

Major Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
School of Theology and Religious Studies
Civil Degrees
Ecclesiastical Degrees
Pastoral Degrees
AY2008-09 through AY2012-13

Assessment Measures

The Graduate program in School of Theology and Religious Studies (STRS) has seen growth especially in the past five years and notably in the pastoral ministry area. STRS offers civil, ecclesiastical, and pastoral degrees in nine different academic areas. The School of Theology and Religious Studies uses the following measures to assess student learning outcomes:

Direct measures:

- comprehensive exams student pass rate
- Progression toward milestones
 - Completion of courses, pro-seminars, and research papers
 - Completion of language requirements
 - Admission to candidacy
- Teaching and research assistantships
- Approval of dissertation proposal
- Defense and deposit of dissertation
- Award of degree or certificate
- Grades
- Course evaluations
- Job placement
- Alumni surveys

Course Data Attachment A – TRS 607 Synoptic Gospels

The School of Theology and Religious Studies evaluated and analyzed enrollment, course grades, and course evaluation data for TRS 607 Synoptic Gospels for the past five years (2008-2012). This course offered as part of our ministerial and pastoral ministry core course work has seen a steady increase in enrollment due to increased enrollments in the pastoral ministry and priestly preparation student populations. During this period enrollment started at 32 in 2008 with decreases to 22 and 28 in 2009 and 2010 respectively, but grew back up to a steady 32 for the past two years. This is indicative of enrollment increase in the pastoral area.

Student performance showed an overall slight increase in average GPA from 3.47 in 2008 to 3.50 in 2012. Most students (54%) scored between the grades range of B+ to B- in the past five years and 44% scored A, A-, and only 1% with C and Incompletes.

Course Evaluations were only available for this course for 2011 and 2012. Course rating rated higher for both years 4.69, 4.05 compared to instructor rating 4.48 in 2011 and 3.86 for 2012.

Course Data Attachment B- TRS 630A Foundation of Christian Moral Life

The School of Theology and Religious Studies evaluated and analyzed enrollment, course grades, and course evaluation data for TRS 630A Foundation of Christian Moral Life for the past five years (2008-2012). This course, offered as a moral theology requirement for both our Master level students and Pastoral/ Ministerial course work, has seen an increase in enrollment. During this period enrollment started at 31 in 2008 and rose to 44 in 2012

Student performance showed an overall increase in GPA from 3.63 in 2008 to 3.67 in 2012. Most students (62%) scored between the grades of A and A- in the past five years. 37% scored in the B+ to B- range, and only 1% had Incompletes. There were no failing grades. This class has become popular and preferred amongst Master level students and Ministerial students studying for priestly formation.

Course Evaluations were only available for this course for 2011 and 2012. Course evaluations show positive ratings for both instructor and course. In 2011, the course rating and instructor rating were almost identical – 4.49, 4.50 respectively. In 2012, 79.55% of students rated the professor, with instructor rating slightly lower at 4.15, and course rating at 4.22.

Course Data Attachment C- TRS 760A Theological Foundations

The School of theology and Religious Studies evaluated and analyzed enrollment, course grades, and course evaluation data for TRS 760A Theological Foundations for the past five years (2008-2012). This course, offered for Doctoral course work, has seen a decrease in enrollment. During this period enrollment went from 20 students in 2008 to 12 in 2012. The steady decline is indicative of the “right-sizing” initiative undertaken to reduce the population of the School’s Doctoral programs. The School has been on a quest to right size our doctoral programs by offering enrollment to fully funded students at the Ph.D. level. This initiative is in part to bring better quality and scholarship to our programs by offering a blend of research, teaching, and learning to our doctoral students. This will in turn help increase the quality and future employability of our students, and also increase our comprehensive pass rate, decrease time to degree rates, increase retention, and establish better overall programs and students.

Student performance showed an overall increase in average GPA from 3.73 in 2008 to 3.95 in 2012. Most students (82%) scored between the grades of A and A- in the past five years, with 13% in the B+ to B- range, and only 5% taking Incompletes. There were no failing grades. This demonstrates a great improvement in the quality of students being admitted to our doctoral programs. Although enrollment decreased, overall student quality has increased.

Course Evaluations were only available for this course for 2011 and 2012. Course evaluations show positive identical ratings for both instructor and course; which is indicative of student’s appreciation of the quality of the course and commitment of the professor.

Comprehensive Exams and Graduation Progression Data Attachment D, E, F

The School of Theology and Religious Studies analyzed enrollment, retention, and graduation data in the School for a five-year period (Fall 2008 through Fall 2012). The data at hand addresses two types of degrees: Master's Level Degrees which includes S.T.L., and Doctoral Degrees including the Sacred Doctorate.

Master's Programs. Average enrollment over the past five years at the M.A. level has increased from 42 with a gradual progression to 62 by Fall 2012. Over the last five years there has been a steady trend toward increasing cohort sizes, a factor that may be accounted for in part by efforts to extend funding to more incoming students over the past four years. Overall retention rate continues to improve for Master level student returning for the second year. In 2008 only 73 % returned the next academic year compared to 79% in 2011 and 80% in 2012. Since master's level programs usually last about two years; we expect retention to decline after the full second academic year, which in turn could indicate that students are graduating in time.

The number of students passing the comprehensive exam has increased steadily, with a total average of 84% pass rate over the past five years.

The data on "time to degree" indicates that Master level students finish their degree in two years 19%, three years 24%, and four years 43%. Considerably smaller numbers finish after two years or three years. These data may be slightly deceptive in light of the fact that some students who receive their M.A. in the third year may already have begun doctoral coursework before finishing all M.A. requirements. Overall, the data show that STRS students who receive their master's degree generally do so in good time.

Ph.D. Programs: Over the past five years, the school has moved towards right-sizing the Ph.D. programs in order to improve students' research, scholarship, and overall quality. New enrollment in 2008 was at 45, with a steady reduction to 26 new enrollments in 2012. This was a conscious move on the part of STRS. After the restructuring of the school and creation of academic areas, the school has moved aggressively towards improving its doctoral student population. The school embarked on a right-sizing initiative by being more rigorous with the application process. This included raising the minimum GRE scores and requiring writing samples to evaluate the applicants' research potential. This is also a strategy to improve completion rate, and time to graduation rate for doctoral students. The result has been a steady, purposeful decline in admitted doctoral students resulting in improved student to faculty ratios, enhanced five-year funding and stipend packages, and the creation of a teaching and learning program to improve students' teaching skills.

The overall retention rate of 77% has been comparatively high, especially given the financial difficulties involved in funding graduate study. The retention rate for students admitted in 2012 reached a high of 80%.

Summary of civil degrees: In sum, enrollment of students in M.A. programs has held steady while the doctoral population has declined but gained in quality. Satisfaction with professors and courses remains high. However, moving forward the STRS will continue to find ways of expanding the master's level

student population, both to grant more terminal M.A. degrees and to become more of our own feeder into our doctoral programs.

The decision to reduce the doctoral population has brought benefits in terms of better retention, a higher quality student body, enhanced financial aid, and a better classroom experience. Going forward, we expect to see improvements in the quality of doctoral dissertations as the smaller cohorts complete their courses and move into dissertation phase. The implementation of a mandatory teaching and learning program as part of the restructuring of financial aid packages should make the students more competitive on the academic job market.

Curricular Improvements

The School of Theology and Religious Studies has a structure built around academic areas as a result of its re-organization ten years ago. Currently our nine academic areas offer Civil, Ecclesiastical and Pastoral degrees.

Civil Degrees: M.A. Programs

Following the restructuring of the School, an M.A. committee of faculty members and a student met to review the requirements for the various area programs and to compare them with the structure of programs at other institutions. Based on this process, recommendations were made regarding the number of credit hours, language requirements, comprehensive exam structure, and so forth for school-wide M.A. requirements. Individual academic areas also met to review and revise the details of their particular M.A. programs and, in some cases, to reconcile overlapping programs that had been offered in different departments (for example, two different departments had offered an M.A. degree in theology). At that time a new M.A. program in Moral Theology/Ethics was created, proposed by the academic area, and approved by the School faculty and the University Graduate Board. At present, the School offers M.A. degrees in Biblical Studies, Church History, Historical and Systematic Theology, Liturgical Studies/Sacramental Theology, Moral Theology/Ethics, Religion and Culture, Religious Education/Catechetics, Spirituality, and MA Theology/M.S. in Library Science administered in conjunction with CUA's Department of Library and Information Science. Changes at the M.A. level made following the reorganization of the school include:

- The introduction of M.A. pro-seminars. These were created by the Dean and the Executive Council with the purpose of initiating M.A. students into the research culture of the School, and have been adjusted in number and content in part in response to student feedback. In the fall of 2012 the format of the pro-seminar was changed from a series of stand-alone workshops to a single course in order to facilitate attendance and simplify the recording of milestones. The STRS also revised the number and types of topics covered in order to make it more useful to students.
- Revisions of M.A. reading lists. Individual areas occasionally review and update the reading lists used for the comprehensive exam.

- Use of tracking sheets. Areas have developed tracking sheets for the use of area directors and faculty to assist in advising and gathering data on students.

In addition, individual areas have made numerous adjustments to the procedures and curricula for the M.A. programs they administer. For example, Biblical Studies has revised its system of language exams to prevent students who continue to the doctoral level from being subjected to taking the exams twice. Church History has revised its core course curriculum in partial response to course evaluations and informal student input, and has moreover launched a thoroughgoing review of its programs in light of changing patterns of enrollment (specifically, a marked upswing of interest in patristics). Historical and Systematic Theology has taken steps to investigate the quality of courses available at neighboring institutions for credit through the Washington Theological Consortium. Liturgical Studies/Sacramental Theology has developed new, more rigorous forms of instruction in Latin so as better to prepare students for working with liturgical source texts. Moral Theology/Ethics has inaugurated co-curricular activities including brown-bag lunches, informational sessions, and student-faculty reading groups to provide professional socialization for students and to promote a greater sense of intellectual community. Religion and Culture has begun developing a database of its alumni to assist in recruitment and networking for students

Civil Degrees: Ph.D. Programs

In the period surrounding the restructuring of the School in 2003, the faculty in the newly constituted areas met regularly to integrate and harmonize the doctoral programs that had previously been offered through the framework of departments. In the wake of the School's reorganization, many alterations and adjustments have been made to the resulting Ph.D. programs, which were established in Biblical Studies, Church History, Historical Theology, Liturgical Studies/Sacramental Theology, Moral Theology/Ethics, Religion and Culture, Catechetics, Historical and Systematic Theology, and Spirituality. Some School-wide changes to the Ph.D. degree have included:

- The introduction of Ph.D. pro-seminars on careers, learned societies and publishing, and dissertation procedures. As with the M.A. pro-seminar, this was also reformatted from independent workshops to a course so as to cover more topics in both graduate studies and professional preparation, facilitate attendance, and simplify the recording of milestones.
- The development of a common procedure for vetting doctoral dissertation proposals, with a school-wide reviewing body (the Ph.D. dissertation committee) and standardized procedures for review within the areas. This procedure is once again under review to ensure a rigorous yet timely approval process.
- The development of a set of professional socialization measures designed to prepare students for the job market and careers, including a "Teaching and Learning" program focused on pedagogical training and various other workshops dealing with publications, presenting at conferences, interviewing, and assembling a teaching dossier.
- The use of tracking sheets. Areas have developed tracking sheets for the use of area directors and faculty to assist in advising and gathering data on students. These have been incorporated into

Cardinal Station so as to automatically populate milestones and give advisors and the deans an accurate picture of the student's performance in his or her degree program.

- The improvement of the STRS website. Under the leadership of the Dean, various student resources have been incorporated on the website to make information, forms, and course materials more accessible to students.
- The development of common standards for dissertation advising. The Dean has initiated an effort, presently underway, to improve coordination in regard to procedures for directing and evaluating dissertations.
- The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies has implemented procedures that go into operation at the end of every semester to detect low GPAs, excessive registration for comprehensive examinations, and dissertations past deadline.

In addition, individual areas have made numerous adjustments to the procedures and curricula for the Ph.D. programs they administer. For example, Biblical Studies occasionally changes its exegetical course offerings in response to student needs, and has recently introduced reading lists in response to student demand. Church History has traditionally tailored its research seminars to fit student interests, and recently created a new core course, in part in response to student evaluations; the area is also presently undergoing a comprehensive self-study and review of student performance encompassing the last fifteen years, in response to changing patterns of enrollment and staffing shifts. Historical and Systematic Theology has used enrollment data to systematize its 800-level course offerings, has revised its modes of satisfying language requirements, and has developed new specialized courses in Latin texts in response to student requests. Liturgical Studies/Sacramental Theology has responded to student and faculty requests by altering its language requirements to ensure that students acquire the ability to work with ancient liturgical texts. Moral Theology/Ethics has instituted a "program proposal" process to ensure that students receive appropriate oversight during the phase of coursework. Religion and Culture has begun developing a database of its alumni to assist in recruitment and networking for students. A number of areas also took part in an effort to establish Hermeneutics as a core subject across the School, with the result that a course on this topic is required in Religion and Culture and recommended in other areas. Other core courses such as TRS 660: History and Method in Theology, TRS 760A: Theological Foundations, and TRS 780A: Introduction to the Study of Religion (see section on Assessment Findings above) have been crafted to meet the needs of several different areas.

Pastoral Degree and Graduate Certificate Programs

STRS offers pastoral degrees, including the Master of Divinity, and the Doctor of Ministry, and graduate certificates in pastoral Ministry and Hispanic Ministry. Of these programs, the D.Min. has experienced the most significant changes in recent years, having undergone a complete overhaul six years ago. At that time an external consultant was commissioned to carry out a market survey in order to identify and assess the needs of potential students, and in light of the results the D.Min. was reconstituted as a distance-learning degree with intensive on-site courses in the summer augmented by online courses during the academic year. The program experienced an immediate increase in enrollment. The area faculty have continued to revise the program, relying in part on course evaluations, student performance, general meetings with students, and student-supervisor relationships in introducing new courses, new

pedagogical methods (e.g. role-play), a new format for the D.Min. seminar, and a new set of guidelines for the D.Min. Project.

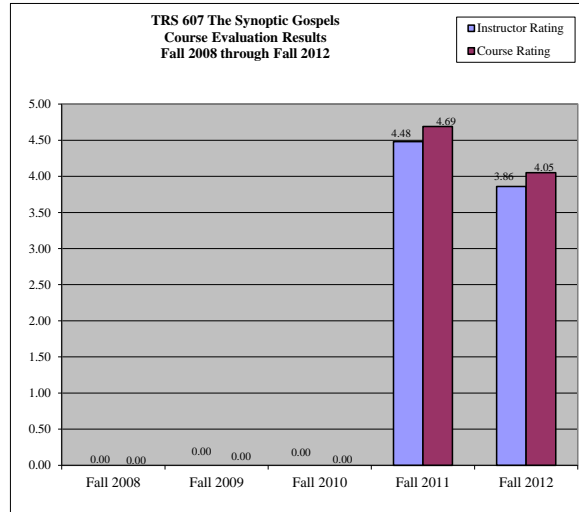
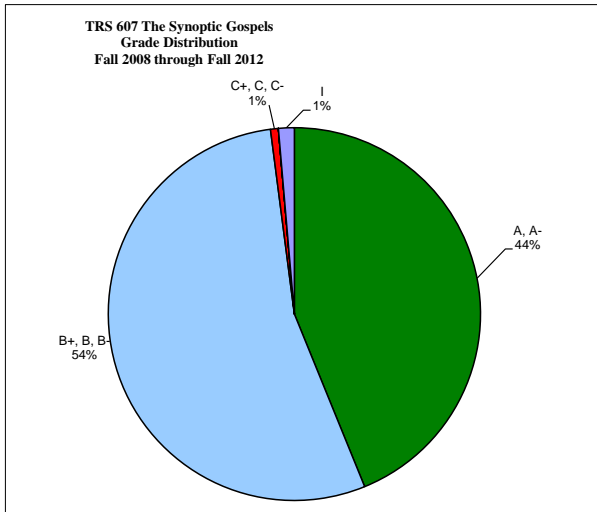
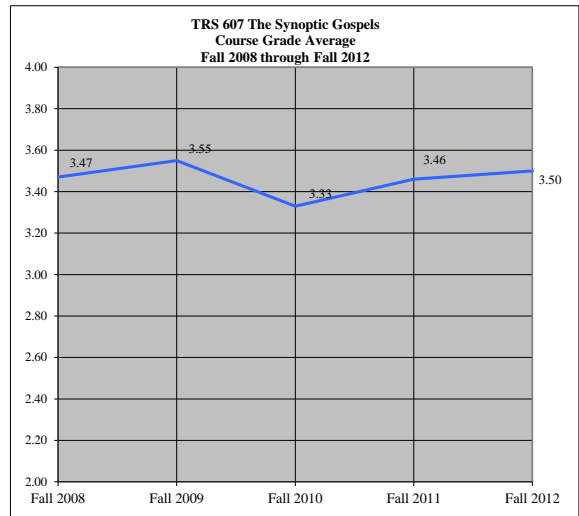
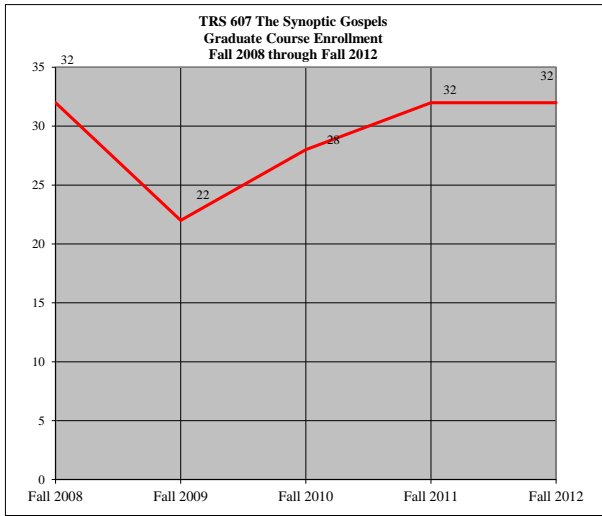
Ecclesiastical Degrees

The ecclesiastical degrees—the S.T.B., S.T.L., and S.T.D.—had previously been located in the Department of Theology and were adapted to the new structure of academic areas following the reorganization of the entire School into an ecclesiastical faculty in 2003. The individual areas periodically revise reading lists for the program, with the approval of the Ecclesiastical Degree Committee, and also adjust course offerings that might serve these degrees. However, because the requirements of ecclesiastical degrees are structured according to the apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* and the international Norms of Application issued by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, significant changes to the programs have not been undertaken.

The S.T.L. and S.T.D. degrees both function much as the civil Ph.D. degrees, and so many of the School-level curricular changes noted above apply to these degrees as well. For example, these students also attend the pro-seminars and benefit from the changes made to the dissertation proposal process.

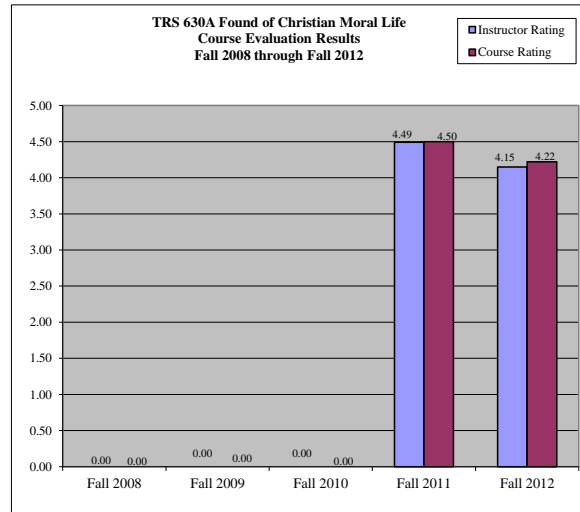
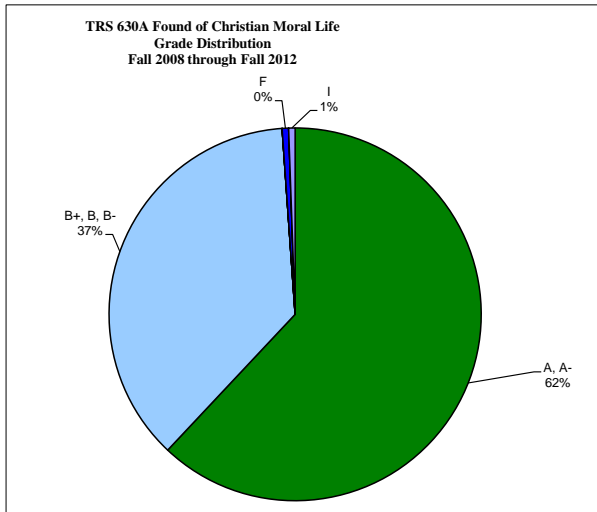
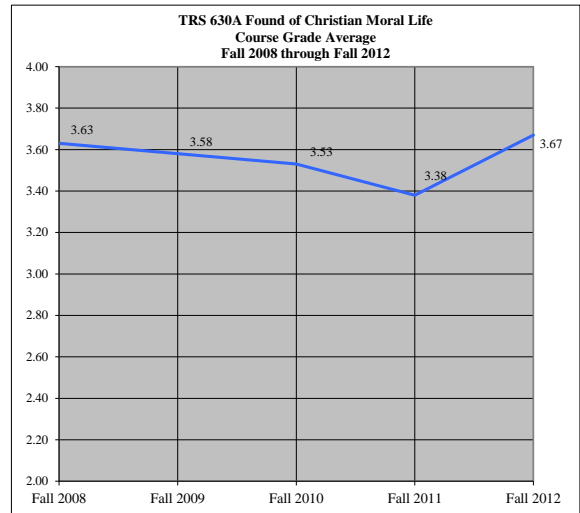
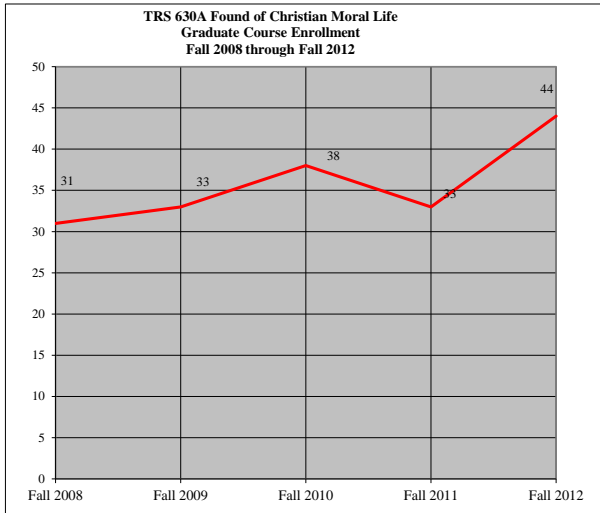
COURSE SUMMARY DATA: SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
 TRS 607 The Synoptic Gospels

Term	Graduate Course Enrollment	Course Grades									Course Evaluation Results						
		Course Grade		Grade Distribution						Course Eval.		Instructor Rating		Course Rating			
		Avg.	StDev.	A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	W	I	#	%	Avg.	StDev.	Avg.	StDev.	
Fall 2008	32	3.47	0.35	13	19							0	0.00%				
Fall 2009	22	3.55	0.32	12	10							0	0.00%				
Fall 2010	28	3.33	0.41	10	17	1						0	0.00%				
Fall 2011	32	3.46	0.36	16	16							27	84.38%	4.48	0.94	4.69	0.68
Fall 2012	32	3.50	0.44	13	17					2		31	96.88%	3.86	1.37	4.05	1.11



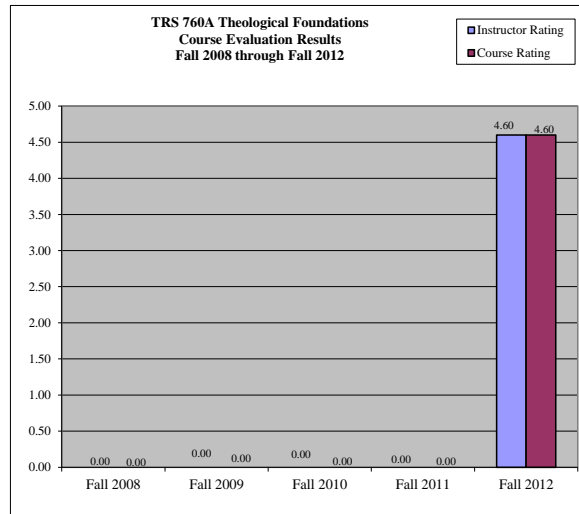
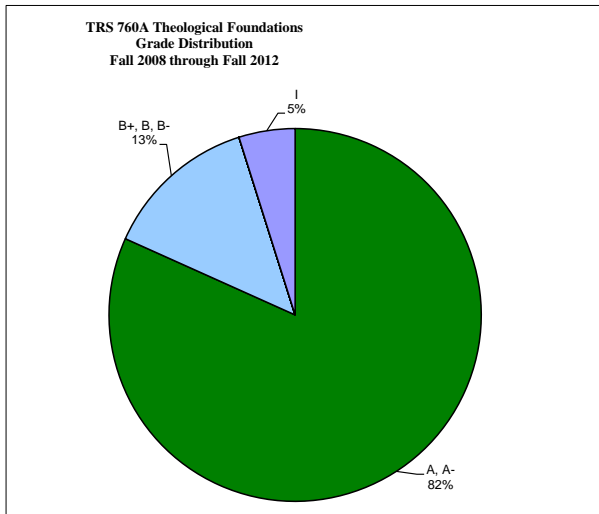
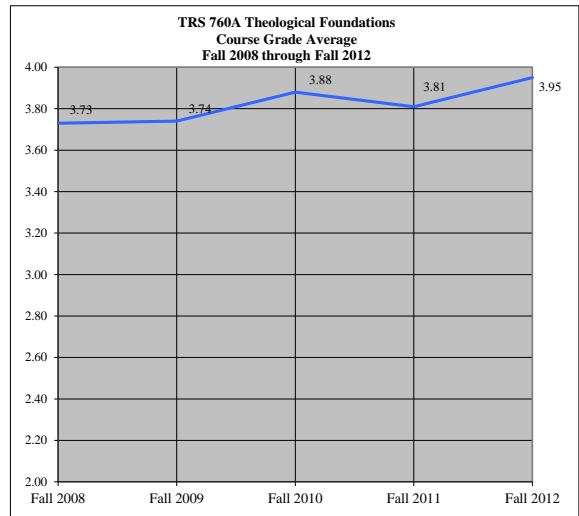
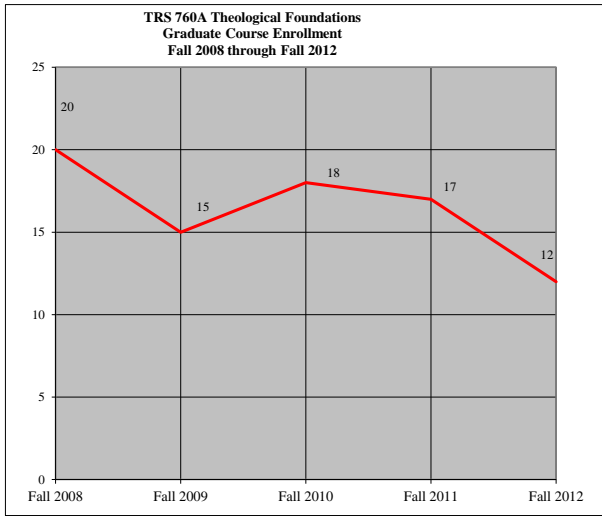
COURSE SUMMARY DATA: SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
 TRS 630A Found of Christian Moral Life

Term	Graduate Course Enrollment	Course Grades									Course Evaluation Results					
		Course Grade		Grade Distribution						Course Eval.		Instructor Rating		Course Rating		
		Avg.	StDev.	A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	W	I	#	%	Avg.	StDev.	Avg.	StDev.
Fall 2008	31	3.63	0.40	21	10						0	0.00%				
Fall 2009	33	3.58	0.43	20	13						0	0.00%				
Fall 2010	38	3.53	0.67	25	12			1			0	0.00%				
Fall 2011	33	3.38	0.38	13	20						32	96.97%	4.49	0.79	4.50	0.73
Fall 2012	44	3.67	0.40	32	11					1	35	79.55%	4.15	1.17	4.22	1.05



COURSE SUMMARY DATA: SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
 TRS 760A Theological Foundations

Term	Graduate Course Enrollment	Course Grades									Course Evaluation Results						
		Course Grade		Grade Distribution						Course Eval.		Instructor Rating		Course Rating			
		Avg.	StDev.	A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	W	I	#	%	Avg.	StDev.	Avg.	StDev.	
Fall 2008	20	3.73	0.31	14	4						2	0	0.00%				
Fall 2009	15	3.74	0.53	11	3						1	0	0.00%				
Fall 2010	18	3.88	0.20	17	1						0	0	0.00%				
Fall 2011	17	3.81	0.28	13	3						1	0	0.00%				
Fall 2012	12	3.95	0.12	12							10	83.33%	4.60	0.70	4.60	0.70	



Milestone Data (Attachment D)

Comment on Passage of Comprehensive Exams

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
AY2008-2009 to AY2012-2013

Master's Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2008-2009	1	4.76%	20	95.24%		0.00%		0.00%	21
AY2009-2010	9	30.00%	21	70.00%		0.00%		0.00%	30
AY2010-2011	2	14.29%	12	85.71%		0.00%		0.00%	14
AY2011-2012	1	11.11%	8	88.89%		0.00%		0.00%	9
AY2012-2013	1	7.14%	13	92.86%		0.00%		0.00%	14
TOTAL	14	15.91%	74	84.09%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	88

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2008-2009	1	2.08%	46	95.83%	1	2.08%		0.00%	48
AY2009-2010	1	4.17%	23	95.83%		0.00%		0.00%	24
AY2010-2011	1	4.55%	21	95.45%		0.00%		0.00%	22
AY2011-2012		0.00%	21	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	21
AY2012-2013	3	10.00%	27	90.00%		0.00%		0.00%	30
TOTAL	6	0.00%	138	0.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	145

Note:

- 1) Milestone outcomes were included in the categories High Pass and Pass with Honors if these designations were explicitly indicated in the students' milestone record.
- 2) Category "High Pass" includes both "High Pass" and "Pass with distinction".
- 3) The count in this table is based on the exam outcomes of all attempts in an academic year.
- 4) Level of the comps, i.e. Master's and doctoral, is based on the milestone activities; if there is no specification of the level in the record, students' degree level is used to determine the level.

Progression Data (Attachment E, F)

Comment on Enrollment

Comment on Time to Degrees/ Graduation Rates

GRADUATE PROGRESSION AND GRADUATION SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES Graduate Cohort Fall 2008 through 2012 Master's Program

	Graduate Cohort Size	Returned To CUA in Fall 2009		Returned To CUA in Fall 2010		Returned To CUA in Fall 2011		Returned To CUA in Fall 2012		Returned To CUA in Fall 2013		Graduated in One Year		Graduated in Two Years*		Graduated in Three Years*	
		No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Fall 2008	42	31	73.8%	20	47.6%	18	42.9%	8	19.0%	2	4.8%	1	0.0%	8	19.0%	10	24.0%
Fall 2009	41			33	80.5%	22	53.7%	18	43.9%	10	24.4%	0	0.0%	6	15.0%	11	27.0%
Fall 2010	44					36	81.8%	28	63.6%	16	36.4%	2	5.0%	5	10.0%	14	32.0%
Fall 2011	53							42	79.2%	27	50.9%	0	0.0%	3	5.7%		
Fall 2012	62									50	80.6%	0	0.0%				

*Two to five years of graduation rates are cumulative.

Note: A particular cohort is defined as the combination of the students first enrolled in consecutive sessions of one year: the summer session or the fall semester. For example, cohort 2008 consists of students first enrolled in summer 2008 or fall 2008.

GRADUATE PROGRESSION AND GRADUATION SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES Graduate Cohort Fall 2008 through 2012 Doctoral Program

	Graduate Cohort Size	Returned To CUA in Fall 2009		Returned To CUA in Fall 2010		Returned To CUA in Fall 2011		Returned To CUA in Fall 2012		Returned To CUA in Fall 2013		Graduated in One Year		Graduated in Two Years*		Graduated in Three Years*	
		No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Fall 2008	45	35	77.8%	32	71.1%	27	60.0%	25	55.6%	22	48.9%	0	0.0%	4	9.0%	5	11.0%
Fall 2009	34			30	88.2%	28	82.4%	25	73.5%	24	70.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.9%
Fall 2010	29					24	82.8%	19	65.5%	15	51.7%	2	7.0%	3	10.0%	3	10.3%
Fall 2011	32							25	78.1%	25	78.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		
Fall 2012	26									21	80.8%	0	0.0%				

*Two to five years of graduation rates are cumulative.

Note: A particular cohort is defined as the combination of the students first enrolled in consecutive sessions of one year: the summer session or the fall semester. For example, cohort 2008 consists of students first enrolled in summer 2008 or fall 2008.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA Planning, Institutional Research, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME FROM DOCTORAL CANDIDACY TO DEGREE COMPLETION SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES 2003-04 through 2012-13

Degree	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Avg. Years	N	Avg. Years	N	Avg. Years	N	Avg. Years	N
PhD	4.3	15	5.6	10	3.1	8	3.2	10

STD									5.0	3
DMin	1.0	3	2.7	3	1.4	5			4.7	3

Degree	2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	Avg. Years	N	Avg. Years	N	Avg. Years	N	Avg. Years	N
PhD	3.7	17	4.0	21	4.6	24	3.9	21
STD	5.3	4	3.1	7	4.0	4	4.8	6
DMin	1.8	5	*	*	2.2	5	3.6	8

* Statistics are omitted for cases where there were fewer than 3 students.

Note: The beginning of doctoral candidacy is determined by the first term of students' registration of dissertation guidance courses.