. Indeed, this underscores the observation made in the *KFF 2019 Summative Report* that the role the program director plays is the single most important factor in program success (p. 4).

A. PROGRAM ELEMENTS & IMPACT IN OUTCOMES - *Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations*

1. The findings from this research suggest that *the relational aspect* of the program director with students is one of the most important aspects of the program director's role and a healthy and consistent relational component between student and program director will contribute to ultimate program success.
2. Faculty engagement with and attention to students that includes but goes beyond the classroom is a significant factor in student retention and is supported in the literature. When possible, including faculty in students' mentoring or coaching eco-system as well as engaging faculty in other co-curricular programming for students is recommended.
3. As APDP's grow in student numbers, the capacity of programs directors to engage students at a deep and significant level will be a growing challenge. Though some of the most successful APDP's have program directors that are highly relational, pastoral and directly involved in students' lives, as programs scale, the growth in student numbers will make it necessary for directors to rely more heavily on a growing eco-system of mentors and coaches including faculty, field-work supervisors, and potentially additional APDP staff serving in a chaplaincy role to students.

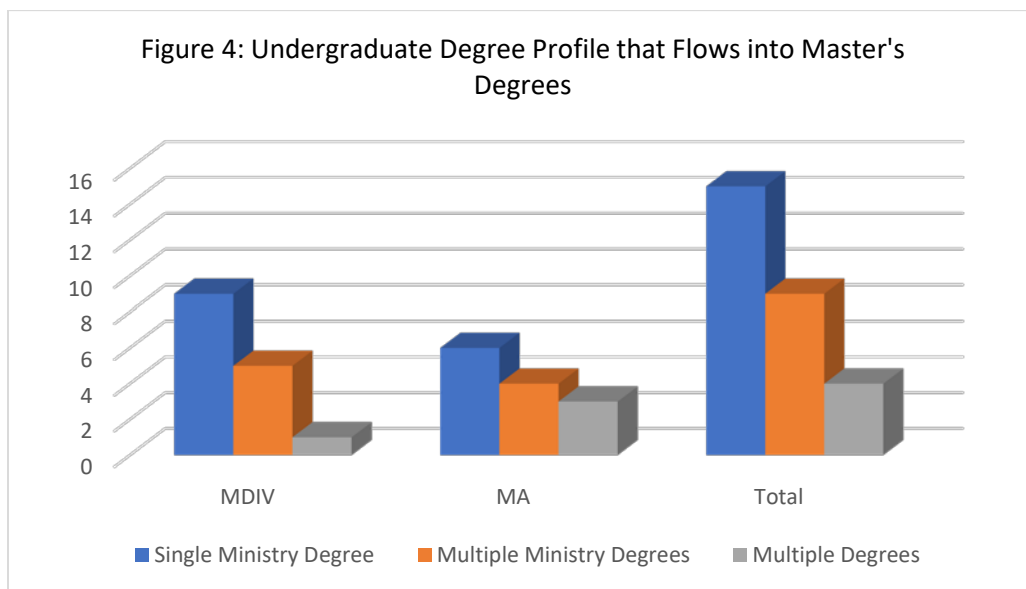
6. UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS FEEDING APDP'S & CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

Respondent interviews revealed that APDP programs among the 21 institutions continue to iterate and adapt from the original program design as articulated in grant proposals to the foundation. These adaptations and iterations often relate to program structure and the kind and number of undergraduate degrees that feed into the graduate degrees. For example, Evangel's initial design in 2014 was an

⁶ Smith, Luther E. *What Does this Have to do With Me? Challenges of Relevance in Theological Education*. The American Theological Library Association <ATLA> Summary of Proceedings, 2009, p. 95.

Associate’s degree (not a BA) that fed directly into the MDIV, an offering that simply did not attract students. In 2016, Evangel restructured the entire accelerated program such that students can earn an MA in one of three different areas and can major in anything at the BA level because the BA degrees have put together a pre-seminary minor in year’s three and four. Enrollment in this “4+1” APDP has gone from 27 students in 2017 to 36 in 2018 to 55 in 2019. In this example, scholarships are back-ended so they only receive the scholarship in year 5. This is just one example among numerous institutions that continue to iterate and improve upon their program from where they started.

The number and kind of undergraduate majors that feed into the graduate degrees of the APDP program fall into three categories. 15 of all 28 institutions that were part of this study indicated that at present there is one *single ministry-related degree* that feeds into the master’s degree; nine of those fifteen feed into MDIV degrees. Examples of such degrees include a BA-ministry, BA-Theology, BA-Biblical Studies and a BA-Applied Theology. Nine institutions have *multiple ministry degrees* that feed into the master’s program and this seems to be the growing norm. Students can select an under-graduate major from any one of a number of ministry-related degrees. One school offers the option of a BA-Religion or BA-Bible degree; another institution has structured their program so everyone receives a dual major including a BA in Biblical Studies and then they choose among 3 other BA concentrations. Finally, four schools have structured their programs in such a way that students’ bachelor’s degree can range among *multiple* possibilities not necessarily related to ministry. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the undergraduate degree types that feed into the masters’ programs.



7. CREDIT HOUR ANALYSIS – MA and MDIV APDPs

The summary below provides an overview of the credit hour requirement of the 28 institutions that are currently funded by the Foundation. The main source of data is from a thorough review and analysis of APDP grant applications submitted to the KFF by each of the funded 28 institutions. Where there have been gaps in the data or relevant questions, I have interacted with FWE staff and further clarified any gaps with the program directors of the 21 institutions that agreed to participate in interviews. The tables on pages 15 and 16 reflect a summary of the credit-hour data.

A. CREDIT HOUR ANALYSIS - BA(BS)/MA Programs

Of the 28 institutions with APDP programs, sixteen offer BA/MDIV degrees, and twelve offer a Bachelors/MA degree. Nine schools offer a BA/MA, one offers a BS/MA (Indiana Wesleyan) and one offers a BA/MS degree (Concordia-Bronxville). Seattle Pacific University offers two BA/MA degree

options, one completely within SPU for 136 combined credits and one in partnership with another institution for 145 combined credits. SPU’s “in-house” APDP was included in the table below. Table 1 summarizes eleven of the twelve Bachelors/MA programs with the total credit hours for the combined degrees. The total credit hours reflect the dual credit hours that are applied to both degrees and therefore reflect actual class credit hours.

Institution	Current Degree Combination	Bib Lang	Total APDP Credits	Field Work Credits (non-classroom)	Total Adjusted “Classroom” Credits
Seattle Pacific University	BA – Christian Theology MA- Christian Leadership	none	136	N/A	136
Biola	BA/MA Offers 3 MA’s tied to one BA – with 3 different emphases	none	145	6	139
Trinity Bible College	BA-dual major: Biblical Studies and Youth, Pastoral or Children’s Min MA – Missional Leadership MA – Rural Ministries	none	150	6	144
Evangel	BA/MA MA can be in Leadership and Ministry Intercultural Studies, Theological Studies, BA-most majors work, pre-seminary minor	none	151	6	145
California Baptist University	BAT/MA – Leadership or Bib/Theo Studies	12	154	8	146
Asuza Pacific University	BA (works with most majors except a few like nursing, social work, etc.) MA – Applied Pastoral Studies	none	156	2	154
Judson University	BA- 3 options: Intercultural Leadership, Youth Min, Christian Min /MA-Leadership	none	157	15	157
Bethel University	BA – Missional Studies (other BA majors are possible) /MA – Ministry	none	158	3	155
Concordia Bronxville	BA Judeo Christian Heritage/ Theology MS Business Leadership	none	162	6	156
Concordia-Irvine	BS – Theology & Entrepreneurial Ministry leadership; MA -Church Leadership	none	163	21	142
Indiana Wesleyan	BS Children’s, Youth, Global, Christian, Worship, Cty Dev, Christian Ed, Pastoral Care & Counseling – 8 BS degrees MA in Practical Theology	none	187	21	166
Latin America Bible Institute	BA-Theo/MA – Leadership Studies	none	168	0	168
Credit average			159		152
Credit Range			136-187		136-168

Table 1 – BA/BS and MA APDP Credit Hours

Column five of Table 1 indicates the number of academic credit hours students receive for non-classroom experiences such as field work, internships and practicum experiences. These non-classroom credits are part of the overall formal curriculum and credit total for the entire accelerated program. Column six of the same table indicates the total classroom hours of academic work less the non-classroom credit hours.

B. CREDIT HOUR ANALYSIS - BA/MDIV Programs

Sixteen institutions are currently funded that offer an accelerated BA/MDIV program. All sixteen of these institutions are included in Table 2 below.

Institution	Current Degree Combination	Bib Lang Credit Req'mt	Total APDP Credits	Field Work Credits (non-classroom)	Total Adjusted "Classroom" Credits
Northern Seminary	BA-Biblical Studies, BA-Theology or BA-Historical/Syst Theo/MDIV	0	146	6	140
Grace Seminary	BA-Biblical Studies, BA-Intercultural Studies, BA- Youth Min, BA-Bible Translation, BA-Educ Min, BA-Sports Min/MDIV	24 (note: 12 are noted as 'advanced standing')	157	12	145
Cedarville University	BA-Biblical Studies/MDIV	12	161	0	161
Palm Beach Atlantic	BA- Ministry BA- Intercultural Studies BA- Bib/Theo - MDIV	8-20 depending on which if three undergrad majors chosen	162	12	150
Multnomah University	BA-Bible/MDIV	14	162	22	140
SEBTS	BA-Pastoral Min/MDIV	12	163	30	130
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	BA- Bib Studies- MDIV	12	165	9	154
Grand Canyon University	BA – Christian Ministries or BA – Christian Studies - MDIV	16	168	4	164
Columbia International University	BA – Bib/Theo Studies- MDIV	27	168	12	156
George Fox	BA- Biblical Studies - MDIV	8	172	26	146
Erskine	BA – Bible & Religion - MDIV	12-18 (Depending on Denom. Req'mt)	174	3	171
Wartburg Theological Seminary	BA-Religion/MDIV	8	179	38	141
Crown College	BA-Pastoral Leadership and MDIV	8	179	0	179
New Orleans	BA-Bib Studies or BA- Christian Min - MDIV	15	182	15	167
Emmanuel Academies	BA/MDIV – BA is one of four options: BA in Org Mgt; from Concordia Univ.Chicago's School of Business, BA in Ministry (English language curriculum) or BA in Global Leadership (Spanish language curriculum) from Palm Beach Atlantic University, or BA in Ministry, Christian Thought and Practice from Sioux Falls Seminary.	0	199	22	177
Sioux Falls Seminary	BA-Variou/MDIV	0	199	22	177
Credit Average			171		156
Credit Range			146-199		130-179

Table 2 – BA and MDIV APDP Credit Hours

Similar to the data table for the BA/MA, column five of Table 2 indicates the number of academic credit hours students receive for non-classroom experiences such as field work, internships and practicum experiences. These non-classroom credits are part of the overall formal curriculum and credit total for the entire accelerated program. Column six of the same table indicates the total classroom hours of academic work less the non-classroom credit hours.

C. CREDIT HOUR ANALYSIS - Discussion of Data

The credit hour range for the BA/MA is from a low of 136 credit hours (Seattle Pacific University) to a high of 187 credit hours (Indiana Wesleyan University); a difference of 46 credit hours. However, when adjusted for “non-classroom credit hours”, the range is smaller and changes to a low of 136 and a high of 168; a difference of 32 credit hours. Of the BA/MA programs, Indiana Wesleyan University has the highest

credit requirement. IWU together with Concorida-Irvine also have the highest number of academic credits (21) awarded for various kinds of field experiences of the KFF-funded BA/MA programs. As highlighted in IWU's proposal, their MA is similar to an MDIV offered by another sister institution: *The curriculum for our master's degree will be similar to the Master of Divinity degree offered at Wesley Seminary. However it will differ in two significant aspects: 1) Our master's degree will require a twelve month residency designed to help our students launch into careers as solo or senior pastors; 2) Our master's degree will target 21-23 year old students while Wesley Seminary will target students who have been involved in full-time ministry for a number of years.*⁷

Turning to the BA/MDIV data, the credit hour range of the programs listed in the table is a low of 146 (Northern Baptist Theological Seminary) to a high of 199 (Sioux Falls Seminary and Emmanuel Academies). It should be noted that Sioux Falls Seminary's MDIV (as well as Emmanuel Academies which partners with Sioux Falls) is a non-traditional and innovative competency-based model so any comparison to the other institutions should keep this reality in view, as assignment of credits is not done on a traditional, class-by-class basis. New Orleans Baptist Seminary has the next highest credit requirements with 182 credits, a difference of 36 hours. When adjusted for "non-classroom credit hours", the range is 130 (Southeastern Baptist) to a high of 179 (Crown College⁸); a difference of 49 credit hours.

Noteworthy is comparing the average program credit hours of the MA and MDIV programs. The average total credits for the MA is 159 credits compared to 171 credits for the MDIV. The adjusted averages taking into account credited field work are 151 and 156 credits respectively. The relatively small difference in the average total and average adjusted program credit hours, raises the question as to what factors contribute to such a small disparity in the total program hours of the MA versus the MDIV.

8. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A. General Observations

1. Program Directors are as a whole enthusiastic about the Accelerated Pastoral Degree Programs and very open to learning ways of qualitatively and quantitatively improving and iterating the APDP to achieve greater success in terms of program outcomes.
2. Over half of the PD's exuded a deep pastoral enthusiasm and burden for students' success in the APDP and students' spiritual, vocational and ministerial success in pastoring local churches after graduation.
3. Student transformation and development (in terms of ministerial competency and spiritual/personal depth and maturity) program retention, and graduate placement in churches were the dominant priority outcomes for program directors.
4. Strong relational connections in varied forms are seen as critical elements that drive outcomes. These connections include the *cohort model* itself, the relationship of students to the program director and an ecosystem of mentors surrounding students.
5. Faculty engagement with and attention to students that includes but goes beyond the classroom is a significant factor in student retention and is supported in the literature. When possible, including faculty in students' mentoring or coaching eco-system as well as engaging faculty in other co-curricular programming for students is recommended.
6. As APDP's grow in student numbers, the capacity of programs directors to engage students at a deep and significant level will be a growing challenge. Though some of the most successful APDP's have program directors that are highly relational, pastoral and directly involved in students' lives, as programs scale, the growth in student numbers may make it necessary for directors to rely more heavily on a growing eco-system of mentors and coaches including faculty, field-work supervisors and potentially additional APDP staff serving in a chaplaincy role to students.

⁷ Implementation Grant Proposal submitted by Indiana Wesleyan University to Kern Family Foundation, p. 2.

⁸ Crown College did not participate in the interviews so it was not possible to clarify any credit-related information contained in their grant proposal.

B. Summary of Recommendations

FUTURE ASSISTANCE:

1. Invest in helping schools build capacity for tracking alumni beyond initial post-graduation placement.
 - a. Identify best practices among current APDP institutions that already track alumni after graduation in terms of alumni vocation and pastoral longevity.
 - b. Assist schools in developing a framework, methodology and capacity for tracking pastoral retention among graduates.
2. Explore ways to assist schools in developing a set of evaluative rubrics (perhaps in conjunction with Dr. Chris Adams and APU's *Flourishing in Ministry* project) that schools and particularly Program Directors can use to more effectively assess spiritual development, health and resiliency of students.
3. Assist schools in developing a set of metrics for assessing *Cohort Cohesion* that aid PD's to intentionally monitor and improve upon this key element of the APDP.
4. Assist schools to articulate and operationalize a clear and well-defined *assessment rubric* that can be used to assess both curricular and co-curricular elements of a program. Dr. Jason Hiles' (GCU) statement concerning their rubric illustrates this well: *Relational acumen, theological vision, pastoral identity formation, Christ-like virtue and pastoral skill formation haunt the student throughout their five years with us at GCU and are reinforced by their mentors and ministry coaches.*

FUTURE RESEARCH

5. Questions for further research include:
 - a. In what way and to what extent are PD's aware of the way in which *the curricular content* is tied to and coherent with priority program outcomes that PD's are focused on?
 - b. In what way and to what extent is there effective communication or interface between PD's and those in leadership who oversee the shaping of curricular content and sequence?
 - c. In what way and to what extent do schools have a clear and defined articulation of each year's focus and associated student milestones and progress, particularly in relation to skills development and spiritual formation? This could aid both program directors, faculty and mentors as they walk with students to facilitate their transformation and growth over the course of the APDP.