



To: Members of the STM Committee

From: Provost Shane P. Martin

Date: July 27, 2022

Re: Response to STM Committee Report

Dear Colleagues on the STM Committee,

It is a privilege for me to write this letter of response to your recently submitted final report titled: *Lifting Up the Inspiration at the Heart of the School of Theology and Ministry: Insights from the STM Committee, 2020-21*.

Let me first express my sincere thanks for the dedication, creativity and sustained energy that you invested in the work of the committee this past year. In the midst of a full range of other commitments, you gave significant time to this effort and on behalf of the university I thank you for the way each of you prioritized this undertaking.

I also want to acknowledge, as I did with you when we spoke, the significant grief, loss and anger that was generated by the decision in May 2020 to close the School of Theology and Ministry. STM has a rich and profound legacy in educating and forming ministers and spiritual leaders and practitioners in many settings in our region and beyond. Without a doubt, the closing of such a school is a genuine loss and I want to fully recognize that.

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to have read this report in depth, and to share in a meeting with all of you on June 17 when we spoke about its contents. It is clear that your inspiration to gather input from the extended STM community by creating and distributing the survey, holding zoom follow-up listening sessions, and organizing and assessing the responses has generated significant insights into the inspiration or charisma at the heart of the School of Theology and Ministry, and that is a gift to the university and to all those connected with STM.

I was impressed by the way the respondents recognized the strength of the integrated educational approach at STM, bringing together theological understanding, spiritual formation and pastoral practice. This approach provided a meaningful and impactful educational environment for each student, which so many respondents highlighted.

There also was a broad appreciation for the ecumenical nature of the school bringing together a broad range of denominations, the interreligious engagement that became a feature of the way STM educated students, and the generous welcome that was extended to a diverse population of students. All of these contributed to a rich and growthful learning community, and to an experience that respondents felt truly prepared them to move forward and share their gifts of ministry and leadership with the broader community. It is clear that this combination of factors helped students commit more deeply to their chosen ministry, to the work of justice, and to continuing to collaborate across faith traditions.

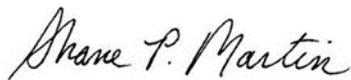
As I mentioned in our meeting, I intend to bring the insights of this report into the ongoing work of the university, for example into the effort to reimagine our curriculum that is currently underway in our Reigniting Strategic Directions efforts. I also will invite other key units on campus to engage with the themes surfaced in this survey, including relevant centers and institutes, mission and ministry offices, and the work of our department of Theology and Religious Studies.

Additionally, I see an important role that can be played by the Office of Alumni Relations, ideally creating a way for members of the STM community to connect with one another and to maintain and deepen the bonds established through shared experiences at STM.

While the School of Theology and Ministry will close in June of 2023, Seattle University is committed to continuing to be a place of connection and discovery for all of those who are part of the extended STM community in the years ahead.

Again, thank you so much for your dedicated work as part of this committee this past year, for your faithful participation, and for your persistent efforts that lifted up the voices of the STM community and helped articulate the significance and the power of the inspiration that has been at the heart of the School of Theology and Ministry.

With my sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shane P. Martin".

Shane P. Martin  
Provost