

Statement of Educational Effectiveness

Academic Year 2015 – 16

Educational Effectiveness

McCormick Theological Seminary evaluates its educational effectiveness through an annual review of its degree programs and its analysis of how well students have met the learning outcomes that McCormick has established for each degree program. It also compiles student retention, graduation, and placement data for the institution. The Seminary's Academic Programs Committee oversees this review, which is then discussed by the Faculty and reported to the Board of Trustees.

Master of Divinity Degree

McCormick has established six learning outcomes for its Master of Divinity degree. The Seminary intends that each student will be able to do the following when she or he graduates with an MDiv:

1. Think critically.
2. Construct theological meaning using biblical and Christian traditions.
3. Communicate effectively.
4. Exhibit growth in cross-cultural engagement.
5. Exhibit pastoral imagination.
6. Lead just and sustainable communities.

The Seminary employs direct and indirect measures to evaluate its educational effectiveness in the MDiv program. Each graduating student is required to create an e-portfolio for our senior review process. They submit their e-portfolios to the Academic Programs Committee's Administrative Assistant, their faculty advisor, and another faculty member designated by the Dean for review. The Dean, faculty Director of Assessment, and Registrar also have access to the e-portfolios. The portfolios include documents that illustrate the students' abilities in the learning outcomes above. Faculty readers within the Seminary read and evaluate the portfolios according to a nine-point scale for each learning outcome:

- Inadequate (Score 0)
- Beginner (Score 3, 2, 1)
- Competent (Score 6, 5, 4)
- Proficient (Score 9, 8, 7)

McCormick reconfigured our masters curriculum, learning outcomes, and assessment procedures in 2014 – 15 and is sharing findings from the current system.

**Master of Divinity Portfolio Evaluations
McCormick Theological Seminary
Percentage of Students Who Meet or Exceed Program Learning Outcomes¹**

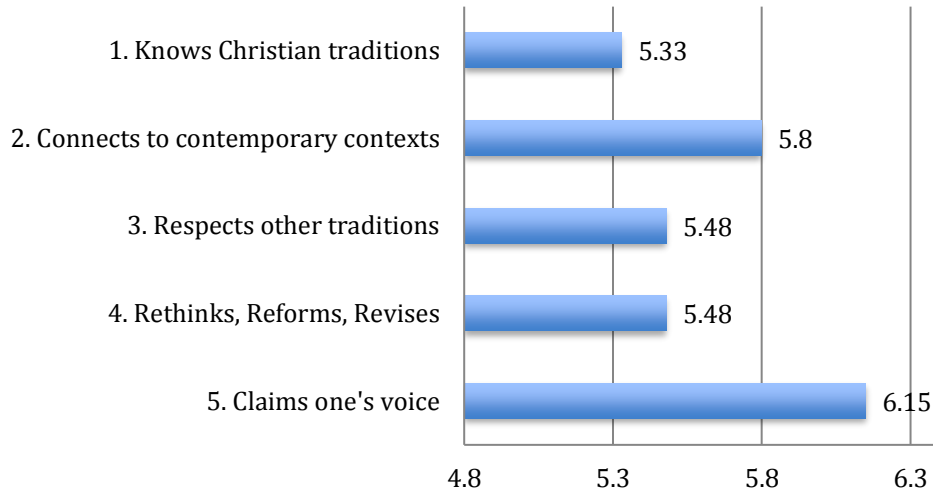
In academic year 2015 – 16, the Seminary's assessment of Masters level programs was further developed with the goal of enhancing faculty participation and learning from the assessment process. In order to enhance the depth of analysis, this included a particular focus on two learning outcomes for the academic year (outcome # 2, Construct theological meaning using biblical and Christian traditions, and # 4, Exhibit growth in cross-cultural engagement). Rubrics were developed for these learning outcomes with input from the whole faculty. Artifacts from graduating student e-portfolios in the MDiv, MTS, and MAM degree programs were selected, names were removed, and faculty scored the artifacts using the new rubrics. *This was the first time we have involved the entire faculty in direct assessment of our learning outcomes and artifacts selected by graduating students.*

The score sheets used a scale of zero to 9 in which there were four categories: Proficient (scores of 9, 8, 7); Competent (scores of 6, 5, 4); Beginner (scores of 3, 2, 1); Inadequate (score of zero).

At our first Day of Assessment (8 April 2016), faculty worked in small groups comparing their scores on similar artifacts, improving the rubrics, and reflecting on data from fall course evaluations in introductory required courses. A select student panel of graduating students was also assembled to reflect with us on learning outcomes # 2 and # 4.

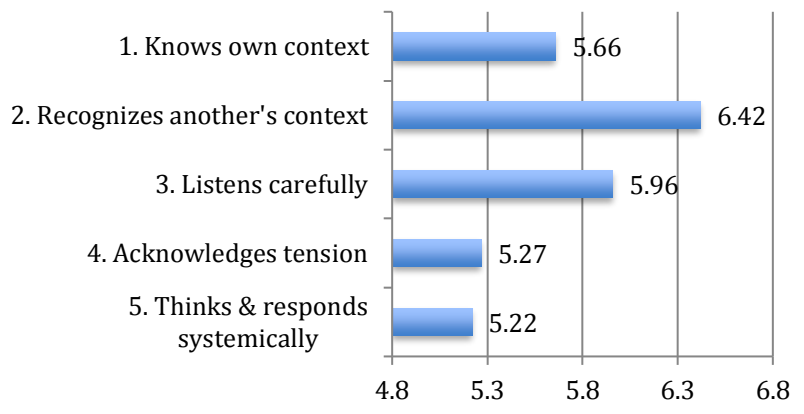
Cumulative data from faculty score sheets show that for learning outcome # 2 for the total of all rubrics, the average faculty score was 5.65 (at the top end of the competent range). The chart below shows the average faculty scores for the five rubric standards used with learning outcome # 2:

Construct Theological Meaning



For learning outcome # 4 ('Exhibit cross-cultural competency'), the average faculty score was 5.70 (at the top end of the competent range) on the same scale. The chart below shows the average faculty scores for the five rubric standards used with learning outcome # 4:

Exhibits cross-cultural competence



The results of this analysis in these learning outcomes show McCormick students come at the top of the competent range and beginning of the proficient range.

Based on data gathered and feedback from faculty and our student panel, the following projects to improve teaching and learning in academic year 2016 – 17 were recommended to the faculty:

1) Make all students better aware of our learning outcomes and rubrics by: (A) sharing them in our syllabi and discussing them in classes; (B) explaining the outcomes via conversations about our rubrics with masters-level seniors who attend workshops on constructing their ePortfolios during fall semester and J-term; (C) in academic year 2017 – 18, add the learning outcomes and rubrics to the Academic Handbook for Masters Level and D.Min. students.

2) Engage faculty in a wider conversation in this academic year about what we mean by “cross cultural” and “diversity,” opening space for faculty to identify where we need resources to engage students in better modes of teaching, learning, and advising to address our goal of “cross-cultural engagement” (learning outcome # 4), and where we already are strong in this regard.

3) Ask faculty to develop a project in reading and writing across the curriculum to improve student performance in all assignments using resources like *“They Say / I Say”: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (third ed.) based on issues of composition in some ePortfolio papers.

4) Begin to develop shared and consistent rubrics and other methods of evaluation for assessing non-written artifacts (creative projects, class presentations, oral histories, web sites, social media projects, etc.) that may become part of seniors’ ePortfolios, and that already appear as assignments in some of our course syllabi.

Master of Arts in Theological Studies Degree

McCormick has established five learning outcomes for its Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree. The Seminary intends that students who graduate with an MTS degree will be able to do the following:

1. Think critically.
2. Construct theological meaning using biblical and Christian traditions.
3. Communicate effectively.
4. Exhibit growth in cross-cultural engagement.
5. Engage in theological research and analysis based upon an argument and construct a theological essay or thesis article.

The Seminary employs direct and indirect measures to evaluate its educational effectiveness in the MTS degree program. Each graduating student is required to submit her or his summative paper in an e-portfolio. The summative paper is either the Masters thesis or the paper written for the required Seminar in Research Methods. Readers from within the faculty (the thesis advisor and the student's faculty advisor) then read and evaluate the paper according to our nine-point scale for each learning outcome:

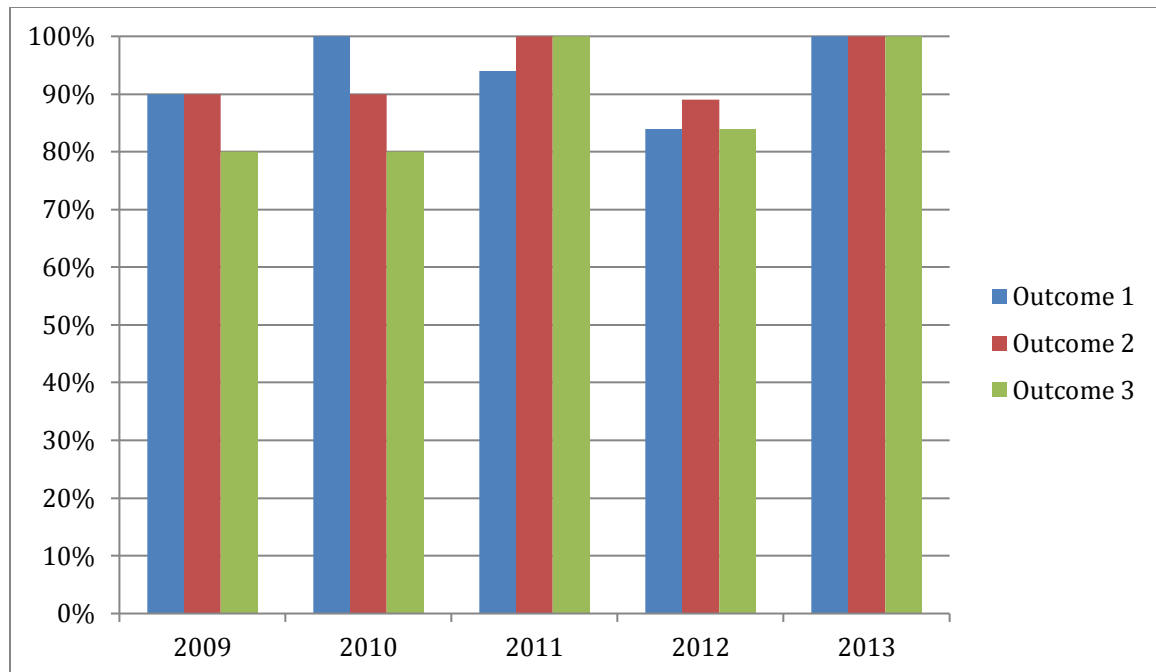
- Inadequate (Score 0)
- Beginner (Score 3, 2, 1)
- Competent (Score 6, 5, 4)
- Proficient (Score 9, 8, 7)

McCormick's goal was for 90% or more of students to be rated at the level of adequate – good or exemplary – excellent (note change in the scale used in the past compared to present). The chart below indicates the percentage of adequate – good and exemplary – excellent portfolio scores for MTS students in 2009 – 2013. Prior to academic year 2014 – 15, the Seminary used three learning outcomes for its MTS degree (these three outcomes are reflected in the chart below):

1. Exhibit the ability to interpret and teach Christian traditions, texts, and practices that nurture the life of faith and scholarship in themselves and the communities they serve.
2. Articulate a point of view effectively and coherently in spoken and written communication.
3. Engage in theological research and analysis based upon an argument and construct a theological essay or thesis article.

No portfolios were evaluated in 2014. As the chart indicates, the Seminary has consistently achieved its student learning goals at the level of 80% or higher. To improve the effectiveness of the MTS degree, McCormick has instituted two required courses in the MTS program, which are focused on analytical reading, research, and writing.

**Master of Arts in Theological Studies Portfolio Evaluations
McCormick Theological Seminary, 2009-2013
Percentage of Students Who Meet or Exceed Program Learning Outcomes**



Master of Arts in Ministry

Beginning in 2009, 2011, and 2012 the Seminary offered four additional masters degrees: the Master of Arts in Discipleship Development (MADD), Master of Arts in Urban Ministry (MAUM), Masters of Theology (ThM), and Master of Arts in Ministry (MAM). The first three degrees were offered briefly and have been discontinued based on assessment by the faculty. The last students in these programs will graduate by 2016 (with one exception).

The Masters of Arts in Ministry emerged out of learning from assessment in the MADD and MAUM programs. It has five core learning outcomes:

1. Think critically.
2. Construct theological meaning using biblical and Christian traditions.
3. Communicate effectively.
4. Exhibit growth in cross-cultural engagement.
5. Serve effectively in congregational ministries.

The Seminary conducts an evaluation that employs direct measures of learning effectiveness; inside faculty readers evaluate program graduates' summative papers submitted in e-portfolios according to the same nine-point scale used in the other masters degree programs. Because this is a new degree program, at this time the sample size of graduates is too small to draw conclusions about

educational effectiveness. We graduated three students in this new program in 2016.

Doctor of Ministry Degree

McCormick offers three options for its DMin program: the McCormick DMin, Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS) DMin in Preaching (offered in conjunction with five other institutions), and Ecumenical DMin (offered in conjunction with two other schools). McCormick established five learning outcomes for its DMin degree and for its students in the ACTS DMin in Preaching. The Seminary intends that students who graduate from McCormick with a D.Min degree will be able to do the following: *

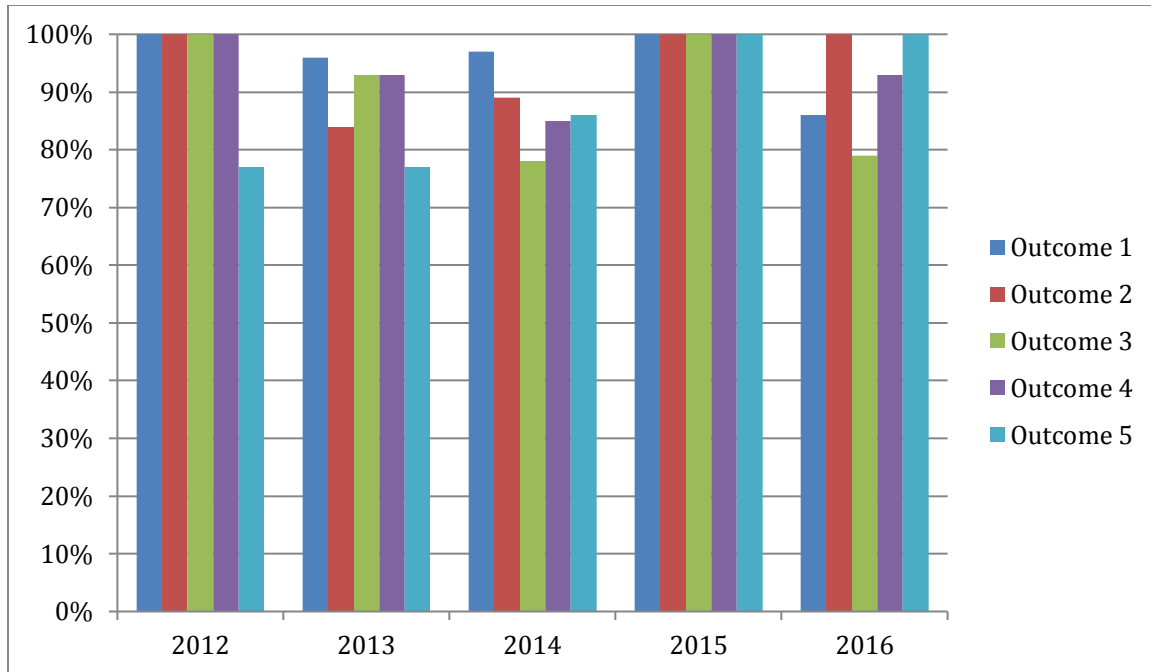
1. Analyze social and cultural factors impacting society in general and her or his own specific setting of ministry.
2. Use and integrate a variety of biblical, theological, and historical resources into her or his own specific practices of ministry.
3. Form clear objectives and strategies to address challenges and opportunities in her or his own specific settings of ministry.
4. Implement evaluative methods that encourage ongoing critical reflection on the practice of ministry in her or his own specific settings.
5. Nurture collegial relationships that strengthen her or his vocational sense of identity and the practice of ministry in her or his own settings.

The Seminary employs direct measures to evaluate its educational effectiveness in the McCormick and ACTS DMin programs. Each graduating student is required to submit her or his own doctoral thesis and defend it before a committee that includes her or his advisor, a faculty reviewer, and another student. The faculty reviewer reads and evaluates the DMin thesis according to a four-point scale for each learning outcome:

- Fails to meet minimal standards
- Beginning - Developing
- Adequate – Good
- Exemplary – Excellent

McCormick's goal is for 90% or more of students to be rated at the level of Adequate – Good or Exemplary – Excellent. As the chart below indicates, McCormick has consistently achieved its student learning goals at the level of 75% or higher. In 2012 and 2013 evaluators judged that some thesis projects did not give evidence for Outcome 5, which accounts for the 77% effectiveness score in that Outcome in these years.

**Doctor of Ministry Thesis Evaluations
McCormick Theological Seminary, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016
Percentage of Students Who Meet or Exceed Program Learning Outcomes**



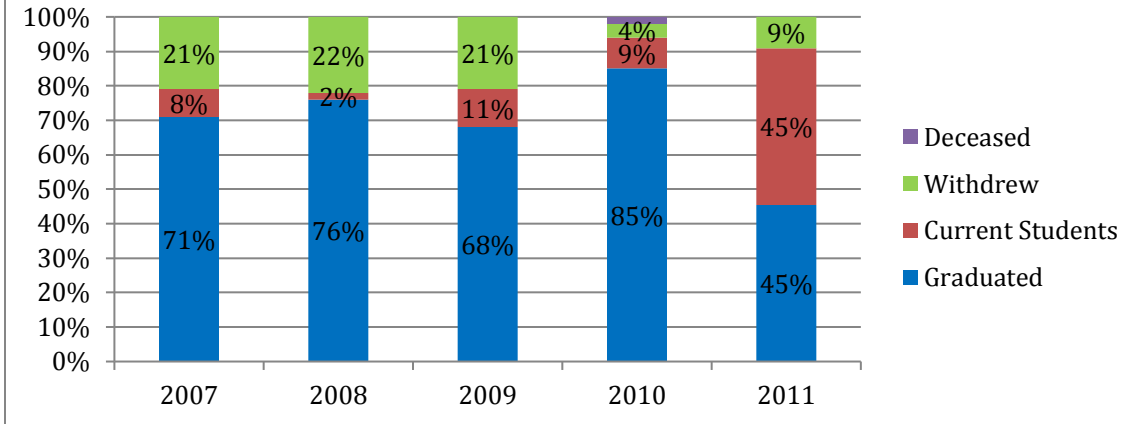
* The Ecumenical DMin program has a separate set of learning outcomes, which are available from the DMin office at McCormick. There was one Ecumenical DMin graduate from McCormick in 2009, one in 2012, and one in 2013.

Graduation and Retention Rates

Masters Programs

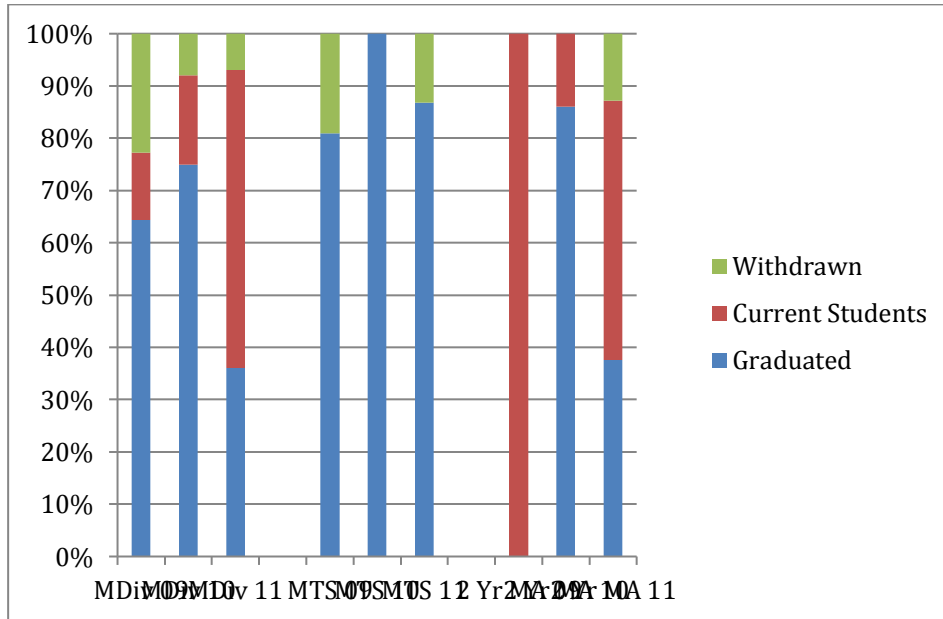
Graduation rates for cohorts who matriculated into any masters program at the Seminary from 2007 – 2011 are found on the chart below:

Masters Level Programs Graduation Rates by Year of Matriculation



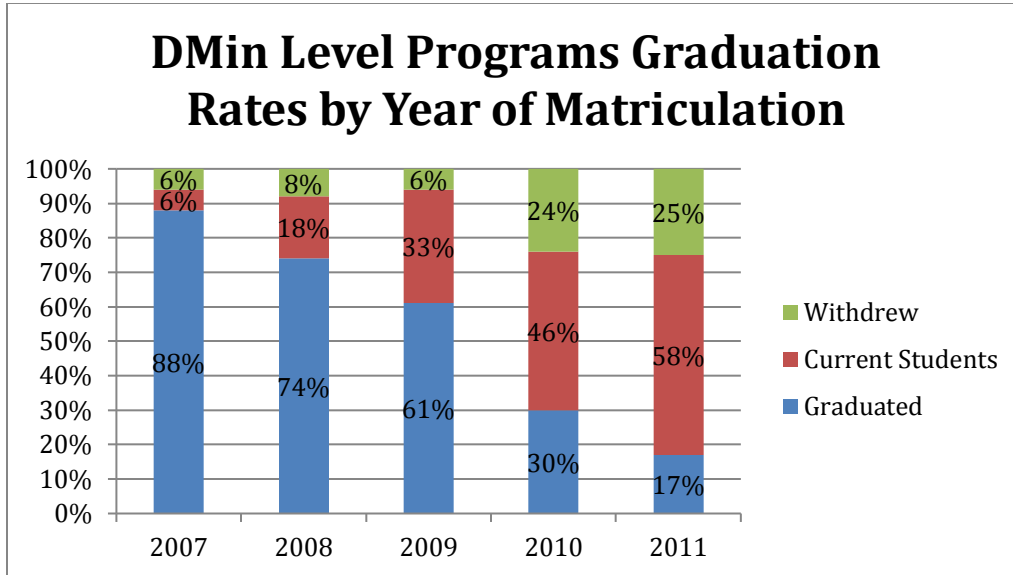
Graduation rates in the Masters of Divinity (MDiv), Masters of Theological Studies (MTS), and two year Professional Degrees (MADD, MAUM, and MAM) for cohorts matriculating in 2009 – 2011 are indicated in the chart below:

Graduation Rates by Degree Program By Year of Matriculation

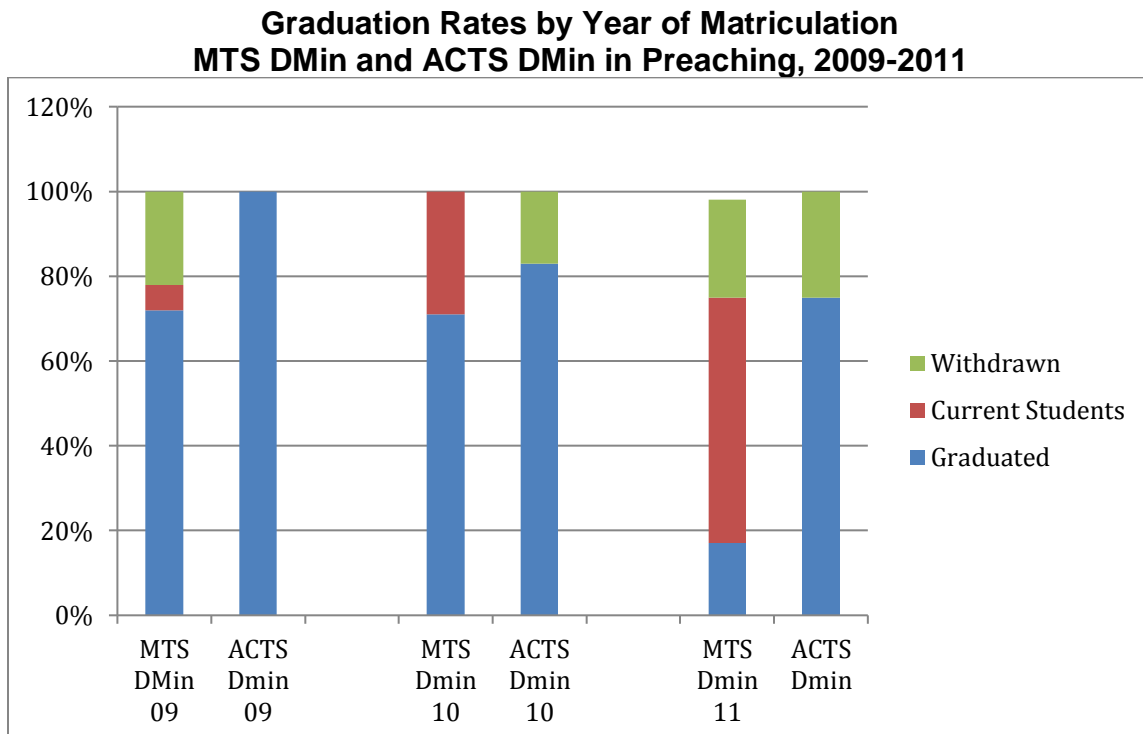


Doctor of Ministry Programs

Graduation rates for cohorts who entered the McCormick DMin Program in 2007 – 2011 are indicated in the chart below. The chart does not include data from the ACTS DMin in Preaching graduates or the Ecumenical DMin graduates:



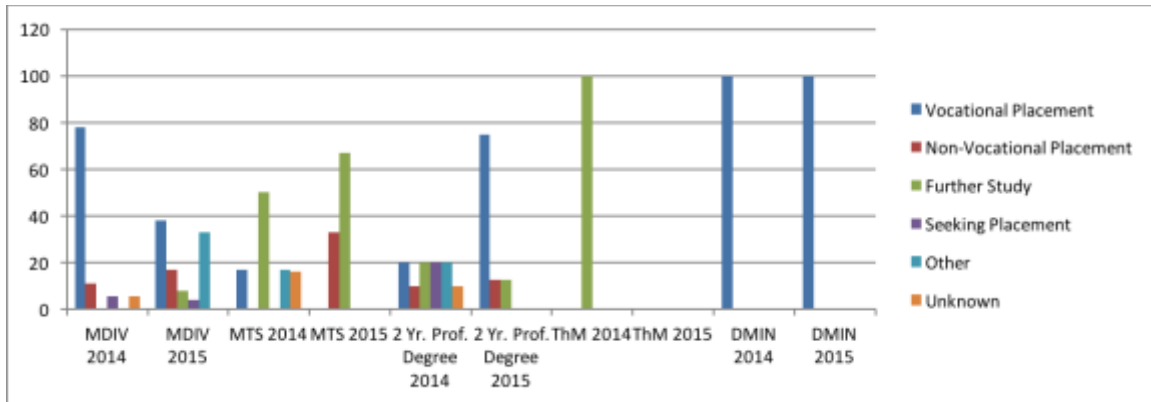
Comparative graduation rates for McCormick students in the McCormick DMin Program and the ACTS DMin in Preaching are represented in the chart below. The data represent findings from cohorts who matriculated in 2009 – 2011. No McCormick students matriculated in the Ecumenical DMin during that period:



Placement Rates

Placement rates for 2014 and 2015 graduates from the Seminary are below. The data indicates that high percentages of the MDiv (78% in 2014) and DMin graduates (100%) are employed vocationally within a year of graduating from McCormick. In the MTS program, high percentages of graduates pursue further studies (67% in 2015). Placement rates for the MADD and MAUM degrees are combined in the category “2 Year Professional MA.”

Placement Rates for 2014 and 2015 Graduates McCormick Theological Seminary



NOTES

¹ Persons wishing to have educational effectiveness information about our masters programs from 2009 – 2014 can contact the Seminary.