

THE REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON LEADERSHIP FORMATION FOR MINISTRY
(OCTOBER 29, 2014 VERSION)

**Faithful, Effective and Learned Leaders for the Church We Are Becoming:
A Competency-Based Approach to Ministerial Education and Formation**

Recommendations

The Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry recommends:

1. That The United Church of Canada adopt a competency-based approach to equipping and evaluating people for leadership in ministry and mission.
2. That The United Church of Canada affirm that assessing the academic readiness and competence for leadership in ministry and mission is a core responsibility of the church and, therefore, that the tradition of naming specific schools as *testamur*-granting be discontinued.
3. That The United Church of Canada affirm its relationship with its theological schools, and education and retreat centres, and recognize their on-going contribution to the formation and education of church leadership by continuing to provide funding for representative institutions as outlined in this document.
4. That United Church of Canada affirm the contribution of the Designated Lay Ministries Program, currently hosted at St. Andrew's College, and continue to provide funding as long as this program is required.
5. That the General Secretary authorize the creation of an inter-unit implementation task group to implement the competency approach, and to integrate it with other leadership formation and education initiatives that have been, or may be, approved: the *One Order of Ministry* proposal of the Joint Ministry Group, the *Report of the Candidacy Pathways Pilot Project Steering Group*, and the *Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relations* initiative.

Mandate and Membership of the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry: see [Appendix A](#).

List of Groups and Individuals Consulted: see [Appendix B](#).

Background, Description and Rationale

Faithful and effective leaders are vital to the fulfilling of the church's vocation in the world. We know this because from his calling of the twelve disciples to his farewell at the last supper, to his crucifixion Jesus taught and embodied transformative leadership. We know this because evidence-base data, like that used as the basis for the 2010 *Call to Action* report of the United Methodist Church, confirms that effective pastoral leadership

is among the top 4 “drivers of vitality” in communities of faith. We also know this to be true anecdotally as each of us observes the connection between strong leadership and United Church congregations that are responding to the needs of their contexts with imagination and impact. This does not imply that poor leadership is the sole cause when congregations flounder. Nor does it mean that an excellent ministerial leader should be solely credited for a congregation’s success. The reality is more complex. Nevertheless, as Moderator Gary Paterson wrote in his March 2013 blog, reflecting the conviction of the Comprehensive Review Task Group: “...leadership is absolutely key to the ‘new church’, whatever it’s going to look like.”

This being true, three key questions present themselves:

1. What kinds of leaders are needed for the church we are becoming?
2. What knowledge and skills do these leaders need in order to be faithful and effective?
3. What church policies and practices will best form, educate and equip these leaders for ministry and mission in the 21st Century?

These are the questions the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry used as the basis for its conversations and consultations across the denomination, and beyond. Virtually every other mainline denomination in North America has been wrestling with the same questions, and they certainly are not new questions to us. Few topics over the history of The United Church of Canada have been as discussed, studied and reported on as “theological education”. As financial resources and student numbers have dwindled in recent decades the debate over theological education has intensified and narrowed into a perennial discussion regarding the adequacy of General Council’s financial support for its theological schools. All the previous studies and reports have been helpful resources to the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry in its deliberations, and it believes a competency-based approach to ministry represents a newly relevant and responsive articulation of the United Church’s historic commitment to having an educated ministry.

In his opening address to the 2014 biennial meeting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, director Dan Aleshire began by declaring, “All of the future has a history, but not all of history has a future.” The competency-based approach being proposed here is an attempt to give a future to the best of our past, and to let go of assumptions, policies and practices that are proving to be obstacles to moving forward. It is both interesting, and troubling, that in recent decades an inordinate amount of time and energy has been spent addressing matters of less and less foundational importance. This is one of the signs that we have been caught in a pattern of trying to make technical fixes to problems and issues that are actually adaptive challenges. This proposal is an attempt to rise to the adaptive challenges that the United Church’s current approach is struggling to accommodate.

Recommendation 1: That The United Church of Canada adopt a competency-based approach to equipping and evaluating people for leadership in ministry and mission.

Under the current policies of The United Church of Canada, candidates for commissioning and ordination, and those seeking to become Designated Lay Ministers, are required to attend a limited number of United Church-related schools and programs, where they must complete a specified degree or diploma. A more complete description of these policies can be found in [Appendix C](#).

The United Church's current approach is problematic in two notable ways: 1) It puts strict limits on where candidates and students can receive their education; 2) By making the possession of a degree or diploma a requirement for ordination, commissioning or recognition, it does not adequately acknowledge that there are other ways that knowledge and skills are obtained. This causes undue hardship to people and excludes potential leaders.

In one sense, requiring students to attend only United Church schools and programs reveals that there remains some expectation that schools will fulfill the traditional seminary function as inculcators of United Church ethos and theologies. The schools see this as one of their contributions to the United Church, and students consistently name this as a valuable benefit in attending a school related to the United Church. The Working Group believes, however, that there are additional ways to experience and learn United Church ethos without causing the hardships related to restricting where people can enroll. The policy restricting approved schools and programs also contributed to the viability of the schools by ensuring that the relatively small pool of candidates and students was distributed among the fewest possible regionally based United Church schools. The Working group acknowledges that removal of this restriction will require further changes and adaptations by some of the schools.

Requiring that people seeking to enter ministry must earn a degree or diploma from a United Church school has been one of the ways the United Church has sought to fulfill its expectations of having properly educated ministry personnel who are able to function pastorally and theologically within the United Church of Canada. There are several assumptions underlying this expectation that need to be critically examined more fully in another context. For the purposes of this proposal, however, the important matter is the cumulative effect of requiring specific academic credentials of people (as opposed to assessing what they know), and limiting where those credentials must be obtained.

The Working group heard from, or about, faith communities:

- that have been in a perennial struggle to find ministry personnel who have travelled the required educational pathway
- that are linguistic-specific congregations of The United Church of Canada that have difficulty finding a minister already resident in Canada who can speak their language
- that are immigrant congregations wishing to enter The United Church of Canada but whose current minister does not meet the specific educational qualifications of The United Church of Canada, and who is unable to engage in the required

program of study because they are supporting their extended families through their job(s).

The Working Group also heard from, or about, individuals:

- who are not in a position to enter ministry because they cannot incur the additional debt of re-locating to study (most schools offer tuition support, but the cost of living remains a significant source of student debt)
- who cannot find a nearby appointment to fulfill a core requirement of the in-ministry programs
- whose spouse and/or children cannot be relocated because of jobs and schooling
- who cannot relocate because they are caring for a dependent parent
- who have significant theological knowledge in addition to many of the “non-traditional” skills now required for many forms of ministry and mission, such as community development, social enterprise, global justice, and initiatives in international ecumenical or intercultural collaboration. This group often hears from the church “Your knowledge, experience and skills will serve you well once you are in ministry, but first you must go to school and get your degree.” This mindset, and its accompanying policies, is a source of immense frustration, especially for younger people. Globally wired and networked digital natives are gaining knowledge and abilities quite apart from traditional educational institutions, and the church’s inability to credit this knowledge is a source of discouragement.
- who teach, or have taught, in a theological school, and who have many years of offering leadership in the United Church, but who would be required to enroll in a full M.Div. or Diploma in Diaconal Ministries program in order to be ordained or commissioned.
- whose academic credentials, obtained at a non-United Church theological school, are not recognized by our denomination and are required to begin all over again at a United Church school. This reality is especially troubling because the largest number of people the church puts in this position are from two groups: those who come from an evangelical background; and people belonging to racialized communities who possess degrees or diplomas from universities or colleges in the developing world. It is in the interest of the church to have a diverse leadership representing the broad theological and racial spectrum of The United Church of Canada.

In light of these realities, the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry is proposing a competency-based approach to formation and education that will:

- continue the United Church’s commitment to having an educated, faithful and effective leadership
- increase accessibility and inclusion
- recognize prior learning
- prepare “non-traditional” leaders for emerging diverse expressions of mission
- improve stewardship of intellectual, spiritual, and financial resources

The Competency-based Approach

In a competency-based approach, the church is prepared to ordain, commission, or recognize people if they are able to demonstrate that they possess the necessary competencies for the expression of ministry into which they are being called. It does not matter how a person gains the necessary competencies. A degree program, combined with a Supervised Ministry Education experience (an internship or an in-ministry degree program), will still be an excellent, tried and true, learning pathway that provides proficiency in a great many of the competencies. In addition to the excellent theological schools affiliated with The United Church of Canada, however, people will be able to obtain their theological degrees from an educational institution of their choice. If they choose this option, they will still be required to demonstrate competence in, and commitment to, the ethos and polity of The United Church of Canada. The United Church of Christ has been using a competency-based approach since 2005 and reports that a strong majority of people are still choosing the M.Div. as their chosen pathway to achieving the competencies. The Working Group expects that this will also be the case for The United Church of Canada, but the M.Div. or Diploma in Diaconal Ministries, or the Designated Lay Ministry program currently hosted at St. Andrew's College will no longer be the sole pathways.

Using *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry*, and a forthcoming document outlining culturally-appropriate competencies for Aboriginal ministries, the competencies a person brings into the candidacy process from previous education and experience is evaluated through a formal prior learning assessment, and an Individual Education and Formation Plan is developed that will guide the person as they move forward to achieve the remaining competencies. This Plan may include ways a person can achieve some competencies via non-degree pathways e.g. individual courses taken at any number of schools; intensive supervised training like Clinical Pastoral Education; supervised ministry as a Candidate or Student Supply; mentored projects and/or community involvements; certificate or diploma programs; mentored reading and individual study; teaching from elders; time-intensive workshops; cohort learning etc.

Studies taken at centres of transformational adult learning, like the United Church's education and retreat centres, may also be recognized as effective means of achieving some competencies. Innovative programming offered by the EDGE Network and regionally-based initiatives, like B.C. Conference's *LeaderShift*, will be similarly recognized and promoted. Such recognition should, in turn, till the ground for the planting and growth of further grassroots, context-responsive, leadership development initiatives. Again—the focus is not so much on how the person achieved the competencies, but on their *demonstrated* readiness to engage in faithful and effective ministry.

Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry document

At the heart of this new approach is a process of life-long discernment and assessment employing a comprehensive description of competencies as its primary resource, guide and tool. These competencies for non-Aboriginal ministries are currently contained in a single document that applies to all expressions of ministry: *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry*. This document is an updated version of the *Learning Outcomes for Ministry* document approved by the Executive of General Council in 2007. The complete

revised document can be found in [Appendix D](#). It clusters specific competencies into four broad categories:

1. Personal, Spiritual, and Vocational Formation for Ministry
2. Knowledge and Skills for Ministry and Mission
3. Cultural, Contextual, and Global Literacy
4. Leadership

Lifelong, Discernment, Education, and Assessment

The processes of discernment and assessment do not end once a person becomes a candidate or DLM applicant, although the language we often use suggests this: “Finally, I have finished my discernment!” Every person in ministry will serve in multiple contexts over the course of fulfilling their vocation. Deciding which context God is calling one into requires careful discernment, and assessment of knowledge and skills. Furthermore, when a call into a new context is answered, one must discern what must be learned to serve effectively, and an Individual Education and Formation Plan should be developed in concert with one’s faith community. This Plan then becomes the touchstone for pursuing continuing education and is a valuable resource for the *Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relations* initiative. *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry* would well serve both ministry sites and Ministry Personnel in the search and selection process, and would be a touchstone document in the church’s exercise of oversight and accountability of leaders. It could also be a tool for discernment and assessment regarding continuing education plans that strengthen leaders’ competence for effective leadership in their current contexts for ministry and mission. Discernment is a life-long endeavour. It begins with one’s initial feeling of being called into ministry and continues until retirement—and even beyond. For an outline of what an integrated United Church culture of on-going call, discernment and assessment might look like, refer to [Appendix E](#).

In the candidacy phase of discernment, the church must be vigilant in ensuring that the description of competencies is not used as a “checklist” applied in a perfectionist manner to every person. It is, rather, a tool for discernment and dialogue between the person and the church used in a constructive way to plot an educational and formational pathway for each individual according to their calling, knowledge and circumstances. Equal vigilance will be needed to prevent any one notion of “leadership” from dominating the church’s assessment of a person’s progress. It remains true today that, “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” (I Cor. 12: 4-7)

The *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry* document will be applied in a **developmental** way: as self-initiating and life-long learners, candidates and DLM applicants will grow in their competencies throughout their lives in ministry, and pursue learning pathways to new competencies as they find themselves in new and unexpected ministry contexts. *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry* will be applied in a **dynamic** way: no person will be expected to achieve the same depth in each and every competency area. People will display competencies in varying degrees of consistency and

depth, the key question being, “Does the person demonstrate the desired competency at an acceptable level?”

How deep a person’s competence needs to be is partially determined by the expression, and location, of ministry to which a person feels called. A person feeling called to plant churches, for instance, will need competence in community development, practical theologies of mission, and entrepreneurialism that will not necessarily be needed by someone called to be a chaplain—and vice versa. Those being called into ordained ministry will be expected to demonstrate a significant competence in biblical studies and theology that will not be expected of Designated Lay Ministers. *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry* will be understood to be **aspirational** in nature: the aim of a competency-based approach of discernment is to promote growth and assess readiness to move into ministerial leadership, not to keep people out of leadership until they have reached the highest level of excellence. By its very nature this approach is **relational** as the church must become well acquainted with each person. Finally, because the content of *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry* will change and evolve as new forms of ministry and leadership emerge, the competency-based approach is **adaptive**.

A Brief Outline of the Process and Procedures (for a broad schematic outline refer to [Appendix F](#))

- A person hears either an inner or outer call to ministry, and seeks to test and discern this call with a regionally-based Assessment Board. Together they may decide that the person’s calling lies elsewhere.
- The inquirer and the Assessment Board discern together which of the expressions of ministry the person is being called into (ordained, diaconal, designated lay ministry, or a form of congregationally-based lay ministry)
- Once this is discerned, the assessment process begins. This process has 3 phases:
 - i. **Initial Assessment:** is an extensive process of evaluating the gifts, qualifications, and developmental needs of an individual using *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry*. This evaluation will examine such things as a person’s transcripts of formal education and training, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), demonstrated expertise and knowledge, ministry experience, life circumstance and experience, demonstrated and evident spiritual giftedness. In addition psychological, vocational, leadership, intercultural, personality assessment tools could be used. The main outcome of the Initial Assessment is a person’s Individual Education and Formation Plan (IEFP). This plan will give shape and define the programs and endeavours in which a person will participate as a means to make progress in gaining competence in the named areas.
 - ii. **On-Going Assessment:** is a process of annual review to monitor a person’s progress in meeting the goals of his/her IEFP. These reviews allow for adjustment and adaptation of the IEFP and the individual initial discernment of which expression of ministry she/he feels called into.

- iii. **Assessment for Ordination, Commissioning, and Recognition:** is a summative assessment that reviews and builds on all that is known about the person from Initial and Ongoing Assessments, a person's portfolio (transcripts, supervision & education reports, projects, self and peer assessments etc.), and the assessment groups experience while accompanying the individual. *Competencies for Faithful and Effective Ministry* is the primary measure for determining readiness for ordination, commissioning or recognition.
- Candidates and DLM applicants will be responsible for maintaining an educational & formational portfolio. As a person moves through the equipping phase of their preparation, evidence is added to their portfolio demonstrating how they are meeting the goals of their IEFP through education, training, supervised ministry experiences, projects, reading, mentoring etc.

Specific Challenges Moving Forward

The competency-based approach received an extremely positive reception by the great majority of those with whom the Working Group consulted. Four concerns about a competency-based approach, were raised over and over again, however:

1. **Will the church ensure that the Regional Assessment Boards are highly competent?** The integrity of this approach rises and falls with the real and perceived competence of the Regional Assessment Boards to carry out effective and supportive assessment and accompaniment. For this approach to function, and to not do harm to individuals, members of Assessment Boards must be carefully chosen for their emotional maturity, spiritual depth, experience in the church and its ministries, wisdom, and commitment to their ministry as members of an Assessment Board. This group, which will include a balance of men and women, lay people and members of the Order of Ministry, must also be trained. It will be ideal if there are members with specific expertise in educational assessment, theological education, prior learning assessment, psychological or vocational assessment, and spiritual guidance. Few Boards will possess all the needed expertise and experience, however. The General Council must ensure, therefore, that every Assessment Board has access to the expertise it needs to effectively carry out its responsibilities. This must include assistance and resourcing from General Council staff.
2. **Will the church have the capacity to implement and sustain a competency-based approach?** The approach of assessment and accompaniment being proposed will require a significant dedication of time and energy from the members of the Assessment Boards. Each Board need not be large (6-8), and when Boards feel they have reached the limit of the number of people they can assess and accompany, additional Assessment Boards can be created. Nevertheless, as those who have been involved in the Candidacy Pathways Pilot Projects will attest, a person-centered, relational approach can be exhausting if it is not structurally supported, properly staffed, and receiving ongoing training as

members rotate out. Competency assessment approaches have long been used in the educational programs of many non-church professions. In addition, almost all the United Church related schools and programs have been employing a competency-based approach to education. This means that a large body of printed resources, and significant numbers of United Church people with decades of experience, will be available to The United Church to further develop and implement its competency-based approach to leadership education and formation.

3. **Will this approach result in the lowering of educational standards and, therefore, a less educated body of ministry personnel?** This is the concern that is, in some ways, the most difficult to address because often underlying it is the assumption that the M.Div. is the “gold standard” against which all other credentials should be judged. In the imagination of many, possessing an M.Div. degree is synonymous with being “competent.” Those without an M.Div. degree are, thereby, considered to be less, or less than, competent. This assumption has been slowly cracking under the weight of contrary evidence for a number of years, as the excellent ministries of Diaconal Ministers, Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre graduates, and Designated Lay Ministers have become impossible to deny. The Association of Theological Schools, the body that accredits theological schools, has acknowledged for quite some time that the M.Div. is as much a professional development degree as it is an academic degree.

What the church and academy call “educated” has long been an evolving definition. In a changing world, this is a good and necessary thing. The Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry believes that the shift of focus from specific degree requirements to demonstrated competencies is the next adaptive step. There will be an initially unsettling leveling of distinctions of status based on education as the excellence in ministry is judged by non-traditional measures, and as leaders who have arrived via non-traditional paths lead thriving communities of faith. Like all education, the M.Div. program is a means to a larger end, and for many people it will be the path they choose toward ordination, commissioning or recognition. The adoption of a competency-based approach, however, will begin an era when other means to the same end are equally accepted, and celebrated, by the church. That era will also see the definition of “educated” expand to include pathways to knowledge and skills that cannot be easily accommodated by theological schools already stretched to their limits by providing core areas of academic theological study.

Just as there is now, a percentage of candidates and students will continue to feel the call to pursue post-graduate academic studies, perhaps with an eye to teaching at a theological school. As long as the church calls self-initiating and life-long learners into leadership, the desire to learn more broadly and deeply will remain. The vocation of the theological scholar is one that the church will continue to need. The Working Group encourages the United Church to give a higher profile to this vocation, and to invite its recognized scholars into an even greater participation in its life and work.

4. Will this competency-based approach adversely affect the theological schools?

It will certainly change things for the schools, although it is difficult to predict how adverse the changes will be in the long-term. Some people will choose alternate educational pathways, others whom the church at an earlier time would have compelled to take a degree or diploma program will no longer be required to do so, and still others will choose to attend a non-United Church school. There is no way to accurately predict these numbers, but for our smaller theological schools especially, the loss of even a few students each year is a serious matter. It is hoped that, as the educational needs of individuals in a competency-based approach emerge, the schools will see opportunities to innovate and deliver new programs.

The results of a recent informal survey of currently enrolled and recently graduated students bode well for the theological schools. The great majority of respondents said that if the requirement to study in a United Church school had not been in place, they would still have enrolled in one. They valued the chance to study in an atmosphere that reflects United Church ethos, inclusivity, and theology, with United Church faculty, and in a learning community that included other United Church students. The generous tuition subsidies, scholarships, and bursaries available for United Church students at schools related to the United Church were also named as an important factor. Most of those people who said they would have chosen a non-United Church school, acknowledged the loss of these benefits in their choice. The hope was expressed that, if needed, the church would help them to further their experience of United Church ethos and polity.

The Working Group also hopes that, should Recommendation 3 of this proposal be adopted, the increased United Church presence in the schools will also serve to attract candidates and students.

At the October 1-4, 2014 meeting of the Theological Schools Circle (Principals, Keeper, and Deans), the schools and General Council staff agreed to continue constructive discussion during the implementation phase regarding several on-going matters of common concern.

The Leaders We Need for the Church We Are Becoming

Even if The United Church of Canada implements an excellent competency-based approach to education and formation, it will be not transformative unless people with certain gifts, qualities and mindsets are being called into leadership. The leadership challenge before the church is larger than educational pathways and programs. Given this, the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry sought responses in its consultations to the question, “What kind of person does the church need in leadership?” The most common answers were that we need people who:

- have a deep and questing Christian faith
- have a strong, loving character
- are psychologically and spiritually healthy
- have a resilient emotional and relational intelligence

- are proactive, self-directed, lifelong learners
- have a capacity for critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and networking
- have gifts and skills for adaptive, transitional leadership
- have a global, justice-seeking/justice-living worldview
- bring an entrepreneurial mindset to community development and social enterprise
- have gifts for leading from the front with humility

It is worth noting how many of these qualities are the same ones that will be needed for people to thrive in a competency-based approach to their education and formation. Some of these qualities the church needs in its leaders overlap with the knowledge, skills and abilities the church needs in its leadership. The shift in language from “leaders” to “leadership” is one that the Working Group has been conscious of. To speak too narrowly of “The kind of leader the church needs looks like this...!” runs the risk of being blinded to the wonderful diversity of gifts, knowledge, skills, strengths and weaknesses of the people God is calling into ministry. We all have an opinion of whom the United Church needs as leaders but, as the biblical story illustrates time and time again, God’s gracious purposes are usually more inspired and generous than all our varied opinions combined. By speaking of the kind of “leadership” the church needs, by contrast, we acknowledge that God’s church-in-mission is well served by having a wide diversity of leaders in its leadership. This conviction will hopefully keep us vigilant in ensuring that in exercising its important ministry of discernment and assessment our church does not lay the template of a single, idealized leader on top of every candidate and DLM applicant.

This does not mean that the church ought not to name “core” areas of knowledge for all its ministry personnel regardless of the expression or social location in which a person is leading. Is faithful and effective Christian leadership possible, for instance, if a minister does not have a thorough understanding of the Christian story as revealed in our scriptures? Nor need this thwart the church’s desire to name specific abilities and skill-sets needed for its particular era and context. The Working Group heard an oft-repeated call, for instance, for ministers in congregational settings to have strong, adaptive, organizational management and leadership skills. These particular competencies, therefore, would be highlighted by Regional Assessment Boards in their discernment with, and assessment of, people feeling called into congregational/organizational ministries. They may not be as highlighted when working with people feeling called into other forms of ministry. The competency-based approach holds the promise of more fully naming, actualizing and releasing each person’s distinctive gifts and abilities, enriching the leadership of The United Church of Canada for the sake of the world: “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ...the body does not consist of one member but of many...now you are the body of Christ...” (1 Cor. 12; 14; 27)

Recommendation 2: That The United Church of Canada affirm that assessing the academic readiness and competence for leadership in ministry and mission is a core responsibility of the church and, therefore, that the tradition of naming specific schools as *testamur*-granting be discontinued.

The current practice of having approved schools with the right to grant *testamur* is not required in a competency-based approach. Successful completion of degrees and courses will be among the important ways many individuals demonstrate their competencies. They will not be the sole method of demonstrating knowledge competencies, however.

Even while the tradition of *testamur* will be transformed into a competency-based approach, it is still to be hoped that the schools will continue to participate in the church's assessment of the suitability and progress of candidates and students in some of the following ways:

- As they currently do, the schools would add their voices into the church's assessment of the suitability and progress of each person who is enrolled in the M.Div. or CCS Diploma program.
- When possible, members of faculty would offer their educational expertise as members of, or advisors to, regional Assessment Boards. When such membership is not possible, the church would greatly benefit from the willingness of faculty members to be available for consultations regarding the competency claims of specific candidates and students.
- In its 2014 proposal to the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry entitled *Funding Faculty: A New Model*, the Theological Schools Circle (Principals, Keeper, & Deans) identified 127 members of their faculties who were available to United Church students in 2014. The report suggests that approximately 50% of these faculty members could comprise a "National United Church Faculty Pool". The members of this pool would offer their rich and diverse gifts to the church.
- The June 2013 gathering in Toronto of the broad community of those involved in education for church leadership (including candidates and students) demonstrated the immense value of bringing together church leaders with educators engaged in ministries of equipping people for ministry and mission. It is hoped that such gatherings will be held on a regular basis as a vehicle for support, education, networking, consultation, and the celebration of the diverse educational ministries associated with The United Church of Canada.

Recommendation 3: That The United Church of Canada affirm its relationship with its theological schools, and education and retreat centres, and recognize their on-going contribution to the formation and education of church leadership by continuing to provide funding for representative institutions as outlined in this document.

All of the theological schools and education and retreat centres will continue to be key partners and participants in making a rich variety of learning opportunities available to the people of The United Church of Canada. As became clear at the January 2014 consultation, and in the *Funding Faculty: A New Model* proposal from the Theological Schools Circle, the schools are seeking to renew and strengthen their partnership with The United Church of Canada. In appreciation of this opportunity, the Working Group is recommending continued financial support for the currently funded schools and the education centres: St. Andrew's College, Centre for Christian Studies, Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, Emmanuel College, Le Séminaire Uni, Atlantic School of Theology, Naramata Centre, Five Oaks Centre and Tatamagouche Centre. It is also being

recommended that annual funding for the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) be reinstated. The purpose of General Council funding for school and centres will change, however.

Instead of providing funds to financially support broad operational budgets, the General Council will divide the available funding for United Church faculty positions according to the following apportionment recommended by the Theological Schools Circle (Principals, Keeper & Deans):

Atlantic School of Theology	1.5
Le Séminaire Uni	1.0
Emmanuel College	2.0
Centre for Christian Studies	1.0
Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre	1.0
St. Andrew's College	1.0
Vancouver School of Theology	1.0
Total	8.5 faculty positions

Some operational funding will continue to be granted to the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, and the Centre for Christian Studies in recognition of the historic and ongoing commitment of The United Church to contexts and expressions of ministry that prepare people for Aboriginal and Diaconal ministries.

In its October 3, 2014 document, *Consensus Statement to the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry* (Appendix G) the Theological Schools Circle identified a number of important issues requiring further conversation between the schools and the General Council. These discussions should continue and feed into the development of the implementation plan.

In the case of the 3 education and retreat centres, they will continue to receive annual grants that may be used to support operational budgets. Further conversations with the General Council to ensure that sufficient programming offered by the centres respond to the needs and priorities of The United Church of Canada will be held in the implementation of this report's recommendations.

Recommendation 4: That United Church of Canada affirm the contribution of the Designated Lay Ministries Program, currently hosted at St. Andrew's College, and continue to provide funding as long as this program is required.

The *One Order of Ministry* proposal from the Joint Ministry Working Group recommends a number of significant changes to the Designated Lay Ministry (DLM) program of study. Should these recommendations be adopted, the status and future of the existing 3 year program located at St. Andrew's College will be under serious discussion as part of the implementation of a new approach to preparing people for Designated Lay Ministry. The students, staff and St. Andrew's College will need the assurance that the existing DLM program will continue during the implementation phase, and that the progress of students currently in the program will not be disrupted should a new educational approach be phased-in by the General Council.

Recommendation 5: That the General Secretary authorize the creation of an inter-unit implementation task group to implement the competency approach, and to integrate it with other leadership formation and education initiatives that have been, or may be, approved: the *One Order of Ministry* proposal of the Joint Ministry Group, the *Report of the Candidacy Pathways Pilot Project Steering Group*, and the *Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relations* initiative.

The months following General Council 42 will provide an important opportunity to coordinate and integrate the approved recommendations of the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry in regards to adopting a competency-based approach to formation and education, the recommendations of the Joint Ministry Working Group on creating *One Order of Ministry*, and those of the Candidacy Pathways Steering Group regarding new practices related to discernment, candidacy, and assessment. The Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry is extremely optimistic that these three initiatives can be integrated into a coherent and coordinated set of policies and procedures. This work will require the coordinated effort and intentionality of an implementation group with representation from both the Church in Mission and the Ministry and Employment units.

That such an implementation group must cross the boundary separating two General Council units points to a further issue obstructing the creation of a coherent and integrated “whole cloth” approach to leadership formation and education. As it currently stands, there is a disjointed patchwork of policies, procedures, and leadership initiatives distributed between two separate units. The Ministry and Employment unit works in the areas of leadership recruitment, vocations, candidacy, and internship for leadership within the domestic ministries of The United Church of Canada. Meanwhile, theological education, including liaising with the theological schools and education centres, along with leadership recruitment, preparation, and internship for global ministries are currently the purview of the Church in Mission unit. Not only is this domestic/global bifurcation administratively very cumbersome, but it is also based on an outmoded understanding of leadership in the 21st century. Faithful and effective leaders are those who have been formed by both domestic and global experience, and are able to function in a culturally and racially diverse world in which the global/domestic distinction has all but completely evaporated. To have integrated leadership for the church it is becoming, The United Church of Canada needs fully integrated policies, procedures, and practices.