

Grace School of Theology

Institutional Effectiveness Plan

2018-2019



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General Information

History

American Christian higher education has deep religious roots. In the nation's early development, it was churches and denominations that led in establishing the first seminaries. Grace School of Theology, a direct product of that history, is founded on a free grace tradition based upon Biblical principles and the conviction that individuals have freedom of conscience before God and humankind. This freedom, absent from many traditions, affirms each person's ability to read and understand the Scripture without the mediation of other human beings. This emphasis ultimately led Grace School of Theology to challenge any teaching that does not recognize free grace as the only means to eternal salvation. Grace School of Theology is, therefore, founded upon the belief that eternal salvation is received solely as a free gift from God by believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior for mankind. Grace is committed to Christian scholarly endeavor in the free grace tradition.

Grace School of Theology is a private, non-denominational, institution of higher learning governed by a dedicated Board of Trustees. The institution had its beginnings in early 2002 when a pastor and laypersons in the Houston area committed themselves to realizing their vision of a local evangelical Christian institution emphasizing free grace. At the encouragement and advice of Dr. Charles Ryrie, Grace School of Theology began as Houston Theological Seminary as the result of the planning and visionary work of seven men who constituted the initial Board of Trustees: Dr. Dave Anderson, Dr. Glenn Darby, Mr. Larry Allbritton, Mr. Mark Rae, Mr. Jeffe Ready, Mr. Bill Diamond, and Mr. Bob Winslow. Of the original seven Trustees, Dr. Dave Anderson now serves as the President of Grace and a member of the Board and Dr. Glenn Darby is Chairman of the current Board of Trustees.

Grace School of Theology is a work of God's grace. God placed the burden for this educational ministry upon the heart of Dr. Dave Anderson who, for twelve (12) years planted churches in southern Texas and then, for eighteen (18) years, served as Senior Pastor of Faith Bible Church of The Woodlands, Texas. The discussions between Drs. Anderson and Darby with the full Board of Trustees led to the beginning of Houston Theological Seminary. The first seminary classes were held in Faith Bible Church of The Woodlands, Texas, and Cypress Bible Church of Cypress, Texas.

Houston Theological Seminary received its certificate of incorporation from the State of Texas effective May 29, 2001. The first students began classes in the fall of 2002. After Texas enacted a state law prohibiting the use of the term "seminary" in an institution's title without state approval, the name Houston Theological Seminary was changed to Grace School of Theology in a Certificate of Amendment issued by the State of Texas in March 2003. The Texas Supreme Court overruled this unconstitutional law in the fall of 2007, but the seminary elected to retain its current name.

Grace is strategically located in the Houston, Texas metropolitan area. The main administrative offices are located in The Woodlands, Texas and include classrooms, faculty offices, and the main Library.

As Grace has begun to significantly grow, teaching sites have been developed in areas near Houston (Beaumont) and as far away as Midland and San Antonio where much support and encouragement from Christian leaders has developed. International initiatives have become priority directives by the institution's Board of Trustees. Many World-Region opportunities have emerged and are under evaluation by administrators and faculty.

The purpose of Grace School of Theology is to teach Christ and empower and inspire students for Christian service and lifelong learning. We are praying that God will allow us to train people who have a

global vision for reaching out in the name of Christ. From the first few students to our current graduates, God has brought us quality individuals who are serious about the study of the Word of God. The students come from many backgrounds, some with years of experience and some as recent Bible college graduates. Many are current church staff members serving as pastors, youth pastors, and Christian educators. Some are businessmen and laypersons interested in and challenged to utilize their ministry gifts in service for Christ. Every student is important to us at Grace. In the classroom, students are challenged to understand the Word of God as we teach a consistent and uniform system of theology.

In individual, one-on-one conversations the students are pointed to the Word of God by dedicated faculty and staff. All of this interaction, classroom and individual, culminates in the preparation of students to minister in a real world to real people with the love of God, a love that cannot be earned or lost. This is the vision, purpose, and the challenge of Grace School of Theology.

Foundational Standards Preamble

Calling

We are called to glorify God by instilling in our students the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and educating the next generation of Christians. Our calling includes both introduction to and encouragement to remain in a life of full devotion to Jesus Christ. We are charged with educating, encouraging, equipping, and serving our students and their families, which are an integral part of Grace School of Theology (GRACE). We do this by directly instilling our Christian philosophies, values, mission and goals in our students through offering a Christ-centered education. Overt liturgical religious purpose activities (preaching, worship, Bible instruction, communion, baptism) as well as related non-liturgical religious purpose activities (social service activities, weddings, teaching, ministry, or events) all serve as methods that GRACE utilizes to instill our religious values and beliefs. Even non-liturgical ministries are grounded in the *Policies Manual*, *Board Manual*, *Academic Catalog*, *Employee Handbook*, *Faculty Handbook*, *IE Plan*, *Strategic Plan*, *Student Handbook*, *Doctrinal Statement*, *Mission Statement*, *Vision Statement*, *Core Values*, *Purpose and Objectives*, *Philosophy of Education*, and *Ethical Values and Standards of Grace School of Theology*, and are therefore subject to all of its ministerial, enrollment, discipline, termination and expulsion policies.

Community and Partnership

We believe that our religious activity and education derives meaning in large measure from participation in a larger religious community. For this reason, parents and family of our student body play a large role in furthering our mission and viewpoint as a school. We exist to foster a Christ-like, educational environment of persons subscribing to our religious beliefs and faith. GRACE seeks to instill Christian values in students by having faculty and staff spend time with the students, instructing and engaging them in the learning process. In this way, we transmit our Christian system of values to the next generation.

Associating with like-minded Christian families reinforces GRACE 's Christian purpose and is vital to our educational mission to perpetuate the faith. We are committed to being and educating disciples who understand what it means to follow Jesus Christ into a life of worship, fellowship, sacrifice, service and being led by the Spirit. (*Matthew 28:19*, *Acts 1:8*, *John 15:16*, *Mark 16:15*) Our mission as part of the body of Christ is to participate, share, and encourage each other toward spiritual growth. (*1 Thessalonians 5:11*, *Hebrews 10:23-25*, *Colossians 3:16*) For these reasons, participation in our school requires a tangible commitment to our beliefs, purposes, and mission as outlined in GRACE's Written Foundational Standards, which are incorporated herein by reference, as if fully set forth herein.

Expression of Faith

GRACE intends to transmit our system of religious beliefs, tradition, Christian morals, reverence and values. We do so by engaging in the community and students' lives, acts of worship, and through all activities, educational and otherwise, in which we participate. Likewise, we believe that all behavior of students and staff of GRACE is communicative in nature, exemplifying and expressing our faith, both publicly and privately. Any student or employee who propounds a point of view contrary to our beliefs as stated in our referenced written Foundational Standards, will impair GRACE 's integrity and ability to educate in accordance with its religious views and message.

Outreach Ministry

We take very seriously GRACE 's charge to be a Christian presence in a secular world. Therefore, all activities that GRACE engages in are intended to further its religious purpose, as stated in our Purpose Statement. As such, all of our programs are considered an outgrowth of the mission of GRACE to preach, teach, evangelize and instill the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Foundational Standards

Mission Statement

Grace School of Theology is an evangelical Christian institution of higher learning and has as its purpose the offering of programs of study in an environment where academic excellence is emphasized and a biblically based perspective is maintained. GRACE is committed to enriching its students spiritually, intellectually, and professionally, and to preparing students to serve God in a global and culturally diverse society.

Vision Statement

Grace School of Theology's vision is to develop spiritual leaders in every nation who can teach others about the love of Christ, a love that cannot be earned and cannot be lost.

Purpose and Objectives

Grace School of Theology is committed to living, learning, and worshipping as a community of faith based upon the grace of God. Through the faculty, staff, administration, and trustees, GRACE strives to lead students to a correct understanding of doctrine with the necessary skills to communicate the Truth. We live by the spirit of God to love one another, to challenge one another for greater growth in the Lord, and to walk together with integrity in this world. Grace School of Theology seeks to prepare others to proclaim God's Truth courageously to a world that is in need of hope. We want to glorify God by walking in God's grace, ministering God's Word, and equipping God's people.

As an academic community of faith, GRACE seeks to guide students:

- To develop a personal Christian philosophy of service and an ethical and spiritual commitment which is based upon and examined in the light of biblical revelation.
- To grow in an understanding of the Word of God that is textually based, theologically consistent, and scripturally sound.
- To develop effectiveness in the use and understanding of communications, both written and spoken, employing analytical and logical thinking in the process.

- To become a contributor to God's kingdom in a manner consistent with historical, conservative, evangelical Christian principles, leading and participating responsibly in local church, community, and world affairs.
- To accurately handle the Word of God in ministries appropriate to their calling.
- To grow in understanding, appreciation, and application of biblical exegesis, biblical and systematic theology, biblical interpretation, hermeneutics, history, the church, and global ministry opportunities.
- To prepare students to make life-long commitments and investments of their lives in Christian ministries.
- To prepare students for continuing study by becoming acquainted with electronic technology resources and methods of scholarly research.

Core Values

- Grace School of Theology is committed to and intentional about our Christian faith.
- Grace School of Theology will responsibly teach the Truth of the Gospel.
- Grace School of Theology strives for excellence.
- Grace School of Theology believes in the importance and cultivation of Christian character.
- Grace School of Theology believes in impacting and changing the world for Christ.
- Grace School of Theology believes in and affirms God's free gift of grace for mankind.

Philosophy of Education

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God and was given the responsibility of caring for all things that God has created (*Genesis 1:27*). We believe that all people have many abilities and that we need to help them to develop these God-given talents. These principles apply equally to men and women, young and old.

Because of our high calling, we need to excel in all educational programs, providing a systematic and comprehensive training in the Word of God from a Cristo-centric perspective. Therefore, it is imperative to have professors and staff that are competent in their respective fields, who receive evaluation regularly, and who constantly seek ways to improve professional skills.

Our Christian philosophy is reflected in the Bible-centered curriculum taught by well-trained and dedicated Christian professors. Our faculty uses textbooks authored by scholarly writers that maintain a commitment to the Bible as the divinely revealed guide for all people.

The faculty teaches and students study without fear of their academic freedom being violated and without fear of any kind of discrimination. Each student is granted the right to learn, to inquire, and to explore without restraint. This freedom is guaranteed when a corresponding liberty of instruction is granted to instructors. These rights are extended to the student and faculty members within the parameters of sound scholarship and within the appropriate framework of Biblical foundations and institutional sphere granted by the Board of Trustees.

Ethical Values and Standards

Grace School of Theology is an institution that emphasizes the importance of the Christian perspective in all of its academic endeavors. At the heart of its mission and purposes is the School's commitment to the values and principles of the Christian faith through grace. By accepting the identity of being Christian,

GRACE makes both explicit and implicit promises about the relationship between its words and actions. This means that integrity defines the very core of its existence as an institution of higher learning.

GRACE recognizes that it must demonstrate integrity in its practices and relationships. It is necessary that the School be able to show not only that it has policies and procedures, but also that those policies and procedures reflect the values and practices of its mission.

GRACE demonstrates integrity by its classroom performance, public representations, distribution of information, business practices, contractual arrangements, and relationships with internal and external constituencies. We adhere to the code of ethics accepted by the academic community as well as its specific standards of Christian behavior.

Academic integrity is inherent in the nature of our educational tasks. This is reflected not only in the unique relationship between faculty and student but in the manner in which the School represents itself to the public. GRACE identifies itself as an evangelical Christian institution of higher learning, which indicates that the academic programs are developed and implemented for a perspective that is distinctly Christian. GRACE believes this perspective is consistently expressed in its written documents, academic programs, and in the conduct of its faculty, staff, administration, and students.

Every faculty, staff, and administrator at GRACE is required to be a Christian in practice and belief and must give a statement of faith as part of the overall interview process for employment consideration. Students are informed about the ethics and values of GRACE and agree to abide by the codes of conduct as described in the *Student Handbook*. GRACE believes that Christian values and practices form the basis of all academic and administrative departments.

Doctrinal Statement

The Bible

We believe that the words of the Bible, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are “God-breathed.” They give humankind His authoritative revelation, wholly without error of any kind on every topic discussed in the original writings. We believe that the Bible must be interpreted as language is normally used, recognizing the importance of dispensational distinctions.

(Psalm 12:6; 119:89, 130; 160; Isaiah 40:8; 55:8-11; Luke 24:27, 44-47; John 5:39, 17:17; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 13; Ephesians 1:10; 3:9; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:10-12, 23-25; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

God

We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each of whom possess equally all the attributes of deity and characteristics of personality and with each having specific work to perform. We believe that God is a personal being who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

(Matthew 3:16; John 10:30; 14:10; 14:26; 15:26; Ephesians 1:3-4; 6-7; 13-14)

Jesus Christ

We believe that God the Son, Jesus Christ, became flesh through His miraculous conception in a virgin by the Holy Spirit and His birth. He is, therefore, perfect and complete deity and perfect humanity, these being united without mixture in one person forever. We believe that He lived a sinless life and voluntarily and vicariously paid for the sins of all mankind by dying on the cross. We believe in the resurrection of His crucified body, in His ascension to heaven, in His present ministries in heaven, and in His future literal return to the earth.

(Psalm 2:7; 110; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18-25; 28:19; Luke 1:26-35; 2:52; John 1:1-3, 14, 18; 3:16; 8:58; 10:30; 17:5; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 15:1-20; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:14, 15-17; 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:1-3, 6, 8-12; 4:15; 13:8; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:22; 1 John 2:1-2; 3:16; 4:10, 5:20; Revelation 1:17-18; 19-20)

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is God and that He has come to reveal and glorify Christ, to convict sinners of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to regenerate, indwell, seal, and baptize believers into the body of Christ, impart gifts to believers, and to enable them to live holy lives.

(Genesis 1:2; Psalm 139:7; Isaiah 40:13-14; Matthew 1:18-20; 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 1:13; 3:3-8; 6:63; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15, 13; Acts 2:1-4; 5:3-4; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:9,10, 12; 6:19; 12:13; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:22; 4:30; 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:14; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 John 2:20, 27)

Creation

We believe that the Genesis account of creation is to be understood historically and literally and not allegorically or figuratively. We believe that man was created in the image of God and that the first man, Adam, sinned, bringing spiritual death to all, who, therefore, stand condemned and in need of Christ's salvation.

(Genesis 1; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:15-20; Romans 5:12; Romans 7)

Salvation

We believe that God saves by grace alone, apart from works (whether past or future), those who put their faith in Christ alone as God and Savior from sin. Initial faith resulting in justification and regeneration is not a gift of God. That is, fallen humanity when persuaded by the illuminating and convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit and the drawing ministry of the Father still possesses the capacity to believe in Christ. Such faith precedes regeneration. At the moment of belief, Christ imputes His righteousness to believers and keeps them secure eternally. Based on the promises of God (not works), we believe a person can and should have complete assurance of his or her Eternal Life the moment he or she believes in Christ.

(Isaiah 55:8-11; Matthew 4:4; 26:28; John 1:4, 9, 12; 3:5, 16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; 14:6; 16:8; 17:17; Acts 4:12; 13:38-39; 16:31; Romans 1:7, 16-17; 3:22, 26; 4:4-5; 5:1, 6-9; 6:11-13, 23; 8:2-4, 9, 12-13, 29-30, 32; 10:4, 17; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 8; 6:11; 12:13; 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:21; 7:1; Galatians 2:16; 5:13-26; 6:15; Ephesians 1:3, 7; 2:8-9; 4:22-24; Philippians 3:4-9; Colossians 1:22; 2:6, 10; 3:1-7, 16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:3-4; 5:23; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 4:12, 10:10, 14; 12:14; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 23; 2:2, 11; 1 John 1:5-7; 3:2, 5-9; 5:13; Jude 24)

The Christian Walk

We believe that although sinless perfection is not possible in this life, all believers are called to live holy lives in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

(John 17:17; Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 5:13-25; Ephesians 5:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; Hebrews 10:10, 14; 1 John 3:2)

Marriage and Human Sexuality

We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide. *(2 Timothy 3:16-17)* Since the Holy Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

We are committed to the home and family as set forth in Holy Scripture. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. The Bible sets forth specific home and family values, which include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and longstanding principles of scriptural truth.

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

Marriage

We define marriage as the legal permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child.

(Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:4-9, Mark 10:5-9, Ephesians 5:31-33)

Sexual Immorality

We believe that sexual acts outside marriage are prohibited as sinful. Consequently, GRACE members must resist and refrain from any and all sexual acts outside marriage — including but not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, zoophilia, pornography, prostitution, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, polyamory, sologamy, or same-sex sexual acts.

(Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:7-23, Leviticus 20:10-21, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 15:19, Matthew 5:27-28, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:17-19, Colossians 3:5)

Sexual Identity

We believe that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Consequently, GRACE members must affirm their biological sex and refrain from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex — including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or non-binary “genderqueer” acts or conduct.

(Genesis 1:26-28, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Sexual Orientation

We believe that God created and ordered human sexuality to the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of man and woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. Consequently, GRACE members must affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered.

(Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:5-9, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7-9, Revelation 21:2)

Sexual Redemption

We believe that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption and harmonious relationship with God through confession, repentance, baptism, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, GRACE members must welcome and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts but are committed to resisting sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and conforming their behavior to GRACE’s Statement of Faith.

(Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-10, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:14-16)

Celibacy

We believe that Holy Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy. Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Celibacy and faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within Grace School of Theology.

(Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-8; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-8; Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 12:10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2)

The Church

We believe that the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost and is composed of all who receive Christ through faith. We believe God’s program for the Church is distinguished from His program for Israel described in Daniel 9. We believe that all believers should assemble regularly in local churches for worship, for observing the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord’s Supper, for mutual encouragement and discipline, and for carrying out God’s purposes in this world.

(Acts 2:41-42; 10:44-47; 11:15-17; Romans 6:4-5; 12:3-8; 16:1, 5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-31; 12:12-13, 27; 16:19; Galatians 3:27-28; 6:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:16-22; 5:24-25, 30; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25)

The Future

We believe that the personal and imminent return of Christ to rapture His church will be followed by a period of tribulation on this earth. At the conclusion of this period, Christ will return triumphantly and inaugurate His millennial reign over this earth. We believe in the everlasting conscious blessedness of the saved in the New Jerusalem and the everlasting conscious punishment of the unsaved in the lake of fire.

(Matthew 24:21, 29-30; 25:31, 46; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:4-10; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:10; 20:1-6, 11-15)

Satan

We believe that at some time in the past Satan led a rebellion, including a host of angels, against God and was expelled from the heavenly kingdom. Satan, also called other names including the Devil, is a real being who has tremendous, but limited power, and is the true adversary to God’s people. Satan is destined to be judged and will endure eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

(Ephesians 6:12; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20: 1-3)

Accreditation Status

TRACS

Grace School of Theology is a member of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) (15935 Forest Road, Forest, VA 24551; Telephone: (434) 525-9539; e-mail: info@tracs.org), having been awarded Reaffirmation I of its Accredited Status as a Category IV institution by the TRACS Accreditation Commission on April 25, 2017. This status is effective for a period of ten years. TRACS is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

ATS

Grace School of Theology is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools. [10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275; Telephone 412-788-6510] The Commission granted accreditation on June 2, 2017 for a period of seven years. The following degree programs are approved by the Commission on Accrediting: Doctor of Ministry, Master of Theology, Master of Divinity, Master of Military Chaplaincy, Master of Arts (Biblical Studies), Master of Arts in Chaplaincy, and Master of Ministry. Complete information for the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada can be found at the ATS website: www.ats.edu.

Institutional Effectiveness

Background

The Regulatory Compliance department developed the Institutional Effectiveness Resource Manual (Manual) through consultation with the other departments and functional areas at Grace School of Theology (GRACE). The overall goal of the Manual is to guide and enable a strong, integrated, campus-wide effectiveness and assessment process that adds to quality of teaching, learning, and institutional effectiveness. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness intends for the Manual to help faculty, academic administrators, departmental staff and executive leadership to develop and use effectiveness and assessment plans at every level within Grace School of Theology. Furthermore, this Manual will assist those responsible for assessment in developing their annual assessment reports.

Purpose

The purpose of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Grace School of Theology is to support and implement the mission, vision, and goals through the purposeful, systematic collection of information. The analyzed data will be used to interpret, measure, and continuously improve the effectiveness of the seminary's programs, policies, and practices.

GRACE is fully committed to the need for and value of ongoing, continuous self-evaluation. Assessment activities, policies, and procedures include and are approved by the Board of Trustees.

Introduction

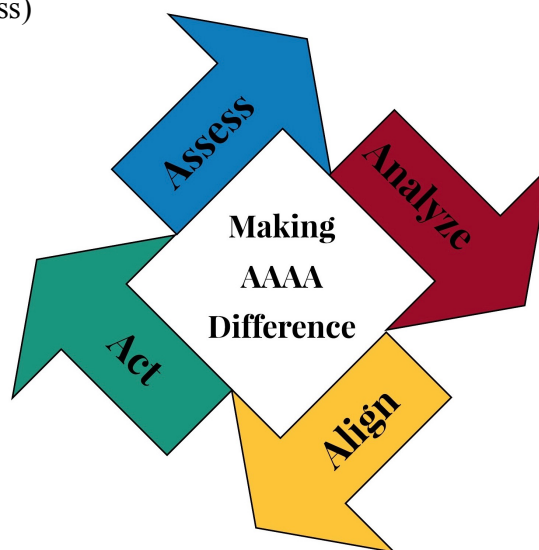
The Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IE Plan) for Grace School of Theology was designed to guide the assessment process and to contribute to the understanding of how well the institution is accomplishing the academic, administrative, and strategic goals of the school. The underlying belief about assessment at Grace is that only through school and departmental involvement and their resulting commitment to a continuing assessment process can the educational goals and mission of the institution be accomplished.

Assessment provides evidence of how well the institution is fulfilling its mission, and helps identify areas for improvement. Three major assessment criteria are addressed by our annual *Institutional Effectiveness Reports*: (a) program improvement; (b) accountability; and (c) the satisfaction of students. A comprehensive institutional assessment program supports continuous improvement of programs and services of the seminary, containing studies related to program reviews and direct assessments of outcomes from major areas of institutional interest. These activities may include surveys from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and board members. Units of assessment range from individual academic and service programs to the overall institution.

Planning and Assessment

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) at Grace School of Theology has four key elements:

- A. Functional Area Assessment and Planning (Assess)
- B. Analysis of Recommendations (Analyze)
- C. Executive Planning (Align)
- D. Governing Board (Act)



Faculty and staff assessments by functional area or department are conducted annually. Each functional area reviews data, provides summary analysis, recommends goals, and estimates potential budget needs. Data collection includes the following:

1. SWOTS
2. Surveys (internal) – Departmental
3. Surveys (external) – Alumni, Friends of Grace, etc.
4. IPEDS Reports
5. TRACS Annual Reports
6. ATS Annual Reports
8. Institutional Benchmarking
9. Internal Reviews – Departmental Reports/Minutes

Upon implementation of the collection of data and analysis, the departmental supervisor reviews summaries including goal and budget recommendations. Then the President of GRACE and the Executive Leadership Team engage in strategic planning. Planning and budgeting are based upon the visionary leadership of the President and input from the institution's vice presidents who are charged with the responsibility of departmental recommendations. Data collection, analysis, goals, and budgets comprise the executive planning process from January through May of each year.

GRACE's institutional effectiveness process integrates the institutional mission with planning and assessment. A primary purpose of GRACE's IE process is to assure that plans are developed based on institutional goals consistent with the institutions mission, as well as an annual systematic process of planning and evaluation that guides decision making. An additional goal of the IE process is to assure that the planning and budget development process incorporates evidence cited in the annual assessment reports. The diagram below illustrates the main goal of the Institutional Effectiveness Model (IEM): Institutional Effectiveness is guided by a focus on GRACE's mission, the development and refinement of goals and outcomes, an ongoing cycle of planning and assessment, planning and budgeting, and use of results for continuous improvement.

Institutional Effectiveness Model



- Mission & Vision Statement:** Grace School of Theology has a Mission and a Vision Statement. The institution has formulated a set of strategic initiatives, departmental goals and a budget to help guide them as it fulfills its Mission and Vision.
- Department Assessments:** Assessment and evaluation tools provide evidence of how well the seminary is fulfilling its mission and vision, and helps identify areas for improvement.
- Department Assessment Analysis:** Assessment Analysis is interpreting the results generated from the assessment and evaluation tools.
- Department Strategic Planning:** Departments collect and review all the data from the assessments for that cycle and determine if they have accomplished their initiatives and goals, if they need to modify them, or add new ones.
- Departmental Budgeting Process:** Departments must formulate a budget for accomplishing its updated strategic initiatives and departmental goals.
- ELT Strategic Planning & Budgeting Process:** The Executive Leadership reviews the updated strategic initiatives, with supporting assessment analysis, along with the proposed budget then modifies them as necessary before sending it to the BOT.
- BOT Strategic Plan & Budget Input & Approval:** The Board of Trustees reviews the updated initiatives along with the proposed budget then may make recommendations before approving.

Functional Areas

Institutional Foundational Standards

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the institution is reviewed every odd year by the Executive Plus Leadership Team (comprised of all Vice Presidents and department leaders). The statement is viewed to determine if it is current and comprehensive and serves as the guide for all institutional operations and functions. The review also determines if the statement is descriptive and understandable to all constituents. Recommendations for any revisions or to remain static are presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval during the Board spring meeting every odd year.

Institutional Objectives

Institutional Objectives are reviewed every odd year by the Executive Plus Leadership Team (comprised of all Vice Presidents and department leaders). The statement is viewed to determine if they are formulated to be consistent with the institution's Doctrinal Statement and educational Philosophy. The educational goals are benchmarked with national institutions in an effort to assure that what has been approved is appropriate for institutions of higher learning. Recommendations for any revisions or to remain static are presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval during the Board spring meeting every odd year.

Institutional Philosophy

The institution's Philosophy of Christian Education is reviewed every odd year by the Executive Plus Leadership Team (comprised of all Vice Presidents and department leaders). The Educational Philosophy is reviewed to determine if the institution's is functioning educationally according to the biblically-based Doctrinal Statement. As an integral part of the review faculty conduct an analysis of the curriculum (in designated cycles) to assure that the philosophy of education of the institution is reflected throughout the academic program. Recommendations for any revisions or to remain static are presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval during the Board spring meeting every odd year.

Ethical Values and Standards

There are six Core Values of the institution approved by the Board of Trustees. The identified Values and Ethical Standards of the institution are reviewed every odd year by the Executive Plus Leadership Team (comprised of all Vice Presidents and department leaders). Ethical values and standards for operations are reviewed to determine if the institution is honestly and accurately functioning through established policies and procedures with integrity in relation to students, constituents, the public, and to external regulatory agencies. Recommendations for any revisions or to remain static are presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval during the Board spring meeting every odd year.

Biblical Foundations

Annual Review

The biblical foundations statement at the institution is called the Doctrinal Statement. The Doctrinal Statement is comprised of ten (10) theological statements related to the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Creation, Salvation, the Christian Walk, the Church, the Future, and Satan. A review of the Doctrinal Statement is conducted annually January through March. The review process is described on the Co-Curricular Institutional Effectiveness Calendar and may be found on the institutional Administrative Calendar.

Departmental and Executive Leadership Review

The Doctrinal Statement of the institution is reviewed every year by the Executive Leadership Team (comprised of all Vice Presidents) and by department leaders. The ten statements are reviewed by departments to determine if they affirm the evangelical traditions in theological education. They are under annual review to assure conformity to historic creeds and statements of Christianity and that they are written in such a manner to be understandable to students, faculty, administrators, board members, and other external constituencies. Recommendations by any departments for any revisions or to remain static are presented to the institution's Executive Leadership Team for consideration.

Board of Trustees Approval

The Executive Leadership Team of the institution conducts formal evaluation of any departmental recommendations related to the Doctrinal Statement. Affirmation of current content or suggested revisions are determined and reflected in ELT Minutes. The Doctrinal Statement as is or with recommendations is presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration during its annual spring meeting.

Governing Board

Self-Evaluation of Board Members

Each year, during the spring BOT Meeting, the Board of Trustees conducts a self-evaluation using the IE Form IE BOT 100 (BOT Self Evaluation). The self-evaluation concentrates on the effectiveness of its own function and reviews its responsibilities and functions using the Board of Trustees Self Evaluation Form. Regular board evaluation is evidenced in BOT evaluation files.

Use of Results

The Chair of the Board gathers the results and summarizes it into a report for the Board to discuss. The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall initiate the confidential Board self-evaluation. The self-evaluation is conducted annually during the scheduled spring meeting. The self-evaluation is distributed to all trustees. Completed evaluations are returned to the Board chair for review and analysis. Summary results and analysis shall be disseminated to the Board and discussed with the President of Grace. All self-evaluations are made part of the permanent Board record.

Administration, Staff, and Publications

Presidential Evaluation by the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees conducts an annual performance appraisal of the President using the IE Form BOT Appraisal of the President's Performance (IE AD 101) during the spring meeting. The Chair of the Board gathers the results and summarizes it into a report for the Board to discuss. The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall initiate a confidential meeting with the President to discuss the appraisal and establish Board required functions for the next academic year. Confidential presidential evaluations are made part of the permanent Board record.

Executive Leadership Team Evaluations

The Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer conduct an annual performance appraisal of the Executive Leadership Team using the Institutional Effectiveness Plan instrument IE EM 102 (Employee Evaluation) during the spring. The Executive Vice President gathers the results and summarizes those findings for the President to discuss. The Executive Vice President shall initiate a confidential meeting with each Executive Administrator to discuss the appraisal and establish institutionally required functions for the next academic year. Confidential evaluations are made part of permanent Human Resource records.

Staff Evaluations

The Executive Leadership Team plus Departmental Leaders conduct an annual performance appraisal of institutional staff using Institutional Effectiveness Plan instrument IE EM 102 (Employee Evaluation) during the spring. The Executive Leadership Team gathers the results and summarizes those findings for the Executive Vice President to discuss. The Executive Leadership Team plus the Departmental Leaders shall initiate confidential meetings with each staff member in the assigned area of responsibility to discuss the appraisal and establish institutionally required functions for the next academic year. Confidential evaluations are made part of permanent Human Resource records.

Publications, Policies, and Procedures

The Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer in collaboration with the Executive Leadership Team conducts an annual evaluation of all publications (*Policies Manual, Strategic Plan, Institutional Effectiveness Plan, Academic Catalog, Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, Employee Manual*), policies, procedures, and website using the Institutional Effectiveness Plan instrument IE AD 102. (Evaluation of publications, policies, website, and procedures) beginning in January (refer to Institutional Effectiveness Timeline). The Executive Leadership Team gathers the results and summarizes those findings for the Executive Vice President to discuss. The Executive Leadership team shall initiate meetings with each staff member in the assigned area of responsibility for publications, website, policies, and procedures to discuss the findings and establish institutionally required revisions.

Finances

External Audit

A certified external audit of financial statements is conducted each year with auditors providing required management letters. The firm of Seefeld, Lawson, Moeller, LLC, Certified Public Accountants of The Woodlands, TX conducts each annual audit. Data is collected from annual audits over five year periods providing information from which institutional operations develop strategic plans. Information is reported to Executive Leadership Teams and the Board of Trustees for planning purposes.

Cash Flow Analysis, Deficit Data, Debt Retirement

The institution employs the net asset model of accounting which is consistent with the policies and procedures provided by the AICPA and are reflected on the annual audited financial statements. The financial management process each year is designed to place the institution in a positive financial position including the limiting of management letters. Data is collected and reported monthly related to cash flow, deficit operations, and retirement of debt. Month-end financials are distributed to the President and prepared according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Quarterly reports are presented to financial representatives of the Board of Trustees.

Donor Income

Development officers of the institution work in collaboration with the Chief Operations Officer (COO/CFO) in formulating accurate and timely reports related to individual and corporate donations. Reports are compiled and analyzed for trends leading to potential revisions of fundraising activities and operations. All funds received are accurately and properly accounted for in institutional income categories and are audited according to established accounting procedures.

Educational Support Ratios

The institution collects information from multiple sources to determine education support ratios. The ratios are benchmarked according to national norms for similar institutions. The institution gathers data from certified external audit reports, from the Association of Theological Schools annual reports

(combined and comparison data tables from accredited ATS schools), and from TRACS annual reports. Data is analyzed and used as a tool in the budget planning process of the institution.

Financial Stability Analysis

A certified financial audit of the financial statements is prepared each year and serves as the primary indicator of historical institutional financial stability (five year summaries). Data from each audit is analyzed leading to historical performance indicators. Those historical indicators provide direction for the five year, long range planning process (Strategic Planning).

Institutional Default Analysis

The Financial Aid Officer has developed an organized database of Title IV funds approved and allocated. The database is compiled for historical statistics related to default rates. Information is compiled annually and compiled over five-year studies. Compliance reports are submitted according to policies required by the Higher Education Act related to Title IV funding. Historical default rates will be reported within the institution for the purpose of revision of financial aid counseling and enrollment. The institutional default rate goal is 20% or less.

Financial Ratios

- Primary Reserve Analysis
- Net Income Analysis
- Return on Net Asset Analysis
- Viability Analysis

The independent external financial audit compiles all data related to ratios. Analysis of data derived from audited summaries of the primary reserves, net income ratios, return on assets, and viability ratios are benchmarked according to criteria adopted by the institution. Results of such analyses are used in short term and long term financial planning.

Academic Affairs

Program Reviews

Program evaluations are conducted in five-year cycles and use the Program Review Template. The program is typically benchmarked nationally against like Christian, Evangelical Seminary programs that are offering the same or similar degree program of the review. Typically, 4-6 institutions are benchmarked. The purpose of such evaluation is to ensure that the program is well structured and provides a depth required for quality and excellence in higher education.

Curriculum Reviews are conducted in conjunction with Program Reviews. As the data collected is analyzed and trends and anomalies are uncovered, adjustments may be recommended in regards to curriculum structure and delivery.

Student Learning Outcomes

Grace realizes that student learning is best assessed using direct measures and has been intentional in using this process in its “culture of assessment.”

Examples of direct measures are exams, quizzes, essays, and papers graded using a standardized rubric. Embedded direct assessments are ideal since they can focus on specific learning that is desired at the program level.

Another direct measure of student learning is the pre-test, post-test method using a standardized exam. All entering students take the exam upon their first enrollment in classes and then just prior to graduation. Data is analyzed by program, thus enabling to see if there is a gradual increase in scores as students complete more programs at Grace.

Graduation Rates, Completions Rates Job Placement Rates, Retention Rates

Graduation Rate: The institution defines Graduation Rate as the percentage of undergraduate, baccalaureate students who start as first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students and graduate within 150% of the normal (or expected) time for graduation. This rate is calculated each year in the summer after the Academic Year is over.

Completion Rate: The institution defines Completion Rate as the percentage of students completing an Associate or Graduate program within 150% of the normal (or expected) time for completion. This rate is calculated each year in the summer after the Academic Year is over.

Job Placement Rate: Job Placement is defined as the percentage of graduates who find field-of-study related employment within 12 months of graduation. This data is collected via the Alumni Survey conducted annually in the summer.

Retention Rate: Retention Rate is defined as the percentage of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students enrolled in the previous fall who re-enroll the following fall. This definition applies for students in the Bachelor's Program. The institution gathers data for first-time students in all other programs as well.

Surveys

An End of Course Survey is conducted at the end of each Module for each course that has just ended. The results are collected for each Faculty and course then distributed to the faculty member and their immediate supervisor. The results are used to help the faculty with improving the course but also in the yearly faculty evaluations conducted in February.

Library Services

The Library Services department at GRACE has set its own mission that is consistent with the school's mission. Data is collected each semester from End of Course Surveys and annually from the Student Satisfaction Survey. Recommendations generated from the results are tied to the strategic plan, evaluated and processed with the VP of Academics for budget proposals, and then sent to the Executive Leadership Team.

Student Services

The Student Services department gathers assessment data throughout the Academic Year with the collection of Retention Rates, Job Placement Rates, Student Satisfaction Surveys, Mentoring Review, and Environmental Scans. Annually, the department conducts a SWOT analysis that takes into account all the assessment data. Recommendations generated from the results are tied to the institution's strategic initiatives and goals evaluated and processed with the EVP for budget proposals, and then sent to the Executive Leadership Team.

Technology Services

The Information Technology department at GRACE has set its own goals that are consistent with the school's strategic plan. Data is collected each semester from End of Course Surveys and annually from the Student Satisfaction Survey. The data is analyzed along with environmental scans and benchmarking results and it used to generate our departmental SWOT analysis. Recommendations generated from the results are tied to the strategic plan, evaluated with the VP of Student Services for budget proposals, and then sent to the Executive Leadership Team.

Institutional Effectiveness

The IE Department conducts meetings with all other departments on an annual basis to discuss assessment data, data analysis, assessment tools, and the assessment timeline for their functional areas. Changes to assessment tools, the assessment timeline or the department's IE process are developed based on assessment data and data analysis. Changes to the IE plan are submitted to the ELT for approval and ultimately presented to the Board of Trustees.

The IE Department conducts SWOT analysis, Departmental Reviews along with an Environmental Scan, Employee Interviews with the other departments and Employee Evaluations throughout the year. Summary results and analysis are discussed then changes or suggestions are tied to the Strategic Plan and Budget. Next they are presented to the Executive Leadership Team for further discussion and ultimately presented to the Board of Trustees.

Institutional Effectiveness Timeline

Calendar	Academic Calendar	Curricular and Co-Curricular Assessment	Budget Process	Strategic Plan	Comments
July		Program Review Summary			Fiscal Year Begins
August	Module 1 Begins	Faculty Satisfaction Survey			Academic Year Begins
September		Foundational Statements Review (Odd Years)			
October	Module 1 Ends	End of Course Survey		Review of Department Goals, Short Term & Long Term Initiatives	
	Module 2 Begins	SWOT Analysis by Department/ Cost Center			
November		IE Evaluation by Departments and IE Self Evaluation			
December	Module 2 Ends	End of Course Survey	6-Month Budget Analysis & Projections		BOT Review & Approval of Foundational Statement Recommendations
		Library Services Evaluation			
		Employee Satisfaction Survey			
January	Module 3 Begins	Evaluate Policies and Procedures	Budget Analysis Begins by Department/ Cost Center	Strategic Planning Begins by Department	
February		Evaluation of Publications and Website	Budget Meetings by Department /Cost Center (With CFO &/or Finance Personnel)		
		Employee Evaluations			
		Faculty Evaluations			
March	Module 3 Ends	End of Course Survey	Budget Proposal Review by CEO & CFO	ELT Reviews Strategic Plan with Revisions to BOT	
		Student Satisfaction Survey			
		Building and Grounds Inspection			
		Facilities Evacuation Procedures Evaluation			
April	Fall Schedule Ready				Deadline for Updated Publications, Policies, & Website

			Proposed Budget Discussions w/BOT & Revisions		
May	Module 4 Ends	BOT Self-Evaluation	BOT Final Budget Approval	BOT Strategic Plan Approval	
	Module 5 Begins	BOT Performance Evaluation of President			BOT Approval of Publications & Policies
		End of Course Survey			
June		Environmental Scans & Department Reviews			
July	Module 5 Ends	End of Course Survey			
		Distance Education Review (Even Years)			
		Advising/Mentoring Process Review			

Institutional Assessment Documents

Assessment/Evaluation	Department	Form
Evaluation of publications, policies, website, and departmental procedures	All Departments	IE AD 102
Employee Self Evaluations and Employee Performance Review	All Employees & Supervisors	IE EM 102
Evaluation of Executive Administration	All Departments	IE EM 102
Faculty Self Evaluations	Academics	IE FC 100
Faculty Performance Review by AVP	Academics	IE FC 103
Facilities Evacuation Procedures Review	Facilities	IE HSP 101
Buildings and Grounds Self-Inspection	Facilities	IE HSP 100
Building Evacuation Procedures Evaluation	Facilities	IE HSP 102
End of Course Surveys	Regulatory Compl.	JotForm
Performance Appraisal of President	Board of Trustees	IE AD 101
Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation	Board of Trustees	IE BOT 100
Departmental Evaluation/Environmental Scans	All Departments	
Distance Education Review Every Even Year	Academics	
Curriculum Planning and Program Review	Academics	IE FC 106
New Student Survey	Regulatory Compl.	JotForm
Student Satisfaction Survey	Regulatory Compl.	JotForm
Alumni Survey	Regulatory Compl.	JotForm
Graduate Exit Survey	Regulatory Compl.	JotForm
Foundational Statements Review (Odd Years)	All Departments	IE AD 102
Departmental Evaluation SWOT Analysis and Summary Report	All Departments	
IE Self Evaluation	IE Department	IE OIE 102
IE Evaluation by Departments	All Departments	IE OIE 102
Evaluation of Library Services	Library	IE LIB 100