

## Seattle University

### **Lifting Up the Inspiration at the Heart of the School of Theology and Ministry: Insights from the STM Committee, 2021-2022**

June 10, 2022

#### A. Introduction

Over the course of the 2021-2022 academic year a Seattle University (SU) committee made up of thirteen people with connections to a range of constituencies in the extended School of Theology and Ministry (STM) community met monthly to explore the inspiration or charisma that has characterized STM over the course of its life as a school. Provost Shane Martin convened the committee, appointed co-chairs, and invited the group to share their findings at the close of the work in June 2022. The group included representatives from the current STM faculty and student body as well as alumni, former faculty, and other friends of the school.

This document provides an overview of the committee's work and is particularly geared toward lifting up the results of the survey and listening sessions that took place in February and March 2022 and sharing observations about that input.

#### B. Committee Membership, Charge and General Process

In late spring 2021, Provost Martin asked two SU colleagues to co-chair what was called simply the "STM Committee." The two are: Joseph Orlando, EdD, Special Assistant to the Provost for Strategic Initiatives, and Jodi O'Brien, PhD, Special Assistant to the Provost for Faculty Development and Sociology Professor. These two, both with a range of historical and current links to STM, recruited eleven committee members who agreed to serve and who are listed below:

- Teddi Callahan, MAPS - Currently a Doctor of Ministry candidate at STM
- Rev. Allison Cannady-Smith, MDiv- Received Master of Divinity from STM in 2021, and Current Member of the Advisory Council for the Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement

- Rev. Dr. Richard (Dick) Cunningham, MRE, MDiv, DMin - Professor Emeritus of Contextual Education at STM
- Rt. Rev. Edward Donalson III, DMin - Director of the STM Doctor of Ministry Program and STM alum
- Jaisy A. Joseph, PhD -SU Assistant Professor of Theology & Religious Studies
- Erica Lee Martin, PhD - Executive Director of STM and STM alum
- Fr. Colleen D Nsame, SJ, MDiv - Received Master of Arts in Transforming Spirituality from STM in 2021
- \*Jodi O'Brien, PhD - Special Assistant to the Provost, and Professor of Sociology
- \*Joe Orlando, EdD - Special Assistant to the Provost, and past STM adjunct faculty member
- Marcia Riggers, MA - Long-term STM Advocate, Advisory Team Member and Adjunct Faculty Member
- Donna Teevan, PhD - Chair and Associate Professor, Theology & Religious Studies at SU, and past professor of STM courses
- Peter Tran, MATL - Received Master of Arts in Transformational Leadership from STM in 2013
- Rev. Dr. Michael Reid Trice, PhD - Spehar-Halligan Professor and Director of the Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement, and Associate Professor at STM  
\*committee co-chair

The committee held its first meeting on September 24, and continued meeting monthly via zoom through June, concluding with a meeting with Provost Martin on June 17 to share outcomes of the work. The initial charge included the planning of a celebration for STM in the spring of 2022, and that was adjusted to offering ideas that might be taking up by a different group who next year would be planning a celebration for the spring of 2023. With that adjustment confirmed by the close of the second meeting, the committee charge was the following:

*The STM Committee was convened by Provost Shane Martin for the 2021-2022 academic year with the following charges:*

- *To explore ways to carry forward the ecumenical inspiration underlying the School of Theology and Ministry, and also its interreligious engagement*

- *To explore ways to honor the legacy of STM in a closing celebration in spring 2023, and to recommend a tangible way to memorialize the school's history*

The committee moved forward with the intention of providing outcomes of its work to the Provost at the conclusion of the year.

As part of the process of proceeding, the committee presented itself to the extended STM community in November via a letter included in the STM Fall Update (see communication in the Appendix), and added key information onto the [STM website](#) to list its charge and membership, and to share executive minutes which were updated on a monthly basis (See Appendix V). Each meeting opened with a brief prayer, offered by various members of the group, after which substantive topics were taken up.

In the November and December meetings, the committee took significant time to share and listen to one another in response to questions about what was at the heart of the inspiration or charisma of the School of Theology and Ministry, and what impact that may have had on them. This very valuable in-depth dialogue was preparation for soliciting the same input from the extended STM community, and in January the committee designed a survey instrument with two central qualitative questions, as well as some basic questions to gather demographic data (see Appendix III). A plan was developed for presenting the survey to the extended STM community in February and March, and for providing follow-up zoom conversation opportunities for those who expressed interest.

### C. Survey and Zoom Meeting Framework and Demographic Data

In January the committee developed the online survey and determined to extend the invitation in February to the maximum number of email users identified as part of the STM extended community, a total of just over 1,600 individual emails. The survey was sent out on February 8<sup>th</sup>, with an initial deadline of Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, which was extended to March 1 to help increase participation. There were 208 respondents out of 1,600 recipients, representing a solid response rate of approximately 13%. Key demographic data was reported by 199 of the respondents representing the following:

- Current Students (18) *from these programs: MAPS: (6), M.Div. (4), D.Min. (4), M.A. (4)*
- Alums (139)
- Former/Emeritus Faculty (11)
- Former Staff (3)
- Donor (13)
- Other (15)

Alum responses came from those who graduated as early as 1975 and as recently as 2021 (a 46-year time frame) and were categorized into five-year graduation segments with the following numbers:

- 2016 – Present: 43
- 2011 – 2015: 23
- 2006 – 2010: 13
- 2001 – 2005: 17
- 1995 – 2000: 10
- Before 1995: 14 (1975, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994)

The final question on the survey asked respondents if they would like to join in a follow-up zoom meeting with committee members, to share their survey responses in that format. A total of three 1.5 hour zoom sessions with committee member listeners in attendance were offered (March 7, 8 and 10), providing an opportunity for 19 participants to share further via zoom.

There were two key qualitative questions that formed the heart of the survey:

1. How would you describe the core elements/characteristics that constitute the inspiration or *charism* at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry?
2. How has the inspiration or charism at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry been meaningful for you personally?

The written input to these two questions from 208 respondents, as well as the notes taken by committee members during the zoom meeting follow-up sessions with 19 participants, provide a rich source of qualitative data, which is presented in the following section.

#### D. Key Themes That Emerged

Using basic tools to analyze and group responses to the two qualitative questions, the committee identified key themes that surface from the input, identifying four themes for each question. In the spirit of directly sharing the voices of the respondents, the themes are presented in a simplified format below, followed by representative quotes that provide texture, breadth and depth to the theme.

##### **First Qualitative Question:**

**How would you describe the core elements/characteristics that constitute the inspiration or charism at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry?**

##### **Theme #1: An effective integration of spiritual formation, theological understanding and pastoral practice**

*Opportunities in curriculum, classroom setting and STM community setting to deeply explore my interior spiritual landscape in tandem with deepening and integrating an emerging professional and personal spiritual practice.*

*The School of Theology and Ministry always stood out to me as an institution characterized by faculty, staff, and alum that were deeply committed to teaching and investing in students such that they aided in the formation of ministers who embodied the love of God or the Divine. Yes, they were invested in academics and deep theological education and reflection. That seemed to me to always be at the service of ministerial formation.*

*STM is about openness to God, especially in the hearts and minds of humanity. It is a stool that stands on faith, academics, and relationship. These three elements are journeys in their own way and together they are the whole journey of STM.*

*SU provided an environment of welcome and inclusive thought. Coursework content was rigorous and demanding as well as inspiring and hugely significant to pastoral work. Theological study. Formation. Service to community. Calling out gifts.*

*STM is an institution which focused on formation, meaning-making and spiritual deepening - cultivating discernment, deep listening - STM's focus on formation set it apart from other divinity schools. This was an institution that made ministers.*

*I really appreciated the balance between the disciplines of formation: Intellectual, Pastoral, Human and Spiritual. All three were very important to me.*

*Leadership development, personal development, ministerial training, empowerment, community, reflection, Catholic intellectual tradition, ecumenical dialogue. STM is and has been since ITS, CORPUS and SUMORE marked by a creative approach to theological/pastoral education and formation that focuses on the whole person -- body, mind and spirit.*

## **Theme #2: A place of ecumenical and interreligious enrichment**

*STM was a place where people from diverse backgrounds and traditions could think and work together to address some of humanity's deepest questions around God, meaning, hope, and faith.*

*Willingness to have difficult conversations within and across traditions and spiritualities.*

*Education of the whole person in a way that prepares students for life, work, and vocation out in the world post-graduation in an ecumenical and inclusive setting.*

*1. Ecumenical (at least that was important to me) 2. Openness to inter-religious dialogue (even though it wasn't fully developed) 3. Jesuit centered values (especially regarding diversity, inclusivity, and the importance of preaching and teaching)*

*Genuinely ecumenical, increasingly inter-religious: Included people from other world religions in learning community, course content, and faculty representation.*

*Though born with a Christian foundation, it strived to be open to the Spirit in all its forms, actively engaging interfaith dialogue and understanding, with the aim to provide vibrant and meaningful worship, connecting liturgy and life.*

*The core characteristic of the program was the diverse religious background that attended STM. My formation was greatly enhanced by this rich experience of dialog between various faith traditions.*

*The heart of STM is very old, going back to its origins as SUMORE. That heart was strong because it was ecumenical, relational, building daring bridges across much of what now so grievously divides us now as a nation.*

*Ecumenism, applied theology, spirituality vs religiosity, relationship and belonging-*

*A core element of STM was its ecumenical and interfaith foundations, inspired by Vatican II, that brought together students from many faith groups to study and learn from one another.*

*This did create holy envy that challenged students to question and explore the core beliefs and practices of their faith, while at the same time allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of how to be more inclusive and actively engage with faith communities beyond their own.*

### **Theme #3: A safe and welcoming place for growth, discovery and community**

*A deeply moving experience of dedicated professors committed to developing skills in their learning environments, often with the understanding that everyone brought life experience and their own teaching to the classroom. Amazing experience, and life changing!*

*A place to develop an expansive religious literacy in diverse, inclusive learning spaces.*

*STM is unique among schools in its intentional ecumenical identity. It was a place to learn and grow academically, spiritually and professionally.*

*A safe space to explore, question, learn and grow. Core elements include: Inclusivity, formation, deepened faith and spiritual practices.*

*Collaborative learning model, openness to diversity: faith and wisdom traditions, sexuality, cultures, ethnicities, spiritual paths. Emphasis on Ignatian spirituality of finding God in all things. Grounded in Catholic social teachings, Gospel values.*

*Ecumenical community and influences. Diversity of thought, cultures and lived experience. A sense of openness yet still centered in Christ.*

*Inclusive, accepting, welcoming, expansive, broadening, solid theology.*

*Encouraging a deepening understanding and acceptance of one's self. Formation for and of the whole person. Helping one realize and accept God's unconditional love. Practicing service to the world.*

*(STM) is a gathering where we help each other grow spiritually, mentally, and emotionally as human beings. A gathering where we co-create with our teachers- an education that leads to one's liberation. Where we are trained to be spiritual leaders who embody love, empathy, and compassion. Leaders who are not silent in the midst of injustice but one who speaks truth to power.*

*community; hospitality/welcoming; inclusive; collaborative; ecumenical; compassionate justice; ministry grounded in theology; open; intentional; aiming for self-awareness; student centered; creative*

*Community and engagement in the School of Theology & Ministry cannot be compared to anything else. The community makes one feel that they are not alone in ministry.*

*The STM charism has always been hospitality, chiefly shared as an educational resource. in a unique setting --whereby faculty, students, staff and donors were united in spirit to welcome students/people of all stripes to share in the quest for deeper learning and understanding of our commission to love one another. Dialogue, theology, liturgy, and other community events nourished the broad range of subjects needed to prepare students for the various ministries they felt called to pursue.*

#### **Theme #4: A place to engage with issues of justice in the world**

*The core elements of the inspiration of STM were embodied justice-seeking and ecumenism / interfaith connection. STM was a place where people from diverse backgrounds and traditions could think and work together to address some of humanity's deepest questions around God, meaning, hope, and faith.*

*Core elements at the heart of STM focused on and established a track record in addressing DIVERSITY be they: racial groups, Christian traditions, theological perspectives, gender identity, spiritual approaches, and faith groups.*

*Through a diversity-inclusive education, we nurture responsible leaders, even those who do not have faith and all religious traditions, to create opportunities to take responsibility in the world's issues of justice and the environment and try to change the world together.*

*Compassion, commitment to justice in relationships and the world and service.*

*Pushed educational boundaries toward more expansive, justice-oriented conversations compared to other seminaries.*

*Ecumenical, focused on spirituality and justice.*

*Ecumenical Vision. Justice in Human Community. Collaboration in Ministry.*

*I believe STM has always been invested in the formation of ministers with a commitment to justice and interreligious dialogue.*

**Second Qualitative Question:**

**How has the inspiration or charism at the heart of the School of Theology and Ministry been meaningful for you personally?**

**Theme #1: An experience that transformed and empowered in preparation for ministry.**

*I went into STM expecting to become a scholar/theologian and came out extremely transformed and desiring frontline ministry.*

*(STM) has deepened and broadened my pastoral and peace ministry with a local and global perspective.*

*I am a better pastor for my time at STM. Ecumenism is vital to my ministry and in my understanding of the Church.*

*(STM) provided me with tools for life in ministry and the language necessary to inspire, grow and expand my own work in ministry inside and outside the church.*

*The ecumenical environment during my four years earning the MATS degree helped me understand better other faiths and my own as well. I believe the Holy Spirit was at work in that environment.*

*I always have an ecumenical project with clergy, family, communities of faith, etc. I am always learning, stretching and growing as a disciple through those projects. I think leaning into ecumenism makes us more well-rounded and flexible followers of Jesus, and (we) experience a*

*greater appreciation for our unity in Christ. I'm able to challenge and encourage those in my ministry context to stretch and grow in these ways, as well.*

*(STM) thrust me into leadership roles. Encouragement to risk and push oneself for values of social justice. With Jesus as our role model.*

*My heart was opened to understand my Catholic faith in new and deeper ways. My STM formation empowered me to minister with greater compassion and acceptance.*

*STM was instrumental in guiding me to my true ministry calling.*

**Theme #2: An experience that expanded one's worldview through exposure to a diversity of thoughts and life experiences**

*STM for me was a hospitable space where I was challenged to think outside of my worldview, but at the same time, I was able to reaffirm who I am ... and embrace my full humanity...but by being challenged by my peers and teachers to think outside my worldview, I was able to see the sacredness/beauty of all people and to see truth as not only residing in Christianity but in other religious faiths as well.*

*Arriving at STM broadened and deepened my understanding of ministry, church, and the strengths and challenges of community. Everything I had previously learned was tested in this open, inclusive, self-critical, community of students, faculty, and staff and which accommodated no hierarchies. I had to learn how to be one with the many, that theology is about creating community (the Kingdom of God on Earth), and that students and staff could be my most effective teachers.*

*STM became a visible expression of a reconciled Christian community committed to justice and peace within the human family in the Pacific Northwest.*

*The charism of diversity in race and faith traditions was most meaningful for me.*

*The qualities of inclusion and diversity have been a guidepost for the volunteer work and caregiving that are the foundations of this stage of my life. To see that every person, every creature, every thing is part of an interdependent and connected universe opens my eyes, my mind, and my heart so that I can mirror the divine spirit that unites us all.*

*(STM) opened my mind to gain deeper understanding of others' lives and faith choices, made me more open to new ideas, and the faith lives of others put me to shame at my own failings. I became more focused on living my faith.*

*Through including all religious traditions, leadership education promotes solidarity to bring responsiveness to global issues and address our concerns about justice and the environment together.*

**Theme #3: An experience that provided spiritual depth, personal growth and training in theological reflection.**

*For all of my ten years out of school, I believe the spirituality aspects have helped me stay in ministry and learn healthy boundaries.*

*My time at STM was empowering and transformative. This experience was instrumental in ongoing growth, creating a lifelong learning network and a supportive community fostering integration and oneness.*

*I tiptoed up to my essential self, fell apart, then fell in love with my true self and capabilities being fully present to others*

*The conflict resolution piece and the general study of communication has stood the test of time. Theological reflection as a practice and a skill remains central for me, even though the context of my life and existence as a spiritually alert person has changed drastically (it would seem), and methodology has changed accordingly.*

*I came to the school with self-doubt, fear, and curiosity. I left with self-awareness, strength, and a sense of purpose, as well as an even more lively sense of curiosity than when I arrived.*

*STM opened up for me the world of study that has enriched my theology and has prompted me to study my own Christian faith in relation to the world's religions. I am discovering what has been considered difference to be really similarities. I am particularly interested in the ways the Christian faith is born from Judaism and influential to Islam. I never would have been inspired by any of these theologies if not for STM.*

*STM has been a place that has allowed me to hear God's call toward ministry accurately and fully. Among the academically full classes, professors made space for prayer, reflection, and integration. That space for integration was transformative for me as a person and a minister.*

**Theme #4: An experience that deepened a spirit of happiness, well-being, gratitude and meaning**

*I would not be who I am today without STM. I am the happiest I have ever been in my life, and while STM isn't entirely responsible for that, my time there greatly contributed to my ability to choose happiness.*

*Both as a student and adjunct faculty member the combined experiences of SUMORE + ITS + SALT + STM are woven together as some of the most rewarding events in my life.*

*There are not enough words to express my deep and heartfelt appreciation!*

*Deep gratitude and thanks to SU, STM and MATL...my life is enriched because of your living light.*

*The practice of deep, compassionate listening and deep inquiry is essential to how I make meaning of my surroundings and my interior landscape.*

*STM strives to be a place of formation, and I am grateful for the ways I was deeply formed by the people I encountered there. I am a better person, better minister, and better leader because of my time there.*

*I learned how to practice theological reflection and uphold spiritual and theological values in my religious and community spaces.*

These findings offer rich and powerful insights into the inspiration at the heart of the School of Theology and Ministry, as well as the profound impact of this inspiration on those who shared in the community. To close this section, it may be helpful to gather the themes in a simplified form under each question:

1. How would you describe the core elements/characteristics that constitute the inspiration or charism at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry?

- An effective integration of spiritual formation, theological understanding and pastoral practice
- A place of ecumenical and interreligious enrichment
- A safe and welcoming place for growth, discovery and community
- A place to engage with issues of justice in the world

2. How has the inspiration or charism at the heart of the School of Theology and Ministry been meaningful for you personally?

- An experience that transformed and empowered in preparation for ministry
- An experience that expanded one's worldview through exposure to a diversity of thoughts and life experiences
- An experience that provided spiritual depth, personal growth and training in theological reflection
- An experience that deepened a spirit of happiness, well-being, gratitude and meaning

## E. Observations

There are some key general observations to be made in light of the survey responses and their emergent themes, along with the follow up zoom meetings with respondents, and the many conversations among members of the committee over the course of the year and in the work of digesting the material surfaced by the survey. Below are four key observations that surfaced for the committee.

### 1. Gratitude and Impact

There is evidence of an overwhelming, positive spirit of gratitude expressed by those who have shared in an educational and formational experience at the Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry (STM). Expressions of gratitude are shared by participants in all academic programs, from alumni and current students, and from former and current faculty and staff.

This powerful, even profound spirit of gratitude is moving to observe. Those who have shared in an STM educational and formational experience -- be it a course, a degree program, a communal liturgy or prayer experience, conversations among students and with faculty and staff, or a combination of all of these or other elements -- articulate a spirit of deep thanks for what they received.

This spirit of gratitude is in response to what is best described as a transformative impact for students, often articulated in terms of vocational service to the community and to the broader world. The students who took classes at STM overwhelmingly describe their educational experience as life-changing, and as a coherent and integrated journey that truly prepared them for effectiveness in their chosen ministry, leadership, or service.

Respondents shared that this transformation impact came from an education that successfully integrated theological knowledge, spiritual formation, and pastoral practice. They also described

how it took place in a context in which ecclesiological differences helped improve the learning, and where ecumenism was a key value and strength to the overall environment.

When one considers the predecessor bodies and the decades of formational heritage that both predates and includes STM, it is a great tribute to the generations of faculty and staff, to the donors and partners, and to the students now alumni over these many years and range of programs, to have together created an educational milieu that was so beneficial and led to such substance in these expressions of gratitude.

## 2. Consistency and Community Over Time

It is quite inspiring to observe that this gratitude and impact is expressed consistently by members of the School of Theology and Ministry community from its earliest days nearly 25 years ago (STM was founded in 1997), and on up to the present time. Additionally, however, we received robust and heartfelt responses from well before 1997, from alumni of the previous institutional expressions of graduate theological/ministerial education at Seattle University which preceded and eventually led to the founding of STM. These included SUMORE (SU Master of Religious Education), CORPUS, and the Institute of Theological Studies. Respondents to our survey express this very same gratitude and impact since those earliest days, over 50 years ago.

In other words, the deep gratitude for the community of learning and the educational impact through graduate ministerial education at Seattle University goes back a *very long time*, something that is both extraordinary and truly noteworthy.

Over the course of these five decades there were changes in programs, in institutional forms, in student composition, in faculty and administrative leadership, and in many other ways. One can say that STM and its predecessor bodies were characterized by change, in many ways. And yet with so many changes, what remained consistent over time was the positive impact and the gratitude that members of the community experienced by being part of this educational experience. The distribution and tenor of our survey responses, supplemented by our follow-up zoom meetings with respondents, clearly demonstrates this.

### 3. Inclusivity and Growth

It is noteworthy to observe the consistent way that survey respondents speak about the value and impact of the School of Theology and Ministry educational community. The most salient descriptors of the experience are an STM community that was both “inclusive” and “growthful,” and these qualities seem to be part of what has made the milieu so transformative.

By “inclusive” we mean that all people came to feel that they belonged in the STM community. The school attracted students from many faith backgrounds and spiritual traditions, with a diversity in terms of race, gender-identity, age, life circumstance and location, and in numerous important ways. Yet respondents to the survey overwhelmingly affirmed that they came to feel that there was a place for them and for their story at STM, that they were welcomed to be creative and generative agents of self-discovery, and that they belonged. This is an oft-cited testimony to the life-giving ecology of the educational environment in, through and around STM.

And by “growthful” we mean that an overwhelming number of those in the STM community attested to their abilities to discover new dimensions of themselves, to expand their consciousness of self and others, and to see the world, and faith, in new and broader ways.

People expressed a high value for this experience of growth, and it contributed significantly to their appreciation and gratitude for what they received as part of their education at STM.

### 4. Grief, Loss and Anger

It is very clear that the decision to close the School of Theology and Ministry in May 2020 prompted significant feelings of grief, loss, and anger. This sadness and grief are articulated across populations connected to STM (alumni, former faculty and staff, current students, faculty and staff, donors, ecumenical partners), and remain present at the time of this writing two years later.

It is very understandable that this sense of loss would be both broad and deep, in light of the above observations on the powerful, positive, transformative impact that graduate theological ministerial education provided to people over the course of five decades, half of which were during the life of the School of Theology and Ministry. There is a great love, appreciation and respect for STM and its predecessor bodies, and the school and programs offered a beautiful and creative space and place for learning, discovery and transformation. There is a lot of loss bound up in this decision.

In addition, there is anger prompted by the way the decision was made, how it was communicated, and the sense that there was not a transparent process. Many survey respondents and STM community members have expressed this anger, and there is dissatisfaction with how the process has unfolded.

Respondents share that their significant feelings of grief, loss and anger live alongside their feelings of gratitude, appreciation and love for STM and what they experienced in the community. This mixture of feelings is the reality for many members of our alumni community, as well as our current and former faculty, staff and students, and our donors and ecumenical partners. We honor these deep feelings and appreciate them as a healthy response to the closing of a place of learning and formation held dear by so many.

## F. Conclusion

The work of the STM Committee this year has been a significant undertaking, and we are grateful for the opportunity to share in this effort together, to learn and discover from the active participation of the STM community, to be able to lift up the inspiration at the heart of the School of Theology and Ministry, and to note how that inspiration has made a meaningful difference in the lives of so many. We look forward to an opportunity to share these findings with the provost, and to share our thoughts and ideas on how this work can inform university decisions on how to carry this inspiration forward at Seattle University.

## G. Appendices

Following are five appendices, which help to catalogue the work of the STM Committee over the course of the 2021-2022 academic year. These include:

- I. STM Committee Charge and Membership
- II. STM Fall Update Letter
- III. Survey Questions
- IV. Survey Results Overview
- V. Committee Meetings - Executive Minutes

## Appendix I

### STM Committee: Charge and Membership for Academic Year 2021-22

The *STM Committee* was convened by Provost Shane Martin for the 2021-22 academic year with the following charges:

- *To explore ways to carry forward the ecumenical inspiration underlying the School of Theology & Ministry, and also its interreligious engagement.*
- *To explore ways to honor the legacy of STM in a closing celebration in spring 2023, and to recommend a tangible way to memorialize the school's history.*

The committee began meeting in September and will meet monthly through May, concluding with a report offering recommendations to the provost in June 2022.

#### STM Committee Membership

Teddi Callahan, MAPS

*Currently a Doctor of Ministry candidate at STM*

Rev. Allison Cannady-Smith, MDiv

*Received Master of Divinity from STM in 2021, and Current Member of the Advisory Council for the Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement*

Rev. Dr. Richard (Dick) Cunningham, MRE, MDiv, DMin

*Professor Emeritus of Contextual Education at STM*

Rt. Rev. Edward Donalson III, DMin

*Director of the STM Doctor of Ministry Program and STM alum*

Jaisy A. Joseph, PhD

*Assistant Professor of Theology & Religious Studies at Seattle University*

Erica Lee Martin, PhD

*Executive Director of STM and STM alum*

Fr. Colleen D Nsame, SJ, MDiv

*Received Master of Arts in Transforming Spirituality from STM in 2021*

\*Jodi O'Brien, PhD

*Special Assistant to the Provost, and Professor of Sociology*

\*Joe Orlando, EdD

*Special Assistant to the Provost, and past adjunct faculty member with STM*

Marcia Riggers, MA

*Current Member of the Advisory Council for the Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement*

Donna Teevan, PhD

*Chair and Associate Professor, Theology & Religious Studies at SU, and past professor of STM courses*

Peter Tran, MATL

*Received Master of Arts in Transformational Leadership from STM in 2013*

Rev. Dr. Michael Reid Trice, PhD

*Spehar-Halligan Professor and Director of the Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement, and Associate Professor at STM*

\*co-chairs

## Appendix II

*A Message from the STM Committee Co-Chairs November 17, 2021*

Dear friends and colleagues,

We extend warm greetings to all in the extended community of the School of Theology and Ministry – current and former students, current and former faculty and staff, alumni of every program, ecumenical partners, and all those who have supported STM and been community collaborators in so many ways.

As co-chairs of the “STM Committee” which has been convened this fall with representatives from the range of STM constituencies, we sincerely take up the task of exploring how the inspiration that has been at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry over the years might be carried forward in new forms looking ahead to the future.

We are very aware of the sadness and grief, the hurt and discouragement, that has been stirred over the last 18 months by the decision to close STM in June 2023. It has been and continues to be a trying time. Even as we recognize that reality, we earnestly seek to join with colleagues in creatively imagining the future, the primary focus of our work with the committee this year. It is an honor to take up this task alongside faith-filled people who bring insight, wisdom and deep care to the effort.

You can learn more about the charge and membership of the STM Committee on the [STM website](#), and we look forward to reaching out to engage the broader STM community in this undertaking as we proceed through the year.

With hope and peace,

Joe and Jodi

Joe Orlando, EdD (Special Assistant to the Provost)

Jodi O’Brien, PhD (Professor of Sociology and Special Assistant to the Provost)

### Appendix III

Dear Friends in the School of Theology and Ministry Community,

Many of you may have read in the Fall Update about the [STM Committee](#), a group convened for this year to explore possibilities for how to carry forward the inspiration of the School of Theology and Ministry after it closes in 2023.

As part of that work, the committee would like to hear from you. As someone in the extended STM community (students, faculty, staff, alumni, former faculty/staff, donors, partners, etc.) your input is important. To collect your comments, we invite you to participate in a brief survey ([Link here](#)). In addition, we will have an online listening session in the next month.

We ask you to respond to this brief survey by Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, after which we will host one or more listening sessions in March/April. The STM Committee will compile the input/feedback and share it with the Seattle University Provost in our final report in June 2022.

Thanks so much for your participation, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Gratefully,

*Members of the STM Committee*

*Teddi Callahan, Rev. Allison Cannady-Smith, Rev. Dr. Richard Cunningham, Rt. Rev. Edward Donalson, Dr. Jaisy Joseph, Dr. Erica Martin, Rev. Colleen Nsame, SJ, Dr. Jodi O'Brien\*, Dr. Joseph Orlando\*, Marcia Riggers, Dr. Donna Teevan, Peter Tran, Rev. Dr. Michael Trice (\*co-chairs)*

Dear Friend of STM,

We expect that this survey might take 10-15 minutes to complete, and we warmly welcome your input. Thanks so much for sharing your insights with us!

Gratefully,

The STM Committee

1. Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

- Please indicate your primary relationship with STM:
  - Current Student
    - Please indicate degree program
      - DMIN
      - MDIV
      - MAPS
      - MATL
      - MA
      - Certificate

- Alum
    - Year of Graduation
      - (Fillable box or scrollable years here)
    - Program of Study. Check all that apply:
      - DMIN
      - MDIV
      - MAPS
      - MATL
      - MATS
      - MA
      - Certificate
  - Current Faculty or Staff Member
  - Former or Emeritus Faculty Member
  - Former Staff Member
  - Donor
  - Other (fillable box here)
2. How would you describe the core elements/characteristics that constitute the inspiration or *charism* at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry?
  3. How has the inspiration or charism at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry been meaningful for you personally?
  4. The STM Committee plans to host an online forum in the coming month to hear responses to these two questions in that format. If you would be interested in receiving an email about that gathering, please provide your email below and we will send you a link when it is scheduled.

(name) \_\_\_\_\_

(email) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix IV

STM Committee  
Survey Responses Overview as of March 14, 2022  
(J. Orlando & M. Baker - 3/14/22)

- Survey sent to approximately **1,600** email addresses
- Survey responses (survey closed 3/11/22): **208** (approximately **13%** response rate)
- **Question 1** asked for optional names: approximately **130** were provided
- **Question 2** solicited data re: who was responding:
  - Current Students: 18
  - Alums: 139
  - Former/Emeritus Faculty: 11
  - Former Staff: 3
  - Donor: 13
  - Other: 15

*Current student degree programs:*

  - D.Min.: 4
  - M.Div.: 4
  - MAPS: 6
  - MA: 4

*Alum Respondents Categorized by Five-Year Graduation Timeframes:*

  - 2016 – Present: 43
  - 2011 – 2015: 23
  - 2006 – 2010: 13
  - 2001 – 2005: 17
  - 1995 – 2000: 10
  - Before 1995: 14 (pre-1995 years include: 1975, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994)
- **Question 3 (qualitative):** How would you describe the core elements/characteristics that constitute the inspiration or *charism* at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry?
- **Question 4 (qualitative):** How has the inspiration or charism at the heart of the School of Theology & Ministry been meaningful for you personally?
- **Question 5:** respondents interested in attending a zoom listening session: **97**  
**(all were invited, and 19 persons attended one of three sessions March 7, 8 and 10)**

## Appendix V

### STM Committee Meeting via Zoom (September 24, 2021 - 3:00 – 4:30 PM)

Present:

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, J. Joseph, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan, P. Tran, M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson*

- Welcome and brief check-in
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Introductions
- The Committee's charge is clarified and discussed
- Brief introduction of the Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement, begun in the Office of the Provost on 7.1.2021.
- Adjourn

#### Future meetings via zoom:

October 22  
November 21  
December 14  
January 25  
February 22  
March 15  
April 12  
May 17

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(October 22, 2021 - 3:00 – 4:30 PM)**

*Present:*

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, J. Joseph, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan, P. Tran, M. Trice*

- Welcome and brief check-in
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Opening Comments
- Determine Approach to Minutes for the Meetings
- Outcomes of Committee to Provost by June 2022
- Review and Approve September Minutes (Unanimous)
- Discussion of Celebration in 2023
- Adjourn

Future meetings via zoom:

November 16

December 14

January 25

February 22

March 15

April 12

May 17

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(November 16, 11:00 AM -12:30 PM)**

Present:

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, J. Joseph, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan, P. Tran, M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson*

- Welcome and brief check-in
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Approval of 10.22 Minutes

Vote to Approve the Minutes. 2nded. Unanimous Approval

- Updates/Thoughts re: “STM News & Updates” Communication on 11/17

The STM website now includes a segment that describes the work, charge, and membership of the STM Committee. A message will go out soon including a) note from the faculty of STM, b) note from STM Committee co-chairs.

- Engaging the extended STM Community

Discussion re: strategy for engaging constituencies in the extended STM community using participatory action research methodology.

- Adjourn

Future meetings via zoom:

December 14

January 25

February 22

March 15

April 12

May 17

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(December 14, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM)**

Present:

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, J. Joseph, E. Martin, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan, P. Tran, M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson*

- Welcome and brief check-in
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Approval of 11.16 Minutes (Unanimous)
- Discussion
- Committee Members Sharing on the Inspiration of STM and Future Possibilities
- Three Questions:
  1. What emerges for you as you ponder these questions related to the inspiration at the heart of STM, and the elements that might be carried forward in the future?
  2. What does it mean to you to say that STM has an “ecumenical inspiration” and an openness to “interreligious engagement?”
  3. What surfaces for you when asked to imagine possibilities for carrying forward this spirit, charism, or inspiration of STM in some fashion in the future?
- Next Steps
- Adjourn

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Future meetings via zoom:

January 25

February 22

March 15

April 12

May 17

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(January 25, 2022 – 11:00AM – 12:30 PM)**

*Present:*

*T. Callahan, D. Cunningham, J. Joseph, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan, P. Tran, M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson*

- Welcome and brief check-in
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Approval of 12.14 Minutes (unanimous)
- Further Reflections our Sharing re: the Inspiration of STM and Future Possibilities
- Discussion on STM Charism
- Integrating the Charism of STM into the University – Discussion on curriculum, methodology, the Center's discernment work, and overall purpose of sustaining community
- Create a Questionnaire – Discussion on process for doing so.
- Adjourn

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Future meetings via zoom:

February 22

March 15

April 12

May 17

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(February 22, 11-12:20)**

Present:

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan,  
P. Tran, M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson*

- Welcome and brief check-In
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Approval of 1.25.22 Minutes – Approval will be at the 3.15.22 meeting.
- Reviewing Survey Responses - Conversation
- Discussion on Listening Sessions in March
- Next Steps
- Adjourn

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Future meetings via zoom:

March 15

April 12

May 17

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(March 15, 11-12:20)**

*Present:*

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan,  
M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson*

- Welcome and brief check-In
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Approval of 1.25.22 and 2.22.22 Minutes – Minutes are approved unanimously
- Discussion - learnings/themes from the input received via the three zoom “Furthering the Conversation” sessions, as well as the written survey responses (208 respondents)
- Next Steps: Committee will consider the process of drafting a report
- Adjourn

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Future meetings via zoom:

April 12

May 17

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(April 12, 11-12:20)**

Present:

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan,  
M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson*

- Welcome and brief check-In
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Approval of 3.15.22 Minutes – unanimous
- Sharing the current context at Seattle University
- Proposing a Framework for a Final Report
- Ideas and Recommendations for Spring 2023
- Next Steps
- Adjourn

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Future meetings via zoom:

April 28<sup>th</sup>

May 24

June (TBD)

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(April 28, 10:00 to 11:30 AM)**

*Present:*

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, M. Riggers, D. Teevan, M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson, P. Tran*

- Welcome and brief check-In
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Approval of 4.12.22 Minutes – unanimous
- Framework Determined Observation Report and Executive Summary from STM Committee
- Ideas and Recommendations for Spring 2023
- Adjourn

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Future meetings via zoom:

May 24<sup>th</sup>

June (TBD)

**STM Committee  
Meeting via Zoom  
(May 24, 12-1:30)**

*Present:*

*T. Callahan, A. Cannady-Smith, D. Cunningham, E. Martin, J. O'Brien, J. Orlando, D. Teevan, M. Trice, C. Nsame, E. Donalson, P. Tran, J. Joseph, M. Riggers*

- Welcome and brief check-in
- Opening reflection/prayer
- Approval of 4.28.22 Minutes – unanimous
- Review/edit/share ideas on: themes and quotes; observations; recommendations for the provost - general appreciation for edits/idea suggestions
- Adjourn

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Future meeting via zoom:

June 17, 2-3 pm - concluding meeting with Provost Martin