

Some Suggestions for Creating Professional Development Goals

Theological Field Education is an experiential learning opportunity that is focused on professional competency and personal growth, toward developing your pastoral identity and imagination – your sense of who you are as a minister . During your field placement, you will covenant to be in a learning/serving relationship with your supervisor and congregation/community, using an action-reflection model of learning together. Your placement year will be filled with *action* – practical, hands-on experience as you take on the tasks of ministry, wherever you may be serving. And your supervisor (and perhaps other members of the congregation/community) will join with you in *reflection* – offering guidance and companionship as you reflect theologically on your experiences and grow in knowledge, faith and vocation.

Your goals should thus identify your intentions for *how you wish to develop personally and professionally* during this placement. There will be tasks, readings, and feedback mechanisms that accompany them – but the goals themselves should be focused on your learning interests and development needs. As you name your goals, you may wish to use words such as, *develop, experience, learn, discern, explore*, etc. You may also wish to keep a few things in mind:

- To what vocation/ministry do you feel called? What knowledge and experiences will you need to have as you prepare for this ministry? You may not be able to do it all – but it will be helpful to incorporate enough of a variety to make your experience as well-rounded and fruitful as it can be...
 - e.g., for parish ministry – worship & preaching; Christian education; Bible study; pastoral care/visitation; community service, justice/advocacy; church governance & stewardship, etc.;
 - e.g., for a non-parish ministry – knowledge of the prison/justice system; knowledge of resources for hunger, homelessness, etc.; understanding of health and wellness resources and barriers; understanding of youth development; etc.
- Are there denominational requirements for ordination and/or endorsement that you must address? And/or (for a specialized vocation, such as chaplaincy or counseling) are there other requirements for certification that you must pay attention to?
 - If you need assistance finding any of these requirements, the Director of Theological Field Education can help you locate them
- Are there areas of academic learning that you especially wish to integrate into your practical ministry?
 - e.g., scriptural studies; particular theologians and/or philosophers; world religions; multicultural concerns and competencies (e.g., black faith and life, liberation theologies, LGBTQ theologies or ethics, etc.); psychotherapeutic and/or pastoral care theories/theologies and techniques, etc.

- How do the needs and interests of your site placement fit in with your own learning needs and interests? Are there any areas that are a natural fit for your tasks and learning needs and desires to come together?
 - e.g., if you are especially interested in faith-based community service and the church you are serving has a soup kitchen, you may wish to create a goal such as *learning all of the aspects of running a church-based community service*, with accompanying tasks such as *volunteering at the soup kitchen twice a month, assisting the volunteer coordinator, learning about finances from the comptroller, etc.*
- What are your strengths and gifts for ministry? What are your growing edges and experiential gaps?

A note about gifts and growth... While it is sometimes quite natural to lean toward (or on!) our strengths and gifts, it is important to pay attention to our gaps and areas for growth. As you develop your learning covenant, you may wish to focus more on your growing edges, knowing that there will be plenty of opportunity for your strengths and gifts to shine through, during the course of the year. Or, you may wish to strike a balance with both. Your strengths may allow for an opportunity to learn how to help a congregation grow and develop – for example, someone who brings gifts in teaching and volunteer administration to a congregation that seeks to improve upon its adult Christian education offerings, you may wish to set a goal of “*developing my skills in program growth, as I help Grace Methodist Church develop its adult education programming.*”

Finally – your Site Supervisor, your Academic Advisor and the Director of Theological Field Education are all your partners in learning. Please connect with each of them, as you map out the goals that will help you make the most out of your field placement experience!

On the following pages you will find sample professional development goals for both congregational and community field placement settings, as well as a description of the MDiv Program Goals which may help you to understand the areas of competency that may frame your goals.

For example, a **parish** field placement might include professional development goals such as the following:

| AREA of COMPETENCY | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL | TASKS/ACTIVITIES | RESOURCES | METHODS of ASSESSMENT |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| 1.) Cultural Contexts | Develop preaching that is responsive to the concerns and needs of a mostly Caucasian, wealthy, suburban church context, while also inviting community responsiveness to greater issues of metropolitan and global concern | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Participate in worship at least 3 Sundays/month * Preach once/month, with special attention to both the pastoral and prophetic elements within each sermon * worship with neighboring congregations, once/month | <p><i>Speak to me that I may Speak</i>, Dow Edgerton <i>Finally Comes the Poet</i>, Walter Brueggeman CTS preaching class</p> | Direct observation and feedback from senior pastor and lay committee following each sermon; weekly theological reflection with senior pastor |
| 2.) Religious Heritage | Explore Christian and neighboring faith traditions' understanding of and response to issues of sustainability and eco-justice | Work with congregation's organic gardening team to partner with neighboring congregations – create educational event(s) and service project(s) for congregation and/or neighborhood | Faith in Place staff and programs <i>Just Eating</i> curriculum for congregations UCC Environmental Ministries resources | Feedback from gardening team and program participants following events and programs; weekly theological reflection with senior pastor |
| 3.) Personal and Spiritual Formation | Develop capacity to invite spiritual formation into the “everyday” aspects of congregational ministry (individually and communally) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Share weekly written reflections with senior pastor * Develop opening prayers & meditations for meetings, rituals of recognition, etc. | <p><i>Tending to the Holy: The Practice of the Presence of God in Ministry</i>, Bruce G. & Katherine Gould Epperly <i>Discover Your Spiritual Type</i>, Corinne Ware</p> | Weekly theological reflection with senior pastor and monthly reflection with lay committee |
| 4.) Transformative Leadership | Explore the connections between pastoral care and prophetic ministry – what issues are present in pastoral care encounters that merit further attention as a prophetic community? (e.g., loneliness, health care, social security, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Participate in visitation, with senior pastor, pastoral care team, and solo * reflect with pastoral care team and pastor on greater community/societal needs * bring prophetic concerns into sermons, social action events | <i>The Prophetic Imagination</i> , Walter Brueggemann | Weekly reflection with senior pastor, monthly reflection with pastoral care team and social justice team |
| 5.) Justice and Mercy | Learn how to support and guide a congregation through the process of becoming an Open and Affirming community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Participate in all activities related to this process (meetings, educational events, worship) * Be open about my own sexuality – sharing stories, personal response to the process, etc. | UCC resources for becoming an O&A church films (e.g., <i>Fish Out of Water</i> ; <i>For the Bible Tells Me So</i> ; <i>Fish Can't Fly</i>) | Feedback from O&A committee members; reflection with senior pastor |

Or, for a field placement at a faith-based or interfaith **community-service organization**:

| AREA of COMPETENCY | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL | TASKS/ACTIVITIES | RESOURCES | METHODS of ASSESSMENT |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| 1.) Cultural Contexts | Gain understanding of and experience with sensitive and effective pastoral care with people who are homeless, and across the spectrum of agency clients served (teens, seniors, women, men, families, LGBTQ, African American, Latino/a, white, etc.) | Provide pastoral care and outreach services to clients, through regular participation in ongoing agency services and activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Supervisor and agency staff * <i>A Recipe for Hope: Stories of Transformation by People Struggling with Homelessness</i> by Karen Skalitzky * agency resources (articles, workshops, etc.) | Direct observation and weekly theological reflection with supervisor and agency peer group |
| 2.) Religious Heritage | Gain deeper understanding of Christian and neighboring faiths' responses to homelessness | Participate in interfaith dialogue series, which will culminate in a shared community service/justice project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Community clergy and social justice/outreach teams * Jewish Council on Urban Affairs * Inner-City Muslim Action Network | Direct observation and weekly theological reflection with supervisor, feedback from dialogue and service project participants |
| 3.) Personal and Spiritual Formation | Develop understanding of and personal practice in emotional and spiritual stewardship, toward sustained work in the vocation of serving people in crisis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Regular reflection with supervisor, agency staff and agency peer group * Weekly written reflections about my own emotional & spiritual responses to this work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Trauma Stewardship</i>, by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky * Supervisor and other agency mentors | Weekly theological reflection with supervisor, agency staff and peers |
| 4.) Transformative Leadership | Develop ways to bring the compassionate care and advocacy needs of the homeless community into congregational ministry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Preach twice/year at in-care congregation, incorporating stories from outreach ministry * Develop draft of curriculum about homelessness to share with in-care congregation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * CTS preaching class * Supervisor and agency peer group * UCC Faith Practices resources | Weekly heological reflection with supervisor, feedback from church pastor, Christian Education committee and in-care committee after each sermon |
| 5.) Justice and Mercy | Learn about & demonstrate capacity with faith-based advocacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Participate in community action council meetings * work with agency advocacy team on educational event for aldermen and other local leaders * travel with agency team to Springfield for lobbying event | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * agency advocacy team * Community Renewal Society faith based organizing training | Weekly theological reflection with supervisor, feedback from advocacy team and from CRS trainers after events |

M. Div. Program Goals & Outcomes

The M. Div program at CTS is both a program of study and a process of growth that is designed to prepare women and men for ordained ministry and religious leadership. It provides a course of study that will support students as they:

- Develop **critical thinking** that reflects and analyzes received wisdom in ways that allow for new interpretations and possibilities for liberation to emerge,
- Cultivate **compassionate connections** that encourage direct encounters with those who inhabit different cultural contexts, and those who are suffering in a world stratified by social and economic class,
- Promote **ethical-spiritual integrity** that links the authentic embodiment of faith in life through spiritual practices, liturgies, beliefs and wisdom, and interpersonal and public engagement, and
- Support **concrete strategic action** that is spiritually grounded and value-rich and works in cooperation with others who share these commitments.

Through five content areas, students will achieve the following outcomes:

Facility in Religious Heritage

- Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to think critically about one's own tradition and at least one additional tradition, including sacred texts, thoughts, practices and methods of interpretation.
- Demonstrate integration of the practice of ministry with the academic study of religious history, theology and sacred texts in order to effectively engage current crises and opportunities.
- Demonstrate commitment to ongoing integrity of publically stated beliefs and values with personal and communal practices.

Capacity to Address Multiple Cultural Contexts

- Demonstrate knowledge of multiple cultural contexts informed by critical theological reflection and contemporary social analysis.
- Demonstrate the capacity to engage and collaborate across lines of religious and cultural difference.
- Demonstrate commitment to sustained critical and effective theological reflection across lines of cultural difference with compassion for the neighbor, the stranger and the enemy.

Personal and Spiritual Formation

- Demonstrate familiarity with the history, nature and practices of spirituality, vocation and ministry in Christianity and at least one other spiritual tradition.
- Demonstrate commitment to the cultivation and maintenance of a sense of call, vocation and pastoral imagination.
- Demonstrate commitment to be a faithful steward of moral and spiritual authority in one's own ministry practices.

Capacity for Transformative Leadership

- Demonstrate familiarity with organizational dynamics, theories of change and practices for spiritual and ethical care of persons and communities.
- Demonstrate the ability to guide a community in the identification and implementation of its mission, lead organizational change, and offer pastoral care and ethical guidance for persons and communities.
- Demonstrate effective communication and relationship skills for preaching, teaching, pastoral care and community engagement.

Commitment to the Increase of Justice and Mercy

- Demonstrate familiarity with the dynamic relationship between God, persons and the world and the ways this relationship informs strategies for social change.
- Demonstrate the ability to name and evaluate principles and powers that work against greater justice and mercy.
- Demonstrate the ability to integrate theological and ministerial resources for creative use in the struggle for survival, liberation and the repair of church and society.
- Demonstrate the commitment to engage in social analysis in the service of constructive theological reflection and ministerial practice.