

Task Force on New Funding for Clergy Formation

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

4pm EDT/1 pm PDT

Dean Kittridge opened the meeting with prayer.

Brendan Barnicle took role of attendees.

Present: Brendan Barnicle, Courtney Cowart, Jill Heller, Andrew Hybl, Cynthia Kittredge, JoAnne Jones, James Murphy,

Absent: Bishop Taylor, Joseph Swimmer, Bishop Breidenthal

The task force continued its conversation about addressing the tasks of Resolution A027. Specifically, the task force discussed the following questions.

Does anyone know how many students are currently enrolled in all the various "non-traditional" paths to certification/formation, and how many are currently enrolled in all the various "traditional" residential degree programs?

Members observed that the GOEs are one source of data, but it is imperfect. Of the 179 people who took the 2019 GOE, 14% were trained in local formation programs. All agreed that this is important data, but it is a difficult piece of information to get. There is no system of keeping track of everyone. Brendan will be coordinating with Maureen Hagen's task force on their data around this information.

Is there an already existing list of all the Diocesan Trust Funds for theological education scholarships, comparable to the DFMS list?

Brendan and Maureen Hagen will coordinate on a joint survey of all dioceses, seeking information of the number of people in formation, types of formations and sources of funding for formation. Both task forces will review and finalize such a survey.

Is there an already existing list of all other sources of funding for these purposes in addition to the DFMS Trusts; the diocesan foundations/trusts; endowed parish trusts?; other agencies such as SIM and ECF?

There are a diverse set of funding sources outside of the dioceses: Church clubs of various dioceses, endowed parishes, Daughters of the King, etc. Brendan will coordinate with Joe Swimmer to see if CEEP (Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes) has an information about formation scholarships among its members.

Task force members noted that many of the exiting scholarships require people to be registered in residential seminary. Some are restricted to returning students. SIM is re-evaluating its guidelines to include non-traditional formation. As a task force, we are also evaluating whether we are called to request new fund raising from Episcopal Church development office.

Could one of our contributions be to compile such a list and calculate/analyze what the amount of collective resource available is outside of seminaries, and how that amount breaks down by source?

In the past, we have discussed creating a centralized database with this information, but members agreed that we need to determine how big the need is and what resources are available, which will be the central focus on our task force survey.

If we had this information, might we be able to begin to think together as a denomination about a coordinated approach to resourcing students?

It is certainly possible, but could be culturally challenging for us as a denomination. It was agreed that this is a good idea but hard to execute. What if we were discover that we had all the resources that we need? To change our denominational focus on funding clergy formation would require extensive listening to key stakeholders. But, it is hard to start that conversation without the hard data discussed above.

-Is the taskforce considering exploring any existing funds held at DFMS? If so, what is the origin of donor intent on those funds (donor-designated, board-designated, etc.) Who would be the decision-maker to reassess the designation on those funds?

DFMS has a list of scholarships and the restrictions are on those scholarship. It can be challenging to change the restrictions on those scholarships. Unless donor is still living, it can be up to 20 years before the intent and designation can be changed. It is a very involved process. It may be possible to change the scholarships, but takes time to work with various State agencies, normally the State Attorney General, to alter a purpose for any existing fund. DFMS and other data could be drawn into a central database to be accessed by non-traditional students. Could be future effort of the committee to recommend DFMS to review and promote funds available for non-traditional students.

-What is the best way for this pool of funds to be seen as truly independent and available to all? Existing entity, etc.?

Generally, scholarships are defined by their restrictions. If there were a fund for non-traditional paths, it would just need to be restricted in that way. Multiple ways to administer and manage those funds.