**Divinity School**

**INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Divinity School of Duke University is a professional school, formally related to the United Methodist Church, which educates and trains women and men for diverse Christian ministries in the church, the world, and the university. In so doing, the Divinity School aims to form moral and intellectual character and to create a community of reflective theological discourse.

As we plan within the Divinity School as well as across the University, it is imperative that we attend to the broader ends of education. In particular, priority must be given to both intellectual excellence and depth of character. Our future needs to be innovative and wise. Even as we pursue new discoveries in research, we also need to conserve wisdom.

Because our hope for the future is informed by a particular Christian tradition of study, worship, and service, the Divinity School seeks to cultivate the love of learning and the desire for God. The knowledge and love of God are crucial for the formation of women and men for diverse ministries in the church, the world, and the university. The Divinity School's distinctive vocation is to equip students for faithful leadership and critical reflection on the church's role in a dramatically changing global culture.

The Divinity School seeks to become a community in which we heed the Gospel's summons to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Such transformation is possible only within a community that provides intellectual challenge, mutual support and accountability, and encouragement to pursue excellence in the work of discipleship. Consequently, in its work the Divinity School is enriched by the cultural resources of Duke University, while it contributes to the academic and spiritual ethos of a university whose mission is to foster "Eruditio et Religio."

Duke Divinity School is focused on transforming ministry. It does so through exercising leadership in preparation of men and women for ministry and continually recreating and enriching the prevailing conceptions of ministry. It does so also by recognizing that ministry is a vocation that requires an ongoing, lifelong conversion of our hearts, minds, and lives in service to the Gospel. There is a crucial formative and transformative center to ministerial education.

In the same way, Duke Divinity School must be open to the transformation of our education and formation, seeking to cultivate the best practices for the school's curricula and programmatic initiatives.

**ASPIRATIONS**

Duke Divinity School aims to be an agent of transformation for the church and
the world. Achieving this aim will be accomplished by focusing, in particular, on excellence in education in service to the formation of a learned clergy.

The Divinity School is widely perceived to be in the top tier of schools that provide theological education. The Graduate Program in Religion, which the Divinity School co-sponsors with the Department of Religion, was most recently ranked 4th in the country in graduate education.

Our aspiration is consistently to be evaluated as the premier institution of theological education in the English-speaking world. Excellence can rightfully be understood in the following ways: (1) quality of academic research and teaching; (2) preparation of men and women for church leadership; and (3) engagement with major issues in church and society.

Achievement in attaining excellence in education is only one part of our aspiration. It is not sufficient to be a premier institution of theological education. That excellence must be in service to the formation of a learned clergy. It is through these learned clergy that Duke Divinity will most significantly transform ministry for the church and the world.

We are convinced that vitally faithful, highly effective Christian congregations make a transformative difference in their communities. They are critically important because they touch people’s lives, address profound questions with insight and wisdom, and offer sites where crucial ingredients of flourishing life can be discovered and nurtured in faithful relationship to the God of Jesus Christ. These congregations typically are also blessed by excellent pastoral leadership. Over time, profound synergies develop between vital congregations and effective pastors, creating spirals where congregations, pastors, and wider communities flourish.

We are equally convinced that ineffective pastoral leadership weakens congregations, and weak congregations often only desire pastors who reflect and perpetuate weakness. Transformation of the community is forgotten in an increasing concern for institutional preservation. Hence, the relationships between congregations and pastors can also devolve downward, spiraling toward mutual weakness rather than mutually reinforcing strength.

Unfortunately, we live in a time where too often the spirals are moving downward rather than upward. Church officials and researchers point to an increasingly widespread sense that we do not currently have enough really effective pastors to sustain congregational ministries at high levels. Ironically, this downward spiral has been occurring at precisely the time when, across the culture, lay people are increasingly expressing broad interest in the spiritual life, and are searching for ways to connect their yearnings with faithful living.

We believe Duke Divinity School must be bold in emphasizing the significance of Christian ministry for the church, the academy, and our life together in society. We believe we do this most centrally by forming a learned clergy. In particular, this requires that we address issues about the students who come to seminary, what happens while they are students, and how we strengthen their ongoing learning after they graduate. Hence, we are convinced that forming a learned clergy will require that we make strategic advances throughout the
Divinity School in order to address the challenges we have identified and to offer a reinvigorated vision of excellence in theological education across the English-speaking world.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS: KEY FINDINGS

Students: Duke has an excellent mix of first-career and second-career students, and consistently has one of the lowest median ages (approximately 27) of any Divinity student body in the country. We have also accomplished a great deal in diversifying our student body, both in ecumenicity (we typically have over 30 traditions represented in the Divinity School) and racial inclusiveness (we have doubled the number of African-American students over the past ten years).

Key findings in our internal and external assessments have highlighted areas of strategic concern for the Divinity School:

Students who come to Duke consistently cite as their top reasons the academic reputation of the school, and the theological integrity of the school.

We need to improve the breadth and depth of the quality of the pool of persons who inquire and apply to Divinity School more generally.

Those students who refuse our offer of admission do so almost exclusively because of financial aid. In 1999, over three-fourths of these students cited financial aid as a factor, and almost two-thirds said it was the only or primary factor.

Students have a high rate of satisfaction with their Duke education, and this tends to increase over time among alumni.

Church officials continue to state that they are impressed by the quality of Duke’s faculty and education, that our graduates tend to do extremely well in ordination exams, and that they, on the whole, make for faithful and effective clergy.

Competitor schools have significantly increased their financial aid over the past two years; Duke now lags considerably behind other schools in the financial aid we offer to students, and also faces pressures on the side of comparative tuition, now ranking as the highest cost United Methodist seminary.

Competitor schools are explicitly advertising that they will make theological education more convenient for students through off-campus locations and distance learning.

Faculty: The Divinity School includes some of the most distinguished theological educators in the world. We must maintain and build on this success in an increasingly competitive environment, as the academic reputation of the school is a key attraction for prospective students and faculty. The Divinity School has sought, and must continue to seek, faculty who are (1) intellectually rigorous teachers and scholars, (2) committed to the church and to preparation of men and women for faithful ministries, and (3) engaged in wider communities in the world. We cannot afford to compromise in any of these areas, though some
fields that are critical to our curriculum present significant challenges in finding persons who fit all three areas.

We will face several key retirements in the next five years, including several holders of distinguished chairs. We need to replace these people with key intellectual leaders who are committed to the church and its ministry. We also need to strengthen the presence of women faculty, continue to build our strength in African-American faculty, and find creative ways to maintain a strong presence of tenured and tenure-track faculty focused on preparing men and women for leadership in fields of Christian ministry.

Programs: Duke Divinity School has some programs of longstanding significance that we believe ought to continue and be enhanced in the coming years: these include especially the Ormond Center that works with congregational analysis, the Baptist House of Studies, and the Office of Black Church Studies. Each of these important areas will be undergoing changes of leadership in the next two years, which will provide the Divinity School the opportunity to assess these programs and build upon their strengths for the next generation.

Over the past two years, Duke Divinity School has undertaken several noteworthy new initiatives that impact the church, the university, and wider communities. Leading the way academically are our efforts to link theology and medicine, especially through The Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life and also our Health and Nursing Ministries Program. In addition, three major programs impact the church: the Pastoral Leadership Program, the Reynolds Leadership Program, and the Duke Youth Academy for Christian Formation. We are developing significant new programs in the community both locally and globally, including especially our Walltown Ministries Partnership focused on strengthening families and children, and a new partnership with the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

Information Technology: The Divinity School lags behind other professional schools in dealing with information technology and in planning for the resources needed for them. In the last three years, significant investment and resource allotment has allowed us to begin catching up. In the summer of 2000, we received a $300,000 grant that will help address crucial needs in the Divinity School and position us for bolder moves in the future.

We believe information technology can and must play a crucial role in teaching and research in the classroom. Even so, our emphasis on the centrality of formation for theological education will lessen the overall immediate impact of distance learning in our degree programs. We do anticipate significant use of distance learning in continuing education and other lifelong learning programs. This includes the opportunity to use information technology as a key part of establishing international partnerships. Planning for a new building will help us create new space for information technology of varied sorts, including enhancing our use of video and other media for preaching and worship.

Internationalization: The Divinity School has a long history of international partnerships. Our assessment over the past year emphasizes the need for improved structures within the School to deal with international students and
programs. Further, we have adopted a distinction between "Comprehensive Partnerships," areas of the world with which the Divinity School intends to foster relationship on several levels, and other "Focused Partnerships," areas designated for more limited contacts. We currently have two primary areas identified for a "Comprehensive Partnership": Latin America, building on already established ties between the Divinity School and Peru, and a new initiative with southern Africa. This will include particular emphases in South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. In addition, we will continue relationships with such places as Bonn, Canterbury, and Haiti through "Focused Partnerships."

The Divinity School recognizes that its efforts at internationalization are typically labor and cost-intensive. By contrast to efforts in some other professional schools, where internationalization is significantly linked to new markets or opportunities with the middle and upper classes, the Protestant church in many international settings is economically quite poor. The Divinity School understands its efforts at internationalization as part of its mission, even though it requires substantial financial investment that limits the scope of our partnerships.

Finances: The Divinity School is currently financially constrained, though relatively stable. Our resources are constrained by our small endowment and by our low tuition (compared to the rest of the University). Yet we are already the highest cost United Methodist seminary, and close to the most expensive of any divinity school with a sizable Master of Divinity student body.

Even with constraints and challenges, the Divinity School has been able to maintain strength thus far through careful planning, prudent deployment of resources, and significant fund-raising through the campaign. As of June 30, 2000, the Divinity School has raised more than $48 million, or $13 million over its original goal. We have seen dramatic increases in giving to our annual fund (up by over 86% in the last three years), and in total giving (up by over 150% in the last three years). Yet our greatest fund-raising success has been in restricted giving, money which does not significantly address either our needs for a larger endowment or for strategic, unrestricted support.

The Divinity School is currently very dependent on several external sources of funding. The Ministerial Education Fund of the United Methodist Church provides significant annual unrestricted support while The Duke Endowment, The Foundation for End-of-Life Care, Vitas Healthcare Corporation, and the Lilly Endowment provide substantial restricted funds.

The Divinity School needs to develop long-term support for investments in financial aid and faculty, for programs such as the Institute on Care at the End of Life, Health and Nursing Ministries, the Walltown initiative, the Youth Academy, and for needed improvements in technology, graduate programs, international initiatives, field education, continuing education, and communications.

Infrastructure: The Divinity School anticipates an urgent need to construct a building addition of approximately 40,000 square feet. The case for such an addition was presented to the Senior Officers in the spring of 1999, and in July 1999 they approved such an addition on the University’s facilities list. The site, scope, and selection of the architect was approved by the Trustees in their fall,
2000 meeting. The new building is projected to house a new Divinity School Chapel (for which The Duke Endowment has already committed $1 million), additional faculty offices and classroom space, including a large state-of-the-art lecture hall, the suite of offices for the Institute on Care at the End of Life (which will help financially support construction of a new building), a community gathering space, a courtyard, and a refectory/café. Its projected cost is $15.25 million.

Intellectual Structure: The Divinity School has identified strengths in several key intellectual areas which will form the foundation of our strategies aimed at enhancing excellence in education. These areas are chosen based on current strengths in the Divinity School and across Duke University, and because they are crucial to the Divinity School maintaining strong links to the academy, the church, and society. These areas have emerged from conversations among faculty and staff in the Divinity School, and have been tested with alumni groups and our Board of Visitors. Duke Divinity School is poised to exercise intellectual leadership in:

Theology and Medicine

Racial Reconciliation

History of Interpretation and Theological Interpretation of Scripture

Theological Ethics

Pastoral Leadership

Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition

FIVE-YEAR GOALS FOR THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Duke Divinity School has established itself as a school focused on excellence in educational formation for diverse ministries in the church, world, and university. In order to achieve our vision to be an agent of transformation for the church and the world, we must maintain that educational excellence, and address critical challenges and weaknesses. Accordingly, the Divinity School will focus its energy and initiatives over the next five years in achieving the following goals:

Develop a major initiative focused on forming a learned clergy;

Improve our ability to recruit high quality students, especially by developing stronger financial aid policies;

Enhance the faculty through aggressive recruitment and retention, especially by developing our intellectual strengths;

Advance program initiatives that impact Duke, the church, and wider communities;

Develop and implement a coherent pedagogical strategy for information...
technology;

Build a new building that addresses infrastructure needs and enhances the climate for interaction and formation.

STRATEGIES FOR GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

Form a Learned Clergy: The formation of a learned clergy is a key ingredient of the Divinity School’s overall aim and vision to be an agent of transformation for the church and the world. While we could make the case that this goal is a part of every other goal, it must also stand alone to ensure proper attention is devoted to significant new strategies designed specifically to advance our current practices by a quantum leap. Four strategies will be used to achieve this goal.

Develop Teaching Congregations in Partnership with Duke Divinity School: Fifteen vital congregations from around the nation will be selected as teaching congregations providing a setting for mutual learning and growth, for revitalized ministry, and for sustained interactions drawing together the best resources of the congregations and Duke Divinity School. Annual field education placements in these congregations will ensure that our best students are apprenticed to a learned clergy-mentor, while annual educational seminars presented by Duke faculty and students to the congregations will promote sustained learning and action by the congregation.

Develop a Scholarship Program to Attract Talented M.Div. and Ph.D. Students: Excellence in education and the formation of a learned clergy is very dependent on our ability to attract highly talented and committed students. At both the masters and doctoral level, competitive pressures increasingly encourage students to choose schools based on financial aid, the ability to work while studying, and the avoidance of debt. To enable students of the highest quality to devote their full-time attention to the education and formation they need to become learned clergy and teachers, Duke Divinity has sought funding to support (over the next five years) 60 full-tuition scholarships for M.Div. students and six Ph.D. scholarships.

Appoint Two Senior Faculty Members: Through external funding sources, the Divinity School will appoint two senior faculty members whose primary role will not be bound to a sub-discipline or specific curricular need. Instead, these faculty will be charged to develop a sustained, interdisciplinary focus on forming a learned clergy for congregational leadership, including the ability to reflect on broad issues and texts theologically.

Cultivate Sustained Learning among Clergy, Laity, Faculty, and Students: The development of a learned clergy requires an ongoing cultivation of good habits of study, reflection and conversation. To encourage sustained learning, over the next five years Duke Divinity will convene 20 seminars that will draw together clergy, laity, faculty and students several times each year for study and conversation around issues vital to transforming ministry for the church and the world.

Recruit High Quality Students: Critical to the success of our vision is the ability
to sustain our ability to recruit the best students in an increasingly competitive market. Strategies to achieve this goal are:

Improve Financial Aid Offerings: Since financial aid is the key barrier to admission acceptance at Duke Divinity School, funds made available from discretionary income under the new endowment agreement, as well as new endowment gifts, will be targeted to four additional scholarships. In addition, a cross-functional team in the Divinity School is assessing the viability of increasing basic need-based financial aid grants to make Duke more competitive in its market.

Increase the Number of Inquiries for Admission: Over the last 10 years, the percentage of inquiring students who submit an application for admission has remained constant. Strategies to increase the number of inquiries are expected to increase the number of applicants, thereby allowing more selectivity in our admissions process.

Develop an Integrated Marketing Strategy for Recruitment: Extensive market research conducted over the next year will be used to develop a targeted marketing strategy that focuses our energy and resources in the most productive arenas for recruitment.

Increase the Percentage of African-American Students to 20%:

Support and Enrich Denominational Diversity:

Strategies d and e are long-term aims of the schools and represent key values of its faculty. The market research conducted in strategy c will provide concrete mechanisms for enhancing our recruiting success among African-Americans and non-United Methodist prospective students.

Foster Greater Coherence among Curriculum, Spiritual Formation, and Field Education:

Build the Sense of Community among Students:

Strategies f and g address the concerns of our existing students for a community of learning that deeply reflects its core Christian principles. These two strategies are designed to foster the development of both physical space and intellectual community in ways that foster a whole life devoted to God.

Enhance the Faculty and Develop Intellectual Strengths: Entrance surveys from students over the last ten years consistently indicate that the primary reasons for choosing Duke Divinity School are its academic and theological reputations. These reputations have been formed over 75 years of teaching and research excellence by a strong faculty, an excellence that has played a leadership role both for the academy and the church. Duke Divinity School is committed to maintaining those reputations, particularly in a time when quality theological education is being compromised for the sake of convenience and serious academic inquiry is being compromised by cultural fragmentation and skepticism. In order to maintain this solid reputation, Duke must work to strengthen the faculty through the following aggressive recruitment and retention
strategies.

Increase the Number of Tenured Faculty to 20, including Women and African-Americans

Appoint Faculty who Enrich our Strength in Areas of Intellectual Leadership

Appoint Faculty to Strengthen Leadership in the Wesleyan Tradition

Deepen the Resources available for Faculty

Develop a Clear Rationale for the Use of "Practice of" Appointments, and add at least One Tenured Member of the Ministerial Division

Increase Funding for Graduate Student Fellowships

Advance Program Initiatives: New program initiatives at the Divinity School are designed to heighten our ability to transform ministry by focusing research and educational initiatives around issues of significance to the church and its communities. These initiatives have impact on current students, but also reach into the church community to provide sustained learning for pastors and congregations. Significant new initiatives being integrated into the life and intellectual structure of the school include:

Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life: The Institute has as its mission the improvement of care at the end of life through interdisciplinary scholarship, teaching and public outreach. Over the next five years, the Divinity School needs to establish a clear leadership profile for the Institute in research, training, and teaching in end-of-life issues.

Duke Health and Nursing Ministries Program: This program, jointly sponsored by the Schools of Divinity and Nursing, focuses upon the traditional commitments of caring for the sick and suffering shared by Christian ministry and nursing professionals. Over the next five years, initiatives to increase the number of students and to increase funding will be essential to the long-term development of the project.

Center for Continuing Education: Through the Center for Continuing Education, the Divinity School will undertake several new initiatives designed to reach new constituent groups throughout the region and to better serve its existing populations. These initiatives include:

The Royce and Jane Reynolds Program in Church Leadership for select clergy leaders

The Duke Youth Academy for Christian Formation for high school youth

Duke Lay Academy expansion and addition of Laity Weekends

Clergy Sabbatical Renewal Programs

Mission immersion events for clergy in international settings
Local and International Partnerships: Over the next five years, the Divinity School will continue to reach beyond its walls to the church and the wider community by developing partnerships and translating our learning from those partnerships for the benefit of our students and the greater church. The Walltown Neighborhood Project, a pilot program with a community of churches near East Campus, and the South Africa Partnership are two examples of these partnerships.

Pastoral Leadership Projects: A Lilly Endowment funded project on pastoral leadership will strengthen the bond between academic research and practical application for the church.

75th Anniversary: During the 2001-02 academic year, use the 75th anniversary of the Divinity School to tell the story of excellence in research and education for the Church at Duke. Specific events will include educational seminars, groundbreaking for the new building, a youth forum and special alumni gatherings.

Pedagogical Strategy for Information Technology: The use of technology for the Divinity School will not be an end in and of itself; it must be a means by which formation for Christian ministry is enhanced. Over the next five years, groups of faculty and staff will pursue the following strategies to develop and implement a coherent pedagogical strategy for information technology.

Utilize Technology to Support the Overarching Mission of the School

Use Technology to Better Serve Constituencies External to the Divinity School

Update Equipment and Skills

Hire a Technology Support Coordinator

Undertake a Thorough Evaluation of the Impact of New Technologies on the Library and Demand for Resources

Build a New Building: Planning for a new building addition that will address the critical need for space to house faculty and staff, as well as provide for greatly improved learning and worship space, will continue throughout the planning period. With the addition of the new building, the Divinity School hopes to reshape its whole ecology of space, creating an environment more conducive to our educational aims. Specific concerns for this strategy include securing full funding for the building, developing architectural plans appropriate for the school and the University, installing an elevator in Old Divinity for ADA compliance, raising support for the maintenance and operation of the building addition, and monitoring issues of parking and access to the school.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS, BUDGET, AND DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS

The Divinity School’s strategic planning has focused on realistic ambitions for the next five years, linked also to aspirational hopes if we achieve significant new financial support through Campaign fund-raising. We believe we can make significant progress toward the goals identified by adopting the strategies we have outlined. Even so, we face critical financial challenges in continuing the
trajectory to meet our ambition of being the premier institution of theological education in the English-speaking world. We will need strategic financial investments from the University in order to move significantly forward.

In recent years a much more competitive environment has emerged within theological education. Duke’s principal competitors have much larger endowments and significantly more resources to devote to scholarships, financial aid and their basic operations, thereby reducing their need to increase tuition. This market greatly limits Duke’s ability to increase tuition to meet our rising costs.

Given this fiscal climate, we will need to expand our success in development. In particular, this will include the following: (1) Increasing our public goal for the Campaign to reflect our success thus far, and to enable us to accomplish the strategies outlined in this document; (2) Developing the key support to enable the Divinity School to undertake construction of the new building, and provide maintenance and operation for it; (3) Achieving greater success in securing endowment gifts, especially for unrestricted support, student financial aid, and faculty support; (4) Securing long-term financial support for major programmatic initiatives such as the Institute on Care at the End of Life, Health and Nursing Ministries, Walltown, Pastoral Leadership, and the Youth Academy; and (5) Providing greater funding for investments in such areas as technology, graduate programs, international initiatives, field education, continuing education, and communications. We hope that, as has occurred over the past three years, our success in development will enable us to develop and implement even greater visions of the Divinity School’s leadership in, engagement with, and service to the church, the academy, and the world.

CONCLUSION

Duke Divinity School is currently strong, building on the legacy of men and women who have shaped a compelling vision over its first three-quarters of a century. Yet we believe it can be much stronger, and is poised to exercise intellectual and programmatic leadership for transforming ministry and forming a learned clergy. We believe this leadership is significant for Duke and the wider academy, for the United Methodist Church and the wider church, and for the Carolinas and the wider world.

Our strategies for the next five years aim to transform conceptions of ministry by emphasizing the need for strong formation, rigorous education, and engaged social witness. In so doing, we believe that we are well positioned to capitalize on our intellectual strengths and our programmatic initiatives.

Further, we believe that our goals and strategies will enable us to emphasize the ways in which ministry transforms people’s lives. This is true for the faculty, staff, and students of the Divinity School, and we also believe it is true for the laypersons who we reach directly through continuing education programs and other initiatives and indirectly through the life and witness of our students and graduates.

This is a critical time for theological education, and for Duke Divinity School. If we keep our sights high, we believe we have an opportunity to build on strength,
pursue a compelling vision, and provide key contributions to the academy, church, and society. We hope to achieve the goals we have identified and move even more ambitiously into the future as we cultivate a love of learning and a desire for God manifested in service for, to, and with God’s people.