



BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS

FORMING LEADERS FOR THE CHURCH

2020-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN (revised)

Approved by the Board of Directors October 17, 2023, January 21, 2025

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND VISION

As the Byzantine Catholic Seminary we form leaders for the Church who continue the mission mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ, to “go...make disciples of all nations”...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19-20) that they may “have the light of life” (John 8:12). (Red font is proposed changes that will be reviewed by the Board on 5-18-21)

As a Catholic community of formation, we discern and nurture the gift of vocation granted by the Holy Spirit to those men called to a life of ordained ministry.

As a theological center and resource for lifelong learning, we hand on the Tradition of the Christian East for those men and women who seek to serve and enrich the life of the Church and to engage the world in theological reflection, dialogue, and witness.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board of Commissioners of The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) reaffirmed on February 7, 2020, the accreditation of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius for a period of ten years, through March 31, 2030. With this reaffirmation announcement, the strategic planning committee comprised of every segment of the Seminary, began building a new strategic plan for the period 2020-2029 (the next comprehensive evaluation visit is scheduled in fall of 2029, one term before the end of the period of accreditation). The planning process involved forming three subcommittees within the strategic planning committee. Their charge was to identify where our attention should be directed for the next 10 years. They were encouraged to develop strategic goals to 1) give attention to specific areas identified by A.T.S. for needed growth with encouragement not to lose sight of our recognized achievements, 2) identify institutional goals to strengthen the foundation of the seminary for the next generation, and 3) include specific goals and action

steps to respond to A.T.S. requirements to respond to three required reports addressing areas of needed improvement. Specifically,

1. April 1, 2022, report regarding an institutional development program essential to developing financial resources.
2. May 1, 2024, report regarding the improvement to the school's use of information technology resources to train faculty for competency in the fulsome use of instructional learning platforms for synchronous and asynchronous student learning; and to secure personnel capable of providing institutional information technology services.
3. November 1, 2025, report regarding the provision of a hospitable environment for work, study and everyday activities given, that "theological schools should strive to eliminate physical or architectural barriers that exclude or deter people that live with a disability."

Understanding their charge, each subcommittee worked diligently to prepare goals and actions steps to accomplish their assignments. The subcommittees worked throughout the fall 2020 semester as well as meeting as a collective group to share and discuss their progress. The Director of Accreditation was responsible for providing the oversight of the strategic planning process along with her participation with a Steering Committee consisting of the Rector, the Academic Dean/Director of Intellectual Formation, and the Director of Human Formation. In January 2021, a draft strategic plan was developed and through May, it was shared with all the constituents of the Seminary to include the faculty, staff, seminarians, administrators, board of directors, and an external ad hoc group of graduates. Their comments, thoughts, and reactions were solicited realizing the importance of their opinions on a plan that would affect the Seminary for the next ten years.

Revised: The Program for Priest Formation (P.P.F.), 6th edition was developed by the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. It was promulgated on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 24, 2022, and was to be observed in all seminaries in the USA effective August 4, 2023. Recognizing the efforts to review and implement the new P.P.F in one year, the Strategic Planning Committee proposed the addition of a 9th Goal to the Strategic Plan. On October 17, 2023, the Board of Directors reached consensus to accept this goal and revision to the Strategic Plan.

The 2020-2029 strategic plan includes nine goals. Each goal includes objectives as well as corresponding action steps to be accomplished:

- Goal 1:** To articulate and promote a new vision for the Seminary's Community of Aspirants.
- Goal 2:** To develop a D. Min. degree program for seminarian and MAT-Chaplaincy graduates.
- Goal 3:** To enhance technology resources.
- Goal 4:** To enhance faculty recruitment and develop a succession plan.
- Goal 5:** To create an Academic Journal.
- Goal 6:** To create an institutional development strategy essential to developing financial resources for the ongoing plans of the Seminary.
- Goal 7:** To develop a plan for a more welcoming, hospitable, accessible, and prayerful Seminary.
- Goal 8:** To develop a marketing outreach program.
- Goal 9:** To implement the new Program for Priestly Formation, 6th edition.

"The Hope of the Harvest Lies in the Planting." "For more than seventy years these words etched in the exterior of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary ... have guided us in our mission to sow the seeds of education, formation, and witness for the church and for the world.'" (BCS website 70th anniversary). The Seminary has always had to adapt to the needs of the faithful, the seminarians, and its students.

With the acknowledgement that the next ten years may be challenging for the Church, this plan includes actions step to adapt to the needs of the faithful. The plan includes action steps for our outreach and engagement with parishes as well as the consideration of ways to equip lay parish leaders. With the challenge of the viability of many Eastern Churches, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary wants to do nothing less than support any strategic initiatives that will heal, grow, and revitalize the Church. Its Mission and Vision statement affirm its role in “forming leaders for the church” of the future and “making disciples of all ...”

The eight strategic goals identified as the result of the work of the strategic planning committee are submitted to the Board of Directors for their consideration and approval.

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

(Short term goals 2021-2023; midterm goals 2024-2026; long term goals 2027 and beyond)

Goal 1: To articulate and promote a new vision for the Seminary’s Community of Aspirants.

Objective 1: Design a Residential Aspirancy Program that combines a Spirituality Year with a BA-Completion Pre-Theology Program. (mid-term goal 2024-2026)

Action Steps:

- Rector establishes a design committee from diverse Seminary stakeholders representing all pillars of formation.
- Committee designs a Spirituality Year program.
- Committee designs a Pre-Theology program tailored to the needs of men studying Eastern Catholic theology.
- Committee finds a degree-granting partner for a BA-completion program.

Objective 2: Design a Non-Residential Aspirancy Program to accompany men through all the stages of life and minor orders prior to enrollment in the residency Seminary formation. (mid-term goal 2024-2026)

Action Steps:

- Design Committee determines the scope and major parts of the Non-Residential program.
- Committee drafts job description for the Director of Aspirancy Programs.
- Committee collaborates with Director to identify external referral resources and programs.
- Committee collaborates with Director to design Seminary-provided programs.

Objective 3: Hire a Director of the Aspirancy Programs to implement, promote, and administer the two programs. (mid-term goal 2024-2026)

Action Steps:

- Board determines initial funding parameters for the director position and Aspirancy programs.
- Rector appoints search committee, which conducts search for the Director position.

Goal 2: To develop a D.Min. degree program for seminarian and MAT-Chaplaincy graduates.

Objective: Develop a ministerial doctorate for pastoral practice among Eastern Christians.
(mid-term goal 2024-2026)

Action Step:

- Complete a study based on the new A.T.S. standards to decide the possibilities of a new D.Min. degree program, and if so, determine when this should be pursued.

Goal 3: To enhance technology resources.

Objective: Enhance and sustain faculty use of technology for instructional purposes. (midterm goal 2024-2026)

Action Steps:

- Utilize staff and/or hire new staff to enhance information system architecture, infrastructure, and training/support.
- Identify ongoing classes and future classes that could be taught asynchronously.
- Expand faculty responsibilities and requirements to teach asynchronous classes.
- Develop means for faculty to enhance their skills in technology-assisted education, activities planning, counseling, and other services to better apply them to asynchronous classes.
- Assess Populi and other information/course systems.
- Write the A.T.S. report due May 1, 2024.

Goal 4: To enhance faculty recruitment and develop a succession plan.

Objective: Recruit and retain the best qualified faculty. (midterm goal 2024-2026)

Action Steps:

- Review and enhance faculty hiring procedures.
- Complete a study to decide if a succession plan model is possible, and if so, identify when it would be initiated.
- Include teaching demonstration as part of the hiring process.
- Professionalize the process as the bulk of the effort currently rests with the Academic Dean.
- Develop a method and procedures for M.Div. and MAT students after they graduate who express an interest in teaching classes.

Goal 5: To create an Academic Journal.

Objective: To meet publishing goals for the faculty. (short term goal 2021-2023)

Action Steps:

- Establish an editorial board.
- Identify editing team.
- Establish a publication schedule.
- Integrate the journal into bcs.edu website.

Goal 6: To create an institutional development strategy essential to developing financial resources for the ongoing plans of the Seminary.

Objective 1: Outline the financial assistance necessary for the future of the Seminary. (short term goal 2021-2023)

Action steps:

- Identify ongoing and future needs of the Seminary with estimated costs.
- Involve alumni for their perspective in the discussion of development and marketing.
- Involve the rector in direct engagement with parishes.
- Write the A.T.S. report due April 1, 2022.

Objective 2: Explore grants/scholarships for M.A.T. students (short long term 2021-2023)

Action steps:

- Development Office seeks information from the Pittsburgh Foundation and similar organizations.
- M.A.T. Academic Advisor contacts A.T.S. for information on financial support of students.

Goal 7: To develop a plan for a more welcoming, hospitable, accessible, and prayerful Seminary.

Objective 1: Install a 4-story elevator to improve access. (midterm goal 2024-2026)

Action steps:

- Document the planning process and timetable to raise the necessary funds.
- Write the A.T.S. report due November 1, 2025.

Objective 2: Install a new entrance, now handicap accessible. (midterm goal 2024-2026)

Action Steps:

- Review current designs vis a vis security recommendations.
- Work with project manager in seeking bids for various parts of the projects.

Objective 3: Revitalize the Chapel. (long term goals 2027 and beyond)

Action Steps:

- Submit plans for Chapel repairs to the Archbishop.
- Contact two or three design companies for bids (patching, painting, etc.)

Objective 4: Create a heritage gallery on the 3rd floor. (long term goals 2027 and beyond)

Action Steps:

- Engage with a design company.
- Design space for ephemera.
- Consider identifying an archivist and a musicologist for digital resources.
- Obtain Archepiscopal approval to complete the project.

Objective 5: Renovate seminarians/deacons living quarters

Action Steps:

- Complete a maintenance proposal to update rooms. Plan to include air conditioning, ventilation, windows, painting and repairs.
- Complete a project workplan with estimated costs.

Objective 6: Renovate and modernize the Seminary kitchen to include new floor plan, hood, and fire suppression system

Action Steps:

- Submit plans for kitchen to the Archbishop and Board for approval
- Contact two or three companies for bids and information

Goal 8: To develop a marketing outreach program.

Objective: Increase name recognition and brand awareness of the Seminary and increase student enrollment. (midterm goal 2024-2026)

Action Steps:

- Prepare a new M.A.T. recruitment video.
- Involve the seminarians in direct engagement with parishes beyond their monthly assignments.
- Revitalize the website.
- Consider ways of increasing enrollment by promoting pastoral courses for potential parish lay leaders.
- Assist with job placement for graduates.

Goal 9: To implement the new Program for Priestly Formation, 6th edition.

Objective: To review all seminary policies and procedures related to priestly formation to comply with the new Program for Priestly Formation, 6th edition. (short-term goal 2020-2023)

Action Steps:

- Establish a process for the review and implementation of the new P.P.F.
- Review and update policies, student/staff/faculty handbooks, and the academic catalog.
- Develop benchmarks to the new propaedeutic and discipleship stages of formation.
- Communicate impact of changes to the seminary community.