



Board Notes

April, 2018

Good News!

Vice President and Dean Jeanne Hoeft announced recently that the Kansas Board of Regents has decided to remove the restrictions they had previously placed on our enrollments under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for distance education classes. Jeanne pointed out that this allows us to offer online instruction without the need to apply to each state individually. Many thanks go to Jeanne and the staff members who worked hard to obtain this ruling.

Data-driven Decisions on Enrollment

Trustees Michael Parmely and Susan Lindahl

As the mainline Church has seen declining participation, so have the nation's seminaries. Our own enrollment numbers in many ways mirror those of the national experience, but a closer examination of the data provides some sense of the unique features of Saint Paul School of Theology.

Each year the Association of Theological Schools provides data to its member institutions in the form of a Peer Profile Report and its online annual data tables. Three different peer groups, designated by Saint Paul, are provided in our reports form ATS. I have chosen just one of the three reports for the data shown in this issue of *Board Notes*.

Peer Comparisons

The peer group selected for this comparison consists of the other free-standing United Methodist seminaries:

- Claremont School of Theology
- Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
- Iliff School of Theology
- Methodist Theological School in Ohio
- United Theological Seminary
- Wesley Theological Seminary

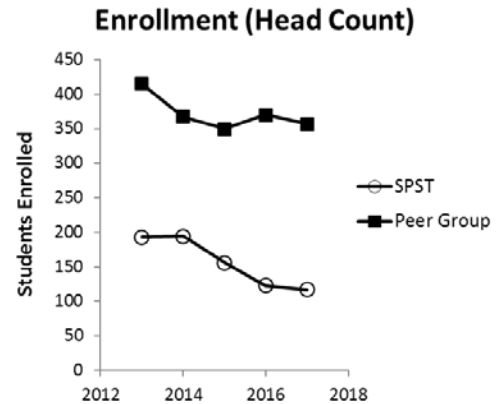


Fig. 1 Total enrollment at SPST

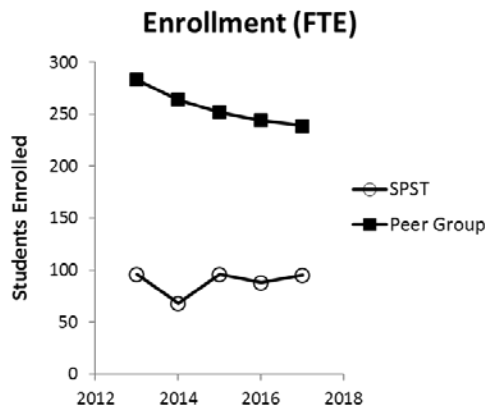


Fig. 2. Total enrollment based on FTE

While enrollment based on head count (HC) (number of individuals enrolled) has declined significantly at all 7 seminaries, full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment (number if all were enrolled full-time) has remained stable (Figs. 1 vs 2) at Saint Paul. It appears that declining recruitment has contributed substantially to the decline in the total number of Saint Paul students (HC). Applicants, acceptances and new enrolling student numbers have all trended down during this period (Fig. 3).

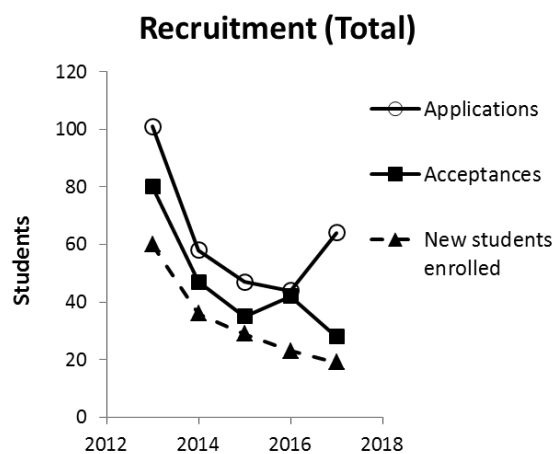


Fig. 3. Recruitment—all degrees

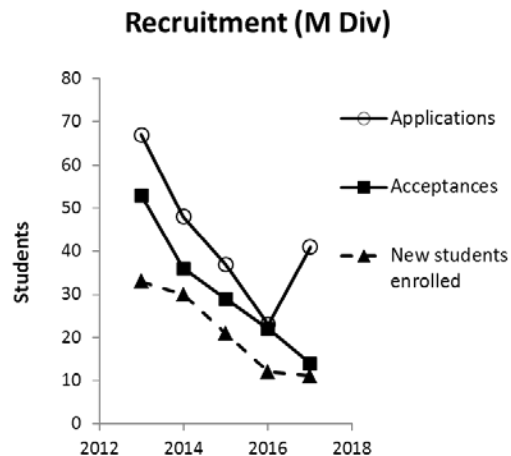


Fig. 4. Recruitment to M Div program

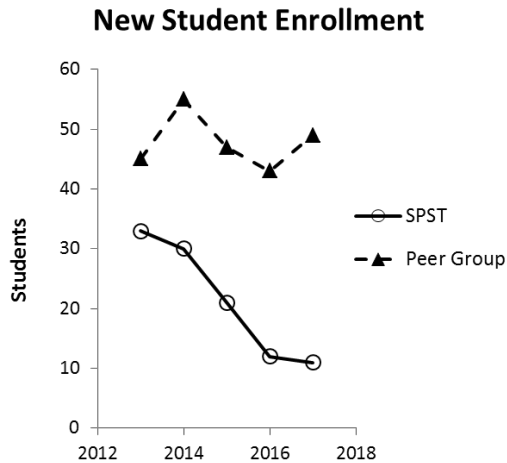


Fig. 5. New student enrollment at Saint Paul School of Theology

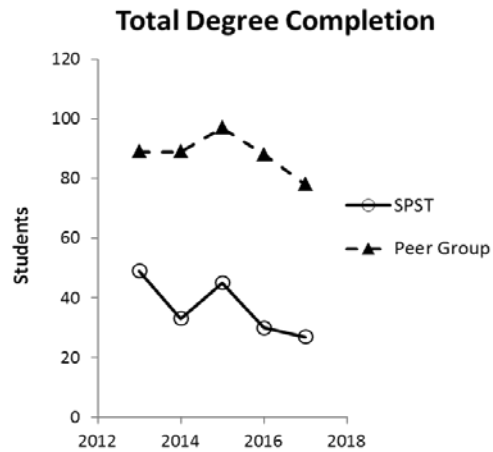


Fig. 6. Total students completing their degree requirements.

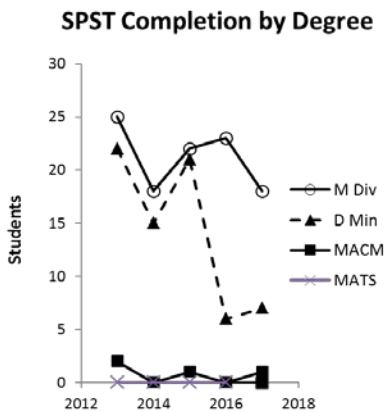


Fig. 7. Completion of degree requirements

A closer look at recruitment by degree program indicates that the largest declines in newly enrolled students have occurred in our largest programs—the MDiv (Fig. 4) and DMin degree programs (not shown). The net result is that new student enrollment is now at a level that will very soon not sustain the seminary at its historic enrollment levels (Fig. 5). These trends are reflected in the data on degree completion (Figs. 6 & 7). If the predicted number of students

complete their degree requirements by May, recruitment would need to equal levels not seen since 2013 to maintain our current head count. A large portion of the decline in D Min enrollment and completion is due to our decision in 2016 not to continue the Korean D Min Program.

Why should trustees be aware of these data? Saint Paul School of Theology now ranks as the smallest among the UM seminaries in terms of size (HC and FTE)(Fig. 8). However, we rank first among this group for the percent of students enrolled in the M Div program, which far exceeds the proportion of our student body pursuing the other three seminary degrees—MACM, MATS and DMin. Where are the opportunities for reversing recent enrollment trends? Table 2 speaks to the

Fig. 8. Rank of UM seminaries by HC.

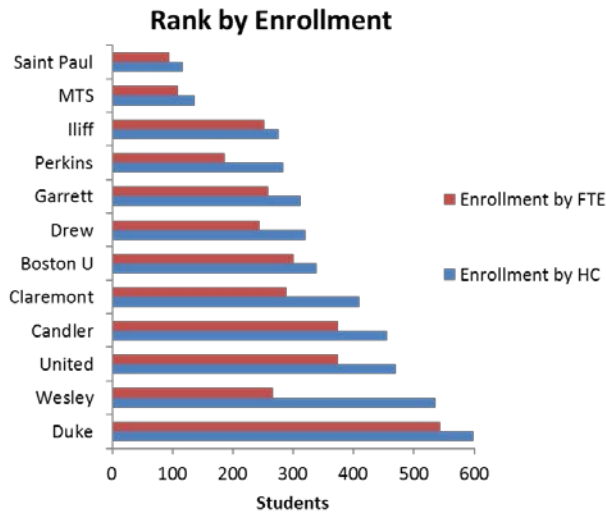


Table 1. Rank of UM seminaries by % enrollment in M.Div. program

Seminary	% Enrolled Students in M Div Program
Saint Paul	68
Duke	62
Candler	62
MTS	58
Illiff	57
Boston U	48
Wesley	47
Drew	46
United	45
Perkins	44
Garrett	42
Claremont	35

geographic distribution of our student body by campus and the stability of enrollment in Oklahoma City. These data, which report enrollment at the drop-add

Academic Year	OCU	Greater KC	Total
2012-13	40	220	260
2013-14	48	183	231
2014-15	49	184	233
2015-16	43	151	194
2016-17	45	97	142
2017-18	33	98	131

Source: Fall 2017-18 Enrollment Report (HC)

date in September, may suggest that a greater emphasis on recruitment for M Div students to the Leawood campus would be appropriate. At the same time, we need to celebrate our success in Oklahoma City and take steps to assure its continued strength.

Additional pertinent information about enrollment at the average ATS seminary comes from the 2017 ATS Annual Report:

- Enrollment began to stabilize two years ago and is now increasing slightly.
- Racial/ethnic student numbers have increased 10% over the past decade and the number of students over 50 years of age has increased 16% during that period.
- Numbers of M.Div. candidates have decreased an average of 14%.
- Nearly 2/3 of seminaries offer online courses or full degree programs.
- The average ATS seminary has 140 students (HC)(90 FTE) and 10 full-time faculty.
- Total average annual expenditures total \$4.1 million, meaning that the average cost of educating a full-time seminary student is \$45,555 per year.

Overall, this picture presents a need for urgent actions to maintain and sustain the mission of Saint Paul School of Theology. Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to the institution, and an understanding of our enrollment numbers is emerging with the development of the Saint Paul Enrollment Dashboard and Enrollment Plan. Together with the ATS dataset the numbers allow us to draw comparisons that enrich our understanding of the position of Saint Paul in the the context of enrollment trends at like institutions. It presents a "call to action" and an opportunity for our Board to work with President Blair and his administrative team to plan and build for financial equilibrium and a sustainable future. Indeed, the April, 2018 meeting of the Board of Trustees will devote significant time to the issue of enrollment planning and the resources needed to take bold new steps in this area.