Portfolio recommendations
Sub-group: Joy Aarsvold, Jenn Herron, Mary Hess, Gary Simpson
12.7.13

Purpose

- The portfolio connects directly to the four program outcomes and will guide the individual student's journey of vocational formation
  - In its syllabus, every course specifies measurable course outcomes and links to at least one program outcome
  - The term "portfolio" designates not just a discrete item but, rather, indicates the process of a learner's growth (technical vs. adaptive)
  - The portfolio will be used for both formative and summative purposes (or process and showcase or accompaniment and review); these terms need clarification to ensure that they are used consistently.
    - Formative: discipleship, vocational formation, academic and spiritual growth fostered through the cohort. Cohort mentors provide ongoing support, direction, and feedback for students. The portfolio reflects this growth over time and focuses primarily on the student's learning. Formative assessment does not include evaluative judgment.
    - Summative: the discrete moments of portfolio reviews provide a snapshot of a student's progress and the seminary's effectiveness. At these reviews, the student's proficiency in meeting the program outcomes is measured. This information may then be used in a formative way (for example, to guide the student's elective choices or internship placement). At the same time, the summative reviews also provide an opportunity to evaluate the seminary's instructional effectiveness and may then be used in a formative way to modify or validate instruction in courses and in the various seminary degree (and other) programs.

Structure

- Artifacts – choose artifacts as they relate to the four program outcomes
  - Modify the PRCR document to move from choosing a specific number of artifacts (12 per semester) to focusing on the four program outcomes and choosing artifacts that demonstrate the outcomes. A student could choose four different artifacts, or use one, two or three artifacts for the four outcomes. Mary and Gary will write this proposal for the December faculty meeting.
  - every course must designate at least one assignment (or artifact) that could be used for the portfolio, but students will choose which to actually use in their portfolio
  - we might suggest or strongly encourage that certain pieces be included in the portfolio: internship and CPE supervisor reports, the approval essay, and an artifact from each signature course.

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- Platform – we recommend that students use Google sites as a free, easy to use and share platform. Students will have access to and ownership of this after graduation. Students can easily control what is publicly viewable.
- MLN could be used for reviews, for portfolio update reminders, etc. This could also be built into the graduation requirement page (along with the check box for items such as the background check, boundary workshop and the like).

Faculty Roles

- Learning Leader faculty: 2-3 per semester? They will set the stage for the portfolio process and guide students through the overall purpose (most significantly, linking to the program outcomes; as well, providing a formal space for students to reflect on their learning and to create a "showcase" piece for future employment purposes) and the practical elements (how does this work?) of the portfolio.

- Cohort mentors: a formative role as mentors actively engage with a small group of students as they seek to learn and grow vocationally.
    - Depending on the number of students, we may have approximately five new mentors each fall semester, two starting with new cohorts in the spring
    - Each will stay with the cohort for the duration of the students' seminary career and will accompany the students on their journey of vocational formation. The cohort mentors will help students reflect on their learning through gatherings and through the portfolio process.
    - With new cohorts beginning every year, every faculty person will have the opportunity to serve as a cohort mentor. For equitable sharing of the work load, those who choose not to be a cohort mentor will likely take on an additional .5 course.
    - Faculty advising happens through the cohort mentoring process.

- Portfolio reviewers: an evaluative role which will involve all faculty and several staff at the end of each academic year for an annual assessment of the portfolio and the institution (as reflected in the portfolio)
    - We propose inviting people external to the seminary to sit on review teams. This could include pastors (including alumni), internship supervisors, and selected cohort members (this needs to comply with FERPA).
- Candidacy mentors: in most cases the student's cohort mentor will be their candidacy mentor, in instances where a student requires such a person (ELCA MDiv students, etc.)

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Portfolio Reviews

- the academic calendar includes a portfolio review day (or half day) at the end of the second semester; this ensures that students actually update their portfolios and that a team of reviewers provide meaningful feedback on the portfolios. It also provides a way to maintain accurate records for the Registrar's Office.
- portfolio review teams consisting of the cohort mentor, one additional faculty person, one staff person, and one other person from outside the seminary (a pastor, contextual leader, etc.). Would it also make sense to allow a student to nominate a peer mentor for review? This team will review many student portfolios from the mentor's cohort (8-12 portfolios total).
- Students must have reached the credit guidelines listed in the PRCR document to be eligible for review, but all reviews will take place at the same time (probably in late April or early May).
- Prior to the formal review, the cohort mentor and the student will examine the portfolio together.
- three rubrics may be used for the review
    - Student self-reflection: this extended rubric will guide the student to consider what has been learned in the course of the semester and how this engages the program outcomes.
    - Review team for individual portfolio: this rubric will walk the review team through an examination of the artifacts and, especially, of the student's self-reflection rubric/writing.
    - Institutional assessment: this element of the portfolio rubric will help portfolio review teams to assess program effectiveness. Students will not see this information, but it will be embedded in the review team process
- According to the PRCR document, reviews will happen at the following intervals:
    - MA: 10 and 15 credits
    - MDiv: 10, 17, and 25 credits
    - We proposed that these credit numbers be used as triggers for students to update their portfolio and for cohort mentors to check in with students. However, the actual review will happen only at the end of the spring semester.
    - Through MLN, we will build in an automatic message sent to students and cohort mentors when these credit marks are reached.
- Candidacy: to make the portfolio process sustainable, we propose making this process tie in more closely.
    - what is happening with the changes in candidacy?
    - The candidacy mentor is, by default, the same person as the cohort mentor, unless the student requests a different candidacy mentor.

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- While candidacy documents (such as the approval essay) would ideally be included in a portfolio, this is only a recommendation, not a requirement.