COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM REFORM AS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: A CASE STUDY BASED ON GROUNDED THEORY

A dissertation submitted to the Kent State University College and Graduate School of Education, Health, and Human Services in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Based on a case study guided by grounded theory, this research sought to investigate and derive meaning from an exploration of the phenomenon of the comprehensive curriculum review process at Ashland Theological Seminary. The study was designed to address two primary research questions, which were formulated from a higher education administrator’s perspective: How did the curriculum review team experience the comprehensive curriculum review process? How did the faculty and administration collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process?

A qualitative grounded theory method was used to study the case and to identify themes and patterns, which led to generating theories. The primary data for this study were generated from in-depth interviews with 10 curriculum review team members.

Five major findings emerged from this study. (a) A collectively shared guiding vision for the curriculum provided a strong foundation for the comprehensive curriculum review process. (b) Embracing curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility among faculty and administration led to widespread participation and buy-in. (c) The collaboration of various groups within the seminary in the comprehensive curriculum review process promoted true organizational change. (d) Cultural issues regarding people
and organizational structure served as barriers to collaboration during the comprehensive curriculum review process. (e) The curriculum team’s sense of community and connectedness strengthened the curriculum review process.

The study provides recommendations to administrators responsible for oversight of the curriculum review process and the educational institution’s resources; faculty engaged in leading the process; curriculum team chairs or co-chairs; and a curriculum review team.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Curriculum has been a focus for higher education institutions since their beginning, and curricular change is one issue that may cause more tension within higher education institutions than any other (Tierney, 1989). A number of authors point to the significance of the topic of curriculum in higher education. Barnett and Coate (2005) said that curriculum is the most significant topic in higher education and that little attention has been given to it. Based on a study of curriculum in universities in the United Kingdom (U.K.), Barnett and Coate (2005) further expressed their sense of urgency that higher education curriculum be a key topic under consideration for the “well-being and effectiveness of higher education” (p. 7).

When discussing curriculum, a major challenge is finding a common definition and understanding of the term since institutions, faculty, and administrators vary on their definitions of curriculum. Faculty members tend to think of curriculum as what students need to know or be able to do. Early definitions of curriculum focused on the content, productivity, and results of courses offered, which was often referred to as a program of studies (Anderson, 1965, p. 5). Seymour (1988) said that professors and administrators
define curriculum development as a framework for organizing courses or the addition, deletion, and changes regarding coursework within an academic unit (p. 29). Dewey promoted a curriculum that allows for a variety of teaching and learning approaches, dealing more with the delivery of curriculum (Ehrlich, 1997). Barnett and Coate (2005) widened the understanding of curriculum to also include that which heightens a student’s self-understanding “as a person of being and becoming” to develop into people who will flourish in the 21st century (p. 7).

A number of curriculum studies have been conducted on how curriculum in higher education should be designed or evaluated (Anderson, 1965; Ehrlich 1997). In addition, some studies have looked at the process of curriculum development (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Burgess, 2004; Jones, 2002; Seymour, 1988; Shapiro, 2003; Toombs & Tierney, 1991; Walkington, 2002; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). Looking at the curriculum development process takes the topic of curriculum a step further. Models for holistic curriculum development exist in some professional fields in higher education such as environmental science and policy development (Shapiro, 2003) and engineering education (Walkington, 2002). These studies were conducted outside the United States and took place in higher education institutions in Australia and the U.K. respectively.

A number of researchers have written on the topic of curriculum development in American higher education (Jones, 2002; Seymour, 1988; Toombs & Tierney, 1991; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). Each of these studies provided insight into the curriculum design process primarily by looking at case studies from a variety of higher education institutions. Two of the studies were written in response to the criticism over the quality,
efficiency, and accountability of colleges and universities in the 1970s and 1980s
(Seymour, 1988; Toombs & Tierney, 1991). However, Jones (2002) provided insight into
some of the progress that has been made by higher education institutions in improving
students’ learning and development. She reported on a variety of undergraduate
professional education programs (p. 14). In their study, Barnett and Coate (2005)
presented principles for curriculum design, not models to be replicated.

The current study adds to the higher education curriculum literature by looking at
a case study of a curriculum review process in a theological education institution of
higher learning in the United States. In this study I do not present a model for curriculum
review but rather describe a higher education institution’s phenomenon of the curriculum
review process as a case study based on grounded theory. This approach provided a view
into the inner workings of a curriculum review team engaged in a comprehensive
curriculum reform effort.

The literature also indicates that religion and spirituality have become topics of
recent discussion in K-12 and higher education (Ream, 2007; Scott, 2000; Slattery, 2006;
Walsh, 2000). Since this research study took place in a theological education setting,
purposeful attention was given to the spiritual aspect of the process. This study looked at
the effects of the spiritual and cultural dimensions on the curriculum review process.
Slattery (2006) has focused on the scholarly study of religion and spirituality and its role
in K-12 curriculum. This case study focused on the experience of the curriculum team
members and provided insights into the spiritual aspect of the process. This study
addressed specifically the importance of a spiritual foundation as part of the guiding
vision for the curriculum review process and the spiritual engagement of the curriculum team during the process.

Research in the field of theological education curriculum has focused primarily on content (Hornbacker, 2004; Ingram, 2004). Some helpful guides have been made available in the last five years to help theological schools engage in curricular revision. Barnett and Coate’s (2005) view of curriculum as embracing a sense of the student’s self and self-understanding in the act of being and becoming speaks to the formation of the student in theological education (p. 7). Theological education curriculum has focused in part on the student’s self awareness and personal growth.

Looking at curriculum development as a process also requires an examination of the concept of organizational change. How well organizations and institutions understand the change process, in turn, impacts curricular reform. According to Toombs and Tierney (1991), “Organizational change has become a key topic in the literature on organizational theory and the implementation of curricular reform has become a central concern to curricular theorists” (p. 71).

Collaboration in the change effort is another challenge in higher education, in particular, with comprehensive curriculum reform. According to Toombs and Tierney (1991), modification to existing courses or content will not lead to this desired reform even though that approach is most common (p. 8). Although modifications and integration are part of the curriculum review process, the goal should be transformation (Toombs & Tierney, 1991). This type of curriculum requires a “full examination of how academics conceive their role and how the curriculum itself is defined, analyzed, and
changed” in the process of curriculum review (Toombs & Tierney, 1991, p. 9). “True transformation of the curriculum requires giving up the place and space of the old in order to create something wholly new” said Ferren and Mussell (2000, p. 253). Barnett and Coate’s (2005) curriculum-in-action approach provides space and opportunity for this type of transformation. Some theological seminaries like other higher education institutions make curricular changes by adding a course in one of the areas or building an experience into the curriculum (Longchar, n.d.; Veling, 1999). This approach falls short of comprehensive curriculum reform. According to Cohen, Fetters, and Fleischmann (2005, p. 324), radical curriculum reform is challenging because it requires time and widespread participation; two challenges for the higher education culture. The current study built on the research of Cohen et al. (2005) by focusing on a radical curriculum reform process that engaged the seminary community including faculty and administrators and spanned over four years. The first few years were dedicated to examining the philosophical foundation of the institution, asking the question “What type of student do we want to graduate from Ashland Theological Seminary?”

In their research, Wolf and Hughes (2007) focused on the role of faculty in the processes and practices of curriculum development and the need for collaboration among faculty. Their study presented information on how faculty engage other faculty in curriculum reform. This current study added to the literature by examining a collaborative effort not only among faculty but also among faculty and administration. A full examination of this comprehensive curriculum review process generated theories related to the guiding vision for the process; the collaborative effort of faculty and
administration; cultural barriers to collaboration; and the sense of community and connectedness experienced by the curriculum review team.

The higher education institution that I studied for this particular research was Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, OH. This study was a case focused solely on this institution. I gained insight into the curriculum review process at the seminary while serving as the leader of the curriculum review team for its four-year duration. An in-depth analysis of the curriculum review and revision process with the goal of generating theories provided important insight into curricular revision and factors that helped or hindered the curriculum review process. The theories generated from this research can be used to assist other seminaries and institutions of higher learning that engage in a comprehensive curriculum review process.

The remaining sections of Chapter I present a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, and the significance of the study.

Statement of the Problem

The first issue explored in this case study was the phenomenon of the curriculum review process at Ashland Theological Seminary as experienced by the curriculum team members. A movement toward curriculum reform in higher education was generated, in large part, by reports in the 1980s that called for improvements in the undergraduate curriculum (Stark & Lattuca, 1997, p. 362). Higher education accrediting bodies began using the term assessment much more frequently. The call for outcomes assessment in 1979 remains a major focus of accreditation standards today (Alstete, 2004, p. 13). The assessment movement has called colleges and universities to become more learner-
focused and outcome-driven (Alstete, 2004; Lucas, 2000; Wolf & Hughes, 2007).

Hubball, Gold, Mighty, and Britnell (2007) went as far as to say that at their university, “Accreditation was the single biggest factor to influence the development, implementation, and evaluation of learning-centered curricula” (p. 101). Regardless of the pressures facing higher education by accrediting agencies or employers, universities need to understand how to engage in curricular reform that goes beyond courses (Briggs, 2007; Hubball et al., 2007; Steele, 2006). This current research furthered the literature by presenting a curriculum review process that went beyond courses by starting at the philosophical foundation of the institution. This research study also took a unique approach to degree design. In an effort to ensure a comprehensive review and not just making changes to individual courses, the curriculum team approached the process with the “empty basket” concept, removing all courses from the degree. All courses had to be proposed to the curriculum review team. The team then evaluated each course proposal, followed a list of criteria, and determined their inclusion in the master of divinity (M.Div.) degree proposal. The curriculum review process focused on the M.Div. degree since it is the primary degree offered at theological seminaries for the training of pastors or other Christian leaders and is the degree that cuts across all disciplines.

Theological seminaries are also being held accountable by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), which is the accrediting body for theological schools in North America. Major areas of accountability include data-driven decision making at all levels of the institution and the demonstration of student learning (Association of Theological Schools, 2004). Curriculum reform is essential in moving theological
education to the place of demonstrating accountability and responsibility. ATS has emphasized curriculum revision in theological education by conducting two events over the past five years that focused on the issue, resulting in two publications. The first ATS consultation on M.Div. curriculum took place in 2003 and resulted in the *ATS folio: Master of divinity revision* (Association of Theological Schools, 2006), which was provided to seminaries to serve as “springboards for faculty discussion on retreats, workdays, or for use in committees charged with the responsibility for curriculum revision” (p. 1). A second consultation on the M.Div. curriculum revisioning process was held in 2007. The 2007 issue of the *Theological Education* journal included short essays on curricular issues including how to build a curriculum that entails the four content areas required by the ATS degree standards, the rationale for an outcome-based model, the role of the mission statement in curriculum review, assessing the validity of degree requirements, among others. ATS has raised awareness among theological schools regarding the necessity of curricular revision as a natural step in helping theological schools embrace the outcomes-assessment model.

The second issue explored in this study was the collaborative process among faculty and administration in the comprehensive curriculum review effort. Because of the necessity for campus-wide involvement in this accountability effort regarding assessment, the curriculum review process should also be a collaborative effort, in particular, of faculty and administration. Currently, no literature on a comprehensive curriculum review process exists in theological education. This research study
contributed to the literature in theological education and higher education curriculum regarding collaboration.

In higher education, a number of articles have been written since the 1990s that focus on curricular issues regarding general education requirements for undergraduates, the role of curriculum collaboration within academic departments, as well as the politics of curricular change in higher education (Arnold, 2004; Briggs, 2007; Steele, 2006). The most recent ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report written on curriculum was in 2002. However, the New Directions for Teaching and Learning series (2007) recently published a volume focused on faculty-driven curriculum development in higher education and collaboration at the department level. This volume was written in part to assist the increasing number of faculty who are being called upon to initiate and lead curriculum development processes. The current study built on this by demonstrating the value of also having administrators involved in the process.

Research also shows that higher education institutions have begun to place a greater emphasis on the engagement of organizational learning (Bauman, 2005; Bensimon, 2005; Kezar, 2005) and organizational change (Kezar, 2001; Seymour, 1988; Toma, 2005). This current study looked at collaboration among the entire institution, not just among faculty or at the department level. It looked specifically at the collaborative effort of faculty and administration. Focusing on what Mortimer and Sathre (2007) refer to as the “how,” not just the “what” of decisions regarding curriculum revision (p. 127), this current study also contributed to the literature on curriculum development and organizational change. In addition, it furthered the understanding of using groups in
organizational learning by looking specifically at the work of the curriculum review team involved in the case study.

This case study addressed two major issues. The first issue was the comprehensive curriculum review and revision process at Ashland Theological Seminary. The theories generated from data presented in documents and interviews provided insight into the work of the curriculum review team. Similarities as well as the unique issues involved in a curriculum review process in a theological seminary were identified. The experiences of the curriculum review team members provided the most insight into this phenomenon.

The second issue was the collaborative effort of faculty and administration in the comprehensive curriculum review process. The data generated through an evaluation of interview transcripts and other documents revealed some of the challenges and triumphs faced by the curriculum review and revision team; the seminary community’s involvement in the process including faculty, departments, and disciplines; the adoption of the revised curriculum in light of faculty input into the design; and the administration’s support through resource allocation.

Purpose of the Study

Based on a case study guided by grounded theory, this research sought to inquire into the comprehensive curriculum review process at Ashland Theological Seminary. The primary purpose of this case study was to investigate and derive meaning from an exploration of the phenomenon of the comprehensive curriculum review process at Ashland Theological Seminary. Most current research related to seminary curriculum
indicated that seminaries have focused on changes in curriculum content in areas such as spiritual formation, leadership development, globalization and cultural issues, and field education (Cobb, 1990; Veling, 1999). A number of dissertations have been written in the recent decade in theological seminaries, focusing primarily on curriculum content (Hornbacker, 2004; Ingram, 2004; Kuubetersuur, 2003). Although curricular revision in other professional areas has also tended to focus on content, some professional areas of study have looked at curriculum review as a process, in particular, Slattery’s (2006) work in K-12 curriculum and other studies in higher education curriculum (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Burgess, 2004; Jones, 2002; Seymour, 1988; Shapiro, 2003; Toombs & Tierney, 1991; Walkington, 2002; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). This study built on that literature with a specific look into the experiences of a curriculum review team.

The secondary purpose of this case study was to deepen the understanding of the collaborative process between faculty and administration during the curriculum review and revision at the university. The higher education profession tends to attract individuals who prefer jobs that allow them to work alone. The nature of the higher education profession promotes individuality (Toombs & Tierney, 1991). Historically, the teacher-centered paradigm has dominated higher education. More recently, as faculty have begun to embrace a learner-centered paradigm, faculty collaboration has been encouraged (Toombs & Tierney, 1991). This shift is most apparent in K-12 education. According to Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (2000), the concept of curriculum development “has been reconceived as less hierarchical and more collaborative in nature. Recent research seems less focused on developing new ‘how-to’s’ of curriculum development,
more on describing curriculum” (p. 663). One specific area that affects collaboration is the institution’s exercise of shared governance. Most literature focuses on faculty sharing the governance over the curriculum, concentrating on degree programs rather than individual courses (Wolf & Hughes, 2007). This current study focused on shared governance not only among faculty but also among faculty and administration in comprehensive curricular reform. Building on curriculum literature in both K-12 and higher education, this study helped to broaden the understanding of curriculum review and revision as a process with a necessary collaborative component. In order to deepen my understanding of the curriculum review process, I used a qualitative design with grounded theory methodology to analyze the case. This approach allowed me to study the emerging phenomenon, uncover knowledge not available in the field of higher education curriculum, and generate emerging theories.

Research Questions

The study was designed to address two primary research questions, which were formulated from a higher education administrator’s perspective. The first research question was: How did the curriculum review team experience the comprehensive curriculum review process? The second research question was: How did the faculty and administration collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process?

In order to study the entire phenomenon of this case, I used grounded theory to identify themes and patterns that helped shape the research questions. Because of this approach, the research questions became more firm as the study proceeded.
Definitions of Terms

Providing some definitions of major terms used in this study assisted in the exploration of the existing literature and the subsequent research questions for this study.

*Curriculum.* An institution’s entire educational program (Toombs & Tierney, 1991) that includes classroom experiences as well as co-curricular activities that take place outside the classroom (Anderson, 1965).

*Curriculum Review Process.* An ongoing and thorough review of the institution’s educational efforts that engages all sectors of the institution involved with the teaching and learning process, in particular, faculty and administrators.

*Stakeholders.* Faculty, administration, students, alumni, employers, the church, trustees, denominational leaders, and the wider public who have an influence on and are affected by higher education curriculum.

*Theological Education.* A form of higher education that focuses on the preparation of men and women for Christian ministry.

*Seminary.* An educational institution where people are trained and equipped for various professional and lay ministries as well as a place where people develop and grow personally and spiritually.

*Association of Theological Schools (ATS).* The main accrediting body for all theological seminaries in North America, which includes those in the United States and Canada.
Significance of the Study

Higher education institutions often engage in curricular revision and then hit a difficult spot where they either choose to stop and keep the curriculum as it is or press through the difficult times and create a revised curriculum that will hopefully impact the lives of faculty, students, and society (Cobb, 1990). According to Cobb (1990), the faculty’s commitment to the curriculum review in his theological education study was modest and did not lead to a rethinking of courses or curriculum. Any changes made were primarily decided by individuals. Cobb’s (1990) example represents a curriculum review process that was not comprehensive or collaborative. In contrast, this current study provided an example of a higher education institution that pressed through difficulties and completed a curriculum review process that was both comprehensive and collaborative.

The current study provided educators with some ways to approach a comprehensive curriculum review process. The study specifically looked into a curriculum review team’s understanding of their experience of that process and can assist others in identifying some of the potential pitfalls and some of the keys that helped move the process forward. This study also showed faculty and administration what can happen when they engage in a collaborative process with a common goal. Working together can create a curriculum that is transformative for all who are involved in the process, including those who design the curriculum as well as future students.

In addition, most educational institutions change because of pressure that is external. External forces such as accrediting bodies, society, and the government provide
a sense of urgency for higher education institutions to focus on student learning, which inevitably requires some review of the curriculum (Alstete, 2004; Lucas, 2000; Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). However, the process at Ashland Theological Seminary was initially motivated by the faculty and administration’s desire to identify how best to prepare ministers for today’s culture. As the process moved forward and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association along with the Association of Theological Schools heightened the focus on student learning, the external forces began to affect the process, in particular, the timing for approval of the new curriculum. Therefore, this study added to the literature in higher education regarding how a curriculum team engaged in curricular review from an internal motivation based on a sense of calling to the process and a sense of community and connectedness among the team members.

According to Merriam (1998), a case is “a single thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). This research focused on a single case study of one institution that engaged in a comprehensive curriculum review process. The goal was to move beyond a description of the case. Using grounded theory methodology, I analyzed the case in order to gather in-depth information, identify patterns, and generate theories related to higher education curriculum. As a case study guided by grounded theory, the primary purpose of this study was to understand the phenomenon of the collaborative curriculum review process between faculty and administration at Ashland Theological Seminary.
Summary

This curriculum review was a challenging but invaluable process guided by the methodology of grounded theory. The purpose of this case study using grounded theory methodology was twofold: 1) to uncover emerging theories related to the curriculum review team’s experience of the comprehensive curriculum review process and 2) to generate theories regarding the collaborative effort of faculty and administration during the curriculum review process. As a result, this study added to the literature in higher education and theological education curriculum reform.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature in the field of higher education curriculum. Chapter III provides the research method used for this study. Chapter IV presents the results and findings. The dissertation concludes with Chapter V, which provides conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature serves as an overview of the available literature on curriculum review and revision as a process and the collaborative role of faculty and administrators. Since I used grounded theory methodology to study the case, I did not have preconceived ideas about what I would find in the study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990):

Since discovery [in grounded theory] is our purpose, we do not have beforehand knowledge of all the categories relevant to our theory. It is only after a category has emerged as pertinent that we might want to go back to the technical literature to determine if this category is there, and if so what other researchers have said about it. (p. 50)

In light of this, much of the literature review was revised after the findings were identified. The review is organized into four major sections. The first section introduces the basic concepts of higher education curriculum development. The second section focuses on educational change. The third section focuses on the role of culture in
curriculum revision. The fourth section addresses the basic concepts of organizational learning in higher education.

This study required a review of the available literature in the areas of higher education curriculum, theological education curriculum, educational and organizational change, organizational culture, and organizational learning.

Higher Education Curriculum Development

The larger concept of curriculum development in relation to this study included a look at the foundational elements of curriculum, the history of higher education curriculum, characteristics of a postmodern curriculum, a holistic approach to curriculum development, and the complexity of curriculum development. A growing body of literature and conversations on higher education curriculum has been especially prevalent over the past decade (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Hubball & Gold, 2007; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). Hubball and Gold (2007) highlight the need for more research on the theoretical concepts and disciplines, principles, and practices that enhance student learning especially in light of learning outcomes assessment (p. 12). Reflecting on the history of higher education curriculum contributed to the understanding of curriculum development.

History of Higher Education Curriculum

The purpose, content, and meaning of curriculum development has been debated throughout the history of higher education in the United States. Curriculum development has focused on content, development, and delivery of information that someone has considered important. Within these three areas, there has been wide debate including the
who, what, and how of curriculum (Ehrlich, 1997, p. 125). In evaluating curriculum
development, a person or educational institution might begin with defining curriculum.
For some, curriculum is the knowledge base that must be taught; for others, it may be
experiences that shape lives. “Who” refers to the accessibility of higher education. Is it
for everyone or only for the elite? “What” refers to knowledge and information. Should
knowledge be limited to the Great Books or include a variety of areas? “How” refers to
the development, implementation, and evaluation processes. How do faculty design
curriculum? How is that curriculum delivered to the student? Throughout the history of
higher education, leaders have struggled with these questions (Ehrlich, 1997).

One of the most well known debates in higher education was the 1936 debate
between John Dewey and Robert Maynard Hutchins. The focus of the debate was the
purpose of a liberal education including who should be students, what should be learned,
and through what type of learning process (Ehrlich, 1997, p. 125). Hutchins preferred the
Great Books approach where the student studied the great philosophers and saw faculty
as experts and disseminators of knowledge. In evaluating today’s higher education,
Hutchins’ model may appear to be most prevalent. However, more recent curricular
research has built on Dewey’s work where a variety of teaching and learning approaches
were considered (Ehrlich, 1997).

More recently Barnett and Coate (2005), higher education professors in the U.K.,
have written on the topic of curriculum engagement. Barnett and Coate (2005) set forth
three arguments: (a) Higher education curriculum has not been taken seriously in debate,
policy formation, or practice. (b) To prepare students to meet the challenges of today,
educators must find a way to engage students in the learning process. (c) The three dimensions of curricula include knowing, acting, and being (p. 2). Barnett and Coate’s (2005) curriculum-in-action approach addressed some of these concerns by promoting active engagement of the students in the learning process (p. 3). Curriculum researchers have taken the study of curriculum beyond content and design and into process (Walkington, 2002; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). Other studies also contributed to the understanding of curriculum design as a process: Burgess’ (2004) study in social work in the U.K.; environmental science and policy development in the U.K. (Shapiro, 2003); and the curriculum review process conducted by an engineering school in Australia (Walkington, 2002).

Characteristics of Postmodern Curriculum

Doll’s (1993) extensive study of postmodern curriculum in K-12 provides some insight into higher education curriculum. Since it is ever-changing and evolving, postmodern curriculum could be referred to as curriculum-in-action (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 3). Curriculum development is not seen as permanent but as creative and fluid. Postmodern curriculum development does not focus on specific steps in curriculum development but instead on the relationships of people involved in the process of creating curriculum (Tierney, 1989). This means that emerging curriculum is a nonlinear process with no master plan or rationale for curriculum. Postmodernism accepts the chaotic, the “emergent currents of change” (Hunkins & Hammill, 1994, p. 41).

Doll (1993) looked at curriculum from the viewpoint of a vision and not a model. A model would contradict postmodernism’s emphasis on openness and the teacher’s role
as “curriculum creator and developer, not just an implementer” (p. 16). Barnett and Coate (2005) also presented principles for curriculum design, not models that are to be replicated. Doll (1993) identified four criteria that are essential for designing a curriculum that fosters a postmodern view: richness, recursion, relations, and rigor. These can be easily applied to higher education.

**Richness**

Likened to grounded theory, richness “refers to a curriculum’s depth, to its layers of meaning, to its multiple possibilities or interpretations,” according to Doll (1993, p. 176). Richness is achieved by having many points of connection and having many constituencies involved in the curriculum design. Walkington (2002) insisted that curriculum requires a broader and more holistic view. This approach goes beyond Hutchins’ interest in the Great Books and Dewey’s focus on a variety of teaching and learning strategies. A broader and more holistic view of curriculum involves engaging many people in the process and designing a curriculum that forms the whole student (Walkington, 2002). This approach to widespread participation increases the ownership necessary for whole curriculum reform (Cobb, 1990; Doll, 1993).

**Recursion**

Recursion characterizes the curriculum development process as both stable and changing. This approach means that the process of curriculum review and development keeps returning to itself. A recursive curriculum does not have a beginning and an end. Every part in the process speaks back to the process (Doll, 1993). A major challenge with
curriculum design is that it is rarely a linear step-by-step process and certainly not a clean process since new information continuously affects the process. Changes that need to be made along the way to adapt the process and keep it moving forward encourage an increasing sense of understanding of the curriculum and the process (Burgess, 2004; Hunkins & Hammill, 1994). Doll (1993) believes that recursion is necessary to create a transformative curriculum.

Relations

The concept of relations in a postmodern curriculum puts the focus not on the parts but on the relations between the parts in curriculum design. This nonlinear curriculum includes connections and interconnections rather than a defined beginning, middle, and end (Doll, 1993).

Rigor

Rigor is a concept to consider when engaging in curriculum development; it is not a step in the process. Rigor reinforces the idea that curriculum development is not a step-by-step process. Educators must struggle to work through problems in order to create a coherent curriculum, which is a curriculum with a purposeful beginning, middle, and end. This effort will not be easy especially in light of the chaos and complexity involved (Doll, 1993). In an effort to build a coherent curriculum, educators must purposefully look for alternatives and for possible connections in the curriculum, which is an ongoing and active process (Doll, 1993, p. 182).
Taking a holistic approach to curriculum development is also a characteristic of postmodern curriculum. In order to live well with oneself and others, one must give attention to three primary dimensions of life: moral, social, and spiritual. Inattention to any area leaves one unable to respond to life situations from a holistic and integrated foundation. Research addresses the necessity of these areas as part of the postmodern curriculum both at the K-12 and higher education levels (Scott, 2000; Slattery, 2006; Walsh, 2000).

A Holistic Approach to Curriculum Development

Slattery’s (2006) postmodern view for K-12 curriculum and his interest in religion, spirituality, and culture also speak to the field of higher education. He identified three main elements of postmodern curriculum: (a) a focus on community cooperation rather than corporate competition, (b) a holistic process perspective rather than separate parts, and (c) a multilayered, interdisciplinary curriculum, which includes the integration of theology (pp. 108-109).

Each of these three main elements will be addressed here by integrating research from Scott (2000), Slattery (2006), and Walsh (2000).

Community Cooperation

Community cooperation promotes a spirit of cooperation among teachers, parents, students, and others rather than a business approach to education. Slattery (2006) encourages teachers and parents to become mentors and guides. He believes this approach will be more effective in “creating stimulating learning environments” than any
dependence on the latest technology. Students will be inspired by these mentors to “seek wisdom and understanding as part of a community of learners” (p. 111). Walsh (2000) broadens this cooperative effort by encouraging the people who work with students to support one another’s efforts to develop inner resources from which this wisdom and understanding flow (p. 7).

Students will benefit from a community of people working together for the good of the whole (Slattery, 2006; Walsh, 2000). Healthier environments will be created as well as healthier role models. Students look to faculty as adults who have life experience, who have their priorities straight, who are balanced and stable people comfortable with who they are, and who find great meaning out of their work (Slattery, 2006; Walsh, 2000). This responsibility takes education and curriculum to another level, to the level of holistic education. This postmodern perspective on education places students and teachers on a joint venture of learning and self discovery and for some, a spiritual journey (Slattery, 2006).

_A Holistic Process Perspective_

Preparing people to serve in today’s society includes providing students with a holistic educational experience, which includes addressing the moral and spiritual crises in society through the curriculum (Slattery, 2006, p. 87). Walsh (2000) supported creating a new vision for higher education that includes spirituality as one component in the effort to “respond more fully to the challenges the world is calling us to confront with all the honesty, integrity, and intelligence we can muster” (p. 12). Addressing the religious or spiritual dimension of higher education institutions has become an area of interest and
research in the last decade (Ream, 2007; Scott, 2000; Walsh, 2000). Ream (2007) addressed how higher education institutions have shifted from a religious to a secular focus; even though early higher education institutions were grounded in deep religious roots. Scott (2000) and Walsh (2000) have conducted research regarding the reconnection of the student’s spiritual life with that of the higher education curriculum.

A holistic process perspective in postmodern curriculum represents a renewed understanding of the future and helps the student see history as an unfolding story in which the student has an active part (Slattery, 2006, p. 87). Individuals must be able to engage in this holistic process perspective in order to reflect spiritually on their own lives, understand their social responsibilities, and seek to live from a moral foundation (Scott, 2000; Slattery, 2006; Walsh, 2000). Aleshire (2003), executive director for the Association of Theological Schools, said, “The curriculum is not just the choice and arrangement of courses and degree requirements. It is also in the teachers who so embody it that they form a cloud of witnesses that continues to give us ‘wisdom pertaining to responsible life in faith.’ They are a curriculum that needs no revision” (p. 4). This holistic process perspective must be part of curriculum development in the postmodern era.

A Multilayered, Interdisciplinary Curriculum

A postmodern approach to curriculum that is multilayered and interdisciplinary integrates the moral, social, and spiritual dimensions (Scott, 2000; Slattery, 2006). “A powerful movement is underway to transform education and organizations through integrative approaches that overcome fragmentation, specialization, and isolation in life,
learning, and the workplace. The movement represents a search for greater meaning and wholeness,” according to Slattery (2006, p. 33). In this search for greater meaning, people are also searching for a sense of connection through relationships and for a spiritual view on life, which are all efforts at reaching wholeness (Slattery, 2006, p. 24). This requires a transformation of education and other societal organizations. Educators need to determine how curriculum can promote this integration and support this movement. Barnett and Coate (2005) offer one avenue for this as they suggest that institutions focus on a curriculum that embraces a student’s sense of self and self understanding with an emphasis on being and becoming. This requires a focus on the natural and the spiritual. Ream (2007) offered hope that in more recent years, “religious schools and scholars have sought to nurture and sustain a vital relationship between religious faith and scholarship” (p. 63). This approach may encourage the integration of the moral, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Thinking of curriculum as a “holistic process rather than a whole product as our goal,” can be helpful to those entrusted with a comprehensive curriculum review process, according to Slattery (as cited in Pinar, 1999, p. 286). Religion and spirituality are strong influences in the lives of individuals; therefore, it is important to consider the integration of this aspect in the holistic process of the teaching and learning.
Comprehensive Curriculum Reform

When looking at curricular revision, it is important to note the difference between making small changes to curriculum and engaging in comprehensive curriculum reform. Educational institutions commonly make small changes to curriculum, which typically involves faculty making changes to individual courses or changes in teaching methods (Cobb, 1990). Faculty tend to focus most of their time and energy on staying up-to-date in their field, expressing less interest in other components of the curriculum (Toombs & Tierney, 1991, p. 22). Many faculty prefer to select the courses they want to teach, the content they want to teach, and how they want to teach it due, in part, to the nature of academic freedom and autonomy (Innes, 2004, p. 259). What is less common is a comprehensive curriculum change where the focus is on how the parts fit together. Some institutions’ hesitations to whole curriculum reform are generated from an unwillingness to embark on a major change because of the complexity and challenges involved in such an effort (Cobb, 1990).

Complexity of Curriculum Reform

Redesigning curriculum is often a complex process. The social work study in the U.K. used the complexity theory as a framework to understand its curriculum redesign process (Burgess, 2004, p. 163). Regarding the complexity theory, Burgess (2004) said:

The value of complexity theory, which emphasizes how design may emerge from participant groups rather than from a centrally managed plan, is discussed, along with the danger, given the time constraints, of chaos. Overall, there is an emphasis on the need for educators to understand the competing and at times contradictory
forces in curriculum design, to enhance participation by the range of stakeholders involved. (p. 164)

Those individuals and groups involved in curricular development must recognize the complexity of the process and its nonlinear nature. “Complexity theory thus provides a tool to make sense of the intricate process of curriculum design,” Burgess said (2004, p. 180). After the goals for the curriculum are set, the leaders need to welcome the creative and unplanned events that will emerge amidst the complexity. Effective leaders will engage in a flexible process that unfolds over time rather than a process that is predetermined (Burgess, 2004). Organizational change agents also support the acceptance of a nonlinear process (Kezar, 2001; Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). According to Kezar (2001), “Being open to ambiguity and a nonlinear process is important for institutional leaders and change agents” (p. 135). Comprehensive curriculum reform is a complex process that benefits from a leader who is able to adapt during the change process.

*Challenges of Comprehensive Curriculum Reform*

Institutions face challenges when attempting to engage in comprehensive curriculum reform. Some of these challenges include time, cooperation, and a desire for transformation. Burgess (2004) and Walkington (2002) identified time as one of the constraints to whole curriculum reform. Adequate stakeholder participation in the curriculum review process takes time. Burgess (2004) encouraged curriculum designers to not miss the opportunity for wholesale curriculum reform because of time constraints. Instead, give the complex process adequate time so that the curricular changes are significant and lasting (p. 172). The process may take years and much collaboration in
order to build the understanding required among the various stakeholders to reach meaningful change (Burgess, 2004, p. 181).

Cooperation is another challenge facing comprehensive curriculum reform. However, working together during the process is important for buy-in and support as well as a sense of ownership. This cooperation is especially important in the design and development phase and is characteristic of postmodernism (Doll, 1993; Walkington, 2002).

Educators should also consider the goal of curriculum transformation, which allows for a more unfolding of the curriculum design process rather than a predetermined direction or final goal, which tends to be more characteristic of curricular reform (Toombs & Tierney, 1991, p. 9). An open, postmodern approach to curriculum design will more likely lead to curriculum transformation (Doll, 1993).

Whole curriculum reform is a complicated process. Higher education faculty and administrators involved in the effort need to recognize the complex and unpredictable nature of higher education curriculum (Stark & Lattuca, 1997, p. 333). Having an increased knowledge and understanding of the curriculum development process can assist in the change efforts needed to transform the curriculum.

Educational Change

The various pressures and challenges facing higher education institutions require strong leaders who understand the change process. All levels of education face external pressures to perform whether through achievement tests in K-12 or job readiness for college graduates. Although external pressures on change generally have a negative
impact, some change efforts initiated this way can prove positive. When looking at curricular revision in the higher education environment, one must consider the influences that affect change as well as barriers that might inhibit change. Three major influences on curricular change include: external influences, organizational influences, and internal influences (Stark & Lattuca, 1997, p. 331). These influences are necessary to understanding the collaborative effort of faculty and administration in a curriculum review process. According to Seymour (1988), the two main challenges to innovation include structural impediments “relating to the characteristics of the organizational framework” and cultural impediments that “determine how people in the organization act” (p. 5). This section identifies the external, organizational, and internal influences affecting change along with the structural barriers facing each area. Some internal influences will be included here. However, due to the impact culture has on the educational change effort, the third section in this literature review is devoted to the discussion of the role of culture in curriculum development. Various cultural influences and barriers will be included in that section.

External Influences on Curricular Change

Higher education curriculum has historically been considered the work of the faculty. More recently, external influences such as society, government, alumni, and others are affecting curriculum development and the curricular change process (Stark & Lattuca, 1997, pp. 98-100). Accreditation bodies expect more from educational institutions especially in the area of assessment of student learning. This external influence has caused a number of educational institutions to engage in curricular review
in an effort to identify the desired student learning outcomes (Alstete, 2004; Lucas, 2000; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). One benefit of external accountability has been the pressure by the market to require institutions to shift the focus from teaching to learning. This approach also requires that faculty work together in the design of the curriculum and therefore, breaks down the barrier of faculty autonomy over individual courses (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 61).

The external push from accrediting bodies, government, and society has created a greater sense of urgency to review curricular issues. In theological education, these external influences include the Association of Theological Schools, the church, denominations, alumni, and counseling agencies.

**Organizational Influences on Curricular Change**

In addition to the external influences, a higher education institution must address the organizational influences that affect the educational change process and the degree of collaboration. This section identifies some of the structural barriers to change, factors promoting change, and the role of shared governance in curricular revision.

**Structural Barriers to Organizational Change**

Some of the structural barriers to change result from the typical design of higher education institutions, which includes separation by disciplines with many units making decisions within the larger institution (Innes, 2004, p. 259). Also, educational institutions are known for being slow to make decisions (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). Higher education leaders find it quite challenging to bring change at the level of the institution
due to the large numbers of natural barriers that are already in place in education.

According to Seymour (1988), “Many innovations, including those generated within the campus walls, fail because they are unable to negotiate existing structural constraints” (p. 14). Seymour (1988) identified three structural impediments that influence the change process in educational organizations: complexity, formalization, and centralization. An interesting paradox exists regarding structure. Sometimes a more defined structure is helpful in educational change. At other times, having more fluidity in the process promotes change. The leader is responsible for navigating this challenge.

**Complexity.** Complexity is a major factor influencing innovation. The size of the organization can have a positive or negative impact on change. Larger organizations tend to be more complex and make innovation more challenging. However, the amount of resources available in a larger organization may encourage more innovation or change (Seymour, 1988). Studies are inconclusive regarding whether complexity impedes or encourages change. However, when it comes to implementation, a high degree of complexity can hinder change when it becomes “extremely difficult for any single source of authority to give priority to one proposal over another” (Seymour, 1988, p. 8). This situation typically results in an unhealthy power struggle for attention and resources.

**Formalization.** Formalization is another structural barrier to change and includes procedures and rules that either help or hinder one’s job. High formalization tends to lead to more procedures, rules, and constraints. However, some formalized procedures in the decision-making process may help reduce resistance to change (p. 9). In educational
change efforts, it is important for institutional leaders to seek input from faculty as they make decisions. One way that faculty can assist in this effort is by identifying procedures, methods, and criteria for arriving at decisions. This process helps faculty recognize the complexity of these types of decisions and gives them a say in the process. Faculty may be more receptive to change when they have been able to give input into the process (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007).

Educators may also feel more comfortable in their ability to dream when administration has provided clear boundaries and procedures regarding the implementation of change. This process helps reduce some anxiety over the implementation process (Innes, 2004). Again the paradox exists regarding a more structured approach to curriculum review or a more fluid approach.

Centralization. Centralization is the third structural characteristic with a major emphasis on decision making. More hierarchical decisions tend to reduce innovation. When there is less input from the bottom, the restriction of communication reduces information flow and decreases the level of commitment by those involved (Seymour, 1988, p. 9). Just as with formalization, the effects of centralization can vary. Decentralized decision making promotes commitment and ownership, which are key components to the change process (Seymour, 1988). However, during the implementation of the innovation, “more strict lines of authority can help reduce the potential conflict and ambiguity” (Seymour, 1988, p. 9).
Some organizational factors can promote educational change by addressing the barriers of complexity, formalization, and centralization. The leader must know how to navigate among these during the curriculum design and implementation phases.

**Factors Promoting Organizational Change**

Three major factors promoting organizational change include financial stability, a shared vision, and an appropriate organizational infrastructure. Taking these into consideration may help address some of the barriers to change.

*Financial stability.* The first factor promoting organizational change is financial stability which includes resources and incentives for faculty involvement in the change effort as well as faculty development opportunities necessary for curricular design and implementation (Innes, 2004, p. 256). Higher education administrators must consider the availability in the budget for funds to engage in curriculum revision and the resources to support potential curricular changes. A collaborative effort between faculty and administration in the curriculum review process may make the funding for necessary changes more likely. In addition, a larger organization may have more resources available to encourage curricular change (Seymour, 1988).

Providing resources and incentives for faculty is critical to the educational change process (Innes, 2004; Walkington, 2002). Faculty often feel pressured to spend time on research since that is what tends to get rewarded. Teaching is typically not seen as important as the contributions faculty make in the area of research and scholarship. Educational leaders need to increase the value placed on the teaching role and give
faculty time to create new teaching methods and design new courses (Innes, 2004, p. 256).

The institution’s leadership must also give time and attention to building faculty collaboration through faculty development opportunities. Faculty must be equipped to implement the revised curriculum since teaching effectiveness is often the key to a successful curricular implementation (Jones, 2002). According to Stark and Lattuca (as cited in Innes, 2004), “Higher education curriculum has received remarkably little attention over the last 30 years. The lack of attention to curriculum is most pronounced in the areas of teaching and learning” (p. 249). Without adequate resources for more purposeful dialogue, faculty conversations tend to center around the “what” of teaching including essential content rather than the “how,” which refers to how courses should be taught (Jones, 2002). One educator said that designing a new curriculum is pointless unless it is accompanied by a well-developed plan focused on those who teach and how they teach (Fishburn, 1995, p. 92). Giving faculty time to dialogue together and create courses together can also help build a more coherent curriculum due to an increased awareness of the curriculum at the degree program level that extends beyond the course level (Knight, 2001, p. 372).

Building a shared vision. Building a shared vision is the second factor promoting organizational change and can address the barrier of formalization by providing faculty input into the decision-making process. Burgess (2004) encourages building consensus through collaboration to lessen the competing interests factor evident in most change processes (p. 175). In addition, the diversity of opinion among stakeholder groups and
academic groups makes educational change more challenging (Burgess, 2004). A change agent also needs to know when consensus on an issue is possible, recognizing that consensus on a big decision may not be reasonable. However, there is always value in creating an atmosphere of openness with a fair process. The individuals may not reach consensus, but they agree to move forward with the decision (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 114).

The complexity of human behavior also affects the organization and its change efforts. An academic dean has to work with this complexity especially when dealing with curricular issues. Myers (2006) said, “No dean wants to instigate a turf war among faculty members and their guilds, but curricular revisioning almost always leads to such a moment unless a rapprochement can be reached via a faculty’s shared vision and understanding of a common mission” (p. 35). Myers further stated that evaluation of the learning goals associated with the curriculum generates dialogue and critical reflection on major issues. This evaluation process, “moves any adjustment of a curriculum into a shared process instead of defining each course as only the effort of one faculty member” (Myers, 2006, p. 39). A common vision and shared decision making can break through the complexity of human behavior and promote change.

*Appropriate organizational infrastructure.* The organization’s infrastructure is the third major factor that can promote organizational and educational change. Providing supportive structures and building a shared vision help create the type of infrastructure that promotes educational innovation. The leadership must be supportive of the change agents as well as the process. One way to accomplish this is to create supportive
structures that allow for an organizational change process that is participatory (Innes, 2004, p. 256). Individuals involved in and affected by the change need to be able to participate in the dialogue, which helps build widespread involvement and encourages the support of the curricular changes. This approach addresses the barrier of centralization by providing avenues for input at various levels within the institution. When individuals are involved in the decision-making process, they are more likely to help make the changes a reality (Jones, 2002, p. 78).

Regarding the organization’s infrastructure, department level involvement is critical to the change process. Regular review of the curriculum should take place at the department level with the goal of reaching departmental consensus. The hope is that faculty will recognize that curriculum change is not the responsibility of one person but rather a collaborative effort (Roy, Borin, & Kustra, 2007, p. 25). Roy et al. (2007) also emphasized the stability of having a team of people leading a curriculum change project so that the process can continue if one of the key members has to step aside (p. 29).

Ferren and Mussell (2000) spoke directly to department chairs regarding the issue of change:

Given this history and practice of piecemeal and uncoordinated curriculum development, the department chair needs to encourage curriculum transformation that reflects trends in the disciplines, to support the integration of new knowledge, to build interdisciplinary bridges, and to link the curriculum with appropriate pedagogies. Through ongoing discussion, chairs can foster the introduction of new knowledge in an atmosphere that recognizes that change need not lead to
culture wars, increased specialization, or fragmentation of the curriculum, but rather to a wholly new perspective. (pp. 253-254)

The separation of faculty members and curriculum by discipline provides challenges in the change process including interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning. The goal is to break down barriers between the departments and disciplines with the goal of building a coherent and holistic curriculum (Stark & Lattuca, 1997). This approach promotes the flow of information both horizontally and vertically. Change in education requires innovation and implementation. Skilled change agents must be strong leaders and willing to take risks in order to help make this a reality (Seymour, 1988, p. 27).

Role of Shared Governance in Change

The role of shared governance is the third organizational factor that must be considered in curricular change efforts. Collaboration regarding decision making can have a huge impact on an educational institution’s ability to implement curricular changes. Shared governance is often a challenging and slow process in higher education but a necessary one (Kezar, 2001; Mortimer & Sathre, 2007; Smith, 2002). According to Mortimer and Sathre (2007), “Shared governance means formulating and implementing meaningful ways to engage large numbers of people in the sharing process.” Faculty, administrators, and boards are “the major governance partners who bear the burden for sharing and making shared governance work” (p. 113). Mortimer and Sathre (2007) do not advocate for the elimination of professional control for these various groups but recommend a modification that would allow for more flexibility as institutions are
consistently pressed by external influences to be engaged with more constituencies and be held more accountable (p. 113).

Competing interests and agendas in higher education often cause difficulty during times of organizational change. Recent research in higher education seems to point toward the shared governance model (Kezar, 2001; Mortimer & Sathre, 2007; Smith, 2002). Leaders in higher education institutions must understand that “governance is an art form…It involves the capacity to deal with staggering levels of complexity,” according to Mortimer and Sathre (2007, p. xiii). Academic governance is also full of ambiguity so it is critical that the leader understand how to work with people and navigate the politics (p. 120). Shared governance requires mutual respect and submission, effective communication, and the recognition of the corporate responsibility for curriculum (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007).

Mutual respect and submission. “Shared governance requires mutual respect and mutual submission out of a fundamental acceptance of the distinctive roles within the governance process,” said Smith (2002, p. 252). He emphasizes the necessity of shared governance, recognizing that not everyone can have a say on every issue. However, attempts should be made to involve certain groups in discussion on certain issues out of mutual respect, deference, and accountability. Smith (2002) gives the example of whether a seminary would want an equal representation of faculty and students on a “key committee if that committee is one in which the faculty should have a privileged voice” (p. 253). Effective governance involves decision making among faculty, administrators, and boards. If heated issues arise, it is likely that each group will engage in an increased
level of politics, trying to position itself for self protection or advancement. An obvious remedy to this type of situation would be for the interest groups to put their agendas aside and focus on what is good for the whole institution. This approach would be best for the higher education community and those it serves (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 112). However, this type of behavior does not come easy for any of the groups.

Effective communication. Curriculum reformers need to accept that conflict and disagreement are part of the decision-making process and essential elements in shared governance (Smith, 2002, p. 254). Therefore, effective communication is critical to shared governance. Effective communication in an open system requires that everyone who needs the information has the information. However, the communication efforts will not be perfect (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). Some individuals will choose to listen and some will not, but continuous communication is essential (p. 123). The leader’s challenge is to balance the desire to honor participation in the process without frustrating the larger community, which is typically impatient with this characteristic of higher education (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. xiii).

Curriculum as a corporate responsibility. Curriculum is a corporate responsibility that must be shared by the collective faculty of the educational institution (Aleshire, 2005; Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). In relation to curricular issues, Mortimer and Sathre (2007), go further to say that “A program of study is not just a faculty responsibility, but a responsibility of the institution as a whole” (p. 55). They argue that this partnership is
necessary in order to avoid what they refer to as a “chain of events…programs of study that often emerge and are not the result of systematic planning” (p. 57).

According to Gaff and Puzon (as cited in Mortimer & Sathre, 2007), “Pressures for institutional accountability require a focus on the education of students and programs of study rather than individual courses. A program is a corporate responsibility, and therefore individual autonomy is not an absolute” (p. 60). The challenge for most educational institutions is that the individual faculty member’s autonomy “trumps collective authority” (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 60). However, with accrediting bodies’ requirements for student learning assessment, the faculty member’s responsibility extends beyond what he or she teaches. This external force requires faculty to take responsibility for the degree program goals (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 62). This assessment places a focus on what is learned rather than what is taught. Gaff and Puzon (as cited in Mortimer & Sathre, 2007) said, “The faculty-centered view of academic governance is the changing instructional paradigm…from teaching to learning” (p. 61). Faculty are responsible for student learning at the degree program level rather than only at the course level. This paradigm requires a collective effort of faculty and administration to ensure that students are achieving a high level of learning. The model of shared governance must be apparent in the area of curriculum. However, it is not without its challenges. According to Gaff and Puzon (as cited in Mortimer & Sathre, 2007):

The administration and board are held accountable for prudent and effective use of resources, but have little authority over the curriculum. On the other hand, faculty have authority over the curriculum, but little or no accountability for the
institution or program as a whole. When authority is not combined with responsibility, a classic governance dilemma prevails. (p. 65)

Another challenge when dealing with issues of curriculum change is how the faculty leaders respond to the proposal. A large majority of the faculty must agree in order to move forward with a degree program change. According to Mortimer and Sathre (2007):

The advocacy of a few committed individuals can turn the matter into a big issue, give it a political character, and delay or perhaps halt approval efforts. And even if the majority faculty voice does not agree with a minority faculty view, the minority can potentially influence the outcome by raising process issues (e.g., the legitimacy of administrative and even their own senate governance processes). (p. 72)

Although Mortimer and Sathre (2007) support open systems, they say that “Administrators, boards, and faculty leaders should be encouraged to ‘discipline’ or deal with obstructionists” (p. 125). It is also helpful to ask the critics to identify solutions to the problems rather than simply criticize (p. 125). “Another major danger in openness is that value differences can be cumulative and result in divisive, permanent rifts in the academic community…Sharp disagreements between people with widely divergent views tend to accumulate and persist over time,” Mortimer and Sathre said (2007, p. 125). This negative effect can unfortunately become part of the institution’s culture if not dealt with appropriately (p. 125).
The key for the team moving the process forward is to stay focused and ensure that the proposal is implemented. Good proposals often fail because of the lack of adequate follow through to implementation. Implementation is as important as the process used to make a decision and the decision itself and therefore, must not be overlooked (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 121).

**Internal Influences on Curricular Change**

The educational change process is largely affected by the individuals involved in the change. Researchers who study the issue of change in education identify the individual as an important factor in the process (Lashway, 1997; Seymour, 1988). The attitudes of people often affect the change effort. Two groups of individuals exist: those who are the targets of change and the agent of change (Zaltman & Duncan as cited in Seymour, 1988). Internal influences such as the change agent or process leader, the leadership team, faculty, and the larger community affect curriculum development and change (Stark & Lattuca, 1997, p. 332).

**Change Agent or Process Leader**

A coordinator or change agent needs to be identified early in the curriculum change process and have the skills to keep the process moving forward as well as the time and authority to lead (Stark & Lattuca, 1997). Hubball et al. (2007) said that the organization must identify a leader who can mobilize stakeholders through open dialogue and various communications and “spearhead the redesign and implementation of a learning-centered curriculum” (p. 99). Agents of change often have similar characteristics
regarding their attitudes and values, knowledge, and skills. These individuals also have strong administrative ability, leadership skills, and political skills (Seymour, 1988, p. 15). The literature tended to recommend that the leader of the curriculum review process be a faculty member (Hubball et al., 2007; Wolf, 2007).

According to Seymour (1988), an agent of change can be from within or outside the institution, “but their mission remains the same – to initiate and implement a change from the status quo” (p. 15). Highly visible leadership is key to maintaining the holistic view and coordinating the various parts of the whole. The coordinator manages all aspects of the process, which includes appropriate delegation to get the job done. The leader is able to draw on the strengths and specialties of the various people involved so that the work is completed (Walkington, 2002). Persistent change agents who work hard to generate and implement change will usually succeed (Innes, 2004). Change agents are most effective when they are able to do two things: present plans to a committee for consideration and manage consensus through guiding discussion (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 122). Change agents not only need to be able to vary their leadership style when needed, they also must rally other change agents.

**Leadership Team as Change Agents**

During the early part of the curriculum review process, a core group needs to be designed to oversee the process. Walkington (2002) recommended a wide variety or breadth of representation when assembling a team (p. 137). This includes senior management, department members, representatives from the field, professional organizations, accreditation committees, the student body, and others. The wide
representation of stakeholders will ensure a breadth of experience and knowledge for the change process (Walkington, 2002, p. 138).

Practical considerations when forming a group include identifying faculty and others who are motivated and can find time to meet together. The group should be large enough that the members are skilled to undertake the tasks. In addition, the time spent together as a group in dialogue and debate helps produce group cohesion and a collaborative focus. This team effort will be time consuming because of the amount of information that needs to be collected, evaluated, and considered in the curricular decision-making process (Walkington, 2002).

Change agents also need to be “continually open to feedback and respond to criticisms throughout the entire change process” (Jones, 2002, p. 79). These change agents need to identify a common vision and involve as many people in the process as possible to create ownership for change. Mortimer and Sathre (2007) said, “Good logic is often an insufficient argument. It is a difficult lesson for all parties in shared governance to learn that it is not enough to have a good idea” (p. 122). The challenge is that some people enter the discussions with strong feelings, having already decided not to be open to the ideas of others. The leaders must then find a way to engage these individuals and help them see alternative perspectives (p. 122). If the leaders continue to be open to input and revisions, faculty resistance may reduce over time (Jones, 2002).

*Faculty*

According to Walkington (2002), providing opportunities for open and frank discussion with faculty in the design and development phase is essential. The leadership
team needs to seek input from the faculty and staff since collaboration will likely assist
with implementation. A system of reporting back to the leadership must be in place so
that everyone’s input can be considered. Creating a sense of ownership means that all
ideas will be documented and considered at some point by the larger group (Walkington,
2002, p. 140). Faculty must also embrace the ongoing nature of curriculum revision. An
article in an ATS publication addressed the issue of ongoing curriculum revision, “If
curriculum review regularly occurs as part of the school’s assessment process, then
curriculum revision is also ongoing and never far from the faculty’s consciousness”

Campus Community

For change to occur, the educational organization must involve the people in the
process. Although faculty expertise is key at the design stage in the curriculum change
process, involvement by the entire staff encourages a holistic approach to curriculum
development. The leadership team must take time to hear all sides and opinions. When
individuals are able to contribute to the process throughout the change effort, their level
of ownership increases (Walkington, 2002, p. 139). When members of the organization
are involved in the decision-making process, they feel empowered and often will be more
committed to the change proposal. Ideally, all staff involved in the change need to
contribute to this stage of the process. The expertise and input from a variety of people
can benefit the process (Walkington, 2002, p. 139). Good processes provide opportunities
for people to participate and offer their input (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 119). This
widespread involvement encourages shared decision making and results in informed staff
who feel valued for their contributions. The goal is a shared vision (Burgess, 2004; Jones, 2002; Myers, 2006; Walkington, 2002).

Teamwork is also encouraged and helps build commitment and enthusiasm while reducing inter-group competition (Walkington, 2002). According to Seymour (1988), “The use of multiunit teams, task forces, and project centers should encourage the exchange of ideas and information across organizational boundaries to help break down the isolation and orientation toward special interests that is prevalent in higher education institutions” (p. 18). The key is to present opportunities for the departments and disciplines to connect. Change in education must involve both faculty and administration (Seymour, 1988, p. 18). When considering change, Cobb (1990) said, “Changes are sustainable only if they are made through processes of widespread participation” (p. 9). Widespread participation is a key internal component in the curricular revision process. The change process does not end but is continuous since curriculum review must be an ongoing process (Jones, 2002).

An organization’s culture also affects curriculum development and the change process.

Role of Culture in Curriculum Development

According to Fullan (2001), education reform requires reculturing rather than restructuring. Simply changing the course offerings or content or adding pre-requisites will not lead to solid educational change. Culture plays a major role in curriculum development. Few topics of discourse have caused as much controversy in higher education as the topic of curriculum (Tierney, 1989). Part of this challenge is a result of
competing cultural definitions of what counts for knowledge. According to Tierney (1989), “Definitions of knowledge and the curriculum is permeated and shaped by the cultural politics of the organization” (p. 25). For centuries, institutions of higher education have considered what knowledge students should be gaining. Closer studies show that often what is taught in an institution is based on the culture. The challenge with the concept of culture is that it is not easily understandable or apparent to organizational participants. People define culture differently (Tierney, 1989). In addition, cultural impediments are often more difficult to identify than structural impediments and therefore, more challenging to overcome (Seymour, 1988). This section provides information about the role culture plays in the educational change effort at the institutional, departmental, and faculty levels.

**Institutional Culture**

A curricular change process is in large part affected by the institutional culture and whether that culture welcomes change. In looking at institutional culture, it is important to examine institutional identification and administration’s role in the curriculum review process.

**Institutional Identification**

Institutional identification is important to organizational culture. Having a strong institutional identification generally encourages people inside and outside the institution to offer their support (Toma, 2005). Regarding the internal culture, people who identify strongly are more likely to cooperate with other members of the organization and
demonstrate more loyalty to the organization (p. 4). This identification can also encourage people to have increased loyalty to one another. Toma (2005) encourages a sense of connectedness between the people and the institution. If those directly associated with the institution feel good about the school, the school benefits. A healthy institutional culture can have a positive impact on a comprehensive curriculum review process.

**Administration’s Role in Curriculum Review Process**

Higher education administrators have a critical role to play in creating an institutional culture that welcomes change. Strong institutional leadership recognizes the need to create a culture of trust within the organization (Jones, 2002). Administration must also dedicate institutional resources to the curricular change effort during both the development phase and the implementation phase. Administrators must also be active participants and leaders in the process.

**Trust.** Trust is the most important cultural element that must be present for change to occur. Administrators and faculty must work together in the change process. A sense of trust allows for an openness to dream about the possibilities and a willingness to engage in change efforts (Jones, 2002). The leadership must give “serious attention to the dynamics of building and sustaining high levels of trust and legitimacy among those who share the governing process – boards, administrators, and faculty,” Mortimer and Sathre said (2007, p. 115). In addition, “The legitimacy of academic governance is based on mutual trust and cooperation among the participants” (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 116). Trust is important across the governing bodies because it increases the effectiveness of
decisions that are made and increases their likelihood of implementation (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). Kezar (as cited in Mortimer & Sathre, 2007) identified three characteristics that are more valuable than structure: leadership, trust, and relationships. Regardless of how much an organization works to restructure its curriculum, the lack of good relationships and a sense of trust can block the effort (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007).

*Committed leadership.* The second role of the administration is to make their commitment to the process evident to the entire community. Although administrators do not typically lead the curriculum review process, they must show support for the change agents and the change process. Some faculty think that curriculum is the sole responsibility of faculty. However, a cooperative and supportive relationship among faculty and administration can lead to revised curriculum (Jones, 2002). Innes (2004) said, “Although I argue against a model of change initiated and championed by administrators, it is clear that college and university administrators must establish a general atmosphere of support for innovations initiated by faculty” (p. 252). Successful curricular review efforts also tend to have stability in the personnel involved such as the curriculum team. Roy et al. (2007) recommend shared leadership over the project so if for some reason one of the leaders is not able to see the process through to completion, the other leader is ready to continue with a smooth transition (p. 29).

Committed leaders will also make sure that institutional resources are available for the curriculum development and implementation process. This includes resources for those most involved in the process such as release time and incentives for faculty and a potential shifting of responsibilities for administrators who serve so that they can also
give adequate attention and energy to the process. This gesture on the part of the administration demonstrates the institution’s serious commitment to a comprehensive curriculum review process (Hubball et al., 2007; Walkington, 2002). Time is another resource that must be provided so that faculty and administration can dialogue, share, and debate in order to produce a sense of understanding and ownership throughout the process (Walkington, 2002; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). Institutional identification and the role of administration impact the culture of the institution. Institutional culture is also affected by the departmental culture.

**Departmental Culture**

Departmental culture is the second type of culture affecting educational collaboration and change. Departments are the major unit of organization in higher education. In an effort to honor academic freedom and decision making, higher education creates smaller units that lead themselves. This design encourages separation from the rest of the institution. Separation and scarcity of resources can often encourage competition rather than cooperation. In addition, departments often have a narrow view of the educational efforts of the institution (Innes, 2004). Members of departments may not even know what other members in their department teach or their areas of research (Seymour, 1988). Faculty loyalties tend to lie with their discipline and not necessarily with the educational organization, which can make organizational change a challenge (Innes, 2004, p. 253).

According to Roy et al. (2007), “Curriculum change is a good mechanism for encouraging change in departmental culture” (p. 31). Although departmental
collaboration is necessary for building a coherent curriculum, the department level is also where a large majority of cultural politics takes place especially turf wars (Ferren & Mussell, 2000; Toma, 2005). Engaging in curricular reform across departments creates a potential for turf wars. “Turf battles, resistance, and adversarial stances can swamp the rational curriculum-approval process,” said Ferren and Mussell (2000, p. 251). Toma (2005) says that little is known regarding why people join in political turf wars. Faculty may be committed to improving education, but if they are uncertain how the curricular change may affect them personally, they may be reluctant to the change (Ferren & Mussell, 2000, p. 251). “With scarce resources and increasing competition, individual faculty members may try to document their indispensability by attempting to take more territory through their specialized expertise,” Jones said (2002, p. 85). Departmental culture is affected by the faculty culture; just as the faculty culture is affected by the institutional and departmental culture.

Faculty Culture

Faculty culture can also impact curricular change. Toombs and Tierney (1991) identify educational beliefs and the disciplines of faculty as factors that must be considered in a curriculum review process. For Fullan (2001), reculturing includes “how teachers come to question and change their beliefs and actions” (p. 34). Tierney (1989) says that faculty operate in four interdependent cultures that influence their beliefs and attitudes. Faculty operate within the culture of the institution, the culture of the national system of higher education, the culture of the academic profession, and the culture of their discipline. These issues of culture make it difficult for faculty in higher education
institutions to engage in “true” curricular revision. The cultural forces in higher education push against a shared vision, shared learning outcomes for students, and shared goals for a coherent curriculum (Tierney, 1989). An article stated, “Guild loyalty is the idea that professors have a greater allegiance to their disciplines…than to the overarching aim of the curriculum” (“Issue: Seven,” 2006, p. 29). This reaffirms the challenges in curricular reform caused by the educational beliefs, actions, and norms that are part of faculty culture.

**Educational Beliefs**

What faculty believe about higher education is partly formed during their time as doctoral students, and they carry some of those beliefs with them into their schools. Most of those beliefs influence how they work together in the educational enterprise (Hare, Jackson, & Jackson, 2000). Whether faculty see higher education as a privatized profession or one in which they engage in a corporate work with other faculty may determine the degree of change in that institution.

*Privatized profession.* “Teaching has long been called the ‘private profession.’” Teachers are rarely provided with the time and means to collaborate and regularly support each other,” according to Hare et al. (2000, p. 279). Higher education tends to create a “culture of isolation,” often physically separating the various disciplines. A college English professor said, “We give a lip service to seamless education, but we don’t even talk with each other” (Hare et al., 2000, p. 280). This same professor became involved in interdisciplinary approaches to education and knew more about the
experiences of his students prior to entering his course and after they left his course (Hare et al., 2000, p. 280). The movement toward common learning outcomes and a coherent curriculum helps break down this long tradition of separation and individualism.

Conversations among faculty and departments are essential. “The formal leader’s most important role is to create a culture that fosters and celebrates conversations about teaching and learning,” said Innes (2004, p. 249).

Individual and corporate work of the faculty. As an internal influence, faculty culture affects the change process. Rudolph (1995) said that professors tend to be “a highly organized and narrowly self-selected guild of professionals, each something of a law unto himself, collectively suspicious of efficiency and expert at obstruction” (p. 5). When addressing the issue of teaching as individual and corporate work, Aleshire (2005) said, “The individualism that is important for academic life, however, can be detrimental to the fundamentally corporate work of educating students…Individualism leads to territorialism, and territorialism leads to protectionism” (pp. 3-4). Aleshire (2005) encouraged seminary faculty to recognize that their school will not achieve its educational goals if individuals function individually. The faculty must keep the larger goals of the school’s curriculum foremost, which requires collaboration with fellow faculty.

Aleshire (2003) identified one of the major challenges facing theological education as the recognition that “MDiv education is graduate professional education not graduate academic education” (p. 2). When addressing the dominance of a liberal arts paradigm in theological disciplines, Aleshire (2003) said:
Our disciplines, for the most part, are clearly anchored in an appropriate intellectual style that is different from the intellectual style that the best of our graduates may use in ministerial practice…. We are using the right intellectual style for the advancement of our disciplines, but that is not the style our graduates use for the advancement of their work. So, it too is a problem that a curricular design must seek to resolve. (p. 2)

Aleshire presented these challenges to theological schools in hopes of generating points of discussion for some schools’ curricular revision processes. Aleshire (2005) proposed a question to new faculty regarding who they had rather teach: the academically oriented students or those most interested in using what they learn in the practice of ministry? When referring to the types of students theological educators are likely to teach, Aleshire (2005), said:

Is it easier to teach students who will love your subject as much as you do and use it the way you use it, or to teach students who will likely be less enamored by your subject, take a more utilitarian view of it, and use it very differently than you do? I think the first kind of teaching is the easier kind, but theological education requires both, particularly the second. (p. 6)

Aleshire (2005) encouraged theological faculty to embrace their individual and corporate work in the curriculum process.

*Guiding Vision of Institutional-Wide Curriculum Revision*

Part of the challenge faculty face is often a lack of a guiding vision for the institution as well as a lack of understanding of what is meant by curriculum reform
(Tierney, 1989) and faculty collaboration. Trustees expect that faculty have been hired by the theological school to design, deliver, and oversee the curriculum, which supports the idea that “faculty members own the curriculum” (“Issue: Whose,” 2006, p. 25). Although faculty essentially own the curriculum, they are often hired without a careful consideration of how they fit with the mission of the school. The article further states:

> On occasion, faculty members presume that what was educationally modeled for them in PhD education ought also to be normative for MDiv [master of divinity] students. And, considering PhD tenure issues in which doctoral institutions reward increasingly specialized research, the self-interest of individual faculty members often discourages them from cooperative, cross-disciplinary work, what some would say are the kinds of academic work better tailored to the leadership education needs of those MDiv students who will be (or are already) practicing ministers. (“Issue: Whose,” 2006, p. 25)

**Institutional curriculum reform.** Some faculty find institutional-wide curriculum reform challenging because they have difficulty conceptualizing entire program revision and seeing how individual courses fit into the overall academic program. According to Jones (2002), “Serious initiatives require a systematic approach across the curriculum rather than selective interventions by an individual faculty member for a single course. Isolated changes are less likely to have a major impact on student learning” (p. 85). When designing curriculum, faculty need to think of the degree program, not individual courses. Faculty must be willing to take responsibility for shaping the entire curriculum so that the students experience a coherent curriculum. If faculty see learning as cumulative, they will
be purposeful to dialogue about what one another teaches. Each faculty member should know how his or her course fits into the overall program and institutional curriculum.

Faculty collaboration. A sense of faculty collaboration must overcome the faculty member’s concern for autonomy since power can be another cultural impediment or barrier to change (Innes, 2004; Seymour, 1988). Faculty tend to want to maintain their autonomy. According to Katz and Kahn (as cited in Innes, 2004), “Because professors have little formal power, they tend to focus on maintaining their autonomy. Changes that reduce autonomy usually meet with strong resistance” (p. 259). One of the goals of the design and development phase for some curricular processes is the creation of a coherent curriculum (Walkington, 2002). This desire will not be achieved through faculty autonomy or independence. There is a “need for the faculty members in a program to be truly knowledgeable about one another’s classes and to organize their classes on the bases of mutual discussions and understandings” (Association of American Colleges, 1991, p. 266). In addition, students not only need to know what they are learning but why they are learning it. Students find it helpful to know how a particular course contributes to their overall educational experience (Association of American Colleges, 1991, p. 268). In order for this to happen, faculty must be knowledgeable about the curricular connections.

Whether the faculty member plans a course alone or in cooperation with other faculty determines some level of personal understanding of the larger curriculum. When designing a coherent curriculum, faculty must be able to see how courses fit together. The historical structure of higher education institutions encourages segmentation,
competition, and small picture mentality (Seymour, 1988). Most faculty do not willingly embrace their role in building a coherent curriculum because of the time and energy that it takes to work together (Toombs & Tierney, 1991). Most faculty spend their time staying fresh in their field and identify that as their major function (Toombs & Tierney, 1991). Faculty often show little appreciation or interests in disciplines outside of their own (p. 22). However, faculty must understand the curriculum in its entirety in order to make it coherent. In a 2005 speech to new faculty in theological education, Aleshire talked about the need for faculty to recognize their collaborative role in the preparation of men and women for ministry. Aleshire (2005) said that teaching is not an individual task but a corporate one (p. 4). He urged the faculty to make curricular decisions based on the contribution to the broader educational purpose, not each course as an individual entity (p. 3).

**Unique Institutional Culture of Theological Education**

In looking at the issue of institutional culture, Kezar (2001) suggested that studies be conducted on the unique characteristics of higher education institutions and how those may facilitate or hinder change (p. 128). A theological seminary is a unique type of higher education institution.

**History of Theological Education Curriculum**

When looking at the history of theological education curriculum, one will see that theological curriculum has not changed much since its inception in the early 1800s. The curriculum is the most fixed aspect of theological education (Handy, 1982). The bachelor
of divinity degree (B.D.) was the first theological degree that offered a curriculum for candidates who were seeking ordination. In 1970, the B.D. was replaced by the master of divinity degree (M.Div.). The curriculum was typically a three-year degree, which holds true today across the many seminaries in the United States and Canada.

*Traditional Four-Discipline Model*

Regarding curriculum, in many ways the traditional theological education model that began in the 1800s still holds true today. Little has changed in regard to the focus on four basic disciplines: Bible, Church History, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology (Fishburn, 1995; Handy, 1982; Harper, 1905). Handy’s (1982) article presents a history of theological education and curriculum spanning from 1880-1980. Harper (1905), former president of the University of Chicago in the early 1900s said, “The only professional curriculum which is essentially the same as it was fifty years ago is that of the theological seminary” (p. 229). Even though faculty members from many generations have been trained in theological colleges and seminaries for over 100 years, the four-fold model has remained the same (Handy, 1982, p. 182).

The structure of four departments at each seminary continues to be the norm. “But while there have been some dynamic developments within departments, the basic curriculum structure with its fourfold form has changed little” (Handy, 1982, p. 182). People differ on their reactions to Handy’s third point that the curriculum remains fixed. Some of the people that Handy interviewed wanted to deny it. Others defended it in the name of keeping the scholarly emphasis with the practice of ministry. These individuals believed that theological institutions should be commended for their faithfulness to the
historical disciplines. They see theological education preserving its historical roots, unlike some other disciplines that focus more on minute specialization (Handy, 1982).

“One speculated that it may indeed be easier to change and transform our institutions than it is to alter the mental furniture with which we live, once it gets in place” (Handy, 1982, p. 183). Faculty find it difficult to get beyond the traditional department design. Farley (as cited in Jones & Paulsell, 2002) has “warned that ‘specialism’ is the heart of the problem for graduate education in religion” (p. 12). Doctoral students are trained predominantly in the independent academic disciplines, which discourages a structure that would allow for integration and coherence (Farley as cited in Jones & Paulsell, 2002, p. 12). This process encourages the formation of separate cultures within the theological faculty. An article affirmed this configuration of the seminary faculty and their disciplines, identifying the first three as the classical disciplines (“Issue: Seven,” 2006, p. 29). This model, with minor adaptations, has remained for 200 years of theological education. Current M.Div. revisions tend to center around these same disciplines. “Every curriculum revision begins with struggles around the allocation of space for the old disciplines that are always growing and the new disciplines that are always emerging,” according to Aleshire (2003, p. 2). This problem is not going away and therefore, must be given much consideration during curricular review and revision processes. The continuation of this model demonstrates a strong culture regarding the structure in theological education institutions.

Regardless of the type of institution, change must happen within the culture of the institution so that the change becomes a natural part of the organization (Bensimon &

Organizational Learning in Higher Education

A look into the concept of organizational learning in higher education may help to address some of these structural and cultural effects on change as well as provide insight into the inner workings of a small group. The learning organization concept has been part of the business field for nearly two decades, first becoming popular in the early 1990s through writings by key researchers in the area (Garvin, 1993; Schein, 1985; Senge, 1990). The focus on learning organizations came out of research on organizational learning. More recently, researchers have addressed the topic of organizational learning and learning organizations in higher education (Bauman, 2005; Bensimon, 2005; Kezar, 2005). Organizational learning provides a concept that may help in understanding how a team works together in a curricular change effort (Bauman, 2005; Kezar, 2001; Kezar 2005). This section speaks particularly to the role of a small group or team in a change effort.

Teamwork and Collaboration

Kezar (2005) provided insight into how to create an atmosphere that promotes organizational learning through teamwork and collaboration. Kezar (2005) encouraged staff, faculty, and administration to form learning communities so that all feel a part of the educational process and environment (p. 19). Efforts need to be taken to break down the hierarchical relationships among many groups in higher education in order to promote
organizational learning (Bauman, 2005; Kezar, 2005). Even “mental models based on hierarchical relationships” can impede organizational learning (Kezar, 2005, p. 19). This view is similar to Handy’s (1982) expression of the challenge of changing the mental furniture, envisioning things as different from the traditional and familiar structure (p. 183). Teamwork and collaboration are necessary for organizational change and are especially challenging in an organization with a strong culture for continuing to do things the way they have always been done.

Use of Groups in Organizational Learning

Groups have a role in organizational learning. Bauman (2005) defined a group as “a structure that promotes the creation and transfer of knowledge among organizational members” (p. 31). This group may also be referred to as a team or a task force. In a study of organizational learning, Bauman (2005) discovered that the group she was researching took a group learning approach. The group looked at the project as a process or a journey rather than a project with a clear end. This approach allowed for more time to review the data presented and to dialogue rather than to hurry and produce a product (p. 29). Bauman (2005) said that committees typically “do not take time to research, define, and understand the problem before trying to find a solution” (p. 33). However, taking a learning approach provides the time and format for discussion so that the members can draw on one another’s knowledge and bring that to bear on issues under consideration (Bauman, 2005).
Culture of the curriculum review team. Regarding leadership in higher education, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) have focused on culture within higher education. Their research speaks to the cultural makeup of the curriculum team charged with the leadership of a comprehensive curriculum review process. Culture includes norms, beliefs, and values. The focus is on the team members rather than on what the team achieves or produces. Taking a cultural perspective looks at how the team members interact with one another, work together, and handle issues such as power in decision making and group conflict (p.24).

Examining the culture of a leadership team provides insight into its effectiveness. Bensimon and Neumann (1993) said that there are two realities: a reality of performance, which can be easily observed by outside parties and a reality of the team’s internal contemplation, which cannot be easily understood by outside parties. The team often is characterized by confusion, less than orderly processes, constant thinking, speculating, creating, and talking among the team members (p. 55). This is part of the process of forming as a group. Based on their model, a team does not reach its maximum because of shared goals but rather because the team members have found something “far more personal and meaningful – the shared values, respect, concern, and appreciation that we are likely to find in a truly interactive, inclusive team. In brief, while others may call for goals and purposes, we call for convergence that is rooted in connectedness” (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993, p. 130). This requires time for people to be together, to share, to create, to confront, and to dialogue.
Community of practice. The team culture that Bensimon and Neumann (1993) emphasize connects with Bauman’s (2005) idea of a “community of practice.” This community of practice is a form of organizational learning and serves as one means for an institution to reach its goals. Bauman (2005) defined a community of practice as a small group within a larger organization that is together because of group members’ “expertise and passion” (p. 32). Taking a learning approach rather than a task oriented approach to the decision or change allows space for the group to discuss and learn from one another in order to further their efforts (Bauman, 2005, p. 33).

In this way, the team becomes much more of a “live human group that is always changing, always in flux, always in the process of becoming. From this perspective, team building involves the giving and sustaining of life within a group” (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993, p. 131). The hope would be that the learning taking place in the team would eventually spread out to other faculty and staff who are active participants in the process. This approach is key to the change effort (Bauman, 2005, p. 33).

Kezar (2001) also expressed interest in how individuals feel about change since change efforts undoubtedly stir up the feelings and emotions of those involved in the change effort. Cultural models have been studied in institutions other than higher education. Kezar (2001) encouraged a focus on the issue in higher education in order to look at cultural issues such as “institutional commitment, morale, and quality” (p. 129). Another area of research could focus on how the culture of the institution affects the change strategies used by the institution to impact change (Kezar, 2001, p. 129). Kezar
(2001) also poses an interesting thought regarding “whether there is a culture of change or certain cultures that are more open to change.”

*Organizational Learning Issues Specific to Higher Education*

Kezar (2005) indicates that more research is needed in higher education institutions because of their unique features such as tenure and long-term employees (p. 20). She indicated that some schools are beginning to conduct research on how learning occurs through the use of “cross-campus teams” that aid in addressing barriers such as the “hierarchical relations between groups” (p. 20). Kezar advocates for more research on organizational learning in higher education.

**Summary**

The review of literature supports three broad conclusions about the literature base for this study and offers support for the current research questions. The current body of research on the process of higher education curriculum review focuses primarily on the role of faculty in the change effort. Faculty are encouraged to have shared governance over the curriculum in order to have ownership at the degree program level. However, no current body of research exists on the shared governance of faculty and administration over the curriculum. This study addresses shared governance and the process of curriculum review as a shared responsibility within the educational institution.

The literature lacks a specific look at the collaboration of faculty and administration in a comprehensive curriculum review process. This study addresses the
collaborative effort primarily through the views of the curriculum team members in a comprehensive curriculum review process in a theological seminary.

Researchers call for more studies surrounding organizational learning. This study looks specifically at the experience of a small group leading a comprehensive curriculum review process. The study examines a curriculum team’s culture of learning and its effect on educational change.

These conclusions support a need for development of a new theory of curriculum review as a process and as a collaborative effort among faculty and administration.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This case study was designed to provide insights into the phenomenon of the comprehensive curriculum review and revision process at Ashland Theological Seminary. The study sought to investigate and derive meaning from an exploration of the curriculum review process as experienced by the curriculum review team as well as the faculty and administration’s collaboration throughout the process.

This methodology section is divided into the following areas: research questions; rationale for qualitative research; rationale and assumptions for the grounded theory methodology; research design; research site and researcher’s role; methods of data collection; data analysis procedures; and methods for verification or trustworthiness. This study provided insight into a comprehensive curriculum review process, in particular, the curriculum team’s experience of the process. The study also addressed the collaborative effort of faculty and administrators in the process. Using grounded theory methodology to analyze the case provided an in-depth look into the data collected. Uncovering patterns led to assertions which generated theories that should prove beneficial to the field of higher education curriculum.
Research Questions

This study was designed to address two primary questions. The first question was:

1. How did the curriculum review team experience the comprehensive curriculum review process? Inherent in this question were three sub-questions that needed to be considered as the grounded theory evolved: (a) How did the curriculum review team members describe the curriculum review process? (b) What motivated the curriculum review team members’ involvement in the process? (c) What was the impact of institutional culture on the curriculum review process?

The second research question was:

2. How did the faculty and administration collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process? Within this question were three sub-questions that needed to be considered as the grounded theory evolved: (a) How did the curriculum team members describe the collaborative effort of faculty and administration during the process? (b) What were some of the barriers to the collaboration of faculty and administration? (c) How did the academic affairs and administrative affairs collaborate during the process?

The nature of these research questions necessitated a qualitative research study.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Qualitative research as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p. 17). Hatch (2002) identified a number of characteristics of qualitative research: (a) involves a natural setting with real people as the objects of study,
(b) requires understanding the world from the participants’ perspectives, (c) includes the researcher as the data gathering instrument, (d) requires the researcher’s close engagement with the study, (e) presents reports that are complex and detailed narratives expressed by the participants, (f) involves subjective judgment as the researcher moves from description to interpretation, and (g) uses an inductive approach that moves from specifics to generalizations (pp. 6-10).

Studying the curriculum review process at a higher education institution provided a natural educational setting where I gathered data, analyzed the data, and made interpretations. Qualitative research typically involves an inductive approach that looks at the various components of a phenomenon to understand the bigger picture of what is taking place. This is unlike quantitative research that tends to take a deductive approach examining various components to determine more specific and somewhat predetermined outcomes. Qualitative research was most appropriate for this study as I sought to examine the phenomenon of a curriculum review process with no predetermined theories (Creswell, 2003).

Rationale and Assumptions for Grounded Theory Methodology

A qualitative grounded theory method was chosen for this case study because I wanted to examine the phenomenon of the curriculum review process from the perspectives of faculty, administrators, and the researcher. Since grounded theory is “discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon,” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23) this approach was most appropriate. Through an examination of the curriculum review
process, I was able to generate theories surrounding the phenomenon of the case. Developing theory from the data served as the main purpose for using grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In order for a study to qualify as a grounded theory approach, some assumptions must be present: (a) all concepts related to the phenomenon have not yet been identified, (b) relationships between concepts are undeveloped, and (c) asking questions enables the search for important, yet unanswered questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 37). These assumptions were true for this study. Because of my desire to see what theories could arise from the curriculum review process, I chose grounded theory as my methodological guide. Grounded theory allowed for the research questions to emerge during the process. This aspect proved exciting at times since I was always in a discovery mode as various themes and assertions arose throughout the data collection and analysis stages.

Other key characteristics of grounded theory helped deepen my understanding of the research inquiry, in particular, theoretical sampling and theoretical sensitivity. As a method of data analysis, theoretical sampling involved the joint process of data collection, coding, and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This procedure required giving attention to the emerging theories since they helped guide some of the data collection. While analyzing the data and identifying various theories, I also revisited other data sources and asked additional questions. This process helped me fill in missing pieces as the theories emerged (Mertens, 1998) and kept me focused on discovery as the aim of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 180).
Theoretical sensitivity also helped deepen my understanding of the research inquiry as I identified important elements of the data and gave those elements meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 46). This approach required interaction with the data in both the collection and analysis stages. I asked questions of the data to help me better understand the complex nature of the relationships between the variables. I constantly looked for themes to emerge. As the researcher, I was actively participating during all stages of the research process as themes consistently emerged that required revision and further development. I adapted grounded theory as the guiding principle of the research methodology.

Research Design

This research focused on a single case study of a phenomenon taking place in the real life educational context at Ashland Theological Seminary. The case study enabled me to seek a “holistic description and interpretation” of the many variables involved in the comprehensive curriculum review process (Merriam & Simpson, 1984, p. 96). I used grounded theory as the research methodology to describe the phenomenon of the curriculum review process.

The case study was also used to discover relationships between variables that were unknown and as a means of improving the phenomenon being studied (Merriam & Simpson, 1984, p. 96). This case study provided insight into the curriculum review process and offered ideas on how to improve such a process. In addition, this case study identified variables that described the collaboration of faculty and administrators in the curriculum review process.
In a case study, the methodology “leads to an increased understanding of the phenomenon by clarifying concepts, generating hypothesis, or constructing explanatory frameworks” (Merriam & Simpson, 1984, p. 90). This particular case study used grounded theory methodology to understand the curriculum review process at Ashland Theological Seminary. Grounded theory served as my research methodology and set of research methods. A systematic set of procedures was used with this qualitative research method to derive grounded theory about this phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This research studied the phenomenon of the curriculum review process and the collaboration of faculty and administration during the process. According to Hatch (2002), “Grounded theory is clearly a postpositivist method. It works from the assumption that rigorous methods can be used to discover approximations of social reality that are empirically represented in carefully collected data” (p. 26). As the researcher, I engaged in constant comparison “in a give and take between inductive and deductive thinking” (Hatch, 2002, p. 26) in an effort to generate grounded theory.

Data were gathered related to the research questions. I then engaged in data analysis to respond to the questions (Glaser, 1998). Themes and patterns emerged that led to theories. Grounded theory was an appropriate research methodology or way of thinking about the study because it allowed me to analyze the large amount of data in-depth. Identifying concepts allowed me to generate assertions or claims from the study of curriculum review as a process. This approach allowed me to engage the case study in such a way that theories emerged, providing me with a sense of expectancy and
excitement. This study provided me with an opportunity to contribute significantly to the field of higher education curriculum.

Research Site and Researcher’s Role

The research site was Ashland Theological Seminary, which is located in northeast Ohio. I have worked at the site for seven years: one year as the director of curriculum and academic support services and six years as the associate academic dean. In addition, I led the seminary’s comprehensive curriculum review process from 2003 to 2007. I chose to study this seminary for three major reasons:

1. Since I led the curriculum review process at Ashland Theological Seminary, I was able to engage in an in-depth analysis of the process.

2. I have a full understanding of the context at the seminary, which helped in the data collection and analysis.

3. The size of the seminary (900 students; four departments; four campuses) provided an opportunity to study a curriculum review process that engaged an entire institution.

Ashland Theological Seminary is the largest seminary in the state of Ohio and the fourteenth largest seminary nationwide. The student body is 51% female and 49% male. The students represent over 70 different denominations. The primary mission of the seminary is to prepare men and women for Christian service to the church and the world. A large part of the student body is preparing to serve as Christian counselors either in the church or in counseling agencies. One quarter of the students are in the seminary’s doctor of ministry program that serves to revitalize and retool those who have been in church
ministry for a number of years as well as those who have served in the counseling profession.

The seminary began a comprehensive curriculum review process in February 2003 by forming a curriculum review team that consisted of a team of 10-12 faculty and administrators. The makeup of the team stayed relatively the same over the years. As the associate academic dean, I led the curriculum review team composed of the academic dean; dean of the doctor of ministry program; director of field education; head librarian; and two faculty members from the counseling department, the biblical studies department, the theology department, and the practical theology department. When faculty members went on study leaves, representatives from the respective departments would then join the team. Some of these representatives participated for only a quarter while others stayed on and became regular members of the team.

The team began by asking the question, “What are the characteristics we desire for graduates of Ashland Theological Seminary?” Before engaging in conversation on the desired outcomes, the team reviewed the following standards presented by the Association of Theological Schools (2004), which is one of the seminary’s main accrediting bodies:

In a theological school, the over-arching goal is the development of theological understanding, that is, aptitude for theological reflection and wisdom pertaining to responsible life in faith. Comprehended in this overarching goal are others such as deepening spiritual awareness, growing in moral sensibility and character, gaining an intellectual grasp of the tradition of a faith community, and acquiring the
abilities requisite to the exercise of ministry in that community. These goals, and the processes and practices leading to their attainment, are normally intimately interwoven and should not be separated from one another. (p. 54)

The choice to study my work setting gave me full access to the curriculum review process. I also understood the mission of the institution and its relationship to the curriculum review process. Since I led the process from its beginning, I was involved in all aspects of its development. The choice of setting provided access to address the research questions on the curriculum review process at Ashland Theological Seminary as well as the faculty and administration’s collaborative element.

I have a professional relationship with my colleagues who served as members of the curriculum team, faculty, and administration. As an administrator, I was sensitive to the time and energy of the curriculum review team members. I prepared all materials ahead of time so that our actual meeting time could be focused on pertinent issues and moving the process forward. I prepared a detailed agenda for each meeting. In the first few years of the process, most discussion was within the larger group as we sought to define ourselves as a seminary and identify the characteristics that we desired in our graduates. I realized after a few years that some of the team members were rather reluctant to offer input in the larger group while others tended to dominate the conversation at times.

As we moved to more concrete issues such as the evaluation of course proposals, I divided the team into small groups while at the same time mixing the group members by their disciplines. The team began to make concrete progress when shifting to the small
group work and the evaluation of course proposals. The small group format ensured that each team member contributed to the conversation. This process also helped to solidify the team, drawing the members closer together as they began to share more in-depth as well as ask specific questions of individuals and disciplines. This time served as an important moment of self discovery as well as an opportunity to gain insight into fellow team members and their disciplines.

I recognize that as the researcher, I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998, p. 17). As a grounded theorist, I needed to exhibit a set of skills. Strauss & Corbin (1990) identified the requisite skills for doing qualitative research: “to step back and critically analyze situations, to recognize and avoid bias, to obtain valid and reliable data, and to think abstractly” (p. 18). With these necessary skills in mind, I proceeded with data collection.

Methods of Data Collection

This study used two of the three most common types of data collection for qualitative studies: document analysis and interviewing (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). This study also used personal journals. Documents included e-mail exchanges and curriculum design materials. Self-reflection and my personal journal provided an opportunity for me to share reflections during the process and data analysis as well as my perceptions as the leader of the process. The primary data were collected through interviews with members of the curriculum review team.
**Document Analysis**

Document analysis has great value in the data collection process for a qualitative study. Merriam (1998) says that documents for the most part are any data not collected through interviews or observations (p. 113). The curriculum review process generated a number of documents that were used to facilitate the process. Yin (2003) identified two of the most important uses of documents: to provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources and to make inferences from documents (p. 87). This study primarily used documents to corroborate information. According to Creswell (2003), a qualitative researcher may choose to use public and private documents (p. 188). This study used public and private documents including: memos, e-mail correspondence, written reports from dialogue and feedback, course proposals, and others (Merriam & Simpson, 1984; Yin, 2003). Public documents created during this process included agendas, feedback from constituencies, and other materials used to facilitate the process. Data collected from various constituencies were used as a basis for dialogue in the curriculum team meetings. Other curricular materials included reports provided to the seminary community at faculty meetings as well as documents requesting ongoing dialogue.

Since the team approached the process as a fluid process, questions or suggestions raised throughout the process helped guide the process. Adjustments were made to the process as needed. Written reports presented at faculty meetings as well as reports from dialogue that included all faculty members and administrators provided a rich description of the curriculum team’s efforts at widespread participation. Although many of these
documents were used to facilitate the curriculum review process, only e-mail correspondence, personal journals, and interview transcripts were used in data analysis. These proved most helpful in addressing the research questions.

In seeking to understand the issue of collaboration, I looked at whether a faculty member planned a course alone or in cooperation with other faculty members. Prior to this study, most faculty members at the seminary designed their courses alone and without the input of others. Designing a coherent curriculum means that faculty must know what one another is teaching. A course proposal form was used in the submission of all course proposals. The course proposals were evaluated in depth by the curriculum review team. The course proposals presented to the curriculum team were required to have the support of the department or departments submitting them. No individual was allowed to submit a course proposal. The curriculum team wanted faculty to embrace the concept that course content and syllabi needed to become public in order for the seminary to develop a coherent curriculum. Faculty needed to know how their courses connected to other courses in the various disciplines.

I transferred all e-mail correspondence into Word documents in chronological order. The attachments were also included with the e-mail. I had approximately 3,000 pages of e-mail. I read through the e-mail correspondence two times. The first time I used gray highlight to identify items that I considered important to the study. In the second review of the e-mails, I identified themes that emerged from the data and highlighted those in green. E-mail correspondence was primarily used to triangulate the data.
E-mail correspondence also provided a detailed outline of the curriculum review process. The data from e-mail correspondence were used to identify common themes regarding the four-year process and the feedback from the curriculum team members throughout the process, thereby, providing a source for generating questions used for the interviews.

I also used what Creswell (2003) referred to as private documents including personal journals (p. 187). Private documents primarily included my personal responses and experiences as the leader of the curriculum review process. The journals and other personal notes helped me identify some of the critical moments in the curriculum review process that assisted in theory development. I analyzed in detail a variety of documents in this study in order to triangulate the data.

**Personal Journals**

My personal journals were the second method of data collection used for this study. Since I led the comprehensive curriculum review process, I was obviously an active participant in the process. I served as a member of the curriculum review team and as an administrator within the organization where I conducted the research. My journals included personal recordings and reflections as well as memos.

**Personal Recordings and Reflections**

I journaled throughout the curriculum review process although it was intermittent at times. I recorded not only what was going on in the process but also my feelings related to the process. Many of my thoughts were recorded in the ongoing e-mail
dialogue with curriculum team members and others. I used a notebook for some of my journaled on the computer, whatever seemed most convenient and appropriate at the time. As the researcher, I journaled my responses to the interview questions prior to conducting my first interview. I wanted to see how well my view of the curriculum review process related to the responses of other team members. I also journaled during the data collection and analysis stages, in particular, the first interview. My journals involved reflection on both my role as a researcher and as a higher education administrator.

*Memos*

When analyzing the e-mail correspondence, I took time to write memos to myself in red highlight on issues that I identified as particularly critical to the process and deserved a potential revisiting. This coding made it easy to identify these items among the many pages of e-mail. These memos were used sparingly since they captured major issues along the curriculum review journey. When I needed to identify my response to a particular issue, I could easily go to the e-mail data to read about the process along with the people and events involved at that particular moment.

In reviewing the early e-mails, I also wrote memos within the Word document using the correction mode to capture my thoughts. In these memos, I tended to focus on what was going on in the institution, in the curriculum team, and in me during that particular time in the process. These memos included my perceptions as well as feelings. The memos helped me clarify my role in the process as well as record my experiences of
the process including the joys and challenges. I included memos only in the early e-mails as time did not permit in-depth personal reflection for all e-mail correspondence.

*Interviewing*

Interviewing was the third and most important method of gathering information for this grounded theory study. “Grounded theory is based on exchanges in which the interviewees can talk back, clarify, and explain their points” according to Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 4). Interviewing the curriculum team members helped identify what was going on during the process, how individuals or groups of people participated, and their understanding of the curriculum review process.

I used what qualitative researchers refer to as a semi-structured interview with the interviews guided by a list of open-ended questions or issues to be explored. The wording and order of the questions asked during the interview basically stayed the same although allowances were made for follow up questions or further elaboration (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This format allowed me to guide the discussion by asking various questions when needed (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 5).

*Interview Pilot*

I followed Maxwell’s (2005) suggestion and conducted a pilot interview with an administrator who had been closely involved with the curriculum review process but not a member of the curriculum review team. This colleague came alongside me during the process, in particular, to proofread and help clarify various e-mails and documents presented to the curriculum review team and seminary community. My colleague knew
enough about the study to provide feedback on the wording of the interview questions. The pilot-test helped me make some adjustments to the wording of a few questions as well as the order in which the questions were asked (p. 95).

Interview of Self

As the researcher and a higher education administrator, I answered the same interview questions on paper so that my thoughts were recorded prior to hearing input from members of the curriculum review team.

Interviews with Curriculum Team Members

Interviewing 10 curriculum review team members one-on-one served as the primary data collection method. Interviews also served as the primary data for the study. I prepared for the interviews by designing a consent form that included statements regarding the purpose of the study and the intent to protect confidentiality. I informed the interviewees when arranging for the interviews that we would basically discuss the curriculum review process, and they would have an opportunity to share any insights from the process. All were serving at the conclusion of the process except for one who served on the curriculum team for three years and then became president of the seminary. I conducted the interviews after the team’s initial work was complete. The team had presented its consensus proposal for the new master of divinity degree and the institutional core curriculum to the faculty. The faculty dialogued on the proposal for a few months prior to the vote in March 2007. At that time, the faculty voted to approve the new curriculum and to support its implementation for fall 2007.
After at least a four-month span, I began interviewing the team members. Waiting for at least four months after the vote gave team members time to reflect on the process, time to be renewed from the school year, and time to address some of the deeply emotional issues generated during the somewhat contested vote in March 2007. The timing of the interviews allowed the team members an opportunity to speak to the curriculum review process with more clarity of thought. Although emotions were expressed during the interviews, it was evident that interviewees had taken time for reflection, which had lessened the emotional intensity for most. I conducted the interviews in the curriculum team members’ offices because I wanted them to feel comfortable with their surroundings. At the beginning of each interview, I gave a brief overview of the study, reviewed the consent form ensuring the person that participation was voluntary and that the participant could stop the interview at any time. The informant was asked to sign the consent form (see Appendix A) granting permission to proceed with the interview as well as permission to audiotape the interview. All participants were given the option of listening to the interview tape. All 10 interviewees signed the permission form and declined the option to listen to the audiotape. To ensure confidentiality, I used pseudonyms for the participants’ names in the results section. Each interview was approximately one and one-half hour in length. I scheduled interviews based on individual’s availability, therefore, conducting the interviews in no particular order.

Regarding the curriculum review team, I focused primarily on those who had been engaged in the process from the beginning since I anticipated generating the most
useful input from them. I interviewed the three faculty members and four administrators who served on the curriculum review team throughout the process. In addition, I interviewed two faculty members who had served on the team during the final year as well as the president who served on the team as a tenured faculty member for the first three years. Table 1 provides some demographics for the 10 people interviewed.

Table 1

Demographics of the 10 Curriculum Team Members Interviewed in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position/Role</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;44 years old</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;45 years old</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Rank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Tenured</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other faculty members and administrators served on the team at various points in the process. Most served in the place of a faculty member who had taken a study leave. A few of those individuals chose to continue on the team even after the faculty member they were representing returned from study leave.

Having 16 individuals serve on the curriculum team over the four-year period had both its advantages and disadvantages. New members brought energy to the process and raised questions from a new perspective. However, an ongoing change in the makeup of the team hindered some of the consistency in communication and the understanding of the process. One department in particular had three different representatives, two of whom served for only one of the four years. One department had only one representative
for the third year of the process. Lack of consistent membership required a rehashing of some issues just to get everyone up to speed. I recognize that I failed to take enough time outside of the curriculum team meetings to talk with the new team members to catch them up to the team’s current dialogue.

In order to address the primary research question, which was to explain how the curriculum review team experienced the phenomenon of the curriculum review process, I asked the interviewees to respond to questions (see Appendix B) including: a description of the process; faculty and administration engagement in the process; motivation for continued involvement in the process; critical turning points in the process; and department involvement in the process.

The interview questions also generated data that addressed the second research question, which focused on the collaboration of the faculty and administration during the curriculum review process. Interviewees were asked to respond to questions including: the collaborative effort of faculty and administration; the team’s efforts at widespread participation within the seminary community; benefits and drawbacks of having both faculty and administrators serve on the curriculum review team; and potential barriers to the collaboration of faculty and administration.

In seeking to address the research questions, I interviewed the 10 curriculum team members regarding the curriculum review and revision process. After a few interviews, I realized that some of the questions were rather repetitive so I combined a few for the remaining interviews. Although I could have asked more questions, I chose the interview guiding questions that could most directly speak to my two main research questions. I
also asked a few questions about the challenges that the school faces in the next one to three years. I used this information to guide part of the curriculum implementation process, which was not directly a part of this study. I wanted to capture some insights from the curriculum review team members, knowing that they could speak to these institutional challenges.

The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. After receiving the typed transcripts from the Kent State University Bureau of Research, I listened to each interview to make any necessary corrections. Having the same person transcribe the final seven interviews helped with consistency and accuracy since the person understood the terminology and language being used. Now that I had data from document analysis, personal recordings, and interviewing, I prepared for data analysis. Grounded theory required that I engage in detailed analytic processes, looking for repeated patterns to explain the phenomenon under consideration.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was the next step in the process. Since I used grounded theory methodology to analyze the case study, the theories emerged from the data rather than being hypothesized prior to data collection (Mertens, 1998, p. 171). Although I moved into the data analysis stage, I was aware that data collection, coding, and analysis were occurring simultaneously. This process is common in grounded theory development, beginning with the first document read and the first interview conducted (Merriam, 1998, p. 151). This grounded theory methodology study looked to develop theory in an area where little research existed, in particular, the experiences of the curriculum team
members. A large amount of data existed regarding curriculum content; however, research was limited regarding the experience of those directly involved in a comprehensive curriculum review process. No study focused on a comprehensive process of curriculum review in the field of theological education. Building the explanation for the phenomenon of the curriculum review process was an integral part of the research. Theories were generated through the exploration of the emerging concepts in the data and their interrelationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This study’s purpose was to develop substantive theory in the area of higher education curriculum.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) said:

The analytic procedures of grounded theory were designed to:

1. Build rather than only test theory.
2. Give the research process the rigor necessary to make the theory ‘good’ science.
3. Help the analyst to break through the biases and assumptions brought to, and that can develop during, the research process.
4. Provide the grounding, build the density, and develop the sensitivity and integration needed to generate a rich, tightly woven, explanatory theory that closely approximates the reality it represents. (p. 57)

Strauss and Corbin (1990) identified two analytic procedures: constant comparative method and theoretical sampling (p. 62). Both procedures were used in this study.
Constant Comparative Method

Constant comparison allowed me to probe deeply into the data to gain familiarity with the data (Creswell, 2003; Hatch, 2002). Constant comparison involved “initially comparing data set to data set; later comparing data set to theory” (Dick, 2005, p. 6). According to Glaser (1998), the constant comparative method has been a key concept in the development and understanding of grounded theory. The constant comparison analysis process provided a way for me to compare incidents in order to generate and identify categories. The process required a constant flow back and forth from concept to concept and category to category. Through asking questions of the data, I was able to integrate those categories as I moved into theory generation. At times it was difficult to differentiate between data analysis and data generation.

As the researcher, I was aware of my preconceived categories or concepts. This acknowledgement was key to this grounded theory methodology. I did not begin with a theory to prove or disprove; I allowed the theory to emerge from the data (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The theories that emerged focused on the foundational components of the process; the corporate responsibility of curriculum; the collaborative effort of faculty and administration; cultural barriers to collaboration, and the sense of community and connectedness among the curriculum team members. The theories corresponded closely to the data. Constant comparison helped in generating theories by constantly comparing categories to concepts and concepts to theories. Analyzing data using the constant comparative method served to help confirm or disconfirm how well the theory could be applied to the curriculum review process (Mertens, 1998).
Theoretical Sampling

Mertens (1998) identified theoretical sampling as a second method of data analysis, which required that emerging theories guide some of the data collection. As I analyzed the data and identified various theories, I would revisit other data sources and ask additional questions. This process helped fill in missing pieces as theories emerged and took shape (p. 171). Theoretical sampling was not predetermined but evolved during the process of theory generation; it was not used to support an existing theory. Concepts emerged from the analysis of the data and contributed to the emerging theories. The theoretical sampling procedure for grounded theory included the joint process of data collection, coding, and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

“Theoretical sampling is cumulative. This is because concepts and their relationships also accumulate through the interplay of data collection and analysis,” said Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 178). It was important that I remained consistent and flexible during theoretical sampling. For example, some of the interview questions changed slightly as I moved through the interview process due to the responses from previous interviews. I needed to make some necessary adjustments. This allowed me to vary slightly the amount and type of data collected. Since interviews were my primary source of data, I looked to e-mail correspondence and memos to help me more fully develop the categories. This process was particularly active during the axial coding phase where I looked for connections between concepts. Comparisons were made purposefully to each category until it was fully developed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Being flexible
with my data collection and theoretical sampling helped me stay focused on discovery as the aim of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 180).

_Theoretical Sensitivity_

As a grounded theorist, I also needed to possess theoretical sensitivity. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), “Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t.” Strauss and Corbin (1990) said that theoretical sensitivity comes from three major sources: understanding of the literature, professional experience in the area of study, and personal experience in the area of study. The first source of theoretical sensitivity was being aware of the phenomenon studied by being well grounded in literature. Regarding literature, I needed to have a familiarity with a variety of documents and publications that provided a “rich background of information that ‘sensitizes’” one to what is going on with the phenomenon being studied (p. 42).

Professional experience is the second source of theoretical sensitivity. A researcher who has practiced the field under study for some time knows how the field works. My seven years of experience in the field of higher education curriculum helped me better understand what was going on in the case study.

Personal experience in the field of study is the third source of theoretical sensitivity. Although personal experience can be a benefit, the researcher must remember that his or her personal experience is not the same as everyone else’s experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 43). Glaser (1998) further developed the idea of theoretical sensitivity. “Since grounded theory is methodologically dependent, the researcher must
constantly do the ‘input’ of collecting, coding and analyzing data and do the ‘output’ such as categorizing, memoing, sorting and writing while stimulating him or herself” (p. 15). Theoretical sensitivity allowed me to recognize the important elements of the data and then give those elements meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 46). I interacted with the data in both the collection and analysis stages.

Asking questions of the data helped me better understand the complex nature of the relationships between variables. Theoretical sensitivity encouraged me to sit with the data and ask questions “such as the Who? When? Where? What? How much? and Why?” (Mertens, 1998, p. 171). When reviewing documents, interviewing individuals, or reflecting on the process, I looked for themes to emerge. Informal analysis of the data had been ongoing since the process began, which eventually led to a large amount of data.

**Data Management**

Managing the data in this grounded theory study was challenging due to the amount of data that had to be reviewed, coded, and analyzed. I spent a great deal of time coding the various forms of data, such as e-mail correspondence, memos, and interview transcripts. Managing the data was also critical. Reading through the e-mail correspondence, memos, notes from the interviews, and journals proved helpful.

As I proceeded with data collection and analysis, I wrote memos reflecting on what I saw develop in the study. Memos were theoretical notes about the data that I wrote during the research process. These memos proved helpful when looking for connections among categories and writing up the theory. I initially listened to each interview to correct the transcripts. Then I read through the interview transcripts to engage in open
coding. I recorded memos that included my thoughts and feeling generated during the review of the data. As I engaged in coding, I wrote memos for the purpose of data analysis. “To start writing one’s theory, it is first necessary to collate the memos on each category, which is easily accomplished since the memos have been written about categories,” according to Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 113). The memos served as a type of code that I, as the analyst, created to aid the process of linking properties and concepts. This process eventually resulted in the formation of the grounded theory. Data management included coding the data.

*Three Types of Coding*

The various documents and transcripts from the case study were reviewed and analyzed using coding, which is the primary data analysis procedure in grounded theory. Coding involved breaking down the data, forming categories, and then putting the data back together. Theories were then built from this process of data analysis. Because of the strong connection between data collection and data analysis, I moved back and forth between them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The three major types of coding used in this grounded theory research included: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In this study the coding process primarily followed this order. However, there were times when I revisited open coding in order to better understand details surrounding a particular category. This meant that I often went back and forth from open coding and axial coding as I sought to understand the categories and theories as they emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
Open Coding

Through a close examination of the data, the phenomena under study were named and categorized using open coding. Data analysis for open coding included identifying, naming, categorizing, and describing phenomena found in the documents. When reviewing the data, I asked questions such as: “What is this about? What is being referenced here?” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

I used open coding in data analysis to identify, name, categorize, and describe the phenomena found in the e-mail correspondence and interview transcripts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). My specific open coding process was as follows:

1. I first used open coding for the 3,000 pages of e-mail correspondence that had been transferred to Word documents in order to conceptualize the data. The e-mail data were presented chronologically with each page numbered for ease of reference. During the first read through of the e-mails, I coded major incidents, ideas, and events with gray highlight.

2. I then went through the e-mail data a second time up to page 700. I took the sentence, paragraph, or phrase highlighted in gray and gave it a conceptual label using yellow highlight. This process allowed for each incident, idea, or event to reflect the context in which it was located (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

3. I made a list of major themes from the review of literature to use in the next step of open coding. After highlighting the concepts in yellow, I then identified categories based on major themes identified from the review of literature. The categories were labeled using green highlight.
4. After getting a general idea of the major categories in the e-mail correspondence, I then coded the first interview transcript. I numbered each page of the interviews and each line for ease of reference. I coded incidents, ideas, and events from the interview data with gray highlight.

5. I took the sentence, paragraph, or phrase highlighted in gray and gave it a category label using yellow highlight.

6. Using the list of major themes already identified from the review of literature, I identified larger categories for the gray and yellow highlighting. For the first interview, these larger categories were in green highlight.

7. During a final read through of the first interview transcript, I identified an emerging theme by giving a conceptual name that encompassed both the categories labeled in yellow and the larger categories identified from the literature review highlighted in green. I labeled these conceptual items as emerging themes and highlighted those in blue.

8. Because of my familiarity with the basic categories, themes, and concepts generated from the coding of the e-mail correspondence and the first interview, I was able to code the remaining nine interviews using only the first code of gray. I then immediately labeled the conceptual items as emerging themes in blue highlight. This process proved helpful for the remaining interviews and kept the number of concepts based on the categories somewhat manageable.

9. Coding in Word using the highlight function proved to be an effective way to organize the data. The various colors helped me keep the categories and concepts
distinct. Because of the large amount of data and the time consuming data analysis, I chose to use computer recognition software within the second month of the coding process as the typing had become repetitive. I used voice recognition software, *Dragon Speaking Professional 9*, to aid with selecting the text and inserting the categories, concepts, and emerging themes. Although I was unable to highlight by voice recognition, I only had to press one computer key to select the color highlight.

10. After coding all interviews, I created an Excel spreadsheet with four columns including: the emerging theme; the interview number and line number; the number of interviewees who identified the theme; and the original statement from the interviewee that had been coded in gray highlight. I then transferred all emerging themes and accompanying information from the Word documents to the Excel spreadsheet. The first draft included 95 pages of data on legal size paper.

11. In the Excel worksheet, I placed all items into larger categories and subcategories in an attempt to make sense of the data. Themes began to emerge through this process.

After initially placing some of the emerging themes into various categories and subcategories in the Excel spreadsheet, I sought the assistance of a peer reviewer in labeling the categories and subcategories. My peer reviewer was a professor emeritus from a theological school who had training in data analysis and had worked with numerous doctoral students on content analysis. Although not familiar with grounded theory, my peer reviewer provided excellent insight into my study. After initially placing
all themes into categories and subcategories, I met with my peer reviewer for one full day to review the coding of categories and subcategories. He asked questions related to my rationale for selecting certain labels. He reviewed the categories and at times offered alternative categories. He brought a fresh perspective to the data. After meeting with the peer reviewer, I continued with the open coding phase until all interview data had been categorized and transferred to the Excel spreadsheet. I then met with the peer reviewer two additional days to review the categories and subcategories. This process helped me better understand and conceptualize my data.

I then proceeded to create a table to display the open coding results. After condensing the large number of categories into major themes with subcategories, I defined each theme by incorporating the subcategories into the definition. I then identified the best example from the interviewees’ words to explain the theme. I only included subcategories for which at least five interviewees contributed. The first frequency column included the number of interviewees who identified that subcategory. The second frequency column represented the total number of times the interviewees identified a particular theme. This process of data elimination was tedious but necessary for data management. Table 2 presents an example taken from the Open Coding Results Chart located in Appendix C.
Table 2

*Example from Open Coding Results Chart Located in Appendix C*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging Themes</th>
<th>Definitions, Subcategories</th>
<th>Examples (Interviewee’s Words)</th>
<th>Frequency # of Interviewees</th>
<th>Frequency # of Times Theme Mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Defined</td>
<td>Curriculum as Entire Experience with an Intended Impact</td>
<td>Curriculum that is carefully considered, well defined, and clearly organized. [Intended Impact] Collection of educational experiences that come together to form the bases of a degree or degree programs. [Entire Experience]</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this example of open coding, “Curriculum Defined” was one of the major emerging themes. All 10 interviewees defined curriculum as having an “Intended Impact.” Seven of the interviewees defined curriculum as “Entire Experience.” I combined those definitions into one: “Curriculum as Entire Experience with an Intended Impact.” I then identified the quote that best encompassed that definition. For this theme, I used one interviewee’s words, “Curriculum that is carefully considered, well defined, and clearly organized.” The second frequency column represents the number of times that the interviewees identified that particular overarching theme. This number indicates that the interviewees identified this theme 21 times. This is an overall number, not one based on the number of interviewees.
Axial Coding

I then engaged in axial coding. After breaking down the data into parts during open coding, I then began reassembling the data in new ways through axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). I identified the relationships and connections between the categories and subcategories. I used constant comparison of one piece of data with another.

I followed a similar procedure to axial coding as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990, pp. 98-99):

1. I began by looking at the various categories and subcategories that had been identified from the open coding analysis, looking specifically at the properties and dimensions of the categories. In reviewing the Excel spreadsheet, I sought to discover how the dimensions gave the categories further specification.

2. I then proceeded to look for connections between the various categories and subcategories. I asked questions regarding how one category related to another category in an attempt to make sense of the data. I moved categories around in the Excel spreadsheet in an attempt to better define the categories and their components.

3. I condensed the 95-page Excel worksheet into 16 pages of only categories and subcategories, eliminating the other information for this stage in the process. This worksheet provided a more succinct outline that helped me see the relationship between the categories and subcategories. This document also included the number of interviewees who identified each category.
4. Using the more succinct outline created from open coding data, I designed visual representations of the larger emerging phenomena and related categories to them. This helped me to visually see the data. I created a visual for each phenomenon by looking for actions and interactions of the data that pointed to each phenomenon. I drew lines to indicate possible connections within and among the categories.

5. On the visuals, I listed specific categories under each phenomenon or theme and indicated the frequencies or number of interviewees who identified that particular concept. This process helped me determine the level of importance interviewees gave to a particular issue. The more people who identified a particular issue, the more weight I gave to the concept.

6. I referred back to the interview questions to determine if any of the questions asked at the conceptual level were supported by the visual data. I looked for evidence in the data to verify or deny statements of relationships.

7. From those visuals, I identified five overarching themes and depicted those visually incorporating the various categories and connections. I used the Smart Art Graphic mode in the Word 2007 to create the figures. I attempted to use those templates that would best portray the results of axial coding. As I began to portray the data visually, I realized the necessity of moving some items around, thereby, reorganizing some categories and subcategories. I also only included those items for which at least five curriculum team members identified, resulting in the elimination of some data.
Axial coding resulted in five visual representations of the connections among the major themes. These themes supported the answers to the research questions and sub-questions. An example of one of the visual representations is included and explained in Figure 1.

As an example of axial coding, I took the overarching theme “Collectively Shared Guiding Vision” and placed it on the top part of the figure. Three major components contributed to that guiding vision and are listed underneath demonstrating their foundational nature: curriculum model, expected student learning outcomes, and spiritual foundation. Other visuals resulting from axial coding are located within the Chapter IV results section. These visuals helped me see the connections and how the emerging phenomena or themes came together to form the overarching themes. I used these visuals to identify major findings in the case study as I moved into selective coding.

Selective Coding

The third form of coding that I used was selective coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), selective coding is, “The process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (p. 116). I was then prepared to integrate the categories to form a grounded theory. This integration was similar to axial coding, “just done at a higher more abstract level of analysis” (p. 117). My goal in selective coding was to take the information in the figures and memos and develop a “picture of reality that is conceptual, comprehensible, and above all grounded” (p. 117). During selective coding, I used the core categories or themes to organize other categories
Figure 1. Example of axial coding with the overarching theme of a collectively shared guiding vision for the curriculum review process.
and properties. In this process, I related the core concept or overarching theme to other categories in an effort to validate those relationships and support the conceptualization of the theoretical framework. In addition, selective coding helped me fill in categories that needed further development (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

All available data were associated with an emerging category; although not all were strong enough to warrant further discussion in the selective coding phase. The supporting information for each assertion in the results section represents those factors that were identified by at least five of the 10 interviewees. This process helped to further limit the large amount of data generated during this curriculum review process and this study. At this stage, I engaged in further critical data elimination as I set aside information that did not speak to my research questions. I followed a similar procedure to selective coding as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990):

1. I used the visual representations created using axial coding, which resulted in five overarching themes from the research including: a collectively shared guiding vision; curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility; collaboration of various groups in curricular change; cultural issues as barriers to collaboration; and the sense community and connectedness among the curriculum team members.

2. All of the other major categories related to these central categories. Through the process of selective coding, I sought to determine a more logical explanation for the categories and their various relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 120).

3. I then connected the major themes and categories to each of the overarching themes to show the relationships of the categories to one another and to the larger
overarching theme. Throughout the process, I constantly made comparisons and asked questions of the data in an effort to identify connections. This required ongoing questions related to what, how, and why.

4. Moving from description to conceptualization, I then explained the story line for each of the overarching themes. Using the memos that I had written along with my personal journals, I asked the following questions of the data: What is the main issue or problem? What idea keeps coming up? (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 119). I began the process of integration by writing sentences or phrases that captured the overall story being told by each overarching theme.

5. Triangulation of the data most came into play within this phase of the coding process. E-mail correspondence as well as memos capturing my personal reflection on the e-mail and my personal journals helped me to more fully explain some of the assertions and provided more definition for those assertions or overarching themes needing more development.

6. After writing the initial assertions, I reviewed all 3,000 pages of e-mail correspondence and identified items that could more fully develop or support the assertions. I copied and pasted those items into a more manageable Word document that included 222 pages.

7. Through this coding process, I had to rearrange some of the categories in relation to the overarching themes, and I eliminated some categories that no longer fit the particular explanation.
8. In order to provide rich data, I revisited some of the original interview transcripts to include information specific to one of the assertions. I recognized that through this process of revisiting the data, I used quotes that were not part of my open coding summary. In some instances, I included longer quotes to provide more in-depth description of the supporting theme and the context.

9. Reviewing my personal journals also provided data triangulation. These personal reflections and comments helped to more fully develop some of the concepts and assertions.

10. I fine-tuned the theories or assertions that supported the main research questions as well as the sub-questions. These assertions were listed as findings and are more fully explained in Chapter IV.

Selective coding delimited the theory to five main variables. The delimitation of the analysis to those significant variables provided the groundwork for theory development. In writing up the grounded theory, I continued summarizing the memos and conducting further analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As a result of selective coding, I constructed five assertions that served as the findings of this study. I designed a selective coding chart (see Appendix D) that included the major research questions and sub-questions and how the assertions connected to those. Chapter IV reports and discusses the findings.

Methods for Verification or Trustworthiness

Grounded theorists must focus on concepts of verification or trustworthiness. The constant comparative method and theoretical sampling helped with the verification of the
developing theories because throughout the study, I engaged in a joint process of data collection, coding, and analysis (Mertens, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Trustworthiness was also a key to the development of grounded theory. Sources of trust in grounded theory address four criteria: fit, relevance, work, and modifiability. According to Glaser (1998), “Fit is another word for validity…does the concept represent the pattern of data it purports to denote? This is the beginning functional requirement of relating theory to data” (p. 236). The data from this study fit well with the research questions that focused on generating categories, concepts, and theories from a comprehensive curriculum review process. Working with my peer reviewer in the open coding phase of the data analysis process served as a key aspect of the trustworthiness of this study. I had placed the various emerging themes into categories. My peer reviewer and I then reviewed the emerging themes and categories together. We sought to identify categories and sub-categories that best represented the data. My peer reviewer had extensive experience with data analysis and brought a fresh perspective to the analysis process. We renamed some of the categories and sub-categories to better represent the emerging themes. At times we removed categories or shifted them to other locations to bring greater clarity to the open coding results. Some categories were removed if determined extraneous to this study.

“Relevance” was the next criterion. “Emergent concepts will relate to the true issues of the participants in the substantive area” (Glaser, 1998, p. 236). Data generated from the interviews with the curriculum team members provided the best relevance to the main research questions. Team members’ insights into the process generated the most
useful data for this study. The third criterion for trust was “work.” “The concepts and their theoretical coding are tightly related to what is going on. They work! This imbues with trust that we can understand and apply a theory about a substantive area,” according to Glaser (1998, p. 237). As the study progressed and I moved through the data collection, coding, and analysis stages, theories related to the research questions emerged regarding the comprehensive curriculum review process. Throughout the study, I asked questions of the data looking to verify the relationships within categories and among categories and theories.

“Modifiability” was the fourth criterion for trust. “The theory does not miss anything that cannot be readily incorporated into it by modifying through constant comparison. The theory does not force the data, the theory gets modified by it,” according to Glaser (1998, p. 237). The process was one of consistent discovery and constant change. Never did I seek to force the data to present a particular theory. Instead, the theories emerged from the process of constant comparison of the data. At times, categories shifted as the relationships were tested. Some data that no longer fit were eliminated. I consistently moved back and forth between data generation and data analysis. I am confident that this grounded theory study represents trusted theories.

Researcher bias was a potential validity threat in this qualitative study. I realized that as the researcher, I brought my own theories, beliefs, and perceptual lens to the study and may have been inclined to select data that fit an existing theory or preconception. However, using the constant comparative method and the assistance of a peer reviewer, I was able to see the data more objectively. As the researcher, I recorded my own
assumptions and thoughts using memos and journals. Consistently asking questions of the data and looking for relationships helped me identify categories and theories that were grounded in the data.

Using triangulation also increased the trustworthiness of this grounded theory study. In this case study, I used multiple sources of evidence including e-mail correspondence and interview transcripts from a variety of people being interviewed including faculty and administrators; a variety of data sets being evaluated including concepts within categories and categories among themes, memos, and reflections; and a variety of methods used to analyze the data including constant comparison, theoretical sampling, and coding analysis. Yin (2003) supports the idea of triangulation as a rationale for using multiple sources of evidence. A major strength of this study was the use of many different sources of evidence. I collected information from 10 curriculum team members including faculty and administrators; 3,000 pages of e-mail correspondence; and a number of personal memos and pages of journals. While naming the overarching themes, I triangulated the data by identifying data from various locations that supported the main themes, whether from concepts within categories or categories among the overarching themes. My memos also served to triangulate the data as my reflections supported much the interviewees’ descriptions of and insights into the curriculum review process.

Document analysis helped identify some of the critical points during the process as well as the collaborative effort of faculty and administrators. E-mail correspondence was particularly helpful. I reviewed the interview transcripts to identify key elements of
the curriculum process and the experiences of the process as reported by curriculum team members. Triangulation added to the trustworthiness of this study.

This case study was confined to the exploration of the curriculum review process at a theological seminary. The data for this study were also limited to document analysis, personal journals, and participant interviews. I identified three major limitations of this study.

Limitations of the Study

1. As the researcher, my affiliation with the educational institution engaged in the curriculum review process under study provided a potential for bias.

2. Since the study involved a smaller educational institution of 900 students, the principles gained from this case study may be best translated to a college or department level curriculum review process rather than an institutional level process.

3. My interviews were limited to the curriculum team members, which did not allow for feedback from the wider community regarding the process.

Summary

In summary, this case study used a qualitative research design of grounded theory. Theories were generated from a study of the data from document analysis, personal journals, and interviews. A variety of analysis techniques such as constant comparative method, theoretical sampling, and triangulation were used to draw some results, conclusions, and recommendations in light of this study. For grounded theory research, it
was important to allow the data to speak for itself. I coded the data with an open mind while identifying categories and properties in the generation of theories. My goal with this study was to generate theories that could be helpful to educational institutions that engage in a comprehensive curriculum review process.

After engaging in selective coding, I identified five assertions that addressed: a collectively shared guiding vision for the curriculum process; curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility; collaboration of various groups in curricular revision; cultural issues as barriers to curricular collaboration; and the community and connectedness of the curriculum review team during the process. These five assertions are more fully developed and explained in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Overview

The primary focus of this case study was to explore a curriculum review team’s experience of a comprehensive curriculum review process conducted by one higher education institution. A secondary purpose was to examine the collaborative effort of faculty and administration during the process. Data were collected and analyzed to answer two broad questions which were refined throughout the study. Sub-questions provided helpful details and insights into the process.

*Research Question 1:* How did the curriculum review team experience the comprehensive curriculum review process? (a) How did the curriculum review team members describe the curriculum review process? (b) What motivated the curriculum review team members’ involvement in the process? (c) What was the impact of institutional culture on the curriculum review process?

*Research Question 2:* How did the faculty and administration collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process? (a) How did the curriculum team members describe the collaborative effort of faculty and administration during the process? (b) What were some of the barriers to the collaboration of faculty and
administration? (c) How did the academic affairs and administrative affairs collaborate during the process?

Chapter IV describes the analysis of data and findings obtained in this study. As the researcher, I kept the following audiences in mind throughout the process: higher education administrators and faculty who may lead a comprehensive curriculum review process; higher education presidents and other administrators who may resource the process; and individuals interested in gaining insight related to organizational change. As noted in Chapter III, the data collection techniques included document analysis, personal journals, and in-depth interviewing. Self-reflection through journaling occurred throughout the process including the data collection and data analysis stages. Document analysis conducted during the study included mainly e-mail correspondence. Although the interviews were my primary data source, I used the personal journals and e-mail correspondence for data triangulation. The quotes included in this results section are primarily taken from the interviewees’ responses. However, some are personal quotes taken from my response to the questions noted in my interview transcript, e-mail correspondence, and personal memos. As the team leader, my voice added information helpful to the study. Since the data collected through the interviews and the data provided in the e-mail correspondence were used in triangulation, my voice helped to further develop some of the findings presented. This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of each of the five major findings: a collectively shared guiding vision for the curriculum.
process; curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility; collaboration of various
groups in curricular revision; cultural issues as barriers to curricular collaboration; and
the community and connectedness of the curriculum review team during the process.

List of Findings

As a result of selective coding, five findings were identified.

Finding 1: A collectively shared guiding vision for the curriculum provided a
strong foundation for the comprehensive curriculum review process.

Finding 2: Embracing curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility among
faculty and administration led to widespread participation and buy-in.

Finding 3: The collaboration of various groups within the seminary in the
comprehensive curriculum review process promoted true organizational change.

Finding 4: Cultural issues regarding people and organizational structure served as
barriers to collaboration during the comprehensive curriculum review process.

Finding 5: The curriculum team’s sense of community and connectedness
strengthened the curriculum review process.

Discussion of the Findings

The five findings from this study are discussed here. The findings are supported
by data collected primarily from the interviews of the 10 curriculum team members.
Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of the participants. All supportive
information for each of the findings must have been identified by at least five of the 10
interviewees. E-mail correspondence and personal journals were used to triangulate the data. Connections between the findings and the research questions are also presented.

**Collectively Shared Guiding Vision**

Finding 1: A collectively shared guiding vision for the curriculum provided a strong foundation for the comprehensive curriculum review process.

A key factor contributing to the curriculum review process was a collectively shared guiding vision co-constructed by the curriculum team at the early stage of the process. A guiding vision was necessary for the team since it served as the philosophical foundation for the seminary’s curriculum (see Figure 2). Having a guiding vision for the curriculum review process addressed what Tierney (1989) identified as one of faculty’s major challenges. Part of the process was helping the seminary community understand that curriculum review and revision requires a cooperative effort. Beginning the process by identifying the educational goals for the institution and for various degree programs helped take the focus off of individual courses. This research furthers Burgess’ (2004) and Myers’ (2006) emphasis on the need to build a shared vision through collaboration. Burgess (2004) said within academic groups, there is usually much diversity of opinion and competing interests so a shared vision is important.

This finding supports Research Question 1 by reporting on the process the team engaged in when creating a collectively shared guiding vision for the curriculum. This finding also supports Research Question 2 by providing a look into the collaborative
Figure 2. Collectively shared guiding vision as the foundation for the comprehensive curriculum review process.
process of the faculty and administrators, in particular, the curriculum team members as they reached consensus on the guiding vision and philosophical foundation.

This study not only speaks to the value of a shared vision but also to the value of revisiting the educational institution’s philosophical foundation. The curriculum team spent two years in dialogue on the philosophical foundation for the theological seminary, which included its primary calling and mission. The three key elements guiding this process included a new curriculum model, expected student learning outcomes, and a spiritual foundation.

*Curriculum Model*

The major guiding force for this curriculum review process was the new curriculum model consisting of the four Cs (core identity, character, calling, and competency) in relation to the seminary’s four core values (Scripture, spiritual formation, community, and academic excellence). This model served to guide the entire review process as well as the design of the new curriculum (see Figure 3). The model was initially presented by a curriculum team member who had been part of a new program within the seminary designed for pastor renewal. The curriculum team engaged in a year-long dialogue on the philosophical foundation of the seminary based on the curriculum model. This study supports Myers’ (2006) idea that academic deans need to develop a shared vision and common mission in order to avoid turf wars and other issues that may impede curriculum reform. The dialogue that led to a shared vision allowed the curriculum team to unite with a common purpose.
Figure 3. Curriculum model for Ashland Theological Seminary.
Williams, an administrator, said, “We [curriculum team] had about a year of conversations ourselves because we had to get on board first.” [Interview #2, lines 291-292]. The model had to become a guiding vision for the team. The team then invited the seminary community into this same dialogue on the curriculum model. The team had unofficially presented the four Cs in relation to the four core values within that first year so the faculty and administration were aware of the new model under discussion. When the model was presented to the seminary community at a faculty meeting in April 2004, it was met with some resistance. In particular, some faculty members were uncertain about the role the seminary should play in the development of character and calling. After some discussions with smaller groups of the community and further dialogue on the curriculum model at the October 2004 faculty meeting, the model was approved unanimously. The community approved the new curriculum model a year and a half into the four-year curriculum review process. However, the model was not officially implemented until fall 2007. The curriculum model is presented in Figure 3 and will be referred to throughout the discussion of the results.

This curriculum model focuses on the components of the 4-C paradigm: core identity, character, calling, and competency. The seminary’s four core values (academic excellence, Scripture, spiritual formation, and community) serve as the avenues by which the curriculum is presented and goals are met.

According to 60% of the curriculum team members interviewed for this study, the adoption of the curriculum model was a critical step in moving the process forward.
Williams said that this curriculum model had a significant impact. “It kind of felt like in the catalog there was some other curriculum model there that probably looks good, but I don’t know that it really made an impact. The adoption of this model, probably because of the length of time that we’ve been working on it, has made a significant difference in the total picture of the seminary.” [Interview #2, lines 278-282] The seminary embraced this focus on the development of the whole person, which includes the training of the mind and the nurturing of the soul.

Porter also spoke directly on the four Cs, “I think the 4 Cs were timely but also God-directed elements of the whole process. I really think this puts us in a position…to shape the students’ lives in a remarkable way. This positions the seminary for at least the next 10 years.” [Interview #6, lines 49-51] Adams, a faculty member, said that the adoption of the curriculum model “was sort of the affirmation of the philosophical side of things.” [Interview #1, lines 199-200] The curriculum model served as a primary guiding vision for the curriculum review process.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

A second guiding vision for the curriculum review process included the expected student learning outcomes. Myers (2006) emphasized the importance of faculty embracing ownership of the curriculum at the degree program level, not just at the course level. This study affirms the need for faculty to have ownership of the curriculum at the degree program level. The process at Ashland Theological Seminary began with in-depth dialogue on the characteristics desired in its graduates. Discussion of courses did not take
place until two and a half years into the four-year process to ensure that the focus remained on the degree program and the student. Early in the process, the curriculum team asked each department to identify necessary competencies for graduates of the master of divinity degree, which is the one degree that spans across all four departments. Then each department reviewed each other’s competencies, asking questions and making comments. This process served to help the faculty gain a broader understanding of the degree as a whole. Identifying the desired learning outcomes served as an example of the curriculum team’s collaborative effort during the process and addressed Research Question 2a. Johnson emphasized the necessity of this foundational component:

Make sure you lay down your outcomes, your picture of what you want at the end first…Good question to ask, “Our product is our students. What does that mean to us?” Do this before you start talking about courses, before you start talking about curriculum. Lay down the philosophical base first, who are you? I think that’s imperative. [Interview #5, lines 1167-1171]

Over half of the curriculum team identified the development of expected student learning outcomes as a significant indicator of progress and an important foundational component. In an e-mail attachment titled “Department Initiatives,” I said to the curriculum team:

We are asking Bible, theology, counseling, [and practical theology] to identify M.Div. competencies in your discipline….Departments will then present these competencies [or outcomes] to the faculty at the January and February [2005]
faculty meetings and we will ask questions of one another in the hopes of having an institutional understanding and agreement on the M.Div. competencies.

[10.25.04, pp. 218-219]

The departments provided feedback on each department’s presentation of the outcomes. The expected student learning outcomes served as a foundational component to the curriculum and the curriculum review process. Adams said, “I felt we were really getting somewhere when we identified those six categories [of learning outcomes: Bible, theology/ethics, history, person in ministry, service to church, and service to world]… not necessarily when we had the codified list, but when we started working on, ‘What do we want to see in a graduate?’ and we started naming those things.” [Interview #1, lines 154-160] These outcomes identified in the six categories eventually served as the foundation for the design of the course proposals.

This study advanced the research (Briggs, 2007; Hubball et al., 2007; Steele, 2006) that emphasizes the value of engaging in curricular reform that goes beyond courses no matter the various pressures presented. The curriculum review team involved in this study used the “empty basket concept,” which meant that all courses in the M.Div. degree program were removed from the degree. The only way a course could be included in the revised degree was for the course to be designed using the course proposal form (see Appendix E) based on the new curriculum model. The courses were then evaluated and included in the degree proposal at the recommendation of the curriculum review
team. The expected student learning outcomes helped create a strong foundation for the curriculum review process.

**Spiritual Foundation**

The third guiding vision for the curriculum review process was the spiritual foundation. As evidenced in the interview transcripts, both the curriculum review team and the team leader valued a spiritual foundation for the curriculum review process. Seventy percent of the curriculum team identified reaching spiritual consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal as a rewarding and important part of the process. Richardson, a faculty member, said:

I really felt that the model [M.Div. degree proposal] that came to the floor; not the one that was voted on but the one that came to the floor…We had accomplished something that none of us thought would ever happen or could have happened. I really felt the best group cohesion at that last meeting…before the [March] faculty meeting….I really felt that we accomplished something that could have been celebrated. [Interview #8, lines 43-49]

I engaged the team in dialogue on *Grounded in God*, a book on building spiritual consensus, which was provided to each team member. “Spiritual consensus is that place of unity to which the Holy Spirit has led a group. It may or may not include a decision. Christian spiritual consensus implies not merely assent, but a sense of Christ’s presence among those assembled,” according to Farnham, Hull, and McLean (1999, p. 72).

Consensus is also a term that has been used in recent literature in higher education. Roy
et al. (2007) said that reaching consensus can be helpful to departments involved in curricular decisions. Roy et al. (2007) said that real consensus probably requires that “a variety of members in a department have been thinking about the proposed change for more than a year” (p. 26). In addition, active involvement of the faculty in the collection and analysis of data stages helps create consensus. This study expanded Roy et al.’s support for consensus by showing the joy that the curriculum team members experienced when reaching spiritual consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal.

The curriculum team began each meeting with prayer, desiring what God wanted for the seminary and the curriculum. After nearly four years of dialogue, the curriculum review team reached consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal. The faculty culture at the seminary is much like that of other higher education institutions. Faculty are passionate about their disciplines and at times had difficulty seeing the bigger picture. [Personal journal, 10.25.06, item #5] I respected and appreciated the passion that individuals brought to the process. Reaching consensus did not mean that we all agreed fully with every aspect of the proposal. It meant that we each felt that we had been heard and agreed to move forward for the good of the institution.

My role was to keep the seminary focused on the goal of building a coherent curriculum, which required cooperation among the disciplines as well as among the faculty and administrators involved. Thus, as the team leader, I purposefully laid a spiritual foundation for the process. Because this was a theological seminary, the process had a unique spiritual component. Although it was difficult at times to guide the process
from a spiritual foundation, I knew the value of this approach. Ashland Theological Seminary’s curriculum team members reflected on the larger spiritual component of the process. “You [team leader] did many things along the way that helped us stay focused on it [spiritual component] because it was a high priority for you,” according to Williams [Interview #2, lines 628-630] Focusing on the spiritual component of the process also motivated the curriculum team members’ continued involvement in the process and directly addressed Research Question 2b.

As the team leader, I made a gesture to help create a strong spiritual foundation for the process in an e-mail to the curriculum team on April 22, 2005:

As we move forward into implementing our action plan, my encouragement to all of us is to choose to lay down those things that we hold dear (courses, disciplines, programs, etc.). If we can honestly lay these down, the Lord can build the degree as He desires it to be. For example, I have been praying and have chosen to lay down the Tuesday M.Div. Cohort Program, which I have invested much time and energy in over the past five years. I am choosing to lay it down, which includes the cohort concept itself, the courses that are part it, and the way it is structured. I want the community to decide the value of this program. This is what we mean by “submitting to the broader community.” Please be in prayer asking God to help us work together and desire what is best for building His Kingdom. He will not let us down. [04.22.05, pp. 417-418]
The curriculum team also helped set the spiritual tone for the process within the community. An institutional culture that welcomed the spiritual component into the process directly addressed Research Question 1c related to the impact of culture on the curriculum review process. In an e-mail to the curriculum team on December 30, 2003, I indicated that we would spend some time in a future meeting to “schedule team members for the devotions for the remaining faculty meetings.” [12.30.03, p. 38] Having team members share devotions at the monthly faculty meetings gave us an opportunity to lay the spiritual foundation for the curriculum review process as we moved forward and in particular, for the curriculum discussion at those meetings. In this same e-mail, I encouraged the team to pray:

I want to encourage you as I am encouraging myself to remember to be purposeful and persistent in praying for this curriculum review process. I sense the process is going well, but I am also prompted in my heart to remember that we must keep in mind that we are God's instruments called to seek what He wants for Ashland Seminary. This can only be accomplished through prayer and through communion with the Holy Spirit. I am always encouraged when we come together and find God's direction through our discussions. [12.30.03, p. 38]

Finding God’s direction throughout the process was part of building consensus. Having a collectively shared guiding vision for this curriculum review process required an agreed upon curriculum model, a shared understanding of the expected student
learning outcomes, and a strong spiritual foundation. This guiding vision was a key component in this grounded theory study.

*Curriculum as a Shared or Corporate Responsibility*

Finding 2: Embracing curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility among faculty and administration led to widespread participation and buy-in.

In addition to having a guiding vision for the comprehensive curriculum review process, an institution should also embrace curriculum as a shared responsibility among faculty and administration (see Figure 4). Shared responsibility involves embracing a shared governance model that is dependent upon widespread participation. This finding primarily supported Research Question 2 regarding the collaborative effort of faculty and administrators in the process. The curriculum team members offered some insight into their view of the collaborative process both on the team and in the seminary community. Sharing insights from their personal experiences, the curriculum team members also addressed Research Question 1a in this finding.

An effective comprehensive curriculum review process should include faculty and administrators. Over the course of four years, the curriculum team had 16 members in a combination of nine faculty members and seven administrators. Of those seven administrators, five had a teaching component in their contract. Typically, the team was composed of 11 people including me as the chair. When faculty members would take study leave, departments would often provide a substitute. Sometimes those individuals
Figure 4. Curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility of faculty and administrators.
chose to stay on the team. The involvement of faculty and administrators continued throughout the process.

**Shared Governance**

The involvement of both faculty and administration on the curriculum review team benefitted the process. In this process, faculty and administration shared the governance over the curriculum. Oversight of curriculum is typically the role of faculty only, and many studies have encouraged the necessity of faculty shared governance (Kezar, 2001, Mortimer & Sathre, 2007; Smith, 2002). This means that faculty must share concern for the degree program, not just for individual courses. Purposefully having faculty and administrators involved in the curricular efforts in this study increased the corporate understanding of what needed to be done in the design and implementation stages. The working together of various groups in this study was essential to creating a shared or corporate responsibility for the curriculum (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). Co-involvement of faculty and administrators and mutual respect for one another affected the process in positive ways.

*Co-involvement of faculty and administrators.* The co-involvement of faculty and administrators in the comprehensive curriculum review process was critical. This study supports the necessity for faculty to have governance over the entire curriculum versus small segments. However, this research took Mortimer and Sathre’s (2007) study a step further to say that shared governance among faculty and administrators over the
curriculum is critical to the curricular change process. A program of study is the responsibility of the institution as a whole, not just the faculty. This approach assists institutions in staying in check regarding the addition and deletion of programs (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007) by involving administration in the process.

Organizational change and, in particular, curricular change require dealing with many competing interests and agendas of the parties involved. In addition, the pressures by external agencies and the push for more institutional accountability require a co-involvement of faculty and administrators through shared governance. The complexity of this curriculum review process also required shared governance. Although not necessarily apparent in the early stages of the curriculum review process, the curriculum team members’ understanding of curriculum as a corporate responsibility grew over the four years. This study made a strong contribution to the fields of higher education and theological education by stressing the value of shared governance over the curriculum by both faculty and administration.

The curriculum team was designed with this type of co-representation, and the process was designed to facilitate this type of partnership. This study captured the experience of the curriculum team members from their viewpoint. The faculty and administrators who served on the curriculum team highlighted the value of this collaborative partnership and shared responsibility.
Benefits of administrator involvement. When faculty members on the curriculum team were asked in the interviews what they thought about having a curriculum team made up of faculty and administrators, 100% indicated that the experience was positive. Richardson said:

I think if we were going to decide something, that was going to…mean certain resource allocations, “Why not have those people in on the conversation, catching the vision, seeing the value, saying this is something that faculty’s excited about; instead of one representative from this committee trying to now have this time…to go and somehow reproduce that [excitement] for the president, for the dean, for whomever.” It [administration involvement] makes perfect sense.  
[Interview #8, lines 609-616]

Harvey, a faculty member, also identified some of the benefits of administrator involvement. He said:

I saw no drawbacks at all from having administration there [on the curriculum team], and I think the benefits were numerous, including administration feeling a partnership in the whole curriculum process; administration having a greater understanding of the part the curriculum plays in the shaping of students; in our part of understanding the role administration plays and how they facilitate so much of what we [as faculty] do and how much we take for granted…So I felt it was a win all the way around. [Interview #10, lines 204-213]

Adams, a faculty member, said:
The only way I could see it [having both faculty and administration on the team] as a drawback is if there were some kind of antagonistic relationship between administration and faculty such that administration wanted to push some kind of agenda that was not in the interest of the curriculum process. Or if the administrators were always arguing, “Oh, we can’t afford it. We need to keep costs down. We have to be marketable.” But that didn’t happen so I didn’t see in our actual experience of the process any drawbacks to having administrators present. The benefits I saw were that…administrators may have more contact time with the students than faculty have. If we have the same idea about what we are all doing, I think that is a valuable piece. [Interview #1, lines 382-392]

Turner spoke to the benefits of a collaborative effort of faculty and administrators and said:

Benefits? [of administration involvement] Absolutely. It just saves an awful lot of effort and work in terms of communication between involved parties, or buy-in. I hate to draw it up in terms of sides…let’s say faculty does all the work, then it comes to the administration with “Oh by the way, excuse me we need $50,000 to start these new Introductory Courses.” I can see administration saying, “No you need to go back to the drawing board.” Well that clearly I think would have been a disaster and vice versa…I just don’t see how that would work without having both sides involved. But I think that’s true with most things here at this institution. [Interview #7, lines 318-336]
Townsend, a faculty member, addressed specifically the administration’s collaborative effort with faculty:

I felt that the administrators were very collaborative with us as faculty members. In fact it…was hard to draw the distinction between who’s in administration with faculty components and who’s faculty? Because the faculty who were there were often times department chairs with a role that pulls us into more administrative capacities. So I felt that it was very collaborative. I felt like we worked very very well as a team. [Interview #9, lines 499-505]

Thomas had some mixed thoughts regarding administration involvement on the team. He said:

Well I think it was faculty and administration trying to build consensus, part of what cooperation is. Also…if you like, I as a faculty member might have a more idealized view than from the administration. There might be some realities that need to impinge on that. I think there was some cooperation that was going on there…Different perspectives…not that it [budget] was raised much because…there are some ideal things that budget might be a restriction on. I remember that being raised as something we might have to think about further down the road. I am not saying it was a roadblock….I just remember there were a couple of times when we would say, “Can we really make that fly?...Let’s put it forward anyway.” I can’t remember somebody ever saying, “No we can’t do that.” What I’m saying is that the faculty who were just a straight faculty person
might not think of those things that might impinge on it. I can’t remember specifically at times when we scaled down because of those kinds of [administrative] concerns. [Interview #3, lines 414-418, 425, 437-444]

Townsend also identified some concerns regarding having faculty and administration on the curriculum team. He said:

About the only downside was the invisible part. As faculty with faculty contract, we don’t have administration built in. You [team leader] and [the academic dean] were very generous in rewarding those of us involved in it, which was a total surprise, a delightful surprise…In the summer time, e-mails were sent out. Technically I don’t have to touch my computer all summer but I do; it’s my work ethic. But if I didn’t have the work ethic, you would have lost the faculty input over summer months or break time…And so I think that sometimes the collaborative feeling maybe at times overlooked the contractual obligations…It wasn’t anything purposeful, it was just kind of inadvertently part of our role in this. [Interview #9, lines 505-515]

The curriculum team members’ reflections on their experience of the process addressed Research Question 1a. My goal as the chair of the curriculum team and leader of the process was to create a shared vision between faculty and administration. Although co-involvement of faculty and administrators was not without its challenges, one benefit was the administration’s willingness to fund the implementation of the newly adopted curriculum. The seminary president in a March 5, 2007 e-mail to the seminary
community after the new M.Div. degree and institutional core had been approved by the faculty offered financial support for the new curriculum:

I am encouraging [the academic dean] and the [curriculum] implementation team to move forward in clarifying the process for getting things in place for this coming academic year. In addition, I've made provision in next year's budget to cover the considerable expense of putting the new curriculum in place. [03.5.07, p. 2434]

The co-involvement of faculty and administrators had both benefits and challenges; however, 100% of the curriculum team members said that the benefits far outweighed the challenges.

Mutual respect. Shared governance also requires that the parties involved have mutual respect for one another. This approach does not mean that each group is given equal say on every issue. However, it does mean that the various groups affected by decisions are part of the process out of respect for their input and involvement. Ongoing participation of faculty and administration in the curriculum dialogue in this study allowed these groups to have input throughout the process. This approach supported Smith’s (2002) view regarding the need for mutual respect (p. 252). Smith encouraged an interdependent relationship among the various groups and respect for one another’s role and contribution. One interviewee shared thoughts related to relationships and respect. Being part of the process “gave me more respect for my fellow administrators,” Williams said. [Interview #2, line 757] This administrator also acknowledged his attempts to
respect the faculty on the team and their input, which he saw as invaluable to the process. “For me as a non faculty member, I just tried not to push too hard on some things [getting feedback, responses from departments and faculty] because I tried to respect their [faculty and department] situation.” [Interview #2, line 390]

One interviewee identified working with colleagues as one of the most rewarding parts of the process. He valued the respect shown him saying, “I appreciate that my voice here is respected and valued among my colleagues even from the academic side.” [Interview #5, line 1085] Although the four-year curriculum review process had officially concluded, he said, “My personal engagement [with other members of the community] is still very real because I’m trying to figure out how to have [continued] conversations respectfully.” [Interview #5, line 440] Through these comments, both administrators addressed Research Question 1 by expressing how they experienced or offered mutual respect during the process.

Some people may ask why faculty did not have full say over the curriculum process in this study. This seminary is designed in such a way that administrators with teaching in their contract are considered faculty and therefore, have voting privileges. Even before the curriculum review process, this shared governance existed. The curriculum process however highlighted this partnership. The majority of the faculty support this partnership; however, a segment of the faculty do not.

This study supported Smith’s (2002) and Mortimer and Sathre’s (2007) views of shared governance that result in effective communication and mutual respect for what
each person brings to the process. Embracing curriculum as a shared and corporate responsibility also called for widespread participation.

**Widespread Participation**

Embracing shared governance meant finding ways to involve many people in the curriculum review process. Mortimer and Sathre (2007) encouraged widespread participation. To ensure widespread participation, this study required that the process be open to all with particular attention given to the breadth and depth of participation. In their research, Wolf and Hughes (2007) focused on the role of faculty in the processes and practices of curriculum development and the need for collaboration among faculty. This study again built on this research by demonstrating the need for and value of collaboration among faculty and administration.

**Breadth and depth of participation.** This curriculum review process involved people from across the seminary with some groups working more in-depth on various issues. The process had both breadth and depth of participation. This study built on Doll’s (1993) theory of postmodernism, which includes the concept of richness and the value of having many people involved in the process. This study reinforced the importance of an emphasis on widespread participation (Cobb, 1990; Doll, 1993; Walkington, 2002) and addressed the issue in a higher education context. When asked to identify some important moments in the process, Williams said:
I think some of the early faculty meetings where we asked for input from the faculty…broke down to small groups and asked for input. I think they really began to get engaged. I’m not sure how productive that was, but I think it was significant in getting them engaged and getting them to feel part of the process….That’s when I felt like there were conversations across campus about what we were doing….We were asking for their input as to what this curriculum should produce. I think that was significant. [Interview #2, lines 229-236]

This emphasis on breadth and depth of participation supported Research Question 2 and its focus on the collaborative effort of faculty and administrators in the comprehensive curriculum review process. Further evidence pointing to Research Question 2 focused on collaboration including the way department members dialogued among themselves and with other departments.

_Institutional dialogue._ When addressing the issue of widespread participation, 70% of the team identified institutional dialogue as fundamental. From the early stages of the process, the curriculum team engaged the community in dialogue on curricular issues including the new curriculum model, feedback from constituencies, student learning outcomes, among others. Administrators were also involved in this conversation. Part of the goal was to make sure that all areas of the institution were informed about the curriculum.

Administrators without teaching in their contract benefitted from discussions on the curriculum. I purposefully involved the entire seminary community in the
comprehensive curriculum review process. For me, curriculum is a cultural issue and therefore, should be interwoven throughout the institution. The student affairs professionals needed to understand the curriculum, the rationale, and the philosophy behind it especially those in recruitment and admissions. These administrators at Ashland Theological Seminary could easily explain the philosophy behind the new curriculum, which indicated a shared vision among the seminary community. I recognize there were times when people did not understand why some administrators were involved in dialogue, including some administrators. There were a few faculty who chose to not be fully involved in the process because of administration’s involvement. This was unfortunate. However, now that the new curriculum has become a part of the culture of the institution, I think the approach toward widespread participation was appropriate. Although these administrators did not have direct input into the degree proposal or a vote on the curriculum, they supported the curriculum by engaging in dialogue on curricular issues during the monthly seminary meetings, providing feedback on topics discussed, and embracing the new curriculum model as part of the seminary’s culture. This group also met to determine how co-curricular activities could help support the goals of the new curriculum and have made that happen.

At the seminary’s fall faculty and administration retreat in 2006, a consultant led a brainstorming session on issues of importance and urgency within the institution. An indicator of buy-in from the seminary community regarding the curriculum was when 58 faculty and administrators were asked, “How important is the M.Div. curriculum review
process and how urgent is the issue?” Both issues were rated at the top in both importance and urgency. Creating a shared vision was the only other item to receive a similar rating. I anticipate that in some educational institutions only faculty would have rated these curricular issues high. However, because of widespread participation and a shared vision created during the comprehensive curriculum review process, both administration and faculty rated the curriculum review process high in level of importance and urgency. This display of support could be interpreted as a view into the shared governance over the curriculum felt by faculty and administration. The way the process unfolded over time made way for this new understanding of governance.

**Departmental and interdepartmental dialogue.** The curriculum review process required that departments engage in dialogue. All courses had to be proposed using a course proposal form. Only departments could submit course proposals; individual faculty could not submit proposals. Faculty within each department worked together to design the courses. This approach required in-depth dialogue at the department level. Thomas said:

I think that [course proposal form] again is helpful on both the institutional and the personal level because what it does is allows us or forces us to in fact fit our concept up against the concept we had agreed with generally [the 4 Cs curriculum model]…I am thinking of it as a pedagogical breakthrough. And also I don’t know if it came from that group but the syllabus style that is being required now. It’s again a follow up from the course proposal form where you have to really
articulate some of these things that ATS is going to be looking for. But at least individually I always said, “The dean has to look after that and I’ll just do my own thing, evaluating a few things.” Again since it’s just starting, it will be interesting to see the institutional buy-in to that, but as an individual I can see the importance of it…It’s also the same thing with the course proposal form. Sometimes it was difficult to understand exactly what was being said. It was hard but I think it was good for each department to do that. [Interview #3, lines 269-281, 285-287]

Thomas’ comments supported a strong emphasis on collaboration along with its benefits and challenges. Departments also actively engaged in dialogue with one another during the curriculum review process. Porter said:

I think one of the byproducts of this [interdepartmental dialogue]…was the benefit to the seminary, having departments engage in dialogue on issues of common interest. For the sake of the curriculum, I think there were a number of very important discussions that were begun at the various points throughout the process. A lot of those conversations continue to be worked out, but I think we built a good model. I won’t say they [interdepartmental dialogue] were always helpful and healthy at times, but I think the desire was there; absolutely the desire was there for every department to engage this part of the process. I think in most cases there was very helpful progress made in those discussions. [Interview #6, lines 212-222]
Although Porter’s support for the interdepartmental dialogue was strong, he was also realistic in that the participation by all departments was not ideal and could have been improved. During the interviews, many members of the curriculum team expressed a desire for continued interdepartmental dialogue, serving as a positive byproduct of the collaborative effort. When asked how these interdepartmental conversations within the faculty might continue without the assistance of the curriculum team, Adams said:

I think departments ought to just do it on an informal basis now unless there is some issue that all departments need to talk about. Then we could take time at a faculty meeting. I think some informal basis, whoever realizes that a conversation ought to take place then need to talk to the department chair or talk to whoever could…get that going. [Interview #1, lines 568-572]

Adams acknowledged that the effort to continue this type of dialogue must be intentional. In addition, a few courses were proposed jointly by two departments, which required significant interdepartmental dialogue and cooperation. Interdepartmental dialogue was also a key component in the creation of the expected student learning outcomes mentioned previously as a foundational component of the guiding vision for the process. No longer were people aware only of their disciplines, but they knew how their discipline fit into the larger curricular goals. This process allowed the faculty and administrators to have a more holistic view of the curriculum. This approach also resulted in shared governance over a portion of the curriculum by two departments responsible for the design and oversight of those courses.
In describing some benefits of the curriculum review process to the institution, Thomas identified, “Raising issues that I hadn’t thought about before…And also hearing perspectives from cross departments, which is an important gain that we have made from this. We had talked informally as friends, but now we can also talk institutionally, which I think is a good change.” [Interview #3, lines 60-65]

In reflecting on the process, at least 50% of the interviewees described the process as open to all, fluid, flexible, and recursive.

**Process open to all.** Widespread participation required that the process be open to all. “The process allowed for anyone with a voice to be heard,” according to Turner [Interview #7, lines 46-47] The team worked purposefully to engage the entire seminary community in the process. Some faculty were invited to serve on the curriculum team; others volunteered. However, the process was open to all. The original e-mail that I sent to the faculty, administration, and staff on February 6, 2003 introduced the curriculum review process for the first time:

A curriculum review and development team is being formed by the academic committee to begin to take a look at Ashland Seminary’s entire curriculum and approach to theological education. This is the beginning of our self-study preparation for our next accreditation visit. We want to have at least one representative from each department as well as extension representatives to join [the academic dean] and me on the team….Please note that more than one member from each department can serve on the team. This process will unfold
over a number of years. The members of the team will change as we move through various stages in the curriculum review and development process. We want to make use of all of the gifts of our faculty, administration, and staff.

[02.06.03, p. 1]

I reviewed this e-mail correspondence during my data analysis and wrote the following memo as I reflected on the open process:

I informed the entire community that a curriculum review team had been designed and that we were beginning to engage in a seminary-wide curriculum review process. I saw it as a community endeavor from the very beginning. We needed everyone involved in order to bring about the transformation that we desire in ourselves, our students, and our institution. [02.06.03, memo, p. 1]

In that same e-mail, I said, “Please pray and consider how you may best contribute to this process. I welcome all ideas and suggestions you may have. Please e-mail your ideas and any resources that you think would be helpful.” [02.06.03, p. 1]

Beginning in March 2003, the seminary president gave the curriculum team time in faculty meetings to engage the faculty and administration in the curriculum review process. This provision allowed for widespread engagement at many steps throughout the process. Harvey emphasized the team leader’s desire for a collaborative effort of faculty and administrators:

I think that [widespread participation] was one of the things you [team leader] were quite concerned about and spent a lot of time…how do we get all the
information out to everyone? How does everyone get a voice? How are we sure
that we’ve had the number of conversations back and forth. I remember you
saying, “Tell us conversations you need to have and we’ll facilitate them.” So I
felt the effort was Herculean in many ways. Looking back, I’m just not sure that
some of the problems we ended up having would have been solved no matter how
many conversations we had. [Interview #10, lines 182-189]

My goal was to keep everyone involved and making a contribution. The team
wanted the seminary community to recognize its role in the curriculum and, therefore, in
the development of the student. This open and welcoming process encouraged
widespread participation and supported the emphasis on collaboration in Research
Question 2.

Fluid and flexible process. This study supported research regarding curriculum
review as a nonlinear process that benefits from being fluid (Burgess, 2004; Kezar,
2001). Kezar (2001) said that change agents need to be open to ambiguity and a
nonlinear process. The curriculum team in this study took this approach. Although some
faculty wanted a detailed step-by-step plan for the curriculum review process, the
curriculum team was unable to provide it. The process was considered fluid or flexible.

Townsend described the process as flexible:

We wanted to accommodate all of the different parties involved with placing
pieces or things into the basket [courses proposed for inclusion in the M.Div.
degree]...and being flexible...looking at the total number of courses and then
realizing there’s no way everybody is going to have an equal say so flexible enough to step back and say, “Okay, it’s [the makeup of courses] not how we would do it necessarily, but that’s not the point. It was how we in a larger ‘we’ sense” [of community]. [Interview #9, lines 76-83]

Porter said that one of the most significant moments in the process was when the team allowed the faculty to redirect the process. The team brought three new foundational courses to the faculty in December 2005 for discussion and support. However, the faculty did not want to approve the curriculum course by course. According to Porter, the faculty had “asked the curriculum team to present these courses [three foundational courses] as part of the total curriculum; they did not want to approve courses ‘piecemeal.’” [02.13.07, p. 2310]

The faculty did not want to review or approve courses until they saw the entire degree. Instead of proceeding with the original plan to review courses as they were designed, the team reviewed the course proposals and designed a proposal for the new master of divinity degree. Porter said, “I do think that had we gone our original direction of having department input for each course as we built the curriculum, that would have engaged the community far more than what we were in a sense forced to by the faculty to redirect the process.” [Interview #6, lines 454-457] Unfortunately, this change in direction required less faculty-wide involvement in the review of courses and caused problems with buy-in later in the process.
One curriculum team member identified the fluid nature of the process as key to its success and recommends that approach to other schools. Regarding the process, Johnson said, “I’d be telling the administrators [who consider engaging in a curriculum review process] to not worry about not having the whole process figured out upfront. Keep your process fluid. Let it be a living thing.” [Interview #5, lines 1164-1166] In an effort to be sensitive to the community, faculty time, and other issues going on in the institution at the time of the process, the team remained flexible. As the administrator leading this process, I was responsible for gauging the pace of the process. Since I was operating with limited authority, I had to be sensitive to the time and energy asked of faculty and administrators in the process. I needed to know when and how hard to push on certain issues (Heifetz, 1994) which required that I continually evaluate all aspects of the process as we moved forward. In my personal journal, I noted that “I have been able to gauge the process in such a way that those who needed more time got that. I encouraged them and brought them along while keeping those who are ready to move forward motivated.” [10.24.06, personal journal, item #1]

Recursive process. The process also remained recursive; the process spoke back to itself consistently as the team maneuvered a rather complicated endeavor. The team would be going in one direction only to recognize a roadblock and the need to move a different way. Sometimes the pace of the process had to be adjusted. As mentioned previously, the curriculum team presented the new curriculum model for faculty discussion in April 2004. The team initially linked the curriculum model to the
seminary’s mission statement and met some resistance. A number of faculty voiced concern that dealing with students’ character and calling was not their responsibility. The curriculum team was surprised by this response from faculty but realized that the community would need more time for thought and dialogue on the curriculum model and its relationship to the seminary’s mission statement. This process stimulated additional conversation on the mission and identity of the institution, which proved healthy for the institution in the long run. Recognizing that the team could not make forward movement on the mission statement, the team proposed the new curriculum model as a philosophy of theological education.

The team then scheduled three informal discussion sessions for faculty and administrators to engage in more dialogue on the philosophy behind the curriculum model. In an e-mail to three members of the curriculum team after the first discussion on April 14, 2004, I said, “Thanks for your input into today's curriculum discussion. I sensed that those present are supportive of the philosophy of education [4 Cs curriculum model] and are beginning to come on board.” [04.14.04, p. 98] I followed with an e-mail the next day, April 15, 2004, to the curriculum team:

We have now had two of the three informal discussions with faculty and administrators concerning the curriculum model and philosophy of theological education statement. Both groups were very positive in response to our focus on the four Cs. Presenting our statement as a philosophy of theological education seemed to be a much better approach than trying to relate it to the mission
statement and the term “servant leader.” People support the idea of trying to recapture education that ministers to the whole person, not simply the imparting of knowledge. [04.14.04, p. 99]

The faculty and administrators who attended that first discussion also expressed concerns and provided some recommendations for the curriculum team. (a) They asked us to provide a definition for each of the four Cs so they can better understand what we mean by each. (b) Connecting the philosophy to the Association of Theological Schools’ goals for theological curriculum seemed to add some clarity to reasons why we are focusing on identity, character, etc. (c) It was expressed that we traditionally have considered calling, character, and competency as part of seminary training. Core identity seems to be the one people wrestle with the most regarding the seminary’s role. Some still are not able to differentiate between core identity and character.

In response to these concerns, a faculty member on the curriculum team drafted definitions of core identity and character. In an April 22, 2004 e-mail to me, a curriculum team member said, “Do you think something like this [drafting definitions] is worth working on? We could see if we’re in agreement as a committee and – if we are – use it to explain to everybody else why we’re focusing on the four Cs. The first two [core identity and character] seem to be the ones people have the most trouble with.” [04.22.04, p. 114] I supported the suggestion, and the team member drafted the definitions, which helped us gain a common understanding of the four Cs and our responsibility to them as a seminary community. A further explanation of the four Cs was provided by another
curriculum team member a few years later to again add clarity to this foundational component (see Appendix F).

The curriculum model was approved unanimously in October 2004; however, the team had to change the process to accommodate more dialogue and to shift from a focus on the mission to the development of a philosophy of theological education. This recursive process caused the team to consistently reflect on its work with a willingness to change direction when necessary. The process remained fluid and flexible as well as recursive as the team continued to refine the process.

Shared governance and widespread participation were key components to embracing curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility in this comprehensive curriculum review process. This research study added to higher education curriculum literature (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007; Wolf & Hughes, 2007) by focusing on curriculum as a corporate responsibility among faculty and administrators. This corporate responsibility supported Research Question 1 and its focus on the experiences of the curriculum review team as well as Research Question 2 and its focus on the collaboration of faculty and administrators.

Collaboration

Finding 3: The collaboration of various groups within the seminary in the comprehensive curriculum review process promoted true organizational change.

The third major finding of this study speaks to the willingness of various groups within the seminary to collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process
in an effort to bring organizational change. Support for this finding is similar to the previous finding regarding the corporate responsibility for the curriculum and how dialogue encouraged widespread participation. However, this finding speaks specifically to how each group went beyond dialogue to actual collaboration, which resulted in organizational change. Therefore, this finding addressed Research Question 2 regarding how faculty and administrators collaborated during the curriculum review process and described the collaborative effort at each level. The levels of collaboration included the curriculum review team, institutional, interdepartmental, and intradepartmental (see Figure 5).

**Curriculum Review Team Collaboration**

Collaboration within the curriculum review team was key to the collaborative effort. The collaboration of the faculty and administrators on the curriculum review team was strong during the process. That collaborative effort grew over time as the team members got to know one another better and began to trust each other. All 10 interviewees said that there was benefit to having both faculty and administration involved in the curriculum review process. When asked if there were any drawbacks to having faculty and administrators on the team, 70% said no. Six of the 10 team members voiced that having the administration involved had no drawback and even benefitted the process. As the team leader, one of my goals was to create a shared vision and understanding of the curriculum among the seminary community. To create a shared vision, we needed not only widespread participation but widespread collaboration.
Figure 5. Collaboration of various groups as a key component of the comprehensive curriculum review process.
In addition, it was important to bring to the table those people who had a variety of gifts, which required having faculty who were experts in their disciplines and administrators who tended to be able to see the bigger picture of the process. As the leader, I was responsible for coordinating all aspects of the process and delegating as appropriate to make sure that things got done. My desire was to draw on the strengths of the people involved (Walkington, 2002). This research study supported the idea of involving a number of people with various gifts. The curriculum review team was created in this way. All but two administrators who served on the team had teaching in their contracts and taught courses in the M.Div. degree. Some of them had many years of pastoral experience, which was helpful in the design of the new M.Div. degree especially since some faculty and other administrators had never served as senior pastors or had not served in quite some time.

When asked about the collaborative effort of faculty and administration, Porter had much to say in relation to the curriculum review team:

Part of my answer comes because of the very nature historically of this institution…I try to be role blind when it comes to making distinctions between faculty and administrators. I view them as colleagues and appreciate the input that they bring no matter what title, no matter what position they hold. To me that is what makes an institution strong and that brings out the best in every person within the institution. You’re not concerned about titles and rank and everything else….I think for those who engaged in the process with a blindness towards title
and rank…really did see this as a wonderful, collegial opportunity and process. I think those who were in tune to rank and status…saw it as a process that was colored if not undermined by too much involvement by administrators. Again, I absolutely sensed no problem with the way the committee, team was composed. In fact it enriched the team to have representation from a wide background of people with academic, practical, professional. [Interview #6, lines 377-394]

The collaboration of faculty and administrators on the curriculum review team modeled the effort for the rest of the seminary.

*Institutional Collaboration*

The seminary promoted institutional collaboration primarily by providing time in faculty meetings for curricular discussion throughout the first three years of the process. This approach to a more collaborative curricular change effort supported the view of Pinar et al. (2000):

Curriculum development, a concept and activity which used to define the totality of the curriculum field, has been explicated in its various aspects. Even today, the concept has been reconceived as less hierarchical and more collaborative in nature. Recent research seems less focused on developing new ‘how-to’s’ of curriculum development, more on describing curriculum development or making it responsive to new problems, new ideas, or research. (pp. 664-665)

This research study did not focus on the “how-to’s” of curriculum but on the process of curriculum review and revision, making application of Pinar’s K-12 approach
to the field of higher education curriculum. Therefore, higher education institutional collaboration was essential to the success of the curriculum process.

Of those interviewed, 70% identified institutional resources as key to the collaborative effort. According to Adams, “They [the administration] had to be philosophically supportive of the process and at least judiciously supportive in terms of resources and supportive in terms of not micromanaging.” [Interview #1, lines 413-414] The institution also supported the process by funding an increased hospitality account since many conversations and discussions were held over lunch. In addition, the seminary held some workdays and seminars that required institutional support including time and monetary resources. This study affirmed the research by Cohen et al. (2005) that major curriculum reform requires widespread participation and time. Also, this collaboration of faculty and administrators spoke directly to Research Question 2c regarding the collaboration of academic affairs and administrative affairs.

Smithson, an administrator, described the institutional collaborative process as insightful:

We went through the [course proposal] forms where people had really given intense thought to what do I do? How do I do it? Why do I do it? What am I trying to accomplish? I think I felt that was an especially good exercise because it made people think through again what they’re about, why they are doing what they’re doing. It was not only a good exercise for them personally, but then it allowed them to share with every other person…And I really benefited from that
because I could look at the nitty gritty….I think it just kind of opened…to me more things that would be beneficial [in my area of service]. [Interview #4, lines 197-202, 208-211]

In response to Research Question 2, the faculty and administrators collaborated at the institutional level, which was a key component of this process and involved primarily faculty and administrators, although the staff was kept minimally involved and received updates during the process.

**Interdepartmental Collaboration**

According to the curriculum team members, one of the greatest benefits of this process was the interdepartmental collaboration. The seminary faculty were energized by the cross-discipline conversation and have expressed a desire for continued dialogue as well as more opportunities for team teaching. Interdepartmental collaboration on the design of the M.Div. degree was challenging as each department wanted to maintain its territory or turf. However, one department was willing to reduce its number of courses in the degree in order to make room for potential redesign. Adams, a faculty representative, recognized the willingness of the practical theology department to consider the degree as a whole, rather than hold a stake to territory. According to Adams:

Maybe the time that I felt most like this [process] is working is when practical theology department came with its revised proposals for its courses to the curriculum team. And it was like, “WOW, I really believe you folks [members of the practical theology department] have done a lot of hard work to put the
interests of the institution first and the interests of our students.” [Interview #1, lines 171-174]

Porter also addressed this issue identifying it as one of the critical turning points in the process:

The willingness of the practical theology department to reduce the number of courses from what it currently had in the catalog for the sake of the curriculum because they were willing to see that other departments had legitimate concern for some of the things that they wanted to have in the new curriculum. [Interview #6, lines 182-185]

This gesture actually created a spirit of cooperation in the curriculum team meeting the day when the first draft of the M.Div. degree proposal was designed. Ultimately this gesture made the redesign of the M.Div. degree possible. This department put into action Aleshire’s (2005) belief that the faculty must keep the larger goals of the curriculum foremost. The department that took the lead with what they referred to as the “open hand” position believed it to be a God-directed moment. Rather than being tight fisted, trying to hold onto turf or territory, that department offered up all courses for consideration. The team members from that department valued the three new foundational courses. Room had to be made in the degree somewhere. Although a cooperative spirit was present at the meeting when the first proposal was designed, one department refused to acknowledge the generosity of others and fought to get more
courses than ever. This approach was unfortunate and began the pitting of department against department, which was a difficult momentum to reverse.

Another interdepartmental collaborative effort took place between the practical theology department and the counseling department. One curriculum team member identified this as a particularly rewarding experience for him personally. He saw it as an opportunity to build bridges and drop some defenses, also describing it as the “open hand” approach. The two departments sought input from each other in the design of some courses; it was a joint effort that turned out very positive.

Interdepartmental dialogue was also necessary in building a coherent curriculum, which was one of the goals of the process. Thomas said:

I just think we can do better than we are doing, be more purposeful. That is, we had a good curriculum before, good conspectus of courses, but even though it was written, it was still fairly fluid. I think it was good to see that we have some commitment to saying that things should be done decently and in order. There is a reason for the order. [Interview #3, lines 212-216]

According to Adams, “I really like big picture stuff. I love designing my own courses and I really believe in the notion of a coherent curriculum.” [Interview #1, lines 89-91] Turner shared his thoughts on a coherent curriculum:

I would be surprised if there’s a curriculum out there that has sort of more cohesive, coherent integrity. We know why everything’s in there. We know how each course fits because it’s there for a reason, and we know what the reason is.
We know how it’s going to contribute to those basic core things that we want to accomplish. [Interview #7, lines 508-513]

Collaboration among the curriculum team members from various departments was also important to the comprehensive curriculum review process. Adams commented on the team’s work by identifying a great point in the process, “We realized that we all agree with each other and we are all from different departments.” [Interview #1, lines 250-251]

Interdepartmental dialogue continued to be an important component of collaboration leading to change even after the conclusion of the major curriculum review process.

Intradepartmental Collaboration

Intradepartmental collaboration was another important component of this change process. Roy et al. (2007) advocated for curricular change at the department level because it tends to lead to a change in the department’s culture. Having dialogue with one another and discussions on how the various department members approach courses can only strengthen a department. The process in the beginning was a bit tumultuous for some departments. However, the departments that pushed through the challenge and difficulty embraced a more consistent curriculum with curricular coherence. Individuals approached this type of situation differently. This research study showed the value of department involvement as well as identified the challenges that departments and the process face when a department refuses to engage adequately in the process. Curriculum
team members described some of the challenges they faced and the benefits they experienced with departmental dialogue. Regarding his department, Adams said:

There was not very much controversy in my department. We were supportive of the process. There were questions raised, concerns raised at different times. We were for the most part ahead of the curve in terms of doing course proposals so we cooperated very well with that. [Interview #1, lines 267-270]

Some departments found it difficult to break out of old ways of operating or thinking. However, members of two departments said that their departments are now more unified as a result of the curriculum review process. According to Williams:

I think we are one of the more unified departments on campus now. And I contribute that totally to the curriculum process; it really got us talking about what was going on in our courses, because nobody really knew what the others were teaching. [Interview #2, lines 406-409]

Prior to this curriculum review process, most faculty within a particular department or discipline had little to no dialogue on what was being taught. Professors designed their own courses primarily in isolation, which provided the freedom to design one’s course according to one’s own preference. Thomas identified a benefit of the curriculum review process, “I think the getting people talking interdepartmentally and internally within departments. Some things might not have even been talked about within the department [without the curriculum review process].” [Interview #3, lines 636-639]
Richardson said in a response to a question regarding whether the process had led to significant changes at a fundamental level:

To an extent yes. I think the way we have been all forced to reconsider how our classes fit the four C model; just how we present our classes. I think simply the dialogue that the committee itself had and also the department level on the classes…we still don’t know a lot about what each other is doing, but we know more than we ever did before about what each other is doing. So that can’t help but strengthen what we do around here. [Interview #8, lines 193-198]

However, one department representative said that he felt more distance between him and his colleagues as a result of the process. He said that the process reinforced an “us and them” mentality among departments, which proved quite unfortunate.

Because this process focused primarily on the master of divinity degree and the institutional core, other degrees were not as thoroughly reviewed. Some degree programs were redesigned alongside the M.Div. while others were not. Curriculum review as an ongoing process continued after the initial implementation of the new curriculum in the fall of 2007. Collaboration at each of these levels with the exception of the curriculum team continues. The struggles have birthed a stronger curriculum and institution.

*Cultural Issues as Barriers to Collaboration*

Finding 4: Cultural issues regarding people and organizational structure served as barriers to collaboration during the comprehensive curriculum review process.
The involvement of a variety of people in the collaborative effort of faculty and administration in the comprehensive curriculum review process proved fruitful. However, cultural issues surrounding those same people and structures also served in some ways to impede the process (see Figure 6). This irony rests in the fact that some of the positive cultural aspects of the process contributed to collaboration while also serving to impede the process.

This finding specifically addressed Research Question 1c by identifying cultural issues that impacted the curriculum revision process. This finding also spoke to Research Question 2b regarding the collaborative effort of faculty and administrators by identifying some of the barriers. This section looks at those various barriers to collaboration in an effort to identify potential pitfalls or areas that may need to be given more attention by those who choose to engage in this type of process. The section looks at the impact of culture on curricular change, specifically focusing on people and structure.

Collaboration of faculty and administration required spending time together, providing mutual support, and honoring each person’s contribution to the process. In contrast, some of these same benefits also caused challenges. Cultural issues affecting collaboration primarily included two areas: people and structure. This section explains how both the people and the structures served as cultural barriers during the curriculum review process. See Appendix G for the complete information for Figure 6.
Figure 6. Cultural issues of people and structure as barriers to collaboration during the comprehensive curriculum review process.
This section provides information about the role culture plays in the educational change effort for faculty, the process leader, and the curriculum team. This section also addresses the impact of culture at the departmental and institutional levels.

**Faculty Barriers**

The faculty culture served as a barrier to the collaborative curriculum review process through some personal challenges, problems with the composition of the team, and interference with process.

**Personal challenges of faculty.** Faculty faced some personal challenges during this process. Some of these challenges were directly linked to the cultural issues facing faculty. The faculty at times found it difficult to operate outside the ingrained faculty culture. This supported Tierney’s (1989) idea that faculty face internal challenges when operating in various cultures: the culture of higher education, the culture of the institution, the culture of their academic profession, and the culture of their discipline. When faced with curricular decisions, faculty often face conflict regarding these various cultures in which they live. This conflict affects their beliefs, attitudes, and actions. This research study supported Tierney’s (1989) view that faculty find it difficult to engage in “true” curricular revision because of the forces pushing against a shared vision, shared learning outcomes, and the design of a coherent curriculum. This study also spoke to the necessity of trust as an essential cultural element that must be present for change. When faculty feel a level of trust, they are more likely to get excited about the possibilities for
change and be more willing to engage in the change effort (Jones, 2002). In this study, some faculty who did not sense a level of trust engaged as minimally in the process as possible.

The faculty also faced some personal issues related to trust and belonging. Johnson remarked, “There appeared to be a lack of ability for some [members of the community] to feel safe and trust being able to put their agendas on the table.” [Interview #5, lines 211-212] A lack of trust can lead to faculty members not wanting to personally engage in the review process and refusing to engage in the implementation process. This study built on Mortimer and Sathre’s (2007) study and emphasizes the absolute necessity of trust and how cooperation results from this trust. Some faculty in this study who did not trust the institution, the curriculum team, or the process cooperated less in the curricular change effort.

This process tended to unearth some of the hidden and unresolved issues of the institution. In doing so, confusion began to occur. It was difficult to identify what challenges could be attributed to the current curriculum review process and what could be attributed to past issues. Faculty member Harvey said, “I think some of the problems were much more personal and dysfunctional.” [Interview #10, line 190] This process gave the seminary an opportunity to deal with some deep seated issues; however, there is much work to be done in this area.

This study also pointed to the struggle that Aleshire (2003) highlighted regarding the way that theological educators differ on the purpose of the master of divinity degree.
Is it professional education or academic education? This debate over the practical and the academic was strong in this study especially when faculty wanted more courses in their particular discipline. This was also evident in a faculty member’s remark at one of the faculty forums accusing the team leader and the team of “stacking the deck” in favor of the practical theology department. [Interview 10, line 410]

*Problems with composition of curriculum team.* One faculty barrier to collaboration was the problem some faculty expressed late in the process regarding the composition of the curriculum team. Some faculty at Ashland Theological Seminary began to see the value of shared oversight of the curriculum by the faculty, which included a focus on the degree program, not individual courses (Aleshire, 2003). This served as a means of what Fullan (2001) refers to as reculturing or how faculty begin to rethink their roles and actions as faculty members. Members of the curriculum team were able to take that a step further and embrace curriculum as a shared responsibility of faculty and administrators. However, some faculty not on the team had more difficulty understanding this approach and had no desire to embrace curriculum as a shared responsibility among faculty and administrators. These frustrated faculty members criticized or questioned the makeup of the curriculum team.

Membership on the team was open to all who were interested. Because the major focus of the curriculum review process was the design of the M.Div. degree, I wanted input from faculty and administrators who had significant ministry experience. In doing so, this meant that the practical theology department had more representation than other
departments. I brought people to the table that I thought could best contribute to the process. As the process proceeded, my goal was to have two faculty members from each department on the team. If we had to vote on anything, these team members would vote in order to provide equal representation across departments and disciplines. At times, it was challenging to find two faculty members from each department willing to serve and made the goal of two representatives impossible. The team reached consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal which also included the institutional core so no vote was required by the team. This study can testify that a curriculum team of faculty and administrators can collaborate and reach consensus on a degree proposal.

Some faculty expressed concern over the makeup of the team after the M.Div. degree proposal had been presented, in particular, the inclusion of administrators on the team. Unfortunately, this issue of governance was raised near the end of the process and caused some unnecessary upheaval in the seminary. Questioning the validity of the team’s work and its authority to make a recommendation to the faculty took place during the two faculty forums where the proposal was discussed. This criticism of the makeup of the curriculum team took place four years into the process and significantly discounted the team and its work. At the first faculty forum, which provided for discussion of the proposed M.Div. degree and institutional core, a faculty member commented on the process:

The curriculum review team has given much excellent work. At the final stage of decision making, the curriculum review team has moved from volunteer make-up
to decision-making authorization. Would it be better if there were an executive representative group (such as dept. chairs and dean) when it comes to decisions at this critical juncture? This could help decrease any sense of division and increase ownership of process. Also, it would be helpful if we could discuss the large picture of “Are we at our best with the present allotment of course quantity (regardless of specific courses) in the various departments?”—we have less “academic” courses (Bib. St. & CHTP) than comparable seminaries. It would seem helpful to engage this conversation as well to examine rationale for how we reached current proportions.

One of the ironic things about this statement is that the four department chairs and academic dean were all serving on the curriculum team at the time of this faculty member’s comment. The chairs and dean were in consensus and full agreement on the proposal presented. It is this type of confusion that plagued the end of the process – lack of understanding, misinformation, accusation, etc. The team was frustrated that the faculty wanted to address the composition of the team at that late point in the process rather than the proposal. A faculty member on the curriculum team reflected on the words of one of the faculty members at the first faculty forum, “One professor said [of the curriculum team], ‘let’s just say they’ve done their job and move on’ with no sense that our [curriculum team] job had a certain authority and influence that should be moved to another level.” [Interview #10, lines 410-412] Some faculty appeared to have little regard
for the work of the curriculum team. Any excitement the curriculum team experienced by reaching consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal dissipated.

Curriculum design is not a totally objective process; professional judgments had to be made by the curriculum team regarding the M.Div. degree proposal. The team faced the challenge identified by Mortimer and Sathre (2007) as the appropriate balance of courses. The curriculum team used a list of criteria to decide what courses to include in the degree proposal. Although this list was communicated numerous times to the seminary community, some faculty still expressed no knowledge of this decision-making process.

In this study, the same people who raised issues regarding the composition of the team also questioned the process after discovering that the degree proposal presented by the curriculum team did not fit their expectations regarding the proportion of courses within their discipline. More research into the motivations of faculty in this regard could be helpful as suggested by Toma (2005).

*Interference with process.* After the M.Div. degree proposal had been approved by the curriculum team and sent to the faculty and administrators, some faculty were ready to move forward. However, some faculty chose to focus on the process rather than on the M.Div. degree proposal. The faculty and administrators on the curriculum team knew that the process had its flaws but overall the team kept its focus on designing a curriculum that would best prepare students for ministry. No matter the good intentions of the curriculum team, some faculty outside the team criticized its work. When asked to
provide suggestions to improve the process, none were given. At times, the criticism was personal, which was hurtful for some team members. “There were times…when personal egos and personal unspoken agendas got in the way of process,” according to Johnson. [Interview #5, lines 209-210] The pace of the process was also a concern expressed by faculty. According to Richardson, “Some people that wanted more conversations were the same who months earlier complained about how slow the process was going.” [Interview #8, lines 210-212] It was difficult at times for the curriculum team to understand exactly what some faculty wanted. Instead of working with the process, it seemed at times that some faculty were working against the process.

Toma (2005) identified the challenge of determining why some people join turf wars and how much self interest plays into that. This research study did not speak directly to this issue. Some faculty wanted to try to steer the process to their advantage while others seemed to ignore the situation. A number of faculty were quite engaged in the process while others gave little time or investment. However, those who failed to read their e-mails and stay informed about the process were the very ones who criticized the process.

This study supported Mortimer and Sathre’s (2007) research that says that it is common to have a few committed individuals express their opposition to a proposal in an effort to halt the approval process. Even though the larger majority of the faculty may be in support of the proposal, a few can potentially harm the situation. They tend to do this by raising questions regarding process. This is exactly what happened in this study. The
voice of a few tried to deter the effort by raising questions which could have and should have been raised earlier. The process was clearly and repeatedly outlined for the faculty.

Some faculty members also proceeded to block the approval as well as the implementation of the new curriculum. The votes on the curriculum and its implementation passed at the March 2007 faculty meeting, however, not without controversy. An amendment was presented to eliminate one of two biblical language requirements for students in one of the new degree concentrations. The amendment passed. This decision caused some division within the institution. Biblical languages then served as the focal point of conversation the following year, and a representative group agreed to an alternate proposal that goes into effect fall of 2009.

*Process Leader’s Barriers*

As the process leader, I faced some cultural barriers that inhibited my collaborative effort with faculty and administration including the lack of proper authority and administrative support.

*Lack of proper authority.* One major barrier that I faced as the process leader was the lack of proper authority to lead the process. Being the associate academic dean, I had no formal authority over any member of the curriculum team. I faced the challenge of getting requested information from some faculty and departments. A note from my personal journal dated September 2006 includes the recording of a statement made to me by a faculty member. “Shawn, if you were a peer [faculty member] and you asked for
course proposals [or other information] you would get them.” This statement and others challenged my credibility and my steadfastness at times during the process. This statement also pointed to a faculty culture where faculty believe that they should own the curriculum and that a curriculum review process should be led by a faculty member rather than an administrator. The curriculum team members also recognized my limited authority. One team member said, “I felt that you were given an unbelievably complex task with limited authority.” [Interview #10, line 48] Another said that my leadership was effective “especially operating from no authority.” [Interview #9, line 925]

This research built on Heifetz’s (1994) study that indicated that little distinction is often made between leadership and authority. Having leadership without authority can be a rather new concept. Most leadership studies focus on figures of authority rather than leaders. Position is often associated with authority. I had no positional authority over the curriculum team. Instead, I had influence. However, informal authority allowed me to have closer communication with the faculty and actually hear what they were thinking since I had no authority over them. A number of faculty took time to share their concerns and frustrations regarding the process with me. I always took their concerns into consideration as we moved forward in the process. After a period of time, I realized that most of the issues expressed were frustrations that people wanted to share with someone. Emotions typically run high in a curriculum review process as is true in any change effort.
Most of the research consulted for this study recommended that a faculty member lead this type of process (Hubball et al., 2007; Seymour, 1988; Walkington, 2002; Wolf, 2007). However, many of the characteristics that they identify as essential for someone leading this process center on administration and leadership. One curriculum team member said, “Select a leader who clearly knows curriculum and knows educational institutions and has the skill set to pull people together and get them working together.” [Interview #7, lines 391-392]

This research study contributed a great deal to the idea of having an administrator lead a comprehensive curriculum review process. As the leader, I faced numerous challenges. However, the vast majority of the interviewees said that I was the person to lead the effort. Their quotes are throughout this results section. In the final chapter, I recommend that there be co-leaders, which includes a faculty member and an administrator. I elaborate further in that section. I knew I was called to lead this process and persevered through the four years. I kept the goal in mind and did my best to keep the curriculum team focused throughout the process as well.

*Lack of support of administration.* Another challenge that I faced as the team leader was the lack of adequate support from administration at critical times during the process. The administration was extremely gracious in providing room in meetings for curricular dialogue and personal encouragement of me as the leader. However, the team members expressed that they wish that the organization had done more to support me and protect me during the process. Harvey said, “I do feel that to this day, no authority figure
has really come and stood on your behalf and said ‘A. What she did was [huge] and done in the spirit of Christ. B. The way you treated her was absolutely out of line and I insist on you making that right.’ And I think that should happen.” [Interview #10, lines 518-523] This could reflect an institution where obstructionists tend not to be confronted directly and where people look out for their own interests rather than the interests of others.

Johnson reflected on the treatment of the leader, “The criticisms became personal instead of curricular, and that was very destructive and hurtful, particularly to you [the leader] and other members of the curriculum team.” [Interview #5, lines 246-247] I seemed like a safe person and an easy target. However, the literature says that being a change agent requires a willingness to take risks, strong leadership skills, and the ability to create a culture for change (Seymour, 1988). The change agent is often the target of people’s negative emotions. That was true in this situation and in this culture.

I reflected in my personal journal on October 25, 2006, “A change agent will be the target of anger, left over unresolved issues with previous leadership, target of frustrations people have with other leaders of the organization. Just a lightening rod and an easy target and source of people’s dumping.” [Personal Journal, 10.25.06, item 54] As the catalyst for change, I was not surprised by the challenges that came my way. I found it difficult at times to separate the emotional component of the process from my personal identity. However, I grew personally and spiritually through the struggles of this process.
Curriculum Team Barriers

In addition to the faculty and the team leader, the curriculum team faced a number of challenges that worked against the process of collaboration. In this section, the curriculum team members describe some of their experiences, which related directly to Research Questions 1 and 1a. The goal was to enable change that would become a natural part of the organization’s culture as suggested by some researchers (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Fullan, 2001; Innes, 2004). Experiencing a cultural change enhanced the relationships on the curriculum team and increased the team members’ level of motivation for change. Reaching beyond the culture of the curriculum team with the change effort was more difficult.

Lack of Adequate Communication. Although the process enhanced the amount of dialogue taking place among faculty; among faculty and administration; and among departments, 60% of the team members identified a lack of adequate communication at points in the process. I discovered late in the process that there was a breakdown in communication from the department representatives on the curriculum team back to the respective departments. Johnson identified a breakdown in process. He said:

There was a breakdown at times from what was happening. As the system was set up, departments were to be having discussions, and then the representatives on the team were to be bringing back a departmental consensus report or whatever, and sometimes it was not really a department consensus as it was really the individuals from that department coming back and speaking their voice when it
really wasn’t consensus, and so we really did not know what the department, as a whole, really was collectively thinking or feeling. [Interview #5, lines 222-229]

Lack of adequate communication caused difficulty as we neared the conclusion since a few departments admitted that they had little to no dialogue on curriculum up until the final year of the process. Waiting for these departments to catch up was challenging. The team slowed its progress in an effort to encourage departments to have the dialogue needed to adequately engage in the process. After it became evident that the departments would not respond to the curriculum team’s request, the team moved the process forward. We faced what Seymour (1988) would identify as a problem with information flow that resulted in less commitment at the department level in some cases. The curriculum team thought that this approach to the process would allow departments to have much dialogue that would result in their active participation and communication back to the curriculum team. However, I obviously failed to adequately communicate the role of the curriculum team members regarding this area and to hold them accountable.

The curriculum team also failed to seek direct input from faculty and staff near the latter stages of the process. Some faculty were frustrated feeling that they had no direct route to report back to the curriculum team and were dissatisfied with departmental representation. The team should have accepted input directly from faculty in order to help keep the lines of communication open so that everyone’s input could have been heard (Walkington, 2002). This does not mean that the team had to change its process, but the process did inhibit individuals from expressing their concerns directly to the team. The
Seminary was practicing its departmental representative model of governance. Only near the end of the process did it become apparent that some faculty did not trust the representative model and were dissatisfied with their department representation.

*Lack of adequate engagement by one department.* Sixty percent of the interviewees identified one department’s lack of adequate engagement in the process as a barrier to collaboration. This lack of participation could be attributed to what Toma (2005) refers to as a lack of connectedness between the people and the institution; in this situation, a lack of connectedness between the members of that the department and the curriculum team or between the department and the rest of the institution. This problem became most evident near the end of the team’s work when trying to reach consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal. Williams said, “There was frustration in trying to get the other people to talk about what we needed to talk about…to get the departments to do what they needed to do for us to move forward….It was their failure to fully engage early on in the process when we wanted them to [talk] about it [degree proposal] and for them, it [courses proposed] was non-negotiable. That’s where it [the process] broke down; not at the vote. The vote is where we saw the result of not negotiating when we were functioning as a committee.” [Interview #2, lines 40-41, 142, 867-871] Johnson expressed frustration regarding the same department, “In fact it [lack of adequate engagement] made the process almost impossible because you weren’t sure which voice you were hearing. ‘Was it a department voice or was it individual voices?’…many times it was individual voices, which weren’t a consensus.” [Interview #5, lines 234-237]
More work should have been done upfront to help create a stronger connection between this department and the rest of the seminary. Having a stronger identification with the institution’s culture may have led to a stronger identification with the seminary and a more cooperative effort as suggested by Toma (2005).

Richardson said that one department’s lack of adequate involvement caused the team to start pulling away from each other because the team didn’t know who was talking at times. [Interview #8, lines 446-447] The team showed incredible patience during that time encouraging the department representatives serving on the curriculum team in what we knew was a difficult time. For example, on November 30, 2006, the team provided this department with a list of specific questions to address, expressing that we needed information from them in order to proceed with the curriculum review process. The requests included feedback on a concentration in their discipline; prioritizing courses within the department; various combinations of offering portions of their curriculum; fuller development of some of the course proposals in order to help the team identify the level of increased competency, content, etc.; and how the courses contributed to the overall learning outcomes of the M.Div. degree.

Inevitably, the department would respond to the team’s requests with questions rather than with responses to our questions. After months of this back and forth approach, the team decided that no matter how many more conversations that department might have, it would never reach consensus, in particular, on the items that we had requested. The team with the support of the two faculty representatives from that department moved
forward with the process, reached consensus on the degree proposal, and presented it to the community.

*Pressure and mixed message from the community.* Another barrier that the curriculum team faced was pressure and mixed messages from the seminary community. The team provided opportunity for widespread participation but then was told by some faculty that the process was taking too long because of the numerous conversations we were having. The team then began to focus its energies on creating the M.Div. degree proposal along with the institutional core. This move was in response to a request from the personal and professional committee to have time in faculty meetings to discuss other important issues. The curriculum team honored that request and ceased the presentations at the monthly faculty meetings as well as the in-depth engagement of the community in the process. Confining most dialogue to the team and department level required less input from the larger faculty. The team was then later accused of not allowing for adequate faculty involvement in the process and for rushing the process. Thomas put it this way:

We were getting mixed messages, “I want to be involved but I don’t have time to be involved, so we want you [the team] to be involved.” I think we were trying to keep the discussion going, but then there were times we might have done it more but again they were saying, “we don’t want it that much.” [Interview #3, lines 476-482]

In other words, the larger faculty wanted the curriculum team to do the work and present them with a proposal. That’s exactly what we did only to have our role and
integrity questioned. This finding supported Jones’ (2002) study regarding the difficulty that some faculty have in understanding how a degree program operates because of a narrow focus on individual courses. In this situation, the curriculum team had an understanding of the bigger picture and designed a proposal that took into account all areas of the curriculum. However, the curriculum team found it difficult to respond to the needs and desires of some faculty when consistently confronted with mixed messages especially regarding their level of involvement.

*Lack of clarity of role and process.* Although communication and participation at all levels of the institution was highlighted as a strength that increased collaboration, 50% of those interviewed said that there was a lack of clarity regarding their role on the team and the curriculum review process. As the leader I certainly failed to communicate clearly the role of the department representatives who served on the curriculum review team. It was their responsibility to take the information discussed by the team back to their department. I thought this was happening, just not at a satisfactory pace.

As the higher education administrator leading this process, I remained mindful of the time and energy of the curriculum team members. Most of the work of the team happened during the curriculum team meetings due to the busy schedules of those involved. Their service on the team was a huge sacrifice. I did not want to place too many responsibilities on them. In an effort to protect their time, I failed to hold the department representatives accountable for serving as the communication link between the team and departments. To be honest, I was just thankful that they continued to show up meeting
after meeting and year after year. This could be indicative of a culture where people are asked to give and to serve for the greater good often without expectation of compensation or release time. Williams said:

I think that the representatives either didn’t understand or chose not to fulfill their obligation, myself included because I represented my department. If there was a breakdown, I think it was not in realizing that they [curriculum team members] were supposed to be communicating what’s going on more [with their department]. [Interview #2, lines 445-448]

This oversight on my part proved problematic in the end when two departments expressed concern over their lack of information and involvement during the curriculum review process. Working with these two departments may have increased communication that could have elevated their level of participation. However, their participation may not have increased no matter the curriculum team’s effort at communication.

In addition to people groups impeding collaboration, some organizational structures also impeded collaboration, in particular, institutional and departmental.

*Institutional Barriers*

In a change process of this size there will always be institutional challenges and barriers that arise to break down collaboration and to stop the forward movement of change. Two major barriers for the institution included a problem with consensus and the faculty vote on the curriculum as well as the lack of adequate institutional resources.
**Problem with consensus and faculty vote on curriculum.** Of the 10 interviewees, 80% identified the problem with consensus and the faculty vote on curriculum as a great barrier to collaboration. The team had been working with the process of spiritual consensus and reached consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal. Gaining consensus on larger issues and with more people involved is not likely (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007, p. 114). Even so, it appeared that some members of the faculty thought that the goal was for the entire faculty to also reach consensus on the curriculum proposal, therefore, not requiring a vote. The seminary president in his e-mail to the seminary community on March 1, 2007, indicated that “any votes that are taken will be done by ballot vote.” [03.01.07, p. 2430] The seminary community knew ahead of time that votes would be taken on the curriculum.

At the March 2007 faculty meeting, a vote was taken. That moment in the comprehensive curriculum review process proved extremely problematic. There was some confusion among the facilitators regarding the use of the term consensus. Because a vote was taken, the process moved away from consensus. However, some members of the community insisted that the process was one of consensus, which proved confusing. According to Richardson, “I really don’t think we did consensus model by that vote, and there was some desire to still try to say it was consensus.” [Interview #8, lines 103-104] In addition, an amendment to the proposal was presented and passed, altering part of the degree requirements for one of the areas of concentration. The department most affected
by the amendment was angry that more time was not given for the department to adequately respond to the amendment.

This research study reaffirmed Jones’ (2002) belief that strong institutional leadership should have created a culture of trust within the organization especially regarding the process. However, instead, there was confusion, anger, and disappointment during that meeting where the vote occurred.

Thomas said, “I think the most difficult one [moment in the process] was the faculty meeting [vote]…So from a personal perspective, it seemed like the process was subverted at the very end.” [Interview #3, lines 128-131] He was referring to the amendment to the proposed degree that affected the biblical language requirement. Other curriculum team members were sympathetic to the feelings of biblical studies. Harvey said that there was no clarity on what consensus meant, and there was no clarity on what the vote was going to be. The wording of the amendment was also confusing for some of the voting members. In other words, the process of that vote was less than acceptable.

Embracing the wisdom of Mortimer and Sathre (2007) could have been helpful here. They emphasized the need for organizations to do things right the first time. Cleaning up problems usually takes more time than having an established and clear plan upfront (p. 121). This was true in this situation.

In reflecting back on the process, Johnson said, “If we had been more intentional about the ending and what that would have looked like, I think that would have been much healthier for us as a community….That should have been nailed down a little bit,
very much more, ‘This is what will happen. This is how it will happen.’” [Interview #5, lines 934-936, 527-528] According to Harvey, “Because what happened last March [2007] with the extension piece coming in and the modification of the actual proposal coming out of committee, [the process] should have been halted right there.” [Interview #10, lines 306-308] However, the vote proceeded. Rather than voting at that meeting, the motion could have been tabled until further dialogue could have taken place related to the amendment to the original degree proposal.

This lingering cloud over “the vote” created great moments of distress and darkness for the seminary community. The curriculum review process also served as an opportunity for many other institutional issues to rise to the surface that had nothing to do with the curriculum review process. I had to maintain a correct perspective during this dark and challenging time, knowing that I had done what God had called me to do as had the curriculum team. I was saddened by the anger and hurt displayed regarding the vote. I had so hoped that the process would end well so that we could properly express our appreciation to the curriculum review team members who gave so much of themselves to this four-year process and so that we could move forward in a positive way with the new curriculum.

After the vote, the president sent an e-mail to the seminary community expressing appreciation to the team and the team leader for our work during the curriculum review process. He said, “Again, thanks to the curriculum team and to the entire community for the effort that has gone into this monumental task. I look forward to celebrating with the
entire community the impact that this work will have on the lives of our students.”

[03.05.07, p. 2434]

That moment of celebration was taken from the curriculum team and the seminary community, which was unfortunate. An e-mail presented by a faculty member not on the curriculum team stated:

I suggest that we are challenged not to be too quick to celebrate (indeed, even use the language of celebration). Significant reservations had been raised by several members of our community about the new curriculum before it was passed, even before it was amended…A full third of our community voted not to approve this curriculum....The grounds for at least some of those reservations have not evaporated because of a vote. If we don't heed those concerns, weigh them more fully now that the vote has carried the day, the problems attributed to majority voting as a decision-making policy will only be exacerbated in our community.

[03.06.07, p. 2435]

The timing for the approval of the new curriculum was also influenced by the need to adopt a curriculum built on student learning outcomes with necessary assessment components. However, the team was not aware of this external pressure during the first three years. The team learned about this need during the final year of the process, which heightened our level of involvement and dedication to see the process through to completion. It would have been wise for the administration to have voiced this need to the larger community earlier in the process so that they would have understood the
timeline that we had been forced to meet. I think the administration did not want to use that as a way to force approval of the curriculum, hoping the process itself would work its way through to an acceptable conclusion. The need to get the curriculum approved because of the assessment requirements of our accrediting bodies made it appear that the process was rushed at the end. Richardson said, “Again I feel that the rush that was external to the curriculum committee at the end in a sense got attributed to the curriculum committee.” [Interview #8, lines 470-471] It was unfortunate that the rush was attributed to the curriculum team since the factor was actually external to the curriculum team. The team had worked so well together throughout the process putting the students’ interests foremost. The result was less than fulfilling for the curriculum team.

Lack of resource allocation. As the process continued over a four-year span, I became keenly aware of the mistake of not providing adequate resources to the curriculum team and the process. Faculty serving on the team should have received a course reduction or compensation for their efforts, which is necessary in this type of change process (Hubball et al., 2007; Walkington, 2002; Wolf & Hughes, 2007). The seminary provided monetary gifts two times during the process and a number of other gifts to express appreciation. However, these monetary gifts did not provide the adequate resources needed to acknowledge or make room in the schedules of the faculty and administrators involved in the leadership of the process. This study should serve as a reminder to institutions planning to engage in this type of process to provide the resources upfront. Otherwise, lack of adequate resources could lead to time pressures for
the leadership as well as physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion. Change efforts are stressful enough. However, I am always amazed and grateful to think about how much these wonderful people gave to the process out of the desire to support one another, our students, and the mission of Ashland Theological Seminary. I am truly humbled that these dedicated people would show up meeting after meeting to work with me on this endeavor. The curriculum team’s culture resulted in a high level of intrinsic motivation to design a curriculum that would impact the students and those they serve.

An implementation team was created to help facilitate the implementation of the new curriculum. Faculty members did receive a course reduction to serve on this team since I had convinced the administration that it was absolutely essential. I knew the energy level of faculty would be low at that time of the school year. With the emotional energy required for coping with the final vote, having a team in place to carry forth the work of the curriculum team was absolutely essential.

Departmental Barriers

Departmental culture can provide some of the strongest barriers to collaboration. The historical departmental structure in higher education provides its own natural, structural, and mental barriers. Groups tend to function within themselves, looking at their own courses and degree programs without the ability to see the larger picture. Faculty loyalty to their departments and their disciplines can also cause challenges to collaboration. This research study strengthened Seymour’s (1988) argument regarding the negative effect of departmental loyalty on institutional change.
Turf wars tend to arise when an institution engages in curricular reform across departments (Ferren & Mussell, 2000; Jones, 2002). Until faculty and departments understand the impact potential changes will have on them, they are often reluctant. Part of this drive for turf is self preservation, wanting to make sure their discipline and their personal expertise continue to be needed. Part of this is impacted by fewer resources being invested in higher education which causes faculty to feel that they must compete rather than cooperate with one another. A departmental culture can create barriers to collaboration and change. Three barriers identified in this study included the lack of adequate engagement by some departments; lack of departmental priorities on curriculum; and departmental criticism of the process and the curriculum team.

*Lack of adequate engagement.* All team members identified departments’ lack of adequate engagement as a barrier to collaboration. According to Porter, “It was difficult for the team to have one department whether intentionally or unintentionally refusing to be engaged in the process in a timely fashion.” [Interview #6, lines 98-99] Lack of adequate engagement by departments served both as a department barrier and a curriculum team barrier.

A number of factors could have been related to the department’s lack of adequate engagement. A sense of mistrust of the administration and the curriculum team could have attributed. One team member said that some faculty maybe did not feel safe enough or trust enough in order to engage the process fully. [Interview #5, lines 211-212] According to Jones (2002), building trust requires a cooperative effort among faculty and
administrators especially in the change process. We know that some members from one department did not respect the process or the makeup of the curriculum team. This also could have contributed to their reluctance. In an interview, one curriculum team member encouraged other schools to consider building trust early in the curriculum review process especially since academic institutions are by nature a competitive environment.

[Interview #1, line 475] Trust is not only important but absolutely essential to the change process.

*Lack of departmental priorities.* Nine out of 10 respondents said that it appeared that for at least one if not two departments, the curriculum review process was not a priority. Williams said:

It seemed like it would always be on one department’s agenda, but they never seemed to get to the issues that we had asked them to give us feedback on and that was really frustrating. And then they [departments and faculty members] would wonder why we weren’t moving faster. [Interview #2, lines 143-146]

The team had difficulty understanding whether one department’s voice at the table was that of the department or of the department representatives. Either way, the voice coming from that department did not represent a consensus of the department. One explanation could be that the department saw itself as operating as an individual unit and was unable to see its role within the larger curriculum. Members of that department may have also wanted to hold onto their autonomy by not participating in the larger curricular change effort in hopes that they may not have to change. Focusing only on the
department’s courses and having a narrow view of the larger curriculum resulted in the lack of adequate participation, which supported Innes’ (2004) view.

These faculty members may have had a greater sense of loyalty to their discipline than to the institution, which made organizational change challenging (Innes, 2004). As a result, those faculty may have seen little value in actively participating in the process. This supported Toombs and Tierney’s (1991) research that indicated that most faculty spend time staying fresh in their field, identifying that as their major function. Higher education training emphasizes the need for faculty to become experts in their field. As a result, faculty often have little appreciation for or interest in other disciplines. However, this curriculum review process required that faculty work together in order to create a coherent curriculum, which was a cultural shift that is still in process.

After a grace period and kind inquiry, the curriculum review team realized that one department would never reach consensus so we moved forward with the degree proposal. Some faculty from that department accused the curriculum team of pushing the proposal through and not allowing enough time for dialogue. If that department was having its first curriculum dialogue just six months before the vote on the new curriculum, then the time for discussion may have seemed brief.

Criticism of process and team. One of the obvious barriers to collaboration among the curriculum team and one department was the department’s criticism of the process and the team. Although the team tried to be sensitive to the concerns of the faculty, the team also had to move forward with the task given. It was also evident that
when the vote did not go the way one department had wanted, that department blamed the process. A question was raised to at least one member of that department regarding whether the department would have questioned the process had the vote gone the other way and in their favor. The person’s response was “probably not.” In reflecting on the criticism of the curriculum review team, Richardson said:

That [attacks against the curriculum team] was one of the more disappointing things for me….As that began to happen, it began to loosen the group cohesion….We went from a group that was trusting each other to an extent getting along, not necessarily seeing eye to eye, but trusting, to a group where “I don’t know where you stand anymore. Is what you’re sharing with me from where you are personally or is it the voices from your department?” And all of a sudden when that stuff starts happening, we start pulling away from each other because I don’t know who’s talking right now…“It’s okay if it’s your voice but I would like to know that it’s your voice [and not that of the department].” [Interview #8, lines 439-449]

This study supported Seymour’s (1988) recommendation that creating interdisciplinary teams and opportunities for team teaching may help to break down some of the barriers between departments. This research study also suggested that a comprehensive look at the curriculum can increase faculty’s understanding of the larger degree program and therefore, create a culture that values the contributions of other departments. This study definitely had its share of turf wars (Ferren & Mussell, 2000;
Jones, 2002), but having a curriculum team with wide representation helped to reduce the intensity of these turf wars. Designing a team in this way may help other educational institutions lessen some of the intensity of the turf wars so that progress can be made for the good of the degree programs and students.

A key to addressing higher education faculty and department cultures would be for faculty to recognize teaching as a corporate task and responsibility, not an individual one (Aleshire, 2005). This approach would require that the natural cultural barriers created by faculty and departments be countered with a cooperative spirit and collaborative approach to curriculum review, design, and implementation. The barriers to collaboration can be overcome if addressed properly and strategically with an emphasis on the culture of the institution, departments, and faculty.

**A Sense of Community and Connectedness**

Finding 5: The curriculum team’s sense of community and connectedness strengthened the curriculum review process.

The curriculum team members’ sense of community and connectedness among one another contributed positively to the curriculum review process. This relational component was instrumental in both the design and implementation of the new curriculum (see Figure 7). This finding regarding the connectedness of the curriculum review team spoke directly to Research Question 1 regarding how the curriculum team members experienced the process. This finding most revealed their personal experiences of the process and the impact of the relational component on the change effort. More
Figure 7. A sense of community and connectedness among the curriculum team members strengthened the process.
specifically this finding addressed Research Question 1c regarding the effect of culture on the curricular change process. The seminary’s culture impacted the curriculum team members’ continued commitment to the process even in the most difficult times. When asked about what motivated their continued involvement even in the midst of great struggle, 100% of the curriculum team members identified their loyalty to the other members of the curriculum team and their loyalty to the seminary. The curriculum review team and team leader identified their connectedness with one another as motivation for continued involvement in the four-year process, which addressed Research Question 1b. Team members were not granted release time or compensation to serve on the curriculum review team. It is obvious that they were internally motivated.

This curriculum review process provided numerous opportunities for faculty and administration to learn more about themselves as well as their colleagues. Change processes often force people to look at themselves as well as others in an attempt to make sense out of the chaos or the uncomfortable. A sense of community began to form among the curriculum team members which became evident as people began to listen carefully and respond gently to one another even in the toughest times. The result was a deep sense of respect for one another; a dedication to see the process through; and a sense of personal fulfillment because of the relationships that developed as well as the new curriculum. This finding supported Toma’s (2005) view that a strong identification with the institution encourages people to demonstrate loyalty to the institution, to cooperate with one another, and to have a strong sense of connectedness.
Curriculum Review Team

A number of studies have looked at the connection between organizational learning and organizational change (ASHE, 2002; Bauman, 2005; Bensimon, 2005; Kezar, 2001; Kezar, 2005). This study furthered the understanding of how groups engage in organizational learning by looking specifically at the work of the curriculum review team.

Community of practice. The curriculum team engaged in organizational learning by creating a culture known as a “community of practice” (Bauman, 2005). The team used this approach to reach its goals in the curriculum review process. A community of practice is a small group within a larger organization that works together because of the team members’ “expertise and passion” (p. 32). This approach supported Bensimon and Neumann’s (1993) idea of a group or team taking a learning approach rather than a task approach to an assignment. The goal of the group or team is to engage with one another in a way that members are motivated and committed to the process and to one another. My research study furthered this idea of community of practice and culture by specifically looking at the curriculum team’s culture of learning.

The concept of a “community of practice” described well the culture of the curriculum team in this study. One of my goals as the team chair was to create strong relationships among team members. Out of this came a beautiful desire to work together, to listen to one another, to hear one another’s concerns, and to connect with one another. The relationships formed, in part, out of the team’s times of struggle. The curriculum
team wanted to create this sense of community and connectedness in the larger seminary community but was unable to do so at a significant level. Some departments expressed drawing closer because of the process but the sense of community that was built outside of the curriculum team was less than desired.

When asked to identify what motivated their participation in the process or kept them involved during the tough times, the curriculum team members shared some common responses that are reflective of the seminary’s culture: member loyalty and inner motivation; a desire for better curriculum and process; a desire for better relationships; a desire for a better seminary; and a desire for personal growth. These responses directly supported Research Question 1b related to the curriculum team’s motivation to remain involved in the curriculum review process.

**Member loyalty and inner motivation.** All 10 curriculum team members identified their loyalty to the institution and to one another as motivation for continued engagement in the curriculum review process. Comments from team members helped describe their persistence with the process. One team member said that loyalty and faithfulness to the institution encouraged continued involvement on the curriculum team even in the midst of difficulties. When asked why one would stay on the team in the midst of difficulty, Adams said, “One of the reasons was loyalty and faithfulness to the institution because I thought it [the curriculum review process] was quite important to the institution and pretty fundamental to our identity….Also, loyalty to the other people involved in the process.” [Interview #1, lines 99-104]
Another reason for such loyalty to one another was the formation of the group as a true team. Looking at the culture of the team sheds light into the relationships among the members. The team often appeared less than orderly in its processes, constantly changing direction, designing things, changing them, and engaging in ongoing dialogue. Bensimon and Neumann (1993) identified this type of group’s culture as one based more on a sense of unity and connectedness. The group in this study seemed to have respect, concern, and appreciation for one another, which are characteristics that create a true team. To create this type of team required much time for group members to be together, dialogue, discuss, deliberate, create, and revise. When interviewed, most of the curriculum team members felt that the group came together as a community. It took time and much patience with one another. However, the curriculum team found something far more personal and meaningful through working together and embracing their participation as part of their spiritual calling.

*Insights into group process.* This study built on Bensimon and Neumann’s (1993) research by providing insights into the group process from the viewpoint of the team members as they took time to reflect on the experience. Hopefully, one can see the value of groups building a sense of community to make a contribution to higher education. This type of community can lead to organizational learning and change. The curriculum team also had hoped that others in the seminary would have been able to experience this same level of community, but that proved impossible due to the time and energy needed to form real community.
Continued participation on curriculum team. When asked to identify reasons for staying involved in the curriculum review process, Thomas said, “Especially toward the end, I felt there were some issues. We [our department] needed to have somebody to hang in there and provide an anchor if you like….I wanted to see it [the process] completed.” [Interview #3, lines 115-117] Smithson said:

I wanted to see a resolution. I didn’t just want to drop out with things unresolved, because I felt like we would then have wasted a lot of our time and energy….I felt like we needed to keep going and it may be hard and it may be a struggle and there is going to be more emotion, but we need to keep going. [Interview #4, lines 158-162]

Turner said, “I’m just not one to bail on a process or a commitment.” [Interview #7, line 122] Townsend said, “I viewed it as you [team leader] probably saw a real need for me to be there and I was discovering what the real need was, but I was going to hang in there until we got this thing done.” [Interview #9, lines 119-121] Richardson said, “The opportunity came to come on curriculum committee…I said then you almost have to [participate] or forget about complaining about not being involved in conversation when the opportunity presents itself. You have to involve yourself or shut-up it would seem.” [Interview #8, lines 337-340] Harvey said, “You know two or three times that I wanted bail and each time I think I said to you I would really like to get out of this unless you would feel personally that you would really like me to be there. And as I remember it, you said yes.” [Interview #10, lines 53-55] Porter identified a critical moment in the
process “when the team began to own the process rather than being led by Shawn or pushed by Shawn or whatever.” [Interview #6, lines 136-137] The team began to take a greater ownership for the process and therefore, became much more engaged.

**Desire for better curriculum and process.** All 10 curriculum team members who were interviewed expressed a desire for a better curriculum and process. In order for this to happen, these individuals had to work together as a team. Groups have an important role to play in organizational learning (Bauman, 2005) and are sometimes referred to as teams or task forces. For the seminary, we used the term “team.” Organizational learning emphasizes that groups approach the assignment with an attitude toward learning and to see the project as a journey. That was certainly true of the curriculum team. We were all learning at each step along the journey.

The curriculum team provided the leadership for the process. This team discovered the process together while sharing and drawing upon one another’s ideas, knowledge, and experience as supported by Bauman (2005). Although this approach sometimes frustrated team members who had rather been given the information already reviewed and formulated, I knew the value of the team struggling through some of the tough issues together. The journey was long but the benefits of discussing issues together rather than hurrying through the process created a better experience for the team members and a better curriculum. Hopefully, this process will have some positive effects on the seminary as a whole.
Another curriculum team member commented on his desire for a better curriculum. Townsend said, “We were seeking to create the best training for those going out into the pastoral ministry as possible, and looking at that just really cranked me up inside…if we’re doing a better job training others than some of us received for ministry.” [Interview #9, lines 280-282] When asked to identify a rewarding part of the process, Adams said:

The prospect, which hasn’t fully been achieved yet but will be, of having an intentional curriculum because forever, things have just grown haphazardly for different reasons…They are all good but not necessarily the way it should be…more balanced or really intentional in terms of what we want in outcomes as opposed to what people want to teach. [Interview #1, lines 642-647]

Regarding a better curriculum and process, Turner said, “I believe we did a very good job of looking at the needs of the church, the needs of pastors serving the church and offering to those future pastors educational experiences that will equip them to serve well.” [Interview #7, lines 500-502] Porter said:

Realizing that Pastors of Excellence [pastor renewal program at the seminary] could be brought into the curriculum and be used as a foundational philosophy for the new curriculum [four Cs curriculum model]….As we worked with the idea of deficiencies in the former curriculum, we came to realize the importance of foundational courses that really in many ways crystallized our way of thinking
about how we can address those, and then we really dreamed and hoped they would form the foundation for the new curriculum. [Interview #6, lines 149-156]

The curriculum team was confident that the new curriculum would better prepare men and women for ministry. As the team leader, I wanted the process to serve as a strong foundation for more collaborative efforts within the seminary. I wanted to create a culture of collaboration.

**Desire for better relationships.** In addition, the desire for better relationships among the team members and the community encouraged the team members’ continued involvement. Johnson said, “It’s all about the students, so honestly I think I can say it was more about the fact that they deserve our best.” [Interview #5, lines 275-276] Regarding relationships among departments and faculty, Thomas said:

Maybe also, it [dialogue] galvanized our department, which was a good thing. Especially I think helpful as we’ve had a lot more dialogue with other departments…I think that was good….have some common visions and goals that we had not discussed together. [Interview #3, lines 673-678]

**Desire for a better seminary.** Fifty percent of the interviewees expressed their desire for a better seminary, indicating that the curriculum review process helped move the institution toward that goal. Part of this desire resulted from the strong relationships held by the members of the curriculum team. Their involvement moved from the head to also include the heart. The curriculum team members stretched beyond their own
disciplines for the good of the degree program furthering Innes’ (2004) study regarding organizational change. This process helped our faculty breakthrough in this area, creating a more unified faculty. This unity was most apparent on the curriculum review team.

Curriculum team members regularly demonstrated care for one another and their ideas, perspectives and concerns. The team members’ commitment to one another was easily translated into their care for a better seminary. When identifying a most rewarding aspect of the process, Thomas said:

I think it was looking at the curriculum as a whole, the academic curriculum as a whole and trying to articulate our particular place in it. It has challenged me. I’m still working on it, to be able to define that place and target for it. [Interview #3, lines 670-672]

When asked about the most rewarding aspects of the process, Smithson, the head librarian, said:

It sounds trivial but knowing that the level of my books [and the] content of my library has risen to another level and just knowing that I am working in tandem with teachers trying to provide what they need and not just putting stuff on the shelf that could be irrelevant to anybody. I just think the satisfaction of knowing that my resources are better and stronger...it gives me a really good feeling.

[Interview #4, lines 931-939]

When asked to reflect on the most rewarding aspects of the curriculum review process, Johnson said:
I saw potentially where we could be as an institution; that’s still the most rewarding piece. That is number one for me. “Is Ashland being who we think God called us to be?” and being willing to embrace that and be different…And for us as an institution, it’s not just about having excellence of academics which we have. It’s about embracing who we are as a community and living that out.

[Interview #5, lines 1120-1126]

*Desire for personal growth.* Some team members contributed their time and energy to the process because of a desire for personal growth, including a desire to improve their pedagogical skills. Williams said, “My threats to retire were always empty because I would have lost a lot personally, and my area would have lost a lot if I had dropped out.” [Interview #2, lines 121-122] Regarding the most rewarding aspect of the process, Thomas said, “It was spiritually forming for me but that will be more in retrospect than during the way through it.” [Interview #3, lines 716-717] Two additional team members said that the process helped them grow spiritually. [Interview #6, line 650; Interview #9, line 858]

*Team Leader*

As the chair of the curriculum team, I focused a great deal on the relational component of the process, helping the team come together toward a common purpose.

*Team builder.* As the team leader, I worked purposefully to build a team. My goal was to rally the team around a common purpose and to break down any structural
barriers, which is one reason why I included faculty and administrators on the curriculum review team. The structure of the curriculum team allowed groups of faculty (tenured and non-tenured), teaching administrators, and other administrators to work together in a non-hierarchical relationship to one another. Bauman (2005) and Kezar (2005) advocated for this type of organizational learning that takes place through teamwork and collaboration in a higher education institution. The goal was to break down the mental models that haunt higher education by placing people in some type of pecking order. On the curriculum team, everyone was welcome and had equal opportunity for input throughout the process.

Agents of change persist through the difficult times in order to bring change to an organization (Innes, 2004). As the team leader, I faced some challenging trials but continued to press on, knowing that the curricular changes would benefit both the students and the institution. A curriculum team member recognized one of the challenges that I faced. “I think part of what you got caught…you were sort of the scapegoat for a number of other areas that people were upset about.” [Interview #7, line 375]

To lead this type of process, a change agent needs leadership skills, administrative ability, and political skills. According to Zaltman and Duncan’ study (as cited in Seymour, 1988, p. 15), these leadership characteristics were necessary in working with faculty and administration in the sensitive area of curriculum. Some curriculum team members commented on having me as an administrator lead the curriculum review process. “I wouldn’t have wanted anybody else leading the process to tell you the truth.”
[Interview #2, line 898] “There was probably no one else that I would have rather have lead us through this than you.” [Interview #8, line 935] “You were not using the process to grab power or to manipulate the curricular design.” [Interview #8, line 602] “I think your integrity and character came through for who you are as a person, and I think that’s why the process ended well.” [Interview #5, line 1230] When reflecting on having an administrator lead the process, one team member said, “I had no difficulty with it because I happen to trust you.” [Interview #8, line 938] I appreciated the consistent support that I received from the curriculum team members.

**Teamwork and collaboration.** Teamwork was an important component of this process. Teamwork and collaboration helped encourage organizational learning. Both teamwork and collaboration are necessary for organizational change and are especially challenging in organizations with a strong culture for continuing to do things the same way. The curriculum team was the most active group in the curriculum review process. However, I wanted people beyond the curriculum team to also experience this sense of teamwork and collaboration and feel part of the process as Kezar (2005) suggested. Other learning communities were created for dialogue at the monthly faculty meetings. These groups changed monthly so there were no other teams that worked together for a long time other than departments. The goal was that departments would take on a collaborative mindset during the process. Some did; some did not.

The design of the curriculum review team with faculty and administrators from across the institution served to break down some of the mental barriers of hierarchy that
exist in higher education. Team members each had an equal say. According to most team members, it was difficult to identify who was faculty and who was administration. It is this type of cooperative mindset that promoted organizational learning (Bauman, 2005; Kezar, 2005). This study pointed to the value of purposefully creating a structure where the various groups work together, not in hierarchical relationship to one another.

Reflections from the curriculum team members provided insight into how the team functioned. Williams said of the leader’s contribution, “You kept me on center stage and focused and you really did a great deal. I had so many other things going on. It would have been easy to say I don’t have time, but you really helped keep me engaged.”

[Interview #2, lines 214-216] Related to team building, Smithson said:

I think sometimes when we listed things out on charts and on the board, different people’s points and anything that anybody said was just accepted. Nobody was put down or no thought was put down or rejected. I think that was good because it gave people the freedom to say things that maybe if others didn’t quite understand or feel maybe it was very important, it was accepted. Well you [team leader] were in charge, so it was accepted by the person in charge as worthy of being added and listed. I think when we did those kinds of things that was beneficial. It got thoughts out and it also just left it open that everybody’s thoughts are okay.

[Interview #4, lines 219-227]
Ongoing affirmation and appreciation of team members. I offered ongoing affirmation and appreciation to the team members for their involvement. In an e-mail to the curriculum team in December 2003, I expressed my appreciation to the curriculum team: “Please know that I appreciate you and your sacrifice and passion for Ashland Seminary and its students.” [12.30.03, p. 39] I regularly concluded my e-mail messages to the curriculum team with words of affirmation and appreciation. When reviewing the e-mail data, I reflected in a memo: “I regularly expressed appreciation to the curriculum team members for their commitment, contribution, etc. I knew this [serving on the team] was an ‘extra’ responsibility for them on top of their other duties. I wanted to keep them motivated for this important journey.” [12.30.03, memo, p. 39]

I knew they were going above and beyond and wanted them to know that their efforts did not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Porter recognized my efforts and said, “I liked your approach that you rewarded people in appropriate ways, not because it was expected, but because it was an expression of gratitude.” [Interview #6, lines 366-367] Creating a culture of appreciation for the curriculum team members was important to me as the team leader.

Focus on the student. Keeping the focus on the student helped keep the team motivated. Turner said of the leader, “You were coordinating, facilitating, laying out a process. At no point did I hear you say this course is in and course is out.” [Interview #7, line 681] The focus remained on what was best for the student. Reflecting on his personal focus on the student, Johnson said:
I tried not to make it [the process] personal. I tried to say this is about us; this is about our community. This is about our students and therefore, for me personally I tried to keep that picture as what drove me to stay the course, stay at it, do it. To me it’s all about the student; it’s not about us; it’s about the students so honestly I think I can say it was more about the fact that they deserve our best so we need to stay at it [see the process through]. [Interview #5, lines 271-277]

I tried to model this same focus on the student.

*Reminder of the vision of what could be.* As the leader, I also constantly reminded the team of the vision of what could be. Since resources in the form of course reductions were not available for team members, the leader recognized the necessity of keeping the focus on our higher calling as a seminary – to prepare people to impact the world for Christ. A sense of a higher calling and a desire for better relationships and a better seminary served as intrinsic motivation for both the team and the leader. In my last official e-mail to the curriculum team on April 30, 2007, I said:

Let me express to you again my sincere appreciation for all of your hard work, persistence, patience, collegiality, time, energy...that helped us develop a new institutional core and in particular, a new M.Div. degree. As I mentioned at lunch today, great interest has already been shown in the new M.Div. degree, in particular, the opportunity to concentrate in an area. I am excited about the new energy that has been generated by the M.Div. degree. I firmly believe that our many hours of dialogue on the type of student we want to graduate from Ashland
Seminary, essential competencies and characteristics of the degree, dialogue of feedback from constituencies, making room for concentrations...will indeed bear great fruit for the Kingdom. [04.30.07, p. 2475]

As the team leader, I was concerned with the relational component both on the curriculum team and in the seminary community. I purposefully spent time building relationships with members of the curriculum team and facilitating their relationship building with one another.

Participants’ Reflections on Process

Although the sense of community and connectedness was strong among the curriculum team members, the team members including the leader faced some challenges. During the collection of the primary data through curriculum team interviews, team members reflected on the process and its effect on them personally. They described the process as emotionally difficult; collegial and engaging; and significant.

Emotionally difficult process. When asked to reflect on the process, 80% of the curriculum team members said that the process was emotionally difficult. Some expressed that it was disheartening and discouraging. In relation to the faculty forums which were emotionally difficult for some members of the seminary community and the curriculum team, Richardson said:

I’m not sure what people’s expectations were. There were those moments in the conversations [faculty forums] in the Arch room where people were raising issues...
like they hadn’t been or hadn’t felt like they were involved, which you just kind of have to scratch your head at. But so you know maybe they didn’t think we were going to bring a firm proposal….And only after they had their chance to do their thing to it would it come…I really don’t know what the problem was…We didn’t have the discussion of what faculty approval meant although personally I thought it was kind of straightforward. You get the proposal, and you say yes or no. [Interview #8, lines 575-588]

Harvey said:

Even to rehearse this [reflect on the process during this interview] puts a level of disgust in my stomach over that ending [faculty forums] because with four years and that hard of work to come out and present what we were doing and then to have someone treat it as they did, [discounting, questioning motives] it was very very disappointing. [Interview #10, lines 429-431]

Instead of being able to celebrate the accomplishment of the team and the community, some faculty insisted that they had not been involved in the process and that the team makeup was inappropriate. The team’s authority was questioned, and the team was criticized for its efforts. Needless to say, this discouraged some of the curriculum team members which was unfortunate given that most of the curriculum team members had given four years to this process. When focusing on a way to move forward, 90% of the team members identified the necessity to address both relational and emotional healing within the community. The strong relational component shared among members
of the curriculum review team strengthened the curriculum process and enhanced community. The relationships across the seminary now need to be strengthened as we learn how to work together and manage conflict in a positive way.

*Engaging and collegial process.* Although the curriculum team members found the process emotionally difficult, 70% of them described the process as both engaging and collegial. The team members actively engaged in the process and reported feeling a strong sense of collegiality. Williams described the process as delightful. [Interview #2, line 101] According to Porter, “I think those who engaged the process with blindness toward title and rank really did see this as a wonderful, collegial opportunity and process.” [Interview #6, lines 386-387] Johnson said that the process was exciting and enlightening. [Interview #5, lines 47, 32] According to Thomas, “It was at times stimulating…just thinking of raising issues I hadn’t thought about before.” [Interview #3, lines 54, 60] “It gave me a much broader understanding of what everyone else was doing and how their piece fits in the whole, and it was also enlightening in the whole idea of human dynamics like communication and conflict management,” according to Harvey. [Interview #10, lines 34-37] Adams said that the process was “challenging, creative, interesting, constructive…” [Interview #1, line 44] This engagement and collegiality allowed for a unique collaboration among faculty and administration, in particular, for those who served on the curriculum team.
Significant process. In further reflection on the process, 60% of interviewees described the process as significant. Even when the process was difficult, the curriculum team members stayed to the task unlike some institutions that ended their curriculum revision when they hit a difficult spot. This team was determined to press through the difficulties in order to ensure a comprehensive curricular change and not simply the rethinking of courses as experienced by some institutions (Burgess, 2004; Cobb, 1990).

This process no doubt took a great deal of time. This time included the numerous meetings by the curriculum review team, dialogue in faculty meetings, discussions with constituencies, among others. Burgess (2004) urged institutions to not hurry the process because it might jeopardize the good work put forth toward the effort. Burgess’ institution missed an opportunity to engage in comprehensive curricular reform because of the lack of time dedicated to the process. This type of process could take years if meaningful change is the goal. The process at Ashland Theological Seminary took four years and continues with ongoing revisions. When asked about the significance of the process, Porter stated:

Well I guess along with my using the word timely, I think there are a number of things that were necessary at this point in our history to have to deal with. One was the very fact that this curriculum has not been really revised or thought through in any review process for a couple of decades at least. Another was the expectations of assessment and the realization by faculty and administrators that
more than just the competencies were needed to produce a well-rounded student today. [Interview #6, lines 43-49]

Adams also described the process as significant, “I thought sticking with it would be of benefit to the institution…There may have been some altercations, but it is a fight worth engaging in.” [Interview #1, lines 102-103, 143-144] Richardson said that he remained involved in the process through the difficult times because of “the sense that what we [curriculum team] were about was really necessary and important. We had an opportunity to make significant changes at a fundamental level.” [Interview #8, lines 188-189] Curriculum review team members experienced both positive and negative emotions.

Team Leader’s Reflection on Process

I responded to the interview questions before interviewing the curriculum review team members and also journaled throughout the process. I described the process as emotionally difficult, disappointing, and rewarding.

Emotionally difficult process. Like the curriculum team, I also described the process as emotionally difficult. I described the process as stressful. As the leader of the process, I carried a lot of the weight of the process. People often took their personal frustrations out on me as the leader or change agent, which is not uncommon in a major change process. However, as a change agent, I had to demonstrate strong leadership, a willingness to take risks, and political skills in order to help make this a reality (Seymour, 1988).
Disappointing process. I also described the process as disappointing. I had hoped that we could have engaged the process spiritually and with a true sense of caring for one another. However, the normal challenges of a change process such as competition and mistrust all became part of this process. Although I was discouraged and disappointed at various points along the process, I was continually reminded that I was called to lead this curriculum review process. It was that sense of call that gave me such a strong sense of caring for the process. Even in light of the call, I was disappointed with some aspects of the process. My disappointments typically centered on the lack of appreciation expressed to the curriculum team and the discounting of the team’s work. I was also disappointed that the process did not end well but instead generated confusion and hurt feelings for some members of the community.

Rewarding process. When reflecting on the curriculum review process, one of the adjectives I used was rewarding. In my personal interview, I described the process as rewarding because I was able to see God work in amazing ways, and my faith deepened as did my trust in God. I enjoyed seeing the Lord bring the community together for the purpose of preparing men and women for Christian ministry.

The curriculum team members including the chair had a strong sense of community and connectedness with the other members on the team. This connection enabled a collaborative effort and served as motivation during some challenging times. This comprehensive curriculum review process took organizational learning to another level in higher education. Hopefully this study can contribute to the literature on
organizational learning and organizational change, in particular, how small groups work together toward a common purpose.

Summary

This chapter reported on the five major findings resulting from the comprehensive curriculum review process. The first finding reported on the necessity of having a solid philosophical foundation or guiding vision for the curriculum review process. The second finding addressed the need to see curriculum as a corporate or shared responsibility among faculty and administrators. The third finding focused on the benefits of collaboration from all facets of the institution during the curriculum review process. The fourth finding identified cultural barriers to curricular collaboration. The fifth finding focused on the sense of community and connectedness created among the curriculum team members.

The five assertions helped create a full picture of the comprehensive curriculum review process at Ashland Theological Seminary. The findings identified some critical principles that can be applied to curricular change processes. The process began with a solid philosophical foundation or guiding vision. Time was dedicated to this part of the process since it served to guide all other aspects of the process. Finding a common vision and understanding of the institution’s mission was one of the most challenging parts of the process. Conversations became difficult. However, staying focused and continuing to work together created a healthy community where people dialogued, debated, and
differed. Learning how to do this respectfully was a great example for the students being trained at this institution.

Some of the aspects of higher education created natural barriers whether related to people or structures that had to be navigated in this comprehensive curriculum review process. Breaking down the sense of hierarchy provided an atmosphere where everyone’s ideas were valued. Decisions were made by the group, not instituted from the top level administrators or senior faculty. This approach allowed tenured and non-tenured faculty to participate equally. This approach pushed against the natural culture of higher education and required a strategic process to navigate the cultural barriers.

The study emphasized the value of cooperation at a variety of different levels. Since this group of people felt called to the process of curriculum reform, they wanted to do their part to make it successful. All of the dialogue and debate on the team served to build a sense of connectedness and community. In this curriculum process, the curriculum team members came together with an amazing sense of respect and care for one another. This connection helped the team to persevere during some very difficult times and eventually led to consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal.

The team’s ability to work together, in turn, created opportunities for the collaborative effort of faculty and administrators in the curriculum review process. When an educational institution can embrace the idea of approaching a curriculum review process as a collaborative effort of faculty and administrators, the process can transform the culture. A purposeful collaboration among faculty and among faculty and
administrators helped create a shared vision and cooperative effort. Having the disciplines working together assisted in providing everyone with a more holistic understanding of the curriculum.

This collaboration naturally created a sense of the curriculum as a corporate or shared responsibility of faculty and administrators. This process created what is now a natural educational partnership. The faculty now understand how the curriculum as a whole works and can communicate this interrelationship with the students. Administrators in student affairs also understand how the curriculum works and share that with prospective students.

Ashland Theological Seminary students are benefitting from a curriculum based on a solid philosophical foundation; embraced as a corporate responsibility of faculty and administrators; created from a collaborative effort of faculty and administrators; implemented in spite of the many cultural barriers against change; and designed by a group of people who have created a sense of community and connectedness as a result of the comprehensive curriculum review process. Faculty and students are equipped to think across disciplines with the goal of integrating all of learning with life. Conclusions and recommendations related to this study are provided in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter V provides the conclusions from this case study as well as recommendations for those who may be involved in a comprehensive curriculum review process. This chapter also includes recommendations for further research. The primary purpose of this study was to explore how one curriculum review team experienced a comprehensive curriculum review process. The secondary purpose of the study addressed the level of collaboration among the faculty and administration during the comprehensive curriculum review process.

Research Question 1: How did the curriculum review team experience the comprehensive curriculum review process? (a) How did the curriculum review team members describe the curriculum review process? (b) What motivated the curriculum review team members’ involvement in the process? (c) What was the impact of institutional culture on the curriculum review process?

Research Question 2: How did the faculty and administration collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process? (a) How did the curriculum team members describe the collaborative effort of faculty and administration during the
process? (b) What were some of the barriers to the collaboration of faculty and administration? (c) How did the academic affairs and administrative affairs collaborate during the process?

Conclusions

This case study was undertaken, first, to explore the curriculum review team’s experience of the comprehensive curriculum review process. The team recognized the necessity of having a guiding vision to lead the process. This conclusion speaks to the value of taking time during the process to build a strong philosophical base for the curriculum review process and the curriculum. The team also expressed support for a shared or corporate responsibility for the curriculum. As the process went forward, members of the curriculum team had an increasing sense of the value of having faculty and administrators on the curriculum review team. This conclusion speaks to the value of looking at curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility from the beginning of the process. The team also experienced a sense of community and connectedness that enabled them to continue the process even in the midst of great difficulty. This conclusion speaks to the need for an organization to create a team with people who are able to work together, have time to spend together, and are committed to the educational institution. The team must form as a group to be most effective.

This study was undertaken, second, to explore the collaboration of faculty and administration during the process. Collaboration among a variety of groups within the seminary created the opportunity for educational change. This conclusion speaks to the
value of engaging the seminary community in the curricular change effort in order to create a common vision and a culture that supports the institution’s educational efforts. The barriers to collaboration identified in this study reflected some of the challenges of a comprehensive curriculum review process. This conclusion speaks to the value of addressing the potential barriers in the educational change effort. Understanding the barriers ahead of time may help an institution plan more efficiently and effectively for curricular change. Recommendations have been provided based on these findings and conclusions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, I recommend the following to higher education institutions who desire to engage in a comprehensive curriculum review process or other major change effort. These recommendations are categorized according to the various groups that might benefit from them, including administrators responsible for oversight of the curriculum review process and the educational institution’s resources; faculty engaged in leading the process; curriculum team chairs or co-chairs; and a curriculum review team.

Recommendations to Administrators

As the chair of the curriculum review team, I offer some recommendations to administrators who may consider engaging in a comprehensive curriculum review process. The recommendations focus on six main areas: provide supportive leadership;
lay a strong foundation; select an appropriate process leader; cast the vision; understand and identify with the role of faculty; and provide resources and support.

*Provide Supportive Leadership*

Supportive leaders are critical to the success of any change endeavor but, in particular, curricular change.

1. Recognize that a great deal of time and energy will be needed for a comprehensive curriculum review process. Plan for how to make time and room in the schedules of faculty members and administrators.

2. Acquire the support of the president upfront because the process will require time on agendas and in meetings as well as budget dollars.

3. Encourage the president to voice support for the change effort publicly and be actively involved.

4. Maintain ongoing, yearly curricular revision. Take time every five years to look comprehensively at the curriculum and how it supports the mission and the seminary’s responsibility to society.

5. Accept responsibility for addressing some of the cultural issues that may enhance or hinder the process.

6. Stay focused on the purpose for engaging in the process. When the process gets difficult, accept that in the end the benefits will most likely outweigh the risks involved.
Lay a Strong Foundation

Laying a strong foundation is key to the effectiveness of curricular change efforts.

1. Recognize that designing a curriculum that is fully aligned and has institutional learning outcomes must be comprehensive.

2. Integrate your institution’s assessment process with ongoing curriculum revision in order to make data-driven decisions. Allow the two processes to complement one another.

3. Make sure that you first lay down your outcomes, your picture of what you want at the end. Ask, “What type of student do we want to graduate from our institution?”

4. Involve administrators in the curriculum review process, which includes various conversations on the institution’s mission, constituency feedback, and others.

5. Recognize that curriculum is a systemic or a cultural issue that affects the entire institution. Understand the role institutional culture plays in the success of any change effort.

6. Create a culture for healthy dialogue on curriculum that invites discussion on the institution’s mission. Recognize that this conversation may take time so give it the time needed to make the process successful.

7. Accept that there will be differences of opinion among the faculty and administrators involved regarding what students should learn and become as a
result of their time in college or seminary. Provide a culture where people feel safe to share and differ.

8. Recognize the value of taking time to work through a complex process because the revised curriculum will likely be transformational both for those involved in the process and for those students who will experience the new curriculum.

9. Identify change strategies that will work for your particular organizational culture. Recognize that change strategies that work in a seminary may not work in other educational institutions. Adapt the strategies as needed.

**Select an Appropriate Process Leader**

The process leader is a major key to the effectiveness of a curricular change effort.

1. Select a leader who has the skill set to guide the process, whether that is a faculty member or an administrator. Make sure the person understands curriculum, education, and organizational change.

2. Make sure the leader has the skill set to pull people together with a common vision and get them working together toward a common goal.

3. Consider selecting an administrator to lead the process since that person may be more objective. That person may not have as much personally invested in the curriculum since the person may not be tied to a particular discipline.
4. Identify co-chairs to serve on the curriculum team: a faculty member and an administrator. Make sure that the top level administration publicly supports these leaders and entrusts them with the process.

Cast the Vision

Higher education administrators who are responsible for oversight of the institution need to accept their role in casting the vision for change.

1. Make sure there is clarity regarding “process.” Be very clear about the process: how it will happen; how decisions will be made; how people will participate; the authority granted to the curriculum review team and the leader; the role of departments; the role of department representatives serving on the curriculum team; the role of faculty; and the role of administration.

2. Create a curriculum team of faculty and administrators to lead the process.

   Consider representation from both academic affairs and student affairs. Look first for people who have the students’ interest foremost and who have a commitment and loyalty to the institution. Then identify those who can bring the gifts, knowledge, experience, and expertise to the process.

3. Make the committee an official one or a subcommittee of an official committee that gives the curriculum team the authority to do its work and make recommendations to the larger community.

4. Create an educational climate that emphasizes integration in order to create an interdisciplinary curriculum.
Understand and Identify with the Role of Faculty

Administrators need to understand the unique culture of faculty in order to design appropriate change strategies.

1. Understand the mindset of faculty. Appreciate the contributions faculty make to the comprehensive curriculum review process.
2. Realize that if you are an administrator, the faculty may not immediately accept your leadership if you are not considered faculty.
3. Realize that faculty are often emotionally connected to their profession and discipline. Allow time for the faculty to dialogue on the curriculum and engage in revision.
4. Encourage faculty to accept corporate responsibility for the curriculum by embracing degree programs not just courses.
5. Communicate, communicate, and communicate some more. However, recognize that communication is a two-way process. Not only should you be getting information to the appropriate people; those individuals need to read the information in order to stay informed.

Provide Resources and Support

In an effort to move the processes of curriculum revision and implementation forward, higher education administrators need to allocate the resources required.

1. Support the change effort by providing the necessary resources for all aspects of the process.
2. Make a commitment to the curriculum team members through release time and/or compensation to honor the commitment on the part of the team members to the institution.

3. Find ways to create room in the curriculum team members’ (faculty and administrators) work schedules to allow them time and energy to devote to the process.

4. Dedicate a large amount of the administrator’s time to serve as co-chair. Provide at least a half time course release for the faculty member serving as co-chair. Provide release time for faculty members serving on the curriculum team and reassign some of the duties for administrators serving on the team.

5. Create a budget line item for the curriculum review process: money for materials, data collection, constituency input, hospitality, etc. Determine how much budget is available for expenses incurred during the curriculum review process and during implementation. Communicate this early in the process so that faculty and administrators know how much they can dream so that they are not faced with disappointment later in the process.

6. Make sure funds are available for faculty to engage in interdisciplinary education and team teaching.

One of the most critical areas that must be resourced is faculty development. Faculty need to be provided with training and assistance to be successful in designing and implementing the new curriculum.
1. Help alleviate any potential sense of inadequacy faculty may have regarding the new curriculum by focusing on faculty development to ensure that the faculty are equipped. Bring in consultants to help faculty make any necessary adjustments to curriculum design or teaching. In addition, faculty could benefit from a broader skill set that includes working in teams, facilitating learning, assessing student learning, communicating, and managing conflict.

2. Equip faculty to engage in different teaching and learning approaches, which is as essential to the process of curricular change as the curriculum itself.

**Recommendations to Faculty**

The following recommendations are for faculty who may consider serving on a team that engages in a comprehensive curriculum review process. Focus on time commitment; vision; communication and relational trust; and organizational change.

*Know the Time Commitment Involved*

1. Identify, to the degree possible, how much time will be involved in serving as a member of the curriculum team.

2. Work with the administration to make room in your schedule to actively participate on the curriculum team.

*Capture the Vision*

1. Engage in conversations on the philosophical foundation of the institution.

2. Make sure there is clarity on the institution’s mission. Then recommit to it.
3. Actively engage in the process to capture the vision.

4. Encourage faculty to dialogue on curricular issues and create a culture of sharing the curriculum, in particular, across departments. Understand the curriculum at the degree program level not just at the course level.

Work on Communication and Relational Trust

1. Recognize the value of regular and clear communication with one another throughout the process.

2. Work to build trust among one another and with administration, and work to keep that trust strong.

3. Value people over process.

4. Place your agendas on the table. Avoid hidden agendas.

5. Listen to your colleagues and to your constituencies throughout the process.

Understand Organizational Change

1. Recognize that the process will likely create conflict both within you and with others since it involves change.

2. Realize that true organizational change takes time. Be patient with the process.

3. Be willing to compromise for the greater good.

Recommendations to Curriculum Team Chair or Co-Chairs

As the chair of the curriculum review team, I make the following recommendations in an effort to assist others who may lead a similar process: consider
Consider Curriculum Team Co-Chairs

Although the curriculum review process in this study was led by an administrator, I recommend that an educational institution consider having co-chairs for this type of effort: a faculty member and an administrator. Further recommendations are based on strategies for approaching this type of process as well as personal issues of self care.

Build a Strong Foundation

The curriculum team co-chairs are responsible for designing the curriculum review process, remaining open to change, and making sure that the revised curriculum is implemented.

1. Involve the entire institution in parts of the process, especially the foundational components such as a new, revised, or reinvigorated curriculum model; shared expected learning outcomes; and a spiritual foundation.

2. Take the opportunity provided by a comprehensive curriculum review process to revisit the philosophical foundation of the higher education institution including the mission statement and operating philosophy. Take time to ask the question: “What type of student do we want to graduate from our higher education institution?”
3. Identify a curriculum model to guide the curriculum review process or revitalize a current one. Use the curriculum model as the framework for guiding discussion. Find ways to encourage the new curriculum model to become part of the institution’s culture through a shared vision among faculty and administrators.

4. Encourage the faculty and administrators to identify the competencies needed in the various disciplines and how those contribute to the overall program goals in order to encourage widespread participation, buy-in, and change.

5. Make use of small group discussion during the curriculum team meetings so that all people become more engaged in the dialogue.

Equip the Curriculum Review Team

1. Inform all participants upfront that the process will be lengthy if the goal is more than switching around some classes.

2. Create a curriculum review team composed of faculty and administrators. Make certain that the administrators can contribute to the curriculum process based on their function within the seminary and their personal experiences and expertise.

3. Maintain consistent curriculum team membership as much as possible in order to enhance communication and keep the process moving forward as a team.

4. Pay attention to the curriculum team members including their level of commitment, struggles, steadfastness, morale, and level of satisfaction.
**Communicate with the Curriculum Review Team**

1. Make certain that the curriculum review team members understand their role in the process, in particular, their service as representatives from their respective departments. Create a list of responsibilities and review this list as a team frequently to clarify any concerns and to modify as needed.

2. When other members join the team, take time to orient them to the process and bring them up-to-date on the process so that they can fully engage and contribute.

3. Discuss process issues with the curriculum team members to gain their input and draw upon their expertise. Keep the process fluid, and make changes as needed.

4. Communicate with each member one-on-one throughout the process to check in and see how the process is going from the team member’s perspective.

**Give Attention to Personal Self Care**

The curriculum team chair or co-chairs must be prepared to deal with a process that is extremely challenging and emotionally charged. The leaders must take the time needed for personal reflection and rest in order to avoid burnout. The chairs will be the ones who will absorb the feelings and emotions of others in the community.

1. Find safe places outside of the institution to share feelings and thoughts regarding the process. The leader needs an outlet.

2. Recognize that most affirmation and encouragement received during the process may come from outside the institution. Healthy perspectives from outside the
institution can help provide a more objective perspective on the process and the role of the leader.

3. Spend restful time with God. Consider taking a half day each week to sit with the Lord, think, process, and gain perspective.

4. Set aside time during the workweek to plan for the next steps in the process to avoid spending evenings and weekends planning for the next week’s meeting.

5. Separate other people’s issues from you. It is important to recognize what is your issue and what is the other person’s issue. Try not to take on the other person’s issue. Realize that this may not be easy to do but is necessary.

6. Keep pressing on in the face of opposition. Keep the vision in mind and move ahead with trust in God’s amazing power.

*Recommendations to a Curriculum Review Team*

The curriculum team composed of faculty and administrators must accept their role as leaders of the process, which includes setting the tone, taking the lead at the department level, and guiding the larger community in the process.

*Set the Tone for the Process*

1. Recognize that real change requires reculturing, not just restructuring. A major restructuring would include designing the curriculum team with faculty and administrators. Reculturing could result from this collaborative effort among faculty and administrators as well as other groups within the organization.
2. Accept the corporate responsibility of the curriculum as shared by faculty and among faculty and administrators. Look at curriculum as an institutional issue requiring widespread participation that impacts the culture.

3. Build strong relationships among the curriculum team members. Create a community of practice or a team that focuses not only on the project at hand but on building relationships with one another. Value the community component of the team that provides a sense of connectedness that keeps the team united even in the midst of difficulty.

*Take the Lead at the Department Level*

1. Assist departments in creating a greater sense of community and a shared understanding of their work during this process. Take the lead in your department.

2. Provide a safe departmental culture where department members can engage in dialogue; integrate their beliefs and their practice; share ideas with one another; identify common learning outcomes for their area; etc.

3. Keep the department up-to-date on the progress of the curriculum review process.

4. Engage the department on issues identified by the curriculum team so that adequate feedback can be provided to the curriculum team.

5. Serve as the liaison between your department and the curriculum review team.
Guide the Larger Community in the Process

1. Make time for dialogue by all departments on all courses.

2. Recognize the need to balance the ideal with practical constraints. Make sure implementing the new curriculum is manageable for both faculty and students.

3. Create interdisciplinary teams to design the courses to avoid falling into the trap of turf and territory. This approach may help lessen the concern over the percentage of courses each department has in the degree program by creating a more shared approach.

4. Enable the curriculum to become part of the educational institution’s culture through widespread participation and ownership. Create a united effort regarding the goals of the institution so that the community can thrive with a shared vision.

5. Accept curriculum review as an ongoing process.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for further study are presented in four broad categories: theological education curriculum, role of culture in curricular change, organizational change, and the curriculum review process.

Theological Education Curriculum

Although the setting for this case study was a theological seminary, a great emphasis was not placed on the unique features of a curriculum review process in a Christian context. Looking at a theological education seminary provided an opportunity
to study change in a different cultural organization. More in-depth study could identify the particular change strategies that worked at Ashland Theological Seminary that may or may not work in another type of institution or even another seminary. This would provide more insight into the role of culture in educational change. Questions to guide further study could include: What characteristics of the process could be attributed to its theological education setting? How did the curriculum team members describe the spiritual component of the process? How did the curriculum team members’ Christian beliefs influence their participation in the process? How did the culture of a Christian educational organization affect the change process?

*Role of Culture in Curricular Change*

This study examined the curriculum review process through the lens of the curriculum team members. Although the culture of the team was studied to some degree, more could be learned from an in-depth study of the culture. Questions to guide further study could include: What were some of the characteristics of the curriculum team’s culture? How did the team’s culture affect educational and organizational change? How could the curriculum team’s culture have been strengthened? How would the team approach this process if asked to engage again?

This study only briefly looked at the culture of this theological seminary and its impact on change. An entire study could be conducted looking only at the cultural aspect of this process. Questions to guide further study could include: Does organizational
change tend to happen in certain kinds of educational cultures? Are some educational cultures more open to change?

*Organizational Learning and Organizational Change*

This study looked at organizational learning and organizational change only to a small degree. A more in-depth study of the relationship between institutional culture and change strategies could be enlightening. Questions to guide further study could include: What faculty characteristics affect the educational change process? Faculty from what particular disciplines appear more open to change? What types of change strategies work best in what types of educational institutions or groups within the institution?

The sense of community and connectedness among the members of the curriculum review team in this study was a unique outcome as well as a component of the process. Looking more in-depth into the role of community in the workings of groups in learning organizations could be interesting. Questions to guide further study could include: How do faculty and administrators in higher education define community? What type of group learning experiences foster a strong sense of community? What group characteristics tend to enhance a sense of community? What type of leadership lends itself to organizational learning?

*Curriculum Review Process*

The role of departments in this study impacted the process and the outcome; some for the better, some not. An entire study could center on the role of departments in a
curricular change effort. Questions to guide further study could include: What characteristics of departments affect their participation in curriculum review processes or other change efforts? What is the impact of departmental culture on the change process? How open are the various departments to the change efforts? What causes some departments to form a greater sense of community than others? What role does the department chair play in the process? How would a department’s active participation throughout a curriculum review process impact its contribution and its ownership?

The curriculum team leader had a unique experience of the curriculum review process. A deeper look into the curriculum team chair’s role could provide some insight into the leadership needed for this type of curricular change effort. Questions to guide further study could include: How did the curriculum team chair experience the process? What did the chair do well in the process? Where did the chair miss the mark in the process? What characteristics of the leader contributed to or hindered the change effort? What impact did being an administrator rather than a faculty member have on the process, the team, the faculty, and other administrators?

Summary

Five findings emerged from this study. Findings revealed the necessity of a strong foundation for the curriculum review process. The curriculum team needed a common foundation on which to build the curriculum. The new curriculum model with a focus on the 4 Cs of core identity, character, calling, and competency guided the philosophical
discussions, the design of course proposals, and the design of the M.Div. curriculum and institutional core.

The curriculum review team took a unique approach by including faculty and administrators in the active design of the new curriculum. Although not all faculty supported the co-involvement of faculty and administrators in the curriculum review process, the curriculum team members highlighted more benefits than challenges to this approach. In addition, having an administrator lead the process provided a unique approach. Hopefully this process will encourage schools to select leaders for this type of process based on gifts and training rather than titles.

The involvement of a variety of groups within the seminary in the process created widespread participation and enabled institutional buy-in and collaboration. As a result, the administration provided the necessary funds to implement the new curriculum, and the curriculum became part of the seminary’s culture.

The curriculum team faced a number of challenges because of the natural culture of higher education that includes the hierarchical mindset, the separation of disciplines by departments, and the slow nature of change in educational institutions. The curriculum team worked to break down the cultural barriers created by people and structures in order to create a revised curriculum for the seminary. Although more work is yet to be done, the curriculum has begun impacting students, faculty, administration, and staff.

One of the most important byproducts of the curriculum review process was the community created among the curriculum team members. The team experienced caring
for one another, listening to one another, respecting one another, sharing one another’s burdens, and the joy of reaching consensus on the M.Div. degree proposal. The day that the team reached consensus was definitely a day of celebration of all that the Lord had done in and among the curriculum review team and the life of Ashland Seminary.

The findings of this study provide some guiding principles for a curriculum review process. Comprehensive curriculum review is a challenging process for all who are involved. The process requires much time, widespread participation, strong leadership, and a willingness to work through difficulties. However, ongoing curriculum review can be rewarding as it assists higher education institutions in providing relevant education.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM
CONSENT FORM
A Study of Comprehensive Curriculum Review and Reform Processes in Collaboration
with Faculty and Administration in a Higher Education Institution

I want to study the comprehensive curriculum review and reform processes in collaboration with faculty and administration at Ashland Theological Seminary. I want to gain insights into the process in the form of theories that may be helpful to other higher education institutions seeking to engage in a comprehensive curriculum review process. I would like you to take part in this project. If you decide to do this, I will interview you and ask you to reflect on the process, your role, critical incidents, etc. I will use pseudonyms to protect individual identity. Your name will not be connected to the information presented in the results.

Your participation in this project will help the researcher better understand the curriculum review process from the view of faculty and administrators. Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to do it. If you take part, you may stop at any time.

If you want to know more about this research project, please call me at 419-289-5170 or my dissertation advisor Dr. Em molec Hyan at 330-672-8389. The project has been approved by Kent State University. If you have questions about Kent State University's rules for research, please call Dr. John L. West (or his designee) Vice President and Dean, Division of Research and Graduate Studies (Tel. 330-672-2704). You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Shawn L. Oliver
Ph.D. Student at Kent State University

CONSENT STATEMENT
I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

Signature ________________________ Date ________________

AUDIOTAPE CONSENT
I agree to being audio taped at Ashland Theological Seminary between July and December 2007.

Signature ________________________ Date ________________

I have been told that I have the right to hear the audio tapes before they are used. I have decided that I:

___ want to hear the tapes  ___ do not want to hear the tapes

Sign below if you DO NOT want to hear the tapes. If you want to hear the tapes, you will be asked to sign after hearing them.

Shawn L. Oliver and other researchers approved by Kent State University may use the tapes made of me. The original tapes or copies may be used for:

___ this research project

Signature ________________________ Date ________________

Address: Teaching, Leadership and Curriculum Studies
          P.O. Box 5190 • Kent, Ohio 44242-0001
          330-672-2580 • Fax: 330-672-3246 • http://educ.kent.edu/ables

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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS
Interview Guiding Questions

The following questions guided the interviews.

First Research Question: How did the curriculum review team experience the comprehensive curriculum review process?

1. Based on your curriculum experience, how would you define curriculum?

2. In reflecting on the process, what would be some of the adjectives that you would use to describe the process? Expand on those terms for me. Why did you select those particular adjectives to describe the curriculum review experience? [I often selected one or two of the adjectives and asked for the interviewee to share more specific details related to the adjective(s).]

3. Reflecting on when you became a member of the curriculum review team, what was the catalyst for your involvement? Why did you get involved?

4. As we know, the process extended over a four-year period of time. What kept you involved in the curriculum review process as it extended over the four years?

5. What would you identify as the most difficult or challenging moment or moments in the process?

6. What kept you engaged in the curriculum work during that difficult time? [This question sometimes did not generate more information than was given in question number four.]
7. When would you say that the curriculum review team began to make concrete progress? When did you feel good about the progress of the team?

8. In reflecting back, can you identify a moment when you felt that you were really engaged in the process?

9. What motivated your dedication to see changes made in the curriculum?

10. I am looking for some critical turning points during the process. These would be particular moments or events during the process that affected our movement as a curriculum team and seminary community. Can you identify any of those? [This question proved to be too similar to question number seven regarding the curriculum team making concrete progress. This question also was one of the most difficult for the interviewees to answer. After some time for thought, however, most were able to identify some critical turning points.]

11. Describe your perception of your department’s role in the curriculum review process. How active were your department members? Were you satisfied with your department’s level of participation and engagement in the process?

12. Could the curriculum team have done anything differently regarding department involvement in the process?
   a. The second research question was: How did the faculty and administration collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process?

13. Part of this study is to explore the collaborative effort of faculty and administration during the process. Did you see your role as a cooperative effort with colleagues? If so, in what way?
14. Since widespread participation is key to any organizational change efforts, how would you describe the curriculum team’s efforts to involve the seminary community in the process?

15. As you know, the curriculum team consisted of faculty and administration. What benefits and/or drawbacks did you perceive by having both faculty and administration serve on the curriculum review team? [Some interviewees answered this question by identifying what some of the drawbacks could have been but were not evident in the process.]

a. Additional questions focused on the process; in particular, ways to change and improve the process. These questions were also designed to collect the wisdom of the interviewees for future processes at Ashland Theological Seminary as well as wisdom for other institutions engaging in a comprehensive curriculum review and revision process. A few questions also addressed the seminary’s challenges regarding implementation and institutional change.

16. In looking back on the curriculum review process, what are two or three things you would change regarding the curriculum team’s work during the process?

17. What would you say to faculty or administration from other seminaries who may consider engaging in a comprehensive curriculum review process?

18. What do you think are some of the greatest challenges for the seminary right now regarding the implementation of the new curriculum?
19. What do you anticipate will be the greatest challenges the seminary will face in the next three years? This question is not limited to curricular issues.

20. What should we do during this time [of challenge]? Why?

21. In reflecting over the entire process, what parts were most rewarding for you? Why is that so?

22. As a member of the curriculum implementation team, how would you describe your role and the role of the implementation team itself? [question asked only of the four curriculum review team members who also served on the curriculum implementation team]

23. As we near the end of our time of reflection, I want to share that this process has been for me a spiritual journey, a walk of faith. At times I felt it was difficult to get people involved spiritually in the process? Do you have any thoughts to share regarding the spiritual aspects of the process?

24. How did you feel about having an administrator lead the curriculum review process? [This question applies to the second research question regarding the collaboration of faculty and administration. However, it was asked at the conclusion of the interview so as not to affect the interview or focus on me as the leader, whether positively or negatively.]

25. Is there anything else you would like to say about the process or anything that you want to comment on that we have not yet discussed?
APPENDIX C

OPEN CODING RESULTS CHART
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging Themes</th>
<th>Definitions, Subcategories</th>
<th>Examples (Words of Interviewees) Only listed if at least 5 interviewees identified the common theme.</th>
<th>Frequency - # of Interviewees out of 10</th>
<th>Frequency - # Theme was Mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Defined</td>
<td>Curriculum as Intended Impact of the Entire Experience</td>
<td>Curriculum that is carefully considered, well defined, and clearly organized. [Intended Impact] Collection of educational experiences that come together to form the bases of a degree or degree programs. [Entire Experience]</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Process Issues</td>
<td>Guiding Vision/Values for Open, Fluid Process with Widespread Participation</td>
<td>Adoption of curriculum model as guiding vision. [Guiding Values] I think it was significant getting the entire community engaged and getting them to feel part of the process. [Widespread Participation] Process allowed for anyone with a voice to be heard. [Open/Welcoming Process] Process was flexible enough for the team to step back and take different directions at time with input from faculty. It was &quot;we&quot; in the larger sense of the community. [Fluid and Flexible Process]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants' Reflection on Process as Emotionally Difficult, Yet Collegial and Engaging</td>
<td>The process was long, exhausting, stressful, demanding, and time consuming. After the process, I have a disheartened, disempowered feeling. [Emotionally Difficult Process] The process at times was stimulating and enlightening. [Engaging Process] Those who engaged the process with a blindness towards title and rank really did see this as a wonderful, collegial opportunity and process. [Collegial Process]</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicators of Progress with Process – Course Proposals as Concrete, Increased Engagement</td>
<td>We began to make progress when we began reviewing the course proposals (Reconsider how our classes fit the 4-C model). [More Concrete Process] Progress made when we defined some of the outcomes and the course proposals. [Increased Engagement with More Concrete Process]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Themes</td>
<td>Definitions, Subcategories</td>
<td>Examples (Words of Interviewees)</td>
<td>Frequency - # of Interviewees identified the common theme</td>
<td>Frequency - # Theme was Mentioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader's Role, Responsibilities, and Challenges</td>
<td>Leader's Role in Guiding Process, Building a Team, Providing Appropriate Oversight, and Moving Process Forward</td>
<td>The process was a community building time. [Build Team]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Well, it was an advantage to us to have someone like you leading the process because they could have a more singular, coherent focus. [Appropriate Oversights and Attention to Process]</td>
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<td>You were coordinating, facilitating, layout out a process. At no point did I hear you say this course is in and this course is out. [Move Process Forward]</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leader's Reward Efforts, Affirmation, and Character</td>
<td>You [leader] were part of who we are [as a seminary] and you're part of this. This is your life blood. It's not just about your dissertation. [Affirmation of Leader]</td>
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<td>I think you rewarded people in appropriate ways, not because it was expected, but because you can say it was an expression of gratitude. [Leader's Affirmation of Team Members]</td>
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<td>I think your integrity and character came through for who you are as a person, and I think that's why the process ended well. [Affirmation of Leader's Character]</td>
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<td>Leader's Challenge of Limited Authority</td>
<td>I felt that you were given an unbelievably complex task with limited authority. [Lack of Proper Authority and Support of Admin]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Team Members' Roles, Responsibilities, and Challenges</td>
<td>Curriculum Team Members’ Role in Guiding the Process, Building Collaboration and Consensus, and Focusing on the Outcome</td>
<td>I thought we did an amazing thing, coming to work together as well as we did. [Collaboration]</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I felt good when we finally had consensus on the curriculum [MDiv degree proposal and institutional core as a team. [Collaboration]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Keeping the curriculum in balance, keeping in mind what is most important for the study, keeping the curriculum as the outcomes and not my individual piece but the whole. [Prevent Derailing]</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Curriculum Team’s Loyalty and Inner Motivation</td>
<td>I felt a sense of loyalty to the other people involved in the process. I felt a sense of loyalty and faithfulness to the institution. [Members’ Loyalty and Inner Motivation]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Curriculum Team’s Challenges of Lack of Communication, Lack of Adequate Engagement by One Dept, Mixed Messages, and Lack of Clarity of Role and Process</td>
<td>If there was a breakdown, I think it was not in realizing that the curriculum team members were supposed to be communicating what's going on more with their department. [Lack of Communication]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging Themes</td>
<td>Definitions, Subcategories</td>
<td>Examples (Words of Interviewees)</td>
<td>Frequency - # of Interviewees out of 10</td>
<td>Frequency - # Theme was Mentioned</td>
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<td>Some members were disempowered to speak on behalf of their department. [Lack of Empowerment]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>We were getting mixed messages, “I want to be involved but don’t have time to be involved, so we would like you to be involved.” [Mixed Messages from Community]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I think that the team representatives either didn’t understand or chose not to fulfill their obligation to communicate with department; myself included because I represented a department. [Lack of Clarity of Role and Process]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Rewarding for Curriculum Team to Impact Curriculum, Build Better Relationships, Build Better Seminary and Personal Growth</td>
<td>We were seeking to create the best training for those going out into pastoral ministry as possible. Looking at that just really cranked me up inside – we’re doing a better job training others than some of us received for ministry. [Better Curriculum and Curriculum Process]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I felt it was a pleasure to see a team begin to listen to one another, encourage one another, share, empathize, and support. [Better Relationships]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seeing the possible benefits of the curriculum and the process to our students and institutionally. [Better Seminary]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It was spiritually forming for me. [Personal Growth]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Benefits of Faculty and Administration Collaboration to the Institution; No Drawbacks to Having Both; Benefit of Administration Involvement</td>
<td>Why not have those people [administrators] in on the conversation, catching the vision. It enriched the team to have representation from a wide background of people with the academic, practical, and professional side. [Benefit of Admin and Faculty Collaboration]</td>
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<td>59</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In terms of working on the curriculum team, I didn’t really perceive the difference. [No Drawbacks to Having Both]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I think the bigger picture of what theological education is all about was brought by the administrators. [Benefit of Administration]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Benefits of Interdepartmental Collaboration</td>
<td>The willingness of one department to reduce the number of courses from what it currently had in the curriculum for the sake of the new curriculum because they were willing to see that other departments had legitimate concern for some of the things that they wanted to have in the new curriculum. [Open Hand Position]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One department took the lead by taking an “open hand” position and believed it to be a God-directed moment. [Open Hand Position]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>You folks have done a lot of hard work to put the interests of the institution first and the interests of our students. [Student Focused]</td>
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<td>The most rewarding point in the process would have been in department meeting when I was trying to do what I thought was a God-directed moment to lead our department into open hand position. [Open Hand Position]</td>
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<td>One department chair thought it would be good to ask another department for feedback, bring it up with the other folks who have a say. And so I would say that was a real defining moment where I felt like I had something positive and it turned out beautifully. [Interdepartmental Collaboration]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Benefits of Intradepartmental Collaboration</td>
<td>The process was hard because we were trying to break out of the old paradigm, take the curriculum model, and bring it into courses. [Cultural Shift for Faculty]</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Barriers to Collaboration</td>
<td>Institutional Problem with the Vote and Consensus Procedure Had we been more intentional about the ending (vote) and what that would have looked like, I think that would have been much healthier for us as a community. [Problem with Vote and Consensus]</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>I feel that the rush that was external to the curriculum committee at the end in a sense got attributed to the curriculum committee. [Criticism of Team]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of Adequate Departmental Engagement, Priorities, Trust of Process</td>
<td>It was difficult for the team to have one department whether intentionally or unintentionally refusing to be engaged in the process in a timely fashion. [Lack of Dept Engagement]</td>
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<td>It seemed like the curriculum would always be on one department's agenda, but they never seemed to get to the issues that we had asked them to give us feedback on and that was really frustrating. [Lack of Dept Priorities]</td>
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<td>There were questions and concerns about process raised at different times. The vote did not go the way one department had wanted so they accused the process. [Dept Concern over Process]</td>
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<td>Faculty Barriers Including Interference with Process, Personal Challenges, and Problems with Composition of Team</td>
<td>Some faculty who wanted more conversations were the same who months earlier complained about how slow the process was going. I believe that there were times that personal egos and personal, unspoken agendas got in the way of process. [Faculty Interference]</td>
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<td>Perceived Faculty Challenges</td>
<td>There appeared to be a lack of ability for some faculty on the team to feel safe and trust being able to put their agendas on the table.</td>
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<td>Faculty Problems with Composition of Team</td>
<td>Some faculty had no sense that the curriculum team’s job had a certain authority and influence that should be moved to another level. Criticized the makeup of the team at the time the MDiv degree proposal was presented, having not been mentioned previously.</td>
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<td>Spiritual Barriers to Collaboration</td>
<td>I could definitely see a spiritual warfare component as part of the whole process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>There was an enemy out there who would have loved to have stopped us. It was extremely frustrating. In fact, it made the process almost impossible because you weren’t sure which voice you were hearing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Issues of Power and Influence</td>
<td>Competition, Power and Mistrust Issues at the Institution, Department, and Faculty Level</td>
<td>It’s a lot easier to pick apart something that has been created than to be part of the creation process.</td>
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<td>The team should have tried to figure out how to deal with one department, to really push them to have some of the hard conversations that needed to be had for the process.</td>
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<td>I think as those criticisms began to get raised about the team and process, seemingly coming from outside the group, I think it ended up having the group members pull away from each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendations to Faculty and Administrators from Other Institutions</td>
<td>Recommendations to Administration and Faculty – Provide Resources, Have Co-Chairs, Select Appropriate Process Leader</td>
<td>It may have been good to have co-chairs (faculty member and an administrator). Share leadership so you wouldn’t have to carry it all on your shoulders.</td>
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<td>Find ways upfront to make room in people’s schedule to serve on a curriculum team.</td>
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<td>You need a leader who clearly knows curriculum, educational institutions, and has the skill set to pull people together and get them working together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging Themes</td>
<td>Definitions, Subcategories</td>
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<td>Recommendations to Faculty</td>
<td>You can’t have hidden agendas because that could really cause lots of problems. If you have hidden agendas, you can wind up with the process causing more damage than help. [Capture the Vision]</td>
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<td>I think it is absolutely critical to see this as a process and that you have got to engage in the process with an open hand. [Relational Trust]</td>
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<td>Have a good sense of the timetable of the process so you know what you are getting involved in. [Time Commitment]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary Issues Identified</td>
<td>Institutional Challenges Including Implementation, Healing, Further Discussion, Faculty Energy, Structure, Strategy, Growth, Process</td>
<td>You have to have the patience to continue to see the implementation process through for at least three years, five years preferably. [Implementation]</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopefully what happens now is that we continue to grow spiritually and go on to greater spiritual and academic cohesiveness. [Relational and Emotional Healing]</td>
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<td>Realizing that the process is still not over because of things that have been raised, issues that still need to be addressed. [Ongoing Challenges]</td>
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<td>My concern is with the energy level of faculty and administrators to implement, to make changes. [Faculty Time and Energy]</td>
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<td>We need to continue that process of discussion because for a healthy institution, you have to break down the walls between departments and understand both the value that other departments bring to the curriculum. [Content and Process Challenges]</td>
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<td>We need to restructure so the organization is a little better designed and efficient for a school this size. [Structural and Strategic Challenges]</td>
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APPENDIX D

SELECTIVE CODING RESULTS CHART
Selective Coding Results Chart:
Identifies how the findings or assertions address the research questions

Research Questions

1. How did the curriculum review team experience the comprehensive curriculum review process? (a) How did the curriculum review team members describe the curriculum review process? (b) What motivated the curriculum review team members’ involvement in the process? (c) What was the impact of institutional culture on the curriculum review process?

2. How did the faculty and administration collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process? (a) How did the curriculum team members describe the collaborative effort of faculty and administration during the process? (b) What were some of the barriers to the collaboration of faculty and administration? (c) How did the academic affairs and administrative affairs collaborate during the process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 Findings or Assertions</th>
<th>Research Question 1: How did the curriculum review team experience the comprehensive curriculum review process?</th>
<th>Research Question 2: How did the faculty and administration collaborate during the comprehensive curriculum review process?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding 1: A collectively shared guiding vision for the curriculum provided a strong foundation for the comprehensive curriculum review process.</td>
<td>1, 1b, 1c</td>
<td>2, 2a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 2: Embracing curriculum as a shared or corporate responsibility among faculty and administration led to widespread participation and buy-in.</td>
<td>1, 1a, 1c</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 3: The collaboration of various groups within the seminary in the comprehensive curriculum review process promoted true organizational change.</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>2, 2c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 4: Cultural issues regarding people and organizational structure served as barriers to collaboration during the comprehensive curriculum review process.</td>
<td>1, 1a, 1c</td>
<td>2b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 5: The curriculum team’s sense of community and connectedness strengthened the curriculum review process.</td>
<td>1, 1b, 1c</td>
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Form for Proposing CORE Courses, M.Div. Core Courses, and Other Courses  
Revised December 15, 2006

**Directions:** Propose CORE courses and M.Div. Core (Practical Theology, Counseling, Ethics, Spiritual Formation, Languages, etc.) to support the 4 broad learning outcomes based on the 4 Cs listed in the table below. The form can be used to propose other courses as well.

- Although the seminary's curricular discussion has thus far focused primarily on the M.Div., the Curriculum Team requests proposals for core courses, which will be required for all degree programs (MAPT, MAR, MA Bible/Theology/History). The Curriculum Team recognizes that core courses for the clinical counseling degrees may vary.
- Use the two documents that help explain the 4 Cs to aid your understanding as you complete the form.
- Use the larger document of “Contributions of the 6 Categories” (Bible, Theology/Ethics, History, Person in Ministry, Service to Church, Service to World) as the basis for identifying the outcomes and content addressed in a particular course. (Revision date 02/01/06).
- Bloom’s Taxonomy may assist in the wording of the outcomes and is part of the “Instructions” document.
- Please note that a particular course may not address or assess the 4 Cs equally. However, faculty are encouraged to identify ways to ADDRESS all 4 Cs in each course. The 4 broad learning outcomes (4 Cs) do not have to be assessed in every course; therefore, not every box in the right column must be filled. Assessment will take place at the program level.
- Identify 5-7 learning outcomes per course.
- Examples of teaching strategies that might be considered or learner-centered approaches to addressing the outcomes (Lecture, discussion, small group, reflection, case study, demonstration, modeling, resource person, panel of former students or current pastors, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Course Name:</th>
<th>Course Hours (4-hr, 2-hr, 1-hr seminar)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended Level:</strong></td>
<td>Level 1 (Foundational, Core); Level 2 (Discipline Foundations, Core); Level 3 (Advanced Discipline, Integrated, Capstone)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes Identified for ALL Degree Programs</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Addressed in this Course and/or Ways the Course May Point to the 4 Cs?</th>
<th>Teaching Strategies or Learner-Centered Approaches</th>
<th>Demonstrations of Student Learning (if applicable to the course)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates of Ashland Theological Seminary will be able to articulate and critically reflect upon their understanding of:</td>
<td>What is the desired outcome I want for the student?</td>
<td>What teaching strategies will I use to help the student reach that outcome?</td>
<td>&quot;Assignments: test, paper…&quot; How will I know the student has met the outcome?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. <strong>CORE IDENTITY</strong>, rooted in Christ, as the source from which life and ministry flow.</td>
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<td>2. <strong>CHARACTER</strong> that reflects maturity in Christ.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes Identified for ALL Degree Programs</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Addressed in this Course and/or Ways the Course May Point to the 4 Cs?</th>
<th>Teaching Strategies or Learner-Centered Approaches</th>
<th>Demonstrations of Student Learning (if applicable to the course)</th>
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<td>&quot;Assignments: test, paper...&quot; How will I know the student has met the outcome?</td>
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<td>3. CALLING that is foundational for servant leadership in the church, community, and world.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate:</td>
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<td>4. COMPETENCE in the disciplines and skills relevant to Christian ministry.</td>
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<td>A. Articulate, integrate, and apply Scripture, theology, church history, and religious heritage to life and ministry.</td>
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<td>B. Apply cultural exegesis to one's life and ministry.</td>
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<td>C. Practice a broad range of appropriate ministry skills.</td>
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Course Description and Basic CONTENT of this course?

If this is a core course, identify examples of the course's connection to practical ministry. Consider application in the field if appropriate.

If this is a practical ministry course, identify examples of the course's connection to the core courses (Bible, Theology, History).

Prerequisites, if any, Recommended for this Core Course? Brief Rationale for the Prerequisites?

Additional Comments, Questions, or Concerns Related to this Course Proposal? Desired Conversations with Colleagues Regarding this Course?

Department and/or Person Recommending the Course? (All proposals from a department must have department support before being presented to the Curriculum Team for review.)

12/15/06
APPENDIX F

DEFINITIONS OF THE 4 Cs
Foundations of the 4 C Paradigm

of

Personal and Professional Development
(March 3, 2006)

The 4 C paradigm of personal and professional development originally grew out of a shared concern for men and women called to pastoral ministry. Pastors and students being served through the Sandberg Leadership Center were consistently demonstrating an unhealthy disconnect between their personal formation as people in Christ and developing skills and competencies needed to serve others (ministry formation). Far more attention was being given to the latter, with little or no reflection on how that imbalance impacts effectiveness in ministry. And, given the level of burnout and abandonment of calling presently being reported, the problem seemed to be broad as well as deep.

With this problem in view, the 4 C paradigm was developed. The basic premise is this: effectiveness in ministry is directly linked to four foundational commitments.

Core Identity – to be effective in pastoral ministry, a person must know who he or she is in Christ and make practical commitments that will deepen that understanding and relationship to the Lord. In the POE program this is defined as the upward journey and serves as the foundation of life and ministry for the servant and a pathway to greater intimacy with the Lord.

Character – the invitation to personal transformation into the likeness of Christ is clearly articulated in scripture. It involves the ever deepening internal development of Christ-like virtues through the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit. As such, pastoral ministers must be willing to actively position themselves for this ongoing work, allowing the purging and perfecting process to occur within their lives. Once again, in POE this is referred to as the inward journey to Christ-likeness.

Calling – men and women who are effective in ministry have a clear sense of call, which is discovered, affirmed, shaped, and engaged within the context of ministry. As such, the person in ministry must develop accountability relationships that serve this purpose, referred to in POE as the outward journey.

(Continued)
**Competency** – building upon the foundation of core identity, character, and calling, the person in ministry must gain understanding and develop skills necessary for effective pastoral ministry. This is where most people will engage with the pastoral minister, and in most cases be the place of ongoing evaluation and continuing education, identified in POE as the forward journey.

Several additional reflections may help to further inform the original development of the 4 C paradigm.

First, it is to be noted that all 4 C’s are about the person in ministry and how he or she ultimately serves church and society. While each of the four characteristics of the paradigm must ultimately flow out into the way the individual interacts in society, the focus of formation begins with the deeply personal. The first three, particularly, are focused upon the understandings, commitments, and skills necessary to be secure in Christ, say yes to the development of Christ-like character, and grow in response to call within the context of community (personal formation). The final C, building upon the personal, involves the understandings, commitments, and skills necessary to serve others within the context of pastoral ministry (ministry formation). While personal formation and ministry formation must never be seen as separate from the other, pastoral development must begin with the personal.

Secondly, and sadly so, many people are in ministry who are not investing in the first three C’s, prioritizing only competencies as each relates to ministry formation. This leads to significant breakdown of the person in ministry and shallowness in the actual shape of ministry. That is why, at least in part, that greater emphasis is being given to personal formation within the first three C’s of the paradigm.

Thirdly, in using the form for proposing courses provided by the curriculum team it may be helpful to remember that:

- a. the outcomes for the first 3 C’s relate to understandings, experiences, behaviors, and skills relevant to those three aspects of personal formation.
- b. the outcomes for the final C relate to understandings, experiences, behaviors, and skills relevant to ministry formation.

Finally, it may be important to emphasize that equipping men and women from this paradigm demands that those serving in the various roles related to equipping be not only professionally committed to the paradigm but personally committed to all 4 C’s as well.
The Four Cs

Core identity consists of what is true about us because we are Christians. For example, we are God’s beloved children, in whom he delights. We now belong to God rather than to the world. We are united with Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and incorporated in the people of God. We have been forgiven and set apart for God. Not only are we created in God’s image, but we are being re-created in that image through the new self that is being formed in us by the Holy Spirit. We have been set free from sin, self, and Satan in order to serve God and others. Although this new reality is given by God rather than achieved by us, we must still recognize it and live on the basis of it. This is why Paul argues both that we have been given a new self and that we have to put it on (Eph. 4:24). Although the primary responsibility for the formation of Christian identity lies with the church, the seminary needs to decide how to address those students who come with a distorted sense of identity or with no Christian identity at all.

Character refers to the virtues that should characterize our lives as Christians. For example, we should demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). A mature Christian will reflect the character of Christ. While character is based on core identity, the development of Christian character is neither instant nor automatic. It is a process of maturity that takes place as believers grow in Christ likeness through the influence of the Word and the Spirit within the context of the community of faith. It is possible to demonstrate some of these qualities (e.g., kindness, patience, self-control) without being a Christian, just as it is possible for Christians to be immature in any of these areas. This is why core identity and character can be distinguished, although they can never be divorced. Some traditions express the difference between core identity and character as the difference between justification and sanctification. Pauline scholars may talk about indicative and imperative. Although the primary context for the formation of Christian character is the church, the seminary should still decide what influence it wants to have on the character of its students. Some of our programs, such as pastoral counseling, are already expected to address issues of character.

Calling refers to the vocation that a Christian receives from God. All Christians are called to a life of self-denial and discipleship, and all Christians are called to use their gifts for ministry in the church and in the world. While the idea of calling is commonly associated with pastoral ministry, this is not the only area of service to which a Christian may be called. Although many of our students come to seminary with an understanding of God’s call on their lives, others do not. The seminary can provide a context in which all of our students can discover, explore, and refine their sense of their calling.

Competency involves the knowledge and skills necessary for students to become fully equipped for service. This is the area which the seminary has traditionally regarded as its responsibility, and this is the area most clearly reflected in the present curriculum.
APPENDIX G

COMPLETE INFORMATION FOR FIGURE 6: CULTURAL ISSUES OF PEOPLE AND STRUCTURE AS BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION DURING THE COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS
Finding 4: Cultural issues regarding people and organizational structure served as barriers to collaboration during the comprehensive curriculum review process.

Figure 6. Cultural issues of people and structure as barriers to collaboration during the comprehensive curriculum review process.
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