

# REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBORS:  
IMPROVING STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE  
DIVERSITY OF ISLAMIC FAITH AND PRACTICE

**On-Site Review: April 9-12, 2012**

PRESENTED AS THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN TO THE

Commission of Colleges: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Accrediting: Association of Theological Schools

*A mind for truth. A heart for God.®*



**Our Muslim Neighbors:  
Improving Student Knowledge of the Diversity of Islamic  
Faith and Practice**

**Quality Enhancement Plan**

**Reformed Theological Seminary**

**On-Site Review Dates: April 9-12, 2012**

**Submitted to SACS and ATS**

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## Section 1: Executive Summary

“I was profoundly conscious of the fact that [the missionaries] did not understand Muslims because they were not properly trained for the work. As far as Islam was concerned, they were horribly ignorant.” These words, from a scholar in Cairo, describe a besetting problem in North American theological education. Because they are over a century old, they underscore the truth that understanding Islam is not a new challenge. The “enigma of Islam,” as Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) termed it, now confronts us in a rapidly changing world. When Reformed Theological Seminary was founded in 1966, there were few mosques in America. A generation later, a flourishing Islamic community is found in every major city in the United States.

Then, September 11, 2001 happened. According to Michael Novak, the terrorist attacks on that date marked the abrupt end of the “unshakeable” confidence that the world was “going automatically secular.” As Islam has awakened from a half-millennium of isolation, Christians are confronted with their profound ignorance of Islamic teachings and practices. Our world keeps changing, as more recently stunning events in the Islamic world have been dubbed the “Arab Spring.” Will this yield more problems or more promise or both?

What has not changed is the mission of Reformed Theological Seminary, which is “to serve the Church by preparing its leaders, through a program of graduate theological education, based upon the authority of the inerrant Word of God, and committed to the Reformed Faith.” In fidelity to this calling, RTS includes a missional commitment among its core values:

RTS equips leaders to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the whole world in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to proclaim that salvation is only by God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone, and in order to disciple the nations into maturity in Christ. Our goal is that the world may worship the true God, serving him everywhere in His creation, and that the nations may enjoy His presence and restoration.

Flowing from this mission, the RTS QEP Steering Committee has developed a systematic plan to integrate the study of the diversity of Islamic faith and practice in the seminary’s Master of Divinity (MDiv) curriculum. At its heart, the QEP has three basic components:

1. A new class in the MDiv curriculum: “Christian Encounter with Islam”;
2. The expansion of coverage of Islam in five other MDiv courses;
3. The addition of three new artifacts for assessment purposes.

With careful attention by the faculty and stable support from the administration, we believe the QEP will play a vital role in improving the preparation for ministry at Reformed Theological Seminary, enabling our graduates better to understand, love, and witness to their Muslim neighbors.

## Section 2: Selection of the QEP Topic

The selection of the QEP topic at Reformed Theological Seminary took place over a fifteen month process (July 2009 to October 2010) that engaged a broad constituency of the Seminary, including trustees, alumni, faculty, administration, staff, and students.

In July 2009, Robert C. Cannada, Jr., Chancellor and CEO of RTS, appointed John Muether, Director of RTS Libraries and Professor of Church History at the Orlando campus, as chair of the QEP project and assigned the RTS Reaffirmation Committee to oversee the QEP selection process. (The RTS Reaffirmation Committee was already in place to produce the Compliance Certification.) On this committee were John Muether, Robert Cara (Chief Academic Officer), Polly Stone (Director of Institutional Assessment), Brad Tisdale (Chief Financial Officer), Steve Wallace (Chief Operating Officer), Rod Culbertson (Associate Professor of Practical Theology and Dean of Student Development, RTS/C), and Angela Queen (Registrar, RTS/C).

The Reaffirmation Committee agreed on these preliminary parameters for the RTS QEP: (1) The QEP would relate to the MDiv curriculum, and (2) the QEP would focus on the resources of the three larger campuses (Jackson, Orlando, and Charlotte), although the plan will still be implemented at the smaller campuses (Atlanta and Washington DC).

Over the next several months, meetings were conducted with the RTS Board, the faculties of all campuses, and selected members of the staff and student bodies on the Jackson, Orlando, and Charlotte campuses. At these meetings, feedback was solicited from each group related to the QEP. In addition, a number of alumni were contacted by email. See Appendix A for the RTS QEP timeline that lists these meetings.

At the beginning of the discussions, no suggested QEP topics were given. However, the earliest respondents suggested some examples of potential topics that would serve well to encourage creative feedback. So, Muether typically employed three suggestive QEP topics to encourage reflection on a fitting subject for RTS. These three were: (1) An analysis and review of the homiletics curriculum in light of media ecology studies; (2) more study of Islam into the theological curriculum; (3) equipping RTS students with research skills for new information technologies.

The presentation to each group included: (1) An introduction to the QEP process; (2) a request for feedback on the three suggested QEP topics; and (3) an invitation to propose additional QEP topics for consideration. What follows is a summary of the feedback that was prompted by these discussions.

In addition to the three suggested QEP topics used as examples, numerous other suggestions for QEP topics were offered by the constituencies surveyed. In no particular order, they included the following (with the source of the suggestion in parenthesis):

1. Spiritual self-care and self-growth among seminarians (alumnus).
2. A study of postmodernism and its impact within Presbyterian denominations (alumnus).
3. Cultivating more cultural sensitivity among RTS students (two sources: student and faculty).

4. A study of women's roles in the church (two sources: student and faculty).
5. Integrating biblical languages into the curriculum (faculty).
6. Incorporating financial stewardship into the theological curriculum (two sources: both staff).
7. Revival of Reformed theology in America (board).
8. Restructuring RTS Bible classes (student).
9. Comparing virtual and traditional classrooms in their student learning outcomes (administration).
10. Training RTS students to become "prayer warriors" (board).
11. A study of the biblical teaching on major economic systems (board).

Among all these topics, there was a decided preference in the feedback received for the study of Islam (among them five faculty, two Board members, and two staff). A faculty member wrote, "I warm most to the Islam option (although for the sake of our donors we might want to find a better wording than 'integrating Islam into the theological curriculum'!). I believe the need for Christians to be able to engage critically with Islam will become only more pressing in the years to come." Similarly, an alumnus observed that an understanding of the origin of Islam and the beliefs of Muslims "should be required and not optional" at RTS. One member of the Board expressed his enthusiasm in these words:

I love the idea of integrating information concerning Islam into our curriculum that will help our students know how to effectively and informatively speak to the challenge we face from the considerable spread of Islam all over the world, and especially in the US and Europe, thought by many to be "Christian" societies. It seems to me that such an effort would be not only practical and useful in knowing how to share the gospel with Muslim people, but easy to measure in terms of an increase in knowledge and understanding of Islam by our students, which should please ATS and SACS. This might actually turn out to be a very worthwhile endeavor, given the challenge we face from the aggressive spread of Islam in our country and the relative ignorance most Christians have concerning the threat we face.

Finally, a staff member observed that the topic of Islam would benefit from the self-consciously Reformed perspective that RTS offers. "The Reformed Faith," he wrote, "is positioned best to make an informed and thoughtful argument to the Muslim. As other Reformed schools seem to be doing little in this field, it could place RTS into a position of leadership, and it could offer a perspective that could challenge trends in Muslim evangelism that present 'a huge danger of syncretism.'"

Information literacy garnered the interest of four individuals (two from the RTS libraries and two from the Board), and homiletics had support from two faculty and one Board member. Three RTS professors wrote to express their enthusiasm for all three suggested QEP topics.

Several faculty members were in favor of integrating biblical languages into the curriculum. They were especially concerned that the languages were not adequately included in the homiletics curriculum.

Some responses included concerns about the liabilities of these topics. It was suggested that it was too difficult to measure learning outcomes in homiletics and that information

technology was too vast and changing to be comprehended in a QEP topic. Two voices expressed skepticism about the value of the study of Islam: a faculty member questioned its relevance and a staff member suggested it was the “most difficult” topic that yielded the “fewest returns.”

It is also worth noting that some responses framed topics in very different ways. For example, the information literacy topic elicited responses both enthusiastically for and skeptical of the digitization of theological information. Additionally, some regarded the Islam topic primarily from the perspective of evangelism and others saw it as a window on the “war on terror.” These are not mutually exclusive directions, of course, but rather they highlight the diversity of approaches to these topics.

Several in the RTS community expressed concern that a QEP might have the unintended effect of dividing the Seminary. Specifically, this was expressed with respect to the homiletics subject (given the polarizing effect of some of the prominent “schools” of preaching in Reformed circles) and the potentially volatile issue of women in church leadership.

This concern underscored the need to frame the QEP in a particular way. Reformed Theological Seminary enjoys a healthy diversity with a shared confessional perspective. Diversity always threatens to devolve into disunity. All of these potential topics harbored the prospect of some tension within the school. There are in Reformed churches today a variety of approaches to the question of what constitutes sound preaching; in higher education there are differences on the weight of electronic and physical information resources; biblical languages can tend to overtake a curriculum to the neglect of other important issues; and the challenge of Islam raises debates over the strategies that affect issues ranging from Bible translation to evangelistic methodology. Wary of the potential of sowing disharmony, the QEP discussion focused on using this project to respect and further cultivate the healthy diversity within the RTS community.

For the actual selection of the QEP topic, the Academic Dean Committee was combined with the RTS Reaffirmation Committee to ensure that there was significant faculty involvement. On the basis of a solicitation of ideas from a broad-based survey of the RTS constituency, this combined committee met via teleconference on April 26, 2010. At that meeting, support was voiced for several QEP topics. After discussion, two recommendations were formally moved as QEP topics: (1) “enhancing biblical languages across the curriculum” and (2) “improvement of the knowledge of the continuum of Islamic faith and practice.”

After a lengthy discussion of the two options, the Chief Academic Officer, Robert Cara, called for a voice vote (from members of both committees). By a two vote margin, the joint committee recommended the following QEP topic: “The Improvement of Student Knowledge of the Continuum of Islamic Faith and Practice.” The results of the vote were submitted to the RTS Chancellor and CEO, Robert C. Cannada, Jr. He approved of the topic, and he submitted it to the Executive Committee of the Board where it secured final approval at its May 2010 meeting.

**Confirming the QEP Topic**

Several factors confirmed the wisdom of choosing this QEP topic. Assessment data over the last several years showed deficiencies related to world religions. A curriculum review revealed minimal attention given to Islamic studies. The baseline surveys developed for the QEP further confirmed the lack of student knowledge. Finally, RTS has had an emphasis on missions since its founding. The following will expand upon these.

The RTS degree-program assessment process (described more fully in Section 9: Assessment) confirmed the wisdom of this QEP topic. Since 2005-06, RTS has administered the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) to its graduating seniors, who participate in this survey in their final semester at RTS. The results provide information about the characteristics, demographics, and experiences of the graduating class and allow RTS to compare results with other ATS schools.

As the tables below indicate, the GSQ revealed a need for improvement in the knowledge of other world religions, including Islam. This has been a weakness among our graduates, relative to other ATS schools. RTS student perception of their knowledge of other religious traditions has consistently registered lower than the perception of students at other ATS schools (note: the range is 1-5).

RTS Combined		Knowledge of other religious traditions									
		MDiv			Prof MA's			All Others			Total
Mean	S.D.	Total MDiv	Mean	S.D.	Total Prof MA	Mean	S.D.	Total All Others	Total Mean	Total Students	
2005-06	3.3	1.0	67	3.4	0.6	15	3.7	0.7	35	3.4	117
2006-07	3.3	1.0	69	3.1	0.7	12	3.5	0.9	44	3.4	125
2007-08	3.4	1.0	51	3.3	0.7	8	3.4	1.0	26	3.4	85
2008-09	3.4	0.9	75	3.0	0.6	21	3.7	0.7	62	3.5	158
2009-10	3.5	0.9	76	3.1	1.1	23	3.8	0.7	50	3.5	149

**RTS CAMPUSES COMBINED**



All ATS Schools	Knowledge of other religious traditions										
	MDiv			Prof MA's			All Others			Total	
	Mean	S.D.	Total MDiv	Mean	S.D.	Total Prof MA	Mean	S.D.	Total All Others	Total Mean	Total Students
<b>2005-06</b>	3.7	0.9	3050	3.7	0.8	817	3.7	0.9	1540	3.7	5407
<b>2006-07</b>	3.7	0.9	2800	3.7	0.8	609	3.7	0.8	1449	3.7	4858
<b>2007-08</b>	3.8	0.9	2723	3.8	0.8	576	3.8	0.8	1429	3.8	4728
<b>2008-09</b>	3.7	0.9	2825	3.7	0.8	606	3.8	0.8	1776	3.7	5207
<b>2009-10</b>	3.8	0.9	2936	3.7	0.8	703	3.8	0.8	1812	3.8	5451
<b>ALL ATS SCHOOLS COMBINED</b>											

The disappointing results of the above tables and a similar table, “Respect of Other Religious Traditions,” had previously contributed to concerns noted by the Academic Deans. These concerns appeared in relation to the evaluations of two MDiv student learning outcomes: (1) Winsomely Reformed and (2) Church and the World.

The above GSQ finding that RTS students were weak on world religions was subsequently confirmed in the Islam survey that RTS began to administer in 2010 among its entering and graduating students. (See Section 3.)

Another confirmation that this QEP topic addresses a deficiency at RTS relates to the MDiv curriculum itself. It was assumed by all familiar with the current curriculum that it is deficient related to Islam. This was subsequently confirmed by the QEP Committee’s curriculum survey, found in Section 3.

Finally, this QEP topic dovetails well with the institutional mission. At the founding of RTS in 1966, taking the Gospel to all parts of the world was a significant emphasis. In fact, the founding of RTS included student missionary societies. This emphasis continues to the present. Currently, the “missional” core value for RTS includes “RTS equips leaders to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the whole world in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to proclaim that salvation is only by God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone, and in order to disciple the nations into maturity in Christ.”

### Section 3: The Shaping of the QEP

Once the QEP topic was determined, Chancellor and CEO, Robert C. Cannada, Jr., in consultation with CAO, Robert J. Cara, appointed a QEP Steering Committee in May, 2010. This committee consisted of faculty from the three largest campuses. The members of this committee, joining the previously appointed Polly Stone (Director of Institutional Assessment) and John Muether (church history, Orlando campus), were: James Anderson (philosophical theology, Charlotte), John Currid (biblical studies, Charlotte), Elias Medeiros (practical theology, Jackson), Scott Swain (systematic theology, Orlando), and Miles Van Pelt (biblical studies and academic dean, Jackson). The composition of the committee has proved to be an effective representation of campuses and academic fields. (However, the press of other campus obligations required Dr. Van Pelt's resignation from the committee in April, 2011. At the time, the committee determined not to seek a replacement in order to complete its work.)

The task that was given to the Steering Committee was to plan a carefully designed course of action that addressed the QEP topic in order to enhance student learning. This task was to be accomplished by the end of the 2011 calendar year in order to submit the QEP to SACS for the April 2012 onsite visit. Once its task was completed, the Steering Committee would be dissolved and replaced by a QEP Implementation Committee that would oversee the execution and assessment of the QEP.

From the outset, the Steering Committee was careful to place some limits on the ambition of the QEP in order to sharpen the focus of its work. As one member of the Committee expressed it:

The QEP was not intended to represent the full scope of RTS's approach toward Islam but to serve an important dimension of that approach. Along these lines, if our QEP were to lean significantly on the leg of seeking to gain an adequate understanding of Islam (rather than measuring Islam's threat level to the West), this would well serve institutional mission. A fundamental principle of Christian ethical action is that it must proceed on the basis of a true understanding. Otherwise, action is blind. So far from inhibiting evangelism and missions (or any other proposed response to Islam), therefore, the pursuit of an accurate understanding of Islam represents the first step to such action. Moreover, it fulfills one of the most basic requirements that we owe our neighbors: the attempt to understand them before critiquing them. A hermeneutic of charity is not opposed to a hermeneutic of suspicion. But the former must precede the latter; otherwise, all suspicions are based only upon prejudice—a judgment made too early and without knowledge.

After the inaugural meeting of the QEP Steering Committee at the RTS faculty retreat in May, 2010, the Steering Committee conducted its work primarily through a series of thirteen teleconferences that took place on these dates:

July 1, 2010  
August 13, 2010  
September 20, 2010  
October 18, 2010  
December 13, 2010

January 24, 2011  
March 15, 2011  
April 12, 2011  
May 10, 2011  
September 16, 2011

October 21, 2011  
December 20, 2011  
January 4, 2012

Additional communication took place though many emails.

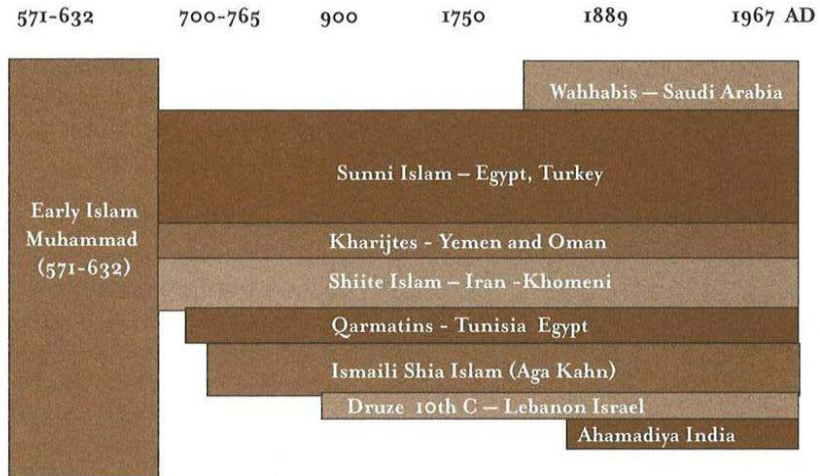
The work of the Steering Committee took place in four phases: refining the QEP topic, gathering data, establishing learning outcomes, and developing curriculum initiatives. The first, second, and fourth phases are described in this section below. The third phase, which was the establishment of student learning outcomes, is found in Section 4 of this document.

### **1. Refining the QEP Topic**

The process of selecting the QEP topic (along with the survey results that confirmed the topic) reinforced for many at RTS the sense that the curriculum as a whole was weak in its treatment of world religions. (And even those who did not promote this topic as their first choice were not willing to claim that RTS was offering too much on the subject of Islam!) Some faculty even posed to the Steering Committee the question of broadening the QEP to cover world religions in general. After some sustained reflection, the Steering Committee determined that it would be unwise to take the QEP in this direction, primarily for four reasons. First, the subject of Islam would present a far more manageable topic. Secondly, the institution-wide enthusiasm for the topic was clearly focused on Islam in particular. Thirdly, deeper understanding in one world religion may have advantages over a broader but shallower understanding of many world religions. Finally, the Steering Committee believed that focused improvement on Islam would yield, over time, opportunities to consider broader curricular changes that would include other world religions.

As the Steering Committee began to consider the “continuum” of Islamic faith and practice, it discovered some conventional ways of describing the variety of Islamic expressions. The broad landscape of Islamic diversity is found in many standard texts, and it is helpfully depicted in the following chart (Hexham 2011, 411).

The Islamic Tradition



In considering both these divisions within the Islamic tradition, broadly conceived, and other contested matters within Islam, this prompts the question of where there of whether there is, in fact, a “continuum” in Islamic faith and practice. Many Christian observers, including Reformed and evangelical voices, challenge that premise. As the literature review in Section 5 indicates, the diversity of Islamic faith and practice is itself a highly contested subject. Are there Westernized, democratic-friendly versions of Islam? Can Islam accommodate Western ideals of religious freedom and tolerance? Is there a peaceful “Islam of Mecca” that counteracts the violent “Islam of Medina?” These questions prompted the Steering Committee to replace the term, “continuum,” with the word, “diversity,” as the latter seemed more suggestive of the variety of points of view under examination.

Other difficulties surround this topic as RTS considers the scope of the QEP. For example, in the particular circles of the constituency of RTS, there is debate about the Insider Movement. Should Christian missionary efforts be designed to extract converts from their culture (as Isaiah 52:11 and 2 Corinthians 6:17 suggest) or rather to imbed them in culture (see Mark 5:19)? The debate about the Insider Movement is reminiscent of the conditions provoking the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. The movement has been both negatively dismissed as the “new Arianism” and positively commended as the way in which Christianity naturally penetrates any culture. As the subject of a debate and an overture at the 2011 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, the Insider Movement is a prominent example both of the timeliness of this QEP topic and the challenge it sets before RTS.

## 2. Data Gathering

Even as it wrestled with refining the topic, the Steering Committee set out to gather and analyze baseline measurement data. These were of four kinds:

### *A. Study of the Present Curricular Offerings at RTS on the Subject of Islam*

As previously noted, there is little in the present RTS curriculum that formally covers Islam (or, more generally, world religions). The Steering Committee solicited from the campus deans a summary of the current study of Islam on each campus in the MDiv curriculum. From this information the Committee made the following general observations. In the required MDiv curriculum, students generally receive between 30 minutes to 4 hours of classroom instruction on Islam, depending on the campus. In addition, a very modest amount of course reading is devoted to the topic of Islam. This instruction comes in the form of comparative religions survey or (most commonly) a survey of the history of Islam in relation to Christianity (e.g., when lecturing on the crusades in church history courses) and brief discussions in the missions course. Clearly, this amount of instruction is inadequate.

Some campuses offer electives on a regular basis which devote significant amounts of instructional time to Islam. For example, “America’s Islamic Challenge” has been offered at the Charlotte campus, most recently in 2003. Also “Perspectives on the World of Islam” was offered at the Atlanta campus, most recently in 2005.

### *B. Baseline Measurements of RTS Entering Students and Graduates*

In the summer of 2010, the Steering Committee read two introductory college/seminary level textbooks on Islam (Brown 2009 and Chedid 2004). On the basis of this reading, the Committee constructed a survey designed to assess student familiarity with the religion of Islam and with the beliefs and practices of Muslims. This survey (found in Appendix B) was administered to recent graduates and incoming students from the five RTS MDiv campuses (Jackson, Orlando, Charlotte, Atlanta, and Washington) in September 2010. The same survey was administered to 2011 graduates in May 2011 and to incoming students in August 2011. Among the conclusions of the survey:

1. Neither entering nor graduating students are confident about their familiarity with the history of Islam or contemporary Islamic faith and practice.
2. Both entering and graduating students agree that it is important for Christian leaders to have a good understanding of Islam.
3. There is some evidence that graduating students generally have greater knowledge and understanding of Islam than entering students, although this is not the case for MDiv students taken alone.
4. If the survey measurements are taken as indicative of the learning of students during their seminary studies, there is considerable room for improvement in these areas.

A fuller analysis of the survey findings can be found in Appendix C.

### *C. Analysis of RTS Library Holdings in Islam*

A volume count was conducted of a particular section of the Library of Congress classification in the general circulation collections of the RTS libraries: BP 1-200s. It should be noted that this count did not yield an exhaustive count of Islamic library resources, as it omitted the presence of Islam in many other areas of the LC classification system. Moreover, this count did not include other collections, such as reference, oversized, and non-print material. However, it did portray a representative sample of the extent of library holdings.

As of May 31, 2011, in the BP 1-200s range of the general circulating collection:

- The RTS Jackson library has 278 items (circulated 608 times since 2003)
- The RTS Orlando library has 139 items (circulated 217 times since 2003)
- The RTS Charlotte library has 150 items (circulated 190 times since 2003)

(Note: the circulation figures above begin in 2003 because that year marked the beginning of RTS's computerized library circulation system. Data before 2003 is not available.)

In the judgment of the Steering Committee, both the levels of holdings and the numbers of circulations are low, and the Committee assumes that QEP implementation will see these figures increase substantially.

### *D. Qualified Advisors*

In addition to the data gathered, another early feature of the brainstorming phase of the Steering Committee was establishing a list of experts to serve as advisors for its work. The Committee actively solicited names and received several recommendations, including the following:

1. Bassam Chedid (former adjunct professor at RTS/J)
2. Sasan Tavassoli (RTS/O graduate and PhD in Islamic Studies)
3. Mike Kuhn (RTS/C graduate and missionary in the Middle East)
4. Bill Nikides (former PCA Mission to the World Director of Ministry to Muslims)
5. Anees Zaka (taught on Islam at RTS/A and RTS/W)
6. Greg Livingstone (EPC minister and founder of Frontiers, a Mission to Muslims)

By the time of the final composition of the QEP in December 2011, these individuals contributed significantly to the work of the Steering Committee in a variety of ways.

## **3. Student Learning Outcomes**

The establishment of student learning outcomes appropriate for the QEP is described in Section 4.

## **4. Curricular Development**

At this point a question that confronted the Steering Committee was where to locate its curricular initiatives: would they be located in one course or several courses?

On the basis of its baseline surveys and its student learning outcomes, the Steering Committee discussed locations in the curriculum for QEP changes in the three divisions of the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program: biblical studies, systematic theology/church history, and practical theology. At the March 15, 2011 teleconference, three subcommittees reported with specific recommendations.

The biblical studies subcommittee (Currid and Van Pelt) urged that no changes be made to the Bible curriculum to account for the QEP.

The practical theology subcommittee (Medeiros and Muether) noted where Islam was currently covered in Missions and Evangelism, and it recommended that preaching classes and preaching labs devote attention to preaching in Muslim contexts. It further noted that field education represented a place in the curriculum where more practical and concentrated work among Muslims could be assigned. (Although the obvious difficulties of implementation were acknowledged.)

The theology/church history subcommittee (Anderson and Swain) presented a series of suggestions:

1. Systematics: allocation of one or two class hours in ST I (under theology proper) to discuss differences between Christian and Muslim understandings of God and to address the question of whether Christians and Muslims “worship the same God” (cf. Volf 2011).
2. History of Christianity: In addition to the Crusades, coverage can extend to the birth and rise of Islam in the seventh century, placing Islam in the context of the history of Christianity.
3. History of Philosophy and Christian Thought: Influence of medieval Muslim philosophy should be mentioned (however briefly), but beyond that, there seemed little that this course could contribute to the student learning outcomes.
4. Apologetics: Islam needs to be addressed at some length as a competing religion/worldview, including basic Islamic beliefs about God, Jesus, and the Qur’an, and outlining some arguments against Islamic views. The syllabus for this course should require at least one text that covers Islam in some detail from an apologetics perspective.
5. Church and World: This course may offer the most scope for discussing the relationship between Christianity and Islam in the current world context and addressing the student learning outcomes. Recommend assigning some relevant reading and devoting two hours to class teaching and discussion. Focus would not be on apologetics issues, but rather on the current state of Islam as religion and culture, and the challenges it presents to the church around the world. Perhaps also some discussion of attempts by Christians to “build bridges” with Muslims.

The theology/church history subcommittee went on to suggest the prospect of an additional course in the MDiv curriculum because the QEP student learning outcomes might not be satisfied merely by modifying existing MDiv courses. Among the options considered:

1. A full 2-hour *elective* course on Islam (might not fully meet QEP scope)
2. A full 2-hour *required* course on Islam (could be interpreted as excessive)
3. A full 2-hour *required* course on world religions (with a third of it devoted to Islam)

Finally, this subcommittee urged that attention be given to these follow-up questions: Where does this course fit: in systematics, history, or missions? What are the qualifications to teach the course? What impact would the course have on the rest of the curriculum?

The Steering Committee discussed these options at its April 12 teleconference. The committee assigned to a subcommittee (Anderson and Muether) the task of recommending possible changes to one existing course, "Church and World," to meet QEP objectives. Three possibilities were considered: (1) altering the present (two-hour) Church and World course to incorporate Islam, (2) expanding Church and World (three hours) to incorporate Islam, or (3) replacing the Church and World class with a two-hour class on Christianity and Islam (presenting campuses with the option of continuing the present Church and World class as an elective offering).

Steering Committee chair, John Muether met with the RTS academic deans in late April 2011 and presented these tentative options. There was consensus among the deans that "Church and World" was the logical target for QEP purposes, but there was resistance to expanding it to three hours for this purpose. Moreover, there was interest in having a course devoted to the study of Islam to develop eventually into a course on World Religions.

On the basis of this feedback, James Anderson and John Muether presented to the Steering Committee at its May 10, 2011 meeting a recommendation to explore the replacement of the "Church and World" class into a two-hour class on Islam.

As the Steering Committee pursued this possibility, it solicited further feedback from the RTS faculties, especially with regard to these questions:

1. What might a new course be titled?
2. What material should be the focus of instruction?
3. What resources would be helpful to assign?
4. Any other suggestions about the design of this course?
5. In addition to the new course, are there any specific suggestions for fitting Islam elsewhere in the curriculum (topics, number of hours, appropriate resources, guest speakers, etc.)?

Among the feedback received was the reminder to spread the subject of Islam throughout the curriculum, as it would be more effective for the students to learn about Islam in multiple classes rather than a single offering.

Ongoing institutional promotion of the QEP and solicitation of feedback was enhanced with the production of an attractive brochure, the title of which captured the particular way in which the Steering Committee sought to "brand" its project: "Our Muslim Neighbors." The cover of the brochure pictures a mosque against the skyline of Atlanta, powerfully reminding the RTS constituency that the Islamic challenge has reached into American neighborhoods. (The brochure is found in Appendix D.)



Meanwhile the Steering Committee began to gather examples of curriculum from peer schools (see Literature Review in Section 5), and throughout the process it solicited advice from a variety of consultants on the structure and content of this new class. As a result of extensive discussions, the Committee created a new class for the MDiv curriculum, "Christian Encounter with Islam" (course syllabus found in Appendix E). This would be a required two-hour class, and it would be taught by a residential/full-time RTS professor, assisted by special lecturers where appropriate. (A discussion of the plan to develop competence among faculty to offer this instruction is found in Section 6: QEP Implementation.)

The Steering Committee also took on the challenging task of determining where a course on Islam would fit into the RTS MDiv curriculum. While "Church and World" was normally a third-year course, the Committee agreed that locating a course on Islam early in the MDiv curriculum would be beneficial.

The chart below demonstrates, among other things, how difficult it was for the Steering Committee to place this course early in the curriculum. It illustrates that RTS curricula, across its several campuses, are similar but not identical. What is offered in the fall on one campus may be offered in the spring on another, what is a first-year course in one locale may be second-year elsewhere, etc. The Steering Committee deliberated at length on this subject, and sought to place the new course coherently into the curriculum cycles of all the campuses.

<b>QEP: Curriculum Options</b> (related to MDiv at each campus)									
The following courses are possibilities for curriculum changes related to the QEP.									
*Each of these options would also include appropriating a certain number of lecture hours from other courses.									
<b>KEY:</b>	E.g. "1-Fall (3)" = 1st year, Fall Semester, 3 credit hours								
<b>For Charts</b>	intro	history of	modern	application	ALL				
Based on 106 credit hour MDiv curriculum = 1378 lecture hours (13 lecture hours per 1 credit hour)									
<b>New Class Option</b>									
Course	Lecture Hours Available	Lecture Hours changed	Artifact?	Jackson	Orlando	Charlotte	Atlanta	DC	TOPIC
ITS/Iministry	39			1-Fall (2)	1-Fall (3)	1-Fall (3)	1-Fall (3)	1-Fall (3)	intro
History 1	39			1-Fall (3)	2-Fall (3)	1-Fall (3)	1-Fall (3)	1-Fall (3)	history of
Church/World	26			2-Spring (2)	3-Spring (3)	3-Spring (2)	3-Spring (2)	3-Spring (2)	modern
Missions	26			3-Fall (2)	2-Fall (3)	2-Fall (2)	1-Fall (2)	1-Fall (2)	
Evangelism	26			3-Spring (3)	1-Fall (2)	1-Spring (2)	1-Spring (2)	2-Fall (2)	
Apologetics	26		Artifact?	3-Winter (2)	2-Fall (2)	3-Winter (2)	3-Winter (2)	3-Winter (2)	application
ST courses				2	2 & 3	2 & 3	2 & 3	2 & 3	
Preaching Lab ?			Artifact?	3	3	3	3	3	
Xn Encounter/ Islam	26	26	Artifact?						ALL
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>26</b>		15	15	14	14	14	

Steering Committee chair, John Muether, joined the teleconference of the RTS Academic Deans on October 31, 2011, to present the Committee's proposed curricular changes. The Deans approved the following recommendations unanimously. These recommendations then needed to go to a vote of the RTS faculties at their November meetings:

1. The creation of a two-hour theology course in the required MDiv curriculum, “Christian Encounter with Islam,” replacing the existing required course, “Church and the World,” beginning AY 2012-13.

The course description for “Christian Encounter with Islam” is as follows:

An introduction to the history, culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices of Islam. Students will reflect on the ways in which Islamic faith and life have been shaped by historical and cultural circumstances, study the diversity of Islam both in history and in contemporary expression, and develop a deeper understanding of Islam in order to love Muslims as their neighbors and witness more effectively to them.

The content of the course, created with the consultation of several advisors, focuses on the diversity both of Christian approaches to Islam and the realities of Islam in its historical, theological, and global expressions. The reading includes substantial portions of the Qur’an and the *Hadith*, and it also captures the variety of Christian voices on Islam.

The syllabus can be found in Appendix E.

2. The inclusion of the following lecture hours on Islam in these MDiv courses, beginning AY 2012-13:
  - a. Evangelism: 2 hours [average increase of one hour]
  - b. Missions: 4 hours [average increase of two hours]
  - c. Church History I: 3 hours [average increase of two hours]
  - d. Systematic Theology I: 2 hours [average increase of one hour]
  - e. Apologetics: 2 hours [average increase of one hour][Note: These are *minimum* lecture hours; the *total* course and lecture hours devoted to the study of Islam are not limited to these.]
3. The establishment of the following artifacts for assessment of the QEP, beginning AY 2012-13 in the following MDiv courses:
  - a. Christian Encounter with Islam: an academic research paper
  - b. Systematic Theology I: book review of a recent study of Islam (such as Miroslav Volf’s *Allah*) requiring a substantial theological response
  - c. Apologetics: a paper that crafts a hypothetical dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim

The QEP implementation plan calls for these curricular changes to begin in the 2012-13 academic year. Accordingly, the CAO requested that the Academic Deans of each RTS campus identify a professor of record for “Christian Encounter with Islam” by February 28, 2012.

At the meetings of the faculties in early November, these recommendations were moved, discussed, and voted upon. The votes of the RTS faculties were reported as follows:

Campus	Votes For	Votes Against	Abstention
Jackson	8	1	1
Orlando	11	1	0
Charlotte	9	0	0
Wash-DC	2	0	0
Atlanta	2	0	0

The total vote of RTS faculty was: 32 for, 2 against, 1 abstention. With this vote, the QEP plan received faculty approval of its essential curricular initiatives.

The consensus demonstrated strong faculty enthusiasm for this course of action. However, one senior member of the faculty (who is near retirement) registered his dissent in an email to his colleagues after the vote. He reiterated his long-standing opposition to accreditation from “secular agencies,” and he further noted that his “casual attitude toward grading and evaluation” would not admit easily to the process of assessing artifacts. Finally, he expressed doubt about the subject matter: “In my judgment, Islam, though an important subject for our times, is not that important as an object of theological or apologetic confrontation.” As strongly as he expressed his personal convictions, he did allow in a follow-up email a willingness to follow the approved curriculum changes: “I’ll be a good soldier and do what I have to do.”

The RTS Academic Deans also took up the fate of the currently required Church and World course. The replacement of the Church and World course with Christian Encounter with Islam, has implications for the MABS, MATS, and MAR programs because Church and World is a requirement for these MA programs. Since it would be inefficient to continue it as an MA requirement (which would tend to secure 3-5 students per campus), each campus was allowed to make their own determination concerning this.

Another aspect of curricular development is related to the influence of personal contacts. As chair of the QEP Steering Committee, John Muether attended two conferences in the fall of 2011.

The Bavinck Conference at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids (October 12-14) was on the theme, “The Reformed Faith and Islam.” The conference was attended by about 75 individuals (including two other representatives from RTS, Dr. Howard Griffith, Academic Dean of the RTS-Washington campus and Dr. Simon Kistemaker, Professor Emeritus from RTS-Orlando). The conference included eleven sessions, ranging from Abraham Kuyper’s visit to the Holy Land to evaluations of the “Insider Movement.” Additional presentations discussed the role of Dutch colonialism in establishing the challenge of Islam for Dutch Reformed cultures, the place of Islam in the development of “Neo-Calvinism,” and the life and ministry of Samuel Zwemer (commonly described as the “Apostle to Islam”). Conference speakers included Richard Mouw, President of Fuller Theological Seminary, Bassam Madany, Arabic translator for the Back to God Hour of the Christian Reformed Church, and Mark Durie, an Australian scholar and expert on Asian Islamic cultures.

Many of the Bavinck Conference presentations were particularly penetrating in their understanding of Islamic theology and history, and several generated passionate disagreement. While non-Dutch Reformed speakers were included, what was most

helpful was its presentation of the variety of Calvinist approaches to Islam, both past and present.

On November 14-18, 2011, Muether attended the World Reformed Fellowship's inaugural "Consultation on Global Ministry among Muslims" in Istanbul, Turkey. This WRF initiative was designed to "support, encourage, and promote common understanding among those engaged in Muslim ministry throughout the world." Eight presentations focused on the challenge of ministry for Reformed "Muslim Background Believers" (MBB). There were three dozen attendees, half of whom were MBB pastors. Several countries from six continents were represented included Algeria, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Nigeria, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Palestine, and Turkey.

A common emphasis at both conferences was that "where accurate information on Islam ends, misplaced fear begins." Speakers underscored that Islam was not a simple, unified religion but a complex reality with a plethora of theological variety. Among the challenges in an accurate assessment of Islam are these:

1. Criticism of Islam must be accompanied by western Christian self-criticism
2. Overgeneralization is not effectively overcome by overspecialization (in other words, a "continuum" can obscure in its efforts to clarify)
3. Distinctions must be drawn between classic or ideal Islam on the one hand and lived or folk Islam on the other.

Another recurring theme was that Islam is a challenge to which the church must respond both by constructive coexistence and faithful witness. It need not choose between demonized or sanitized versions, nor should it opt for either hostility or naivety.

Combined, these two conferences were enormously beneficial for the QEP. The presentations and the personal contacts generated a greater sense of the diversity of international Reformed perspectives on Islam, including, for example, viewpoints sympathetic and hostile to the Insider Movement. Through these conferences, RTS expanded its access to an international roster of consultants who have offered advice on the construction of its QEP initiatives. These include:

1. Roger Greenway, Professor of Missions at Calvin Seminary
2. Bassam Madany, Director of the Christian Reformed Church's "Back to God Hour" in the Arab-speaking world
3. Bernie Power, Lecturer at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths, Melbourne School of Theology, Melbourne, Australia.

Further reflection on the importance of the WRF Consultation can be found in Section 6: QEP Implementation.

On December 20, 2011, the Steering Committee approved a final list of candidates to recommend to SACS as the QEP lead evaluator. These names are, in alphabetical order:

1. John Azumah (professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, and author of *My Neighbour's Faith: Islam Explained for Christians*)
2. Daniel Brown (author of *Islam: A New Introduction*)
3. Nabeel Jabbour (author of *The Crescent Through The Eyes of the Cross*)
4. Tony Maalou (Associate Professor of Mission, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)
5. Phil Parshall (author of many books on Islam)

6. John J. Thatamanil (professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York).

RTS Chief Academic Officer, Robert Cara, forwarded this list, together with individual curricula vitae, to Dr. Steven M. Sheeley, SACS representative for RTS, in January, 2012.

## SECTION 4: Student Learning Outcomes

In the establishment of the QEP Student Learning Outcomes, the Steering Committee kept foremost in its thinking the purpose of Reformed Theological Seminary, the missional commitment of the school, and the student learning outcomes of the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program.

The RTS Purpose Statement is:

The purpose of Reformed Theological Seminary is to serve the church in all branches of evangelical Christianity, especially the Presbyterian and Reformed family, by preparing its leaders, with a priority on pastors, and including missionaries, educators, counselors, and others through a program of theological education on the graduate level, based upon the authority of the inerrant Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Bible, and committed to the Reformed faith as set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms* as accepted by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as its standard of doctrine at its first General Assembly in 1789. This program shall be characterized by biblical fidelity, confessional integrity, and academic excellence, and committed to the promotion of the spiritual growth of the students. The breadth of this ministry will include multiple campuses and extensions as led by the Lord.

In order to execute this purpose the Seminary has established the following missional commitment among its core values:

RTS equips leaders to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the whole world in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to proclaim that salvation is only by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone, and in order to disciple the nations into maturity in Christ. Our goal is that the world may worship the true God, serving him everywhere in His creation, and that the nations may enjoy His presence and restoration. In fulfilling our Missional Commitment, RTS rejoices in cooperating with multiple denominations and organizationally diverse ministries who share the vision of advancing the Kingdom of God, and who celebrate the diversity of culture, language, and ethnicity.

In order to achieve these goals in the MDiv curriculum, RTS adopted in 2006 the following student learning outcomes for its Master of Divinity (MDiv) program:

### Student Learning Outcomes: Master of Divinity

#### 1. A Mind for Truth

A. Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. **(Articulation-oral & written)**

B. Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of

original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.) **(Scripture)**

C. Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. **(Reformed Theology)**

## 2. A Heart for God

A. Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification. **(Sanctification)**

B. Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. **(Desire for Worldview)**

C. Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.) **(Winsomely Reformed)**

## 3. For Servant Leadership

A. Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. **(Preach)**

B. Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. **(Worship)**

C. Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. **(Shepherd)**

D. Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. **(Church/World)**

Combined, these MDiv student learning outcomes encompass cognitive, affective, and behavioral goals, or, more simply, "knowing, being, and doing." The challenge for the QEP Steering Committee was to establish its own SLOs that would fall in organic relation to the MDiv SLOs and broader aspirations of institutional mission.

The concerns of the QEP dovetail well with several aspects of the MDiv SLOs. The MDiv SLOs include that the student would "broadly understand and articulate knowledge related to . . . cultural/global information including details, concepts, and frameworks." Also the student should be able to "apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances." Further the student should have "a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements." As a pastor, the student should encourage the local congregation to have "a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide." And finally, the student ought to have the ability to "interact with significant public issues."

After considerable discussion, at its December 13, 2010 teleconference, the QEP Steering Committee established three student learning outcomes for the QEP:

1. **Demonstrating knowledge of Islamic history**
  - Life of Muhammad, historical origins of Islam
  - Major events in history of Islam
  - Important texts in Qur'an and *Hadith*
2. **Improving knowledge of present-day Islamic faith and practice**
  - Common Islamic beliefs and practices
  - Diversity of Islamic beliefs and practices
3. **Formulating apologetic and evangelism strategies for ministry to Muslims**
  - Demonstration of gospel-driven love for Muslims
  - Awareness of cultural obstacles in evangelizing Muslims
  - Knowledge of effective Christian apologetic materials

The Steering Committee was aware of the emphasis in these SLOs on “cognitive” outcomes. It debated the inclusion of explicit affective and behavioral outcomes, such as preaching skills and evangelistic effectiveness, but it determined to restrict its ambition to more modest and (especially) measurable outcomes. Of course, this is not to deny either the centrality of preaching or the importance of evangelism. Rather, the Steering Committee reasoned that one cannot witness effectively to Muslims (or any religion) without loving them, and one cannot love them without knowing them. In this way the QEP serves to support the RTS mission without exhaustively encompassing it.

In order to accomplish these three student learning outcomes, the Steering Committee examined a range of institutional and curricular enhancements, including:

1. Adding new class or classes.
2. Adding specific lectures/content in certain classes.
3. Continuing education initiatives for current faculty.
4. The addition of new faculty and programs.
5. The establishment of an institute or think tank on Islamic missions.

A consideration of the scope of the project and the institutional capacity to manage it quickly led the Steering Committee to eliminate the last two enhancements and to focus its attention on the first three for the purposes of the QEP.



## Section 5: Literature Review and Best Practices

This section summarizes some literature on Islam and the practices of other schools in three areas: descriptions of the diversity of contemporary Islam; efforts to teach Islam in North American seminaries; and curricular initiatives of some of RTS's "peer institutions."

### 1. A Clash of Civilizations? Describing the Diversity

The field of Islamic studies in the West is broad and interdisciplinary. In recent years, the field has developed into two divergent schools of thought, one influenced by Bernard Lewis, and another by Edward Said. Lewis represents the older English Oriental school, though much of his significant work was done at Princeton University following his appointment in 1974. He argued that most of the developmental problems apparent in the third-world context of the Middle East result from inherent problems in its cultural and religious structure.

In his 1978 book *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that analyses like Lewis's amount to a colonial bigotry that is insensitive to the diversity, identity, complexity of the region and its people. Said's approach inaugurated a new era of Middle Eastern studies that continued unabated until the events of September 11, 2001. Following those events, the traditional view of Lewis (2002), and his students has been reinvigorated as a plausible description of current events.

Within Christian discussions of Islam, there is a great deal of disagreement of how (and even whether) a variety in Islamic faith and practice can be described. The very idea of a "continuum of Islamic theology and practice" is controversial in many American Protestant circles. Thomas S. Kidd's recent book, *American Christians and Islam*, documents how deeply American evangelicals have looked at Islam with varying senses of fear, challenge, and opportunity.

Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) is a popular voice among those who would deny a continuum. "Some Westerners," he writes, "have argued that the West does not have problems with Islam but only with violent Islamist extremists. Fourteen hundred years of history demonstrate otherwise" (1996, 209). He continues:

The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam . . . is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining, power imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West. (1996, 217-18)

Taking issue with Huntington's thesis and its influence among evangelical interpreters, Daniel Brown (2004) urges that a responsible evangelical approach to Islam must take account of the presence of evil in all civilizations, the sovereignty of God over all cultures, and the doctrine of common grace. Thus evangelicals should disengage from the so-called "clash of civilizations" which pits Western civilization against Islamic civilization and should instead focus their efforts on theological engagement with

Muslims. Brown offers some directions that a theologically-informed evangelical engagement with Islam might take.

Most observers argue for the importance of acknowledging the diversity of Islam, pointing out that as western Christendom has become more religiously diverse since the first crusade, it would be profoundly ahistorical to deny the same development in the Muslim world.

In *Allah: A Christian Response* (2011), Miroslav Volf of Yale Divinity School distinguishes between normative and radical Islam, and his focus is on the former. The “paradigmatic” Muslim is Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1056-1111), and Volf identifies the “popular representative of radical Islam” as Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Similarly, Chawkat Moucarry (2008) distinguishes between “Reformist” and “Radical” impulses in Islam, both of which have witnessed revivals in recent years. Reformers argue that Islam must be updated to fit modern societies while radicalists seek full implementation of *shari’a* law in Muslim societies. Moucarry concludes: “The battle to win the hearts and minds of Muslims is relentless between reformists and radical Muslims.”

Still others, such as German Islamic scholar Christine Schirrmacher, describes a continuum in a three-fold way (focusing particularly on Europe): Islam; Islamic fundamentalism (politics in the name of Islam, with the goal of the creation of a state under the rule of a caliph); and violent Islamic fundamentalism. She concludes, “unfortunately, when it comes to dealing with Islam [post 9/11], the picture is still frequently defined either by panic or by downplaying the situation” (2012, 4).

Another three-fold classification is presented by Patrick J. Ryan, professor of Middle East Studies at Fordham University, who divides the Sunni Muslim world into a small but intense minority that espouses a “radically countercultural understanding of Islam.” These are the “Islamists” that are often referred more pejoratively as “fundamentalist.” A second category includes largely secularized Muslims, generally in Turkey, the Balkans, and the former Soviet Asian republics. The largest group are “centrist” (Arabs and South Asian Muslims) who are “inculturating their faith in a world that is only partly Islamic” (2010, 10).

Among most observers who would distinguish between peaceful and militant expressions of Islam, there is a further distinction between the anti-Christian and anti-western sentiments of the militants. And so, there is an appeal to a witness “after Christendom.” J. Dudley Woodberry, Professor of Islamic Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, for example, has urged the need to “redouble our efforts to distinguish between Christian faith and Western culture” (2002, 7).

What about Islamic fundamentalism? Some observers argue that this is an unhelpful classification, an indication of a Christian propensity to describe Islam in Christian categories. It is a western religious colonialism that characterizes Islamic devotion as a fundamentalist narrow-minded zealotry, according to Riffat Hassan. Hassan writes, “One major reason why Islam and Muslims have been so little understood in the West is that they have always been seen through the colored lens of Western concepts and presuppositions” (1990, 169). Similarly, Patrick Ryan pleads for a less triumphalist approach:

It is high time for the Western press to learn more about the inner workings of the Islamic world, time to stop analyzing Islamic faith in Christian or Western secularist categories. One fifth of the world's population is Muslim; before it is too late, the West must take it seriously. (1984, 440)

This very brief survey of the diversity of Christian analysis of contemporary Islamic faith and practice is but another reminder of the danger of approaching this subject in simplistic or reductionistic terms. RTS must neither romanticize nor demonize the challenge of Islam, and it should forge an approach (to borrow from a recent book) that is “between hostility and naivety” (Bell and Chapman 2011).

## **2. “Stumbling about in New Territory”: Teaching Islam in North American Seminaries**

A survey of the study of Islam in North American seminaries reveals a variety of stories. No brief description of this history can fail to acknowledge the legacy of Samuel Zwemer, whose 38 years of service in Arabian missions was followed by twelve years on the faculty of Princeton Seminary as Professor of Missions. In J. Christy Wilson's aptly titled biography, Zwemer was the “Apostle to Islam,” and Wilson's 1952 book is still rewarding reading.

Hartford Seminary has the longest legacy of Islamic studies among Protestant seminaries. Willem Bijlefeld's survey reveals both “uninterrupted involvement” and “significant modifications” in Hartford's program (1993, 103).

Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer describes the development of the course, “Islam for Rabbinical Students” at Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, outside Philadelphia, as “stumbling about in new territory.” She writes: “The goal for a newly revised course on Islam was, at a minimum, to give our students basic competence in this area. . . . We needed a course that went beyond the typical classroom model. In designing the course, three elements were crucial: (1) giving the students exposure to the pluralism and dynamism of American Islam; (2) creating opportunities for them to meet and interact with their Muslim peers; (3) finding opportunities to provide interfaith education about Islam in a Jewish setting” (2007, 13).

The story of a Lutheran school is told by Mark N. Swanson. The three challenges that confronted Luther Seminary were “the hermeneutical issues arising when Christians attempt to read Muslims' sacred scripture; the challenges of developing a dialogical theology in relation to Islam, and questions about the character and practice of Christian witness in a world shared with Muslims” (2005, 172).

While there is significant breadth and diversity in these approaches, there is at least this in common: all of these approaches acknowledge the complexity of the task and the “learning curve” that it entails.

For some institutions, incorporation of Islam has prompted a reconsideration of the nature of Christian exclusivism. On the furthest extreme is the decision by Claremont School of Theology to begin, in the fall of 2010, clerical instruction for Muslims and Jews, making it the first multi-faith seminary in North America (Landsberg 2010). This is not an option for Reformed Theological Seminary. Committed to the Reformed expression of historic Protestantism, RTS unapologetically proclaims the exclusiveness of salvation in

the person and work of Jesus Christ, who proclaimed himself as the “way, the truth, and the life,” without whom no one can “come to the Father” (John 14:6). This teaching was echoed by Peter in Acts 4:12 (“there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”) and Paul in I Timothy 2:5 (“for there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”).

At the same time a commitment to Christian exclusivism does not render inconsequential the importance of multi-faith dialogue in the curriculum. Daniel Aleshire has recently observed that Christian ministers “will need more sensitivity to the nature of Christian ministry in an increasingly multi-faith context” (Aleshire 2010).

Writing from an evangelical perspective, Colin Chapman describes the weaknesses in traditional pedagogy and the need for improvement. He makes this particular appeal, “Persuade teachers of theology to take Islam more seriously. Interest in Islam is generally confined to Islamicists and those with a concern for Muslim evangelism” (2000, 16). Chapman (writing at the time as Lecturer at Near East School of Theology in Beirut) presents the constructive suggestions for seminaries to promote such dialogue, and it is helpful to outline several of his main points:

1. There is often too much emphasis on “Ideal Islam,” and there needs to be a “right balance between Ideal Islam and Folk Islam, between Islam at its best and Islam as it is in practice in particular countries” (200, 15).
2. “We sometimes place too much emphasis on apologetics. . . . [W]hile apologetics is important, sharing the gospel with Muslims involves much more than answering objections about the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the Crucifixion and the Corruption of the Bible” (2000, 15).
3. “It is obvious that we need to know at least something about the life of Muhammad, the content of the Qur’an, the development of Islam, the Five Pillars, Islamic Law, Sufism, Folk Islam, Islam in the modern world, etc. . . . We need to be careful, however, not to present too much information. One missionary writes, ‘I find all study of Islam uninspiring and very difficult to absorb. Most books are very dry and written very formally.’ . . . We don’t need to know everything about Islam before we can cross the street and talk to a Muslim!” (2000, 15).
4. “There can be no substitute for meeting Muslims face to face. . . . No amount of knowledge about Islam will help us if we are unable to appreciate cultural differences or to relax and feel at ease in the company of Muslims” (2000, 15).
5. “In our desire to obey the Great Commission, we may have to go back to the Great Commandment, and ask what it means for us in our different countries to love our Muslim neighbours as ourselves” (2000, 16).

### **3. Peering over Shoulders: Curricula from Reformed and Evangelical Schools**

With Chapman’s concerns in mind, the Steering Committee studied the curricular offerings of many other seminaries and divinity schools. It took note of offerings from schools such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. However, the Steering Committee focused its particular attention on those it identified as RTS’ “peer” schools:

1. Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan
2. Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri
3. Denver Theological Seminary, Denver, Colorado
4. Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California
5. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts

6. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois
7. Westminster Seminary California, Escondido, California
8. Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

It was noteworthy that none of these institutions included *required* courses on Islam within the MDiv program. However, several included Islam in a survey class on world religions, and most, like RTS, covered Islam in church history, apologetics, and/or world missions. Most of these schools offered special elective courses on Islam and Muslim evangelism and missions, and a study of their course syllabi was instructive.

Several schools offered concentrations in Islamic studies. Fuller Seminary offers an Islamic Studies concentration, Trinity has a Cross-Cultural Ministry emphasis within the MDiv, and Gordon-Conwell Seminary has established an Islamic Institute. The Steering Committee determined the scale of these more concentrated programs exceeded both the scope of the QEP project and the institutional capacity of RTS to sustain them.

There were several common characteristics in the course syllabi that were examined:

1. Attendance at a local mosque service.
2. Meeting and dialoging with a Muslim.
3. Reading substantial portions of the Qur'an and *hadith*.

These courses generally sought to cover the diversity of Muslim faith and practice, from secular expressions to militant Islamic fanaticism. Many of them sought to account for the anger of militant Islam toward the West. Several syllabi indicated the need to account for the growth of the global church, especially in ways overlooked by contemporary scholarship, and to define Christian mission beyond the assumptions of Western Christendom.

Of those institutions that operate within the Reformed tradition, course syllabi included an articulation of a Reformed basis for engagement with Islam. For example, the course description for Calvin Seminary's Christian Engagement with World Religions reads in part:

A biblical-Reformed theology and philosophy of religion that examines religious experience, tradition, and practice in the light of general and scriptural revelation, and a commitment to the universal common humanity of God's image bearers will serve as the framework.

The Steering Committee profited greatly from these syllabi, and sought to incorporate their best features in the syllabus for "Christian Encounter with Islam." (The syllabus can be found in Appendix E.)

## Section 6: QEP Implementation

The QEP will be implemented through three required curricular initiatives that RTS will establish over the next five academic years:

1. New required course, "Christian Encounter with Islam."
2. Required minimal lecture hours on Islam in five additional MDiv courses.
3. Three identified artifacts for assessment of the QEP.

Note should be taken of the limited ambition of this plan. The QEP does not exhaust the educational goals of the Seminary for the next five years. At least at first, the QEP will not entail new faculty hiring for its purposes. Meanwhile, regularly scheduled faculty vacancies on RTS campuses will be filled and other program development plans will be met.

In advance of the On-Site Visit scheduled for April 2012, some modest efforts at the "ramping up" for QEP implementation have already begun, including these steps:

1. In fall 2011, RTS purchased a copy of the Qur'an for every member of the faculty.
2. In fall 2011, Steering Committee chair, John Muether, and two other Orlando colleagues, enrolled in two continuing education programs (on CD and online) to preview their effectiveness for the RTS faculty.
3. In January 2012, a memo was distributed to all campuses about curricular changes that begin in AY 2012-13. For students who have been enrolled under previous catalog requirements, the new QEP course will be available as an elective.
4. Steering Committee chair, John Muether, has agreed to write a 1200-word article on the QEP for the fall 2012 issue of the RTS "Ministry and Leadership" magazine that is distributed to a 40,000 member mailing list representing the RTS constituency.
5. The promotional brochure, "Our Muslims Neighbors," continues to be widely disseminated among the constituents of the Seminary, especially by the admissions departments of the RTS campuses.
6. Planning has begun to establish space for the QEP on the RTS website.

In addition, the campuses of RTS have demonstrated their anticipation of this project by scheduling speakers on Islamic subjects. For example, on January 18, 2012, the Orlando campus hosted Dr. Atef Gendy, President of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, who spoke of the challenge before the evangelical church in Egypt following the 2011 revolution that toppled the Mubarak regime.

### **QEP Implementation Committee**

After the On-Site Visit in April 2012, the QEP Steering Committee will have completed its task and will be replaced by the QEP Implementation Committee. All of the activities of the Implementation Committee will serve the single end of improvement of student knowledge of the diversity of Islamic faith and practice at Reformed Theological Seminary. The chair of the Implementation Committee will also serve RTS as its QEP Administrator for the five-year period of QEP implementation. The chair will be a member of the RTS faculty who will report regularly to the RTS Academic Dean Committee about the execution of the QEP and other curricular matters as needs arise.

At a minimum, the Implementation Committee will also consist of the Director of Institutional Assessment and the faculties of record for the course, "Christian Encounter with Islam," from the Jackson, Orlando, and Charlotte campuses.

The specific dimensions of the QEP SLOs are discussed above in Section 4: Student Learning Outcomes. Section 7 that follows will discuss the mechanisms of QEP assessment. This current section on the implementation of the plan is of three parts: curricular requirements; additional faculty and curricular initiatives; and auxiliary implementation plans.

### **Curricular Requirements**

The curricular requirements for the QEP include a new course, required lecture hours in five additional courses, along with three required artifacts.

The new course, "Christian Encounter with Islam," is a core component of the QEP. The artifact for this course is an academic research paper. For the three larger campuses, a residential professor from each of those campuses will teach this course. For the two smaller campuses, a residential professor from one of the larger campuses will travel to the smaller campuses to teach this course. (The course syllabus is found in Appendix E.)

To maximize the effectiveness of the class, "Christian Encounter with Islam," the QEP will make the following provisions:

1. An additional book allowance of \$500 for each faculty of record in AY 2012-13, in order to build a personal library on the subject of Islam.
2. Attendance at one additional conference or learned-society meeting that is related to the subject of Islam for each faculty of record. (All RTS professors receive funds to travel to one conference per year. This would allow these professors to travel to two.)
3. Financial provision for special lecturers in the class.

In addition to the above required course, the QEP mandates a minimum number of lecture hours in five other courses along with two required artifacts. These courses and artifacts are:

1. Evangelism: 2 hours [average increase of one hour]
2. Missions: 4 hours [average increase of two hours]
3. Church History I: 3 hours [average increase of two hours]
4. Systematic Theology I: 2 hours [average increase of one hour]  
Artifact: Book review of a recent study of Islam (such as Miroslav Volf's *Allah*) requiring a substantial theological response
5. Apologetics: 2 hours [average increase of one hour]  
Artifact: A paper that crafts a hypothetical dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim

It is anticipated that a significant portion of the work of the QEP Implementation Committee will be the meetings of the faculty of record, to compare notes, share insights, adjust syllabi, evaluate the chosen artifacts, and in general improve the course. Consultants and special speakers will further enhance the effectiveness of the instruction.

### **Additional Faculty and Curricular Initiatives**

Because the QEP will touch the curriculum in additional courses beyond those required above, QEP implementation will provide continuing education opportunities for the *entire faculty*, beyond the faculty of record for the new course. Every full-time member of the faculty will be invited and encouraged to improve their understanding of Islam through the following (the costs of which will be funded from the QEP budget):

1. "Islam" by John Esposito (available from the Teaching Company on CD or DVD).
2. "Encountering the World of Islam" (online course produced by the Caleb Project).
3. Online resources from "i2 Ministries: Empowering Missions to Muslims."

The QEP implementation plan is for most of the faculty to avail themselves of these courses over the five-year period of the QEP implementation.

Equipped with these resources, the faculty will be encouraged to cover Islam throughout the MDiv curriculum, as appropriate. The following is a non-exhaustive list of ways further to incorporate Islam into the curriculum:

1. *Systematic Theology 1*: "Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God?"
2. *Systematic Theology 2*: Compare/contrast Christian and Muslim eschatologies.
3. *History of Christianity 1*: Discuss Muhammad, the beginnings of Islam, the early expansion of Islam, and the Crusades.
4. *History of Christianity 2*: Discuss modern Islam and its significance for the Christian church worldwide and for Christian missions.
5. *History of Philosophy and Christian Thought*: Discuss Islamic translation/reception of Aristotle in the Middle Ages (e.g., Averroes and Avicenna) and the impact of this translation/reception upon medieval Christian theology.
6. *Apologetics*: Discuss Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles* as an example of a Christian apologetic approach toward Islam.

All of these initiatives are subject to further refining from the advice of QEP consultants. The assessment of these initiatives is described in Section 7: Organizational Structure and Assessment. The QEP Implementation budget is found in Section 8: Resources.

### **Auxiliary Implementation Plans**

To support the instructional focus on Islam, modest supplements to the RTS libraries' acquisitions budgets will be made for each of the next five years. An annotated bibliography prepared by the Steering Committee will serve as a collection development aid. The three major campus libraries (Jackson, Orlando, and Charlotte) will each receive an additional \$1000 per year, and the two smaller campus libraries (Atlanta and Washington DC) will received an additional \$500 per year.

In addition, RTS will secure experts on Islam to speak at the RTS biennial faculty retreats in 2012, 2014, and 2016. The QEP Implementation Committee will also make arrangements for special QEP-related lectures and presentations on all campuses over the next five years.



## **Back to the Future**

As RTS embarks on this project, it is mindful of the resources within our own heritage. It was a pioneering Reformed missionary, Samuel Zwemer (1867-1952), who was dubbed the “Apostle to Islam.” Zwemer was fond of telling his students at Princeton Theological Seminary that only the Reformed faith truly had answers to Islam. Before Zwemer, Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck, founders of the “neo-Calvinistic” movement of the late nineteenth century, were careful students of Islam. They challenged the church both to acknowledge the “antithesis” between Christianity and Islam and to reckon with the ways in which there was, in these two monotheistic and Abrahamic faiths, a measure of “common ground” (Mouw 2011, 129).

Closer to home, the QEP is a reminder of the emphasis on missions at the founding of RTS, and the opportunity this project has to rekindle the missionary passion that characterized the school in its early years. Moreover these initiatives can instigate the study of other world religions. RTS anticipates that the QEP, over time, will promote a more comprehensive approach to the study of comparative religions within a Reformed confessional framework.

## **Beyond the QEP**

RTS understands that proper stewardship of this program extends to sharing its experience, both successes and failures, with others. It hopes to assist other seminaries, especially Reformed and evangelical schools, that seek to expand the ways that they can serve their Muslim neighbors.

RTS Chancellor and CEO, Robert Cannada, has reminded the committee that, beyond the QEP, this project may have many “spill-over effects” that will benefit RTS. At RTS (and other seminaries in the Reformed tradition), apologetics has traditionally focused on defending historic Christianity against unbelief. The QEP can become a means both of reinvigorating the missionary passion that constituted the founding of RTS as well as broadening the institution’s apologetic focus in light of the challenge of world religions.

RTS remains in conversation with World Reformed Fellowship (founded 2000) as WRF discusses the development of an Islamic Studies Resource Center. Informal conversations have taken place about a partnership between RTS and WRF in this venture. This included attendance by the chair of the QEP Steering Committee to the WRF consultation in Istanbul in November 2011. Though it appears that the WRF resource center will take time to develop, RTS intends, through its QEP Implementation Committee, to stay in close contact with WRF as its plans take shape. (Preliminary planning is underway for the RTS Orlando campus to host another WRF consultation on Islam in November, 2012.) This approach is consistent with one of the core values of RTS: “In fulfilling our Missional Commitment, RTS rejoices in cooperating with multiple denominations and organizationally diverse ministries who share in the vision of advancing the Kingdom of God, and who celebrate the diversity of culture, language, and ethnicity.”

Clearly, there is a groundswell of interest in this topic within the RTS constituency (alumni, supporting churches, donors, etc.). Some of this interest is fueled no doubt by questions and concerns raised by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and other news-making events by militant Islam. Although not denying the reality of militant Islam,

RTS will be concentrating on “our Muslim neighbors.” It is fitting that RTS seek to take a leadership role in this field as it seeks to serve the global church.

## Section 7: Organizational Structure and Assessment

Assessment of the QEP will be incorporated into the already established and ongoing MDiv assessment plan at RTS. The QEP will be implemented at the five RTS MDiv degree-granting campuses. Assessment of the QEP will occur on an annual basis.

For purposes of this document, only the QEP assessment plan will be discussed in detail as opposed to the full MDiv Assessment Plan. Only a summary of the MDiv assessment plan will be discussed. For details of the RTS MDiv Assessment Plan, see Appendix F.

The QEP assessment plan is based upon the identification of QEP student learning outcomes (SLOs), the identification of required and optional curricular initiatives, and the identification of artifacts and other assessment measures.

The QEP SLOs are:

1. **Historical Islam:** Demonstrate knowledge of Islamic history.
  - Life of Muhammad, historical origins of Islam
  - Major events in history of Islam
  - Important texts in Qur'an and *Hadith*
2. **Present-Day Islam:** Improve knowledge of present-day Islamic faith and practice
  - Common Islamic beliefs and practices
  - Diversity of Islamic beliefs and practices
3. **Strategies for Interaction:** Formulate apologetic and evangelism strategies for ministry to Muslims
  - Demonstration of gospel-driven love for Muslims
  - Awareness of cultural obstacles in evangelizing Muslims
  - Knowledge of effective Christian apologetic materials

The QEP includes three basic components that RTS will implement over the next five academic years:

1. New required MDiv course "Christian Encounter with Islam."
2. Required minimal lecture hours in five additional MDiv courses.
3. Three identified artifacts for assessment of the QEP.

In addition to the above required components, RTS campuses will have periodic co-curricular events and activities related to the QEP. These activities may include QEP related lectures and presentations for both students and faculty (e.g. annual academic lectures, special lectures, special course lecture hour emphases beyond the required, faculty continuing education, etc.)

### Summary of RTS MDiv Assessment

For each degree program, RTS has identified student learning outcomes, uses both direct and indirect measures to assess the extent to which these outcomes are achieved, and uses results for improvement. Degree program assessment is performed by the campus faculties and managed by the Academic Dean Committee, which consists of the Chief Academic Officer, the Director of Institutional Assessment, and the campus academic deans. The degree program assessment process occurs on an annual basis.

In 2006, RTS redesigned its SLOs to achieve greater conformity with the four ATS Master of Divinity (MDiv) program goals (Religious Heritage, Cultural Context, Personal and Spiritual Formation, and Capacity for Ministerial and Public Leadership). These MDiv SLOs are listed in Section 4: Student Learning Outcomes and Appendix F.

Each year, MDiv artifacts are identified, collected, and reviewed by local faculties. These juried reviews occur in the spring on “Assessment Day.” After the juries are completed, the academic deans gather for “Dean Day” each summer in order to collate and aggregate the data from jury reviews as well as other direct and indirect measures. For each SLO and specific artifact, RTS has chosen the criteria for success to be 80% or 90% for the vast majority of measures. An MDiv assessment summary chart and summary memo are compiled by each campus Academic Dean and reported to the CAO. These summaries are then presented and discussed at campus faculty meetings in early fall. In addition, the campus Academic Dean includes an assessment summary in his Annual Academic Dean Summary Report for the MDiv degree. This aspect of the annual dean report includes an evaluation of enrollment statistics, all ESQ/GSQ/AQ data, placement statistics, and presbytery performance reviews.

Based on these assessment findings, each RTS Academic Dean will make recommendations for curricular and degree program improvement. Some of these findings will be areas of growth and needed improvement. Others will be strengths to be sustained. In addition, there may be recommendations to the assessment process itself. In addition, RTS has the added benefit of cross-campus sharing in strengths and weaknesses because of its multi-campus model. For example, a current weakness at one campus may have already been noted and solved at another campus.

(For details of the RTS MDiv Assessment Plan, see Appendix F.)

### **QEP Assessment Plan**

Following the pattern of the MDiv Assessment Plan, the QEP Implementation Committee will assess SLOs related to the QEP on an annual basis, using course artifacts, QEP entrance and exit exam/questionnaire, and the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire. The QEP Assessment Plan will become one additional aspect of the MDiv Assessment Plan.

### **Direct and Indirect Measures**

Both direct and indirect measures are used for gathering information about achievement of the QEP SLOs. Multiple measures are used to assess each outcome. Some measures may be used to assess more than one outcome.

The following are the direct and indirect measures for this plan:

#### *Direct Measures*

##### Juried Review of Course Artifacts

Using five representative students per course from each MDiv campus, RTS will collect student assignments from the following three specific courses:

1. Christian Encounter with Islam Course – an academic research paper.
2. Systematic Theology I Course – substantive book review of a recent study of Islam (such as Miroslav Volf's *Allah*).
3. Apologetics Course – hypothetical dialogue paper between a Christian and a Muslim.

The sampling of student work will be reviewed by a jury of professors. This jury will be the QEP Implementation Committee. These assignments will be evaluated and measured according to a set institutional rubric (a sample QEP Artifact Rubric is found in Appendix G).

#### Entering and Graduating QEP Exam/Questionnaire

The entering QEP exam/questionnaire and the graduating QEP exam/questionnaire have both direct and indirect components. This exam/questionnaire will be given to all entering and graduating MDiv students over the next five year. (See Appendix B.)

#### *Indirect Measures*

#### Entering and Graduating QEP Exam/Questionnaire

As noted above, the entering and graduating QEP exam/questionnaire have both direct and indirect components. This exam/questionnaire will be given to all entering and graduating MDiv students over the next five year. (See Appendix B.)

#### ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire

Students participate in the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire in their final semester at RTS. This questionnaire provides helpful information regarding the characteristics, demographics, and backgrounds of the particular graduating class. Specifically related to the QEP, GSQ question 17 asks graduating seniors regarding their “level of satisfaction with progress in skills related to...knowledge of other religious traditions.” GSQ question 16 relates to “Respect for Other Religions Traditions.” RTS will continue to chart graduating student responses related to these two questions. These questionnaires not only allow RTS to compare the institution to all other participating institutions, but also allow RTS to compare campus to campus.

#### ATS Alumni Questionnaire

RTS uses the ATS Alumni Questionnaire five years post-graduation. As a result of this five-year mark, the statistics for the AQ will not evaluate alumni in the QEP until after the QEP time limit. However, RTS plans to monitor AQ question 31 related to the relative importance of studying world religions to the professional life and work of respondents.

### **Criteria for Success**

For each SLO and specific artifact, what is acceptable as an evidence of success? This evidence of success is determined by the group-performance standard or criteria to be achieved. RTS has chosen the criteria for success to be 80%. As the plan progresses, this may be adjusted.

### **Annual Assessment**

The QEP will be assessed on an annual basis. The QEP Implementation Committee will meet annually face-to-face for “QEP Assessment Day.” This “day” will include evaluating all QEP direct and indirect measures. The committee will serve as the jury of faculty to perform all juried reviews of QEP artifacts. A report will be created that includes resultant data, observations, analysis, and recommendations for improvements. This report will be submitted as part of the annual QEP report to the Academic Dean Committee, which will incorporate it into their annual “Dean Day” assessment process.

### **Closing the Loop**

“Closing the loop” is an important, and often neglected, aspect of assessment. If a change has been made, the change still needs to be evaluated in the future to determine if it had its desired effect. This future evaluation is “closing the loop.”

To ensure that recommended changes are implemented and reassessed, RTS has empowered the full-time Director of Institutional Assessment (DIA) to accomplish this task. The DIA serves directly under the CAO and is part of the CAO Office. In addition, the DIA is a member of the:

1. Academic Dean Committee, which also includes the CAO and academic deans from each campus. This committee meets monthly via phone conference and three times a year face-to-face.
2. QEP Implementation Committee.

### **Annual QEP Program Evaluation**

The QEP Administrator will submit an annual report to the CAO and the Academic Dean Committee. This report will outline specific activities undertaken in the past year (as specified in Section 6 of this plan), results of assessment day, and possible recommendations for improvement of the QEP.

In addition, a member of the QEP Implementation Committee will be in attendance at all monthly Academic Dean Committee meetings.

In 2014 and 2016, the faculty of RTS will discuss this report during its annual retreat. Faculty conversations will provide opportunity for making adjustments in the instruction to improve student knowledge of Islam.

The QEP Administrator will also be responsible for writing the Impact Report, part of RTS's Fifth Year Interim Report to SACS.

## Section 8: Resources

Budgeting for the work of the QEP began with the initiation of the QEP Steering Committee in 2009. The Steering Committee has had sufficient funds for the three years of its labors, and it has proposed a budget for the Implementation of the QEP.

### **QEP Steering Committee Budget for 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12**

The Steering Committee has spent the following in its work:

2009-10: \$2,325.51  
2010-11: 4,378.63  
2011-12: 3,556.52 (through January 2012, and does not include honoraria)

### **QEP Implementation Budget**

At the Steering Committee teleconference on December 20, 2011, the following budget recommendation was approved for the implementation of the QEP, and subsequently approved by the Executive Committee of the Board:

#### *Proposed QEP Budget, 2012-17*

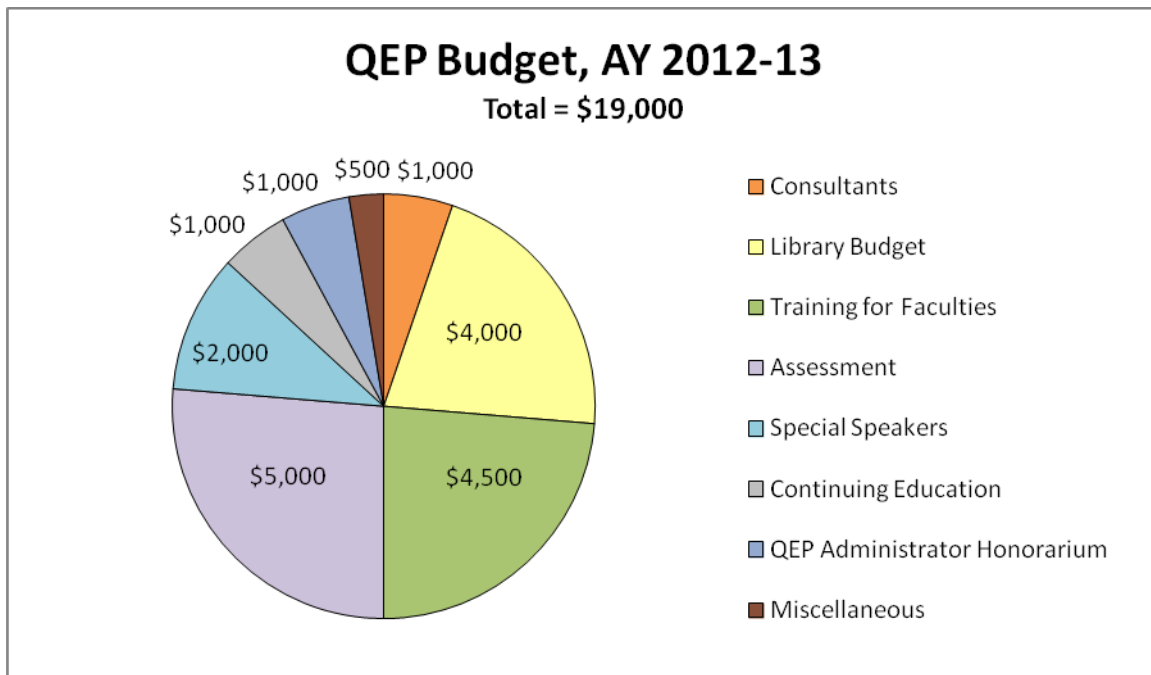
1. Consultants: \$1,000 per year (e.g., an expert evaluation of RTS library holdings)
2. Library Budget per year:
  - a. \$1,000 x three main campuses = \$ 3,000
  - b. \$500 x two other campuses = \$ 1,000
3. Training for faculties of record (tentatively, Anderson, Medeiros, Muether):
  - a. 1 extra conference per year @ \$1,000 = \$3,000 per year
  - b. \$500 personal book budget allowance = \$1,500 (one-time only and not on-going for 5 years)
4. Assessment per year:
  - a. \$700 x 5 = honoraria for QEP Implementation Committee Members = \$3,500
  - b. \$500 x 3 = travel for QEP assessment = \$1,500
5. Special Speakers: \$2,000 per year (rotating among the five RTS campuses)
6. Continuing Education Expenses of RTS faculty: \$1,000 per year
7. QEP Administrator Honorarium: \$1,000 per year
8. Miscellaneous funds (\$500 - \$2,000 per year)

This budget is summarized in the following table:

**QEP Budget, AY 2012-13 – AY 2016-17**

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Consultants	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Library – 3 main campuses, \$1000 each	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Library – 2 other campuses, \$500 each	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Training/Conferences (Faculties of Record)	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Book Budget for Faculties of Record	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Assessment – Honoraria (QEP Committee)	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500
Travel for QEP Assessment	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Special Speakers	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Continuing Education for RTS Faculty	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
QEP Administrator Honorarium	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Miscellaneous	\$500	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,000</b>	<b>\$17,500</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>	<b>\$19,000</b>

The following pie chart illustrates how these funds will be disbursed:





### **Budget Narrative of Proposed QEP Budget**

In establishing this QEP budget, care was taken to see that the scale of the project was appropriate. The Steering Committee sought to avoid a scope that was larger than the learning outcomes needed or that the school could afford (which is why an Islam Studies Concentration, as other schools have adopted, was not pursued). This budget does not “break the bank,” the plan does not alter institutional mission, and no other institutional needs stand to be sacrificed.

The work of the QEP Steering Committee has been a journey in proposing an improvement in student learning at RTS. The process has discovered an important “hole in our game” (to quote the memorable metaphor of RTS CAO, Robert Cara). The Steering Committee believes that it has charted a course of curricular revision that will positively impact student learning and can be institutionally sustained and carefully assessed throughout the implementation of the project.

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# **APPENDIX A**

## **QEP TIMELINE**

## QEP TIMELINE

### 2009

- July, 2009 John Muether appointed to the Accreditation Reaffirmation Committee to chair the work of the QEP
- 07/15/09 Reaffirmation Committee teleconference
- 08/19/09 Reaffirmation Committee teleconference
- 09/21/09 Muether participated in the RTS Academic Deans' teleconference meeting. Introduced the QEP portion of the accreditation reaffirmation process and solicited dates from deans to make QEP presentations to campus faculties, staffs, and students.
- 09/30/09 Reaffirmation Committee meeting and dinner in Orlando
- 10/01/09 QEP Presentation to the Academic Committee of RTS Board and the full Board
- 10/08/09 QEP presentation to the Atlanta faculty via teleconference
- 10/12/09 Email sent to RTS Board soliciting QEP topics
- 12/03/09 QEP presentation to the Jackson faculty (follow-up email on 12/08/09)
- 12/5-7/09 Several members of the Reaffirmation Committee attended SACS-COC meeting in Atlanta

### 2010

- 02/09/10 QEP presentation to Orlando faculty (follow-up email on 2/10/10)
- 02/15/10 Reaffirmation Committee teleconference
- 02/16/10 QEP presentation to Orlando student cabinet
- 02/22/10 QEP presentation to five representatives of Orlando staff (Conley, Farrell, Helm, Mastry, Nelson)
- 02/22/10 QEP teleconference with four representatives of Charlotte staff (Culbertson, Dunn, Jeanrenaud, Queen)
- 02/22/10 QEP teleconference with four representatives of Jackson staff (Gault, Lee, McCarthy, Penny)
- 02/24/10 QEP teleconference with representatives of Washington DC faculty
- 03/08/10 Reaffirmation Committee teleconference
- 03/08/10 QEP presentation with 25 Charlotte students
- 03/10/10 QEP presentation with Charlotte faculty via teleconference
- 04/05/10 Reaffirmation Committee teleconference
- 04/06/10 QEP presentation to the Jackson student cabinet
- 04/13/10 QEP survey sent via email to 25 RTS alumni (Jackson, Orlando, and Charlotte)
- 04/26/10 Combined teleconference meeting of Reaffirmation Committee and Academic Deans Committee that votes to recommend QEP topic on Islam
- 05/06/10 QEP Topic on Islam approved by Chancellor/CEO and Executive Committee of the Board
- 05/26-27/10 QEP discussions at combined RTS Faculty Retreat in Atlanta
- 05/27/10 First meeting of QEP Steering Committee in Atlanta with Academic Deans Committee

- 07/01/10 QEP Steering Committee teleconference (Committee meeting minutes available upon request)
- 08/13/10 QEP Steering Committee teleconference
- 09/20/10 QEP Steering Committee teleconference
- 10/18/10 QEP Steering Committee teleconference
- 11/10/10 Meeting with the RTS Management/Development Team to present QEP work to date and receive feedback
- 12/4-7/10 Two members of the QEP Steering Committee attended SACS-COC meeting in Louisville
- 12/13/10 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting

**2011**

- 01/24/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 03/15/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 04/12/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 04/27/11 Meeting with RTS Management/Development Team to provide update on QEP progress
- 5/10/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 05/27/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 09/16/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 10/07/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 10/12-14/11 Bavinck Conference in Grand Rapids on the topic, "Reformed Faith and Islam" (attended by QEP Steering Committee Chair, John Muether, and two faculty members, Howard Griffith and Simon Kistemaker)
- 10/21/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting; Committee approves curricular proposals to be presented to the Academic Deans
- 10/31/11 QEP curricular proposals approved by RTS Academic Deans
- 11/07/11 QEP curricular changes approved by RTS faculties
- 11/14-18/11 World Reformed Fellowship Consultation on Muslim Evangelism in Istanbul, Turkey (attended by QEP Steering Committee Chair, John Muether)
- 12/3-6/11 Two members of the QEP Steering Committee attended SACS-COC meeting in Orlando
- 12/20/11 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 12/28/11 Approval of rough draft of QEP by Robert J. Cara, CAO, and Robert C. Cannada, Chancellor and CEO

**2012**

- 01/03/12 QEP Steering Committee teleconference meeting
- 01/20/12 Announcement of QEP-related curriculum changes to all current RTS students
- 01/20/12 Submission of Draft QEP to Steven Sheeley, RTS SACS representative
- 02/28/12 Approval of final version of QEP by Robert C. Cannada, RTS Chancellor and CEO
- 03/02/12 Submission of QEP to SACS

## **APPENDIX B**

### **EXAM/QUESTIONNAIRE FOR QEP**



## Baseline Survey Exam/Questionnaire for QEP (For RTS entering and graduating students)

### 1. History of Islam

1. What does the word *Islam* literally mean?
  - a. Peace.
  - b. Struggle.
  - c. Submission.
  - d. Worship.
2. Approximately what proportion of the world population today would be counted Muslim?
  - a. 1 in 20 (5%)
  - b. 1 in 10 (10%)
  - c. 1 in 5 (20%)
  - d. 1 in 3 (33%)
3. In which century was Muhammad born?
4. Which of the following statements about Muhammad is FALSE?
  - a. He was orphaned at an early age.
  - b. He followed Arab polytheistic religion before receiving the Quran.
  - c. He was an accomplished writer and orator.
  - d. He had multiple wives.
5. Which city was first to be converted to Islam: Mecca or Medina?
6. Which of the following statements about the Kaaba is FALSE?
  - a. Muslims around the world bow in prayer toward it.
  - b. Muslims believe that it is built directly under the throne of Allah.
  - c. Muslims believe that it was built by Muhammad.
  - d. It is considered to be the geographical center of the Muslim world.
7. Who were the caliphs?
  - a. The editors of the Quran.
  - b. The generals in Muhammad's army.
  - c. Muhammad's successors as leaders of the Muslim community.
  - d. Muslim theologians and philosophers in the medieval period.
8. What were the Crusades?
  - a. A series of military campaigns by Christians to counter the spread of Islam.
  - b. A series of military campaigns by Muslims to capture Christian cities.
  - c. A series of evangelistic campaigns run by Christians in Muslim cities.
  - d. A series of attacks by Christian armies on Arab cities.
9. What was the name of the longest-enduring Muslim dynasty in Islamic history?
10. The antipathy Muslims today have toward Christianity and the West is largely a reaction to Western colonialism. TRUE or FALSE?
11. Which of the following statements about modern-day Islamic fundamentalism is TRUE?
  - a. It is the Muslim version of Christian fundamentalism.
  - b. It is strongly opposed to secularized Islamic governments.

- c. It has its roots in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.
  - d. It is prominent only among Shiite Muslims.
12. What is Wahhabism?
- a. A mystical form of Islamic religion.
  - b. A revivalist movement calling for a very strict interpretation of Islamic theology.
  - c. A school of Islamic thought that favors a metaphorical reading of the Quran.
  - d. A political movement promoting constructive dialogue with Arab Christians.
13. Which sect of Islam focuses on devotion to the imams: Shia, Sufi, or Sunni?
14. Which sect of Islam has the most adherents worldwide: Shia, Sufi, or Sunni?
15. Which sect of Islam is dominant in Iran today: Shia, Sufi, or Sunni?
16. What does the word *jihad* literally mean?
- a. Holiness.
  - b. Struggle.
  - c. Terror.
  - d. Warfare.

## 2. The Quran

17. Which of the following statements about the Quran is FALSE?
- a. It is written in Aramaic.
  - b. Its chapters are arranged in order of length rather than chronologically.
  - c. Muslims believe it is literally the word of God.
  - d. Muslims believe it was dictated to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel.
18. Which of the following statements about the Quran is TRUE?
- a. It derives much of its content from the Bible.
  - b. It does not acknowledge any other books as originating from God.
  - c. Muslims believe that reciting the Quran brings healing and forgiveness.
  - d. Muslims believe that the Quran is inerrant only in religious matters.
19. What is the Islamic term used for a chapter of the Quran?
20. The Quran refers to Jews and Christians as “people of the Book”. TRUE or FALSE?

## 3. Islamic Faith and Practice

21. Muslims worship Muhammad. TRUE or FALSE?
22. The teachings of Muhammad are considered normative for Muslims. TRUE or FALSE?
23. Why do Muslims visit Mecca?
- a. Because the original copy of the Quran is kept there.
  - b. Because every able-bodied Muslim is required to make a pilgrimage there.
  - c. Because the tomb of Muhammad is located there.
  - d. Because the largest mosque in the world is located there.
24. Which of the following is NOT one of the fundamental beliefs of Muslims?
- a. Belief in Allah.
  - b. Belief in angels.
  - c. Belief in the Day of Atonement.
  - d. Belief in the Day of Judgment.

25. Which of the following is NOT one of the traditional Five Pillars of Islam?
- Almsgiving.
  - Conquest.
  - Fasting.
  - Pilgrimage.
26. How do people become Muslims according to Islam?
- By a supernatural work of divine grace.
  - By participating in the fast of *Ramadan*.
  - By reading and accepting the Quran.
  - By reciting the confession (*Shahadah*) in the presence of two witnesses.
27. What is the *Sunnah*?
- The governing council of the Sunni sect.
  - A body of Islamic tradition concerning the sayings and practices of Muhammad.
  - The creed written at the top of every chapter of the Quran.
  - The sacred stone at the center of the Kaaba.
28. Which of the following statements about the *Hadith* is FALSE?
- It explains which animal sacrifices Muslims need to perform to atone for their sins.
  - It is considered by Muslims to be second in authority only to the Quran.
  - It is probably the most influential factor in shaping Muslim practices today.
  - It refers to a collection of speeches and conversations of Muhammad.
29. Which of the following is NOT considered to be a source for *Shariah* law?
- The consensus of Islamic legal scholars.
  - The traditions of Muhammad.
  - The teachings of the Torah.
  - The teachings of the Quran.

## 4. Islamic Culture

30. What is the Islamic term equivalent to the Jewish term *kosher*?
31. What is the principle of *haram* in Islam?
- A principle determining how Christians should behave under Muslim rule.
  - A principle determining how many wives a Muslim may have.
  - A principle determining how the Quran should be interpreted.
  - A principle determining which practices are lawful for Muslims.
32. Which of the following statements about the Arabic language is FALSE?
- It is viewed as essential to the Arabic national identity.
  - It is considered sacred by Arab Muslims.
  - It is the native language of the majority of Muslims in the world today.
  - It is the only language used in the Quran.
33. Which of the following is NOT considered to be one of the roles of a mosque?
- A place of instruction.
  - A place of prayer.
  - A place of singing.
  - A place of worship.

## 5. Islam and Christianity

34. 'Allah' literally means 'God'. TRUE or FALSE?
35. Muslims consider Muhammad to be a greater prophet than Jesus. TRUE or FALSE?
36. Which of the following claims is NOT accepted by Muslims?
  - a. Jesus was born of a virgin.
  - b. Jesus was a true prophet.
  - c. Jesus lived a sinless life.
  - d. Jesus died by crucifixion.
37. Which of the following is NOT acknowledged by the Quran to be a holy book?
  - a. The Torah.
  - b. The Psalms.
  - c. The Gospels.
  - d. The Epistles.
38. Which of the following is shared by the Christian and Muslim views of God?
  - a. God is a Trinity.
  - b. God is compassionate and merciful.
  - c. God relates to humans primarily by way of covenants.
  - d. God requires atonement for sin.
39. Muslims agree with the Christian doctrine of original sin. TRUE or FALSE?
40. Islam has a very strong doctrine of predestination that is often viewed as fatalistic. TRUE or FALSE?

## 6. Perception Questions

(These six questions requested responses along a 7-point scale, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree.")

1. I am familiar with the history of Islam.
2. I am familiar with contemporary Muslim faith and practice.
3. I have a good understanding of the differences between Christianity and Islam.
4. I am confident that I could effectively share my faith with a Muslim.
5. I have had significant conversations with Muslims about the Christian faith.
6. It is important for Christian leaders to have a good understanding of Islam.

## **APPENDIX C**

# **REPORT ON BASELINE SURVEY RESULTS**

# Report on Baseline Survey Results

July 2011

## 1. Survey Description

Over a one-week period in September 2010, students from five RTS campuses (Jackson, Orlando, Charlotte, Atlanta, and Washington) were invited to complete a survey designed to assess their familiarity with the religion of Islam and with the beliefs and practices of Muslims. The participants were students who had either entered RTS in the 2010 fall semester or graduated from RTS in 2010. After identifying each participant's campus, degree program, and age bracket, the survey posed 6 perception-based questions concerning their current familiarity with Islam and engagement with Muslims. The remaining 40 questions tested the participant's knowledge of the history of Islam, contemporary Muslim faith and practice, and the differences between Christianity and Islam.

Over a one-week period in May 2011, graduating students from the same five RTS campuses were invited to complete the same survey. None of these students had taken the survey before.

## 2. Survey Demographics

A total of 132 students completed the September 2010 survey: 94 (71%) were entering students and 38 (29%) were graduating students. A total of 71 graduating students completed the May 2011 survey.\*

Table 1 shows the campus distribution. Table 2 shows the degree program distribution. Table 3 shows the age distribution. The median age for entering students was [25-29] and the median age for graduating students (both years) was [30-34].

	Jackson	Orlando	Charlotte	Atlanta	Washington	All Campuses
<b>E-10 Students</b>	24	28	27	11	4	94
<b>G-10 Students</b>	5	11	9	6	7	38
<b>G-11 Students</b>	13	23	17	12	6	71
<b>All Students</b>	42	62	53	29	17	<b>203</b>

Table 1: Campus Distribution

	MDiv	MABS/MATS/MAR/MA	MAC/MFT	All Degrees
<b>E-10 Students</b>	65	16	13	94
<b>G-10 Students</b>	17	19	2	38
<b>G-11 Students</b>	50	11	10	71
<b>All Students</b>	132	46	25	<b>203</b>

Table 2: Degree Program Distribution

\* In the tables below, the following abbreviations have been used: E-10 = Entering in 2010; G-10 = Graduating in 2010; G-11 = Graduating in 2011; G-10/11 = Graduating in 2010 or 2011.

	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55 up	All Ages
<b>E-10 Students</b>	38	27	7	14	2	2	2	2	94
<b>G-10 Students</b>	0	13	10	7	1	0	3	4	38
<b>G-11 Students</b>	1	21	14	14	4	8	4	5	71
<b>All Students</b>	39	61	31	35	7	10	9	11	<b>203</b>

**Table 3: Age Distribution**

### 3. Subjective Measurements

Each participant was asked 6 perception-based questions concerning their current familiarity with Islam and engagement with Muslims. Using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 7 = strongly agree) participants indicated their level of agreement with each of the following statements:

- Q1: I am familiar with the history of Islam.
- Q2: I am familiar with contemporary Muslim faith and practice.
- Q3: I have a good understanding of the differences between Christianity and Islam.
- Q4: I am confident that I could effectively share my faith with a Muslim.
- Q5: I have had significant conversations with Muslims about the Christian faith.
- Q6: It is important for Christian leaders to have a good understanding of Islam.

Table 4 summarizes the responses to each statement for students in all degree programs across all campuses. (In each case the mean value of the level of agreement is shown, with the standard error in parentheses.)

A statistically significant difference between 2010 entering students and 2010 graduating students was found for the responses to Q5 (two-tailed *t*-test,  $p = 0.035$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between those two groups for the responses to the other five questions. Moreover, no statistically significant differences were found between 2010 entering students and 2010/11 graduating students for any of the six questions.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
<b>E-10</b>	4.46 (±.152)	4.30 (±.137)	5.25 (±.141)	4.81 (±.130)	3.06 (±.186)	6.23 (±.113)
<b>G-10</b>	4.53 (±.294)	4.50 (±.269)	5.55 (±.191)	5.29 (±.238)	3.84 (±.310)	6.13 (±.174)
<b>G-11</b>	4.56 (±.172)	4.38 (±.173)	5.31 (±.135)	4.96 (±.148)	3.44 (±.246)	6.17 (±.127)
<b>G-10/11</b>	4.55 (±.151)	4.42 (±.146)	5.39 (±.111)	5.07 (±.128)	3.58 (±.193)	6.16 (±.102)
<b>All</b>	4.51 (±.107)	4.37 (±.101)	5.33 (±.088)	4.95 (±.092)	3.34 (±.136)	6.10 (±.076)

**Table 4: Results of Subjective Measurements**

Table 5 summarizes the responses to each statement for *MDiv students only* across all campuses. (In each case the mean value of the level of agreement is shown, with the standard error in parentheses.)

No statistically significant differences were found between entering MDiv students and graduating MDiv students for responses to any of the six questions.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
<b>E-10</b>	4.48 (±.167)	4.39 (±.158)	5.32 (±.150)	4.82 (±.145)	3.25 (±.229)	6.19 (±.142)
<b>G-10</b>	4.06 (±.473)	4.18 (±.439)	5.24 (±.265)	5.41 (±.285)	3.35 (±.461)	6.29 (±.206)
<b>G-11</b>	4.60 (±.190)	4.42 (±.210)	5.56 (±.134)	5.06 (±.168)	3.54 (±.273)	6.16 (±.152)
<b>G-10/11</b>	4.46 (±.186)	4.36 (±.191)	5.48 (±.121)	5.15 (±.145)	3.49 (±.233)	6.19 (±.124)
<b>All</b>	4.47 (±.125)	4.37 (±.124)	5.40 (±.096)	4.99 (±.103)	3.37 (±.163)	6.19 (±.094)

**Table 5: Results of Subjective Measurements (MDiv Students Only)**

## 4. Objective Measurements

Each participant was asked 40 factual questions to assess their knowledge and understanding of Islam. A total score out of 80 was assigned to each participant using the following weighting for correct answers: 4 marks for open-answer questions; 2 marks for multiple-choice questions; 1 mark for true-false questions.

The questions were grouped into five sections, as follows:

- Q1–16: History of Islam (35 marks in total)
- Q17–20: The Qur’an (9 marks in total)
- Q21–29: Islamic Faith and Practice (16 marks in total)
- Q30–33: Islamic Culture (10 marks in total)
- Q34–40: Islam and Christianity (10 marks in total)

Table 6 summarizes the scores for students in all degree programs across all campuses.

The difference between the mean scores for 2010 entering students and 2010 graduating students was found to be highly statistically significant (two-tailed *t*-test,  $p = 0.004$ ). The difference between the mean scores for 2010 entering students and 2010/11 graduating students was found to be statistically significant (two-tailed *t*-test,  $p = 0.015$ ). The difference between the mean scores for 2010 entering students and 2011 graduating students was not found to be statistically significant.

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Lowest Score	Highest Score
<b>E-10</b>	39.46 (±1.24)	12.02	19	70
<b>G-10</b>	46.45 (±1.97)	12.14	22	74
<b>G-11</b>	42.25 (±1.53)	12.92	15	75
<b>G-10/11</b>	43.72 (±1.22)	12.76	15	75
<b>All</b>	41.74 (±0.88)	12.57	15	75

**Table 6: Results of Objective Measurements**



Table 7 summarizes the scores for students in all degree programs at each of the five campuses. A statistically significant difference in mean scores was found between the following groups (applying a two-tailed *t*-test in each case, sample size given in brackets):

- Graduating (2010/11) students at Jackson [18] and at Washington [13] ( $p = 0.011$ )
- Graduating(2010/11) students at Orlando [34] and at Washington [13] ( $p = 0.001$ )
- Graduating (2010/11) students at Charlotte [26] and at Washington [13] ( $p = 0.034$ )
- All students at Jackson [42] and at Washington [17] ( $p = 0.001$ )
- All students at Orlando [62] and at Washington [17] ( $p = 0.002$ )
- All students at Charlotte [53] and at Washington [17] ( $p = 0.007$ )
- All students at Atlanta [29] and at Washington [17] ( $p = 0.012$ )

	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Lowest Score</b>	<b>Highest Score</b>
<b>E-10 (J)</b>	37.58 ( $\pm 2.23$ )	10.91	22	70
<b>E-10 (O)</b>	41.89 ( $\pm 2.06$ )	10.90	26	69
<b>E-10 (C)</b>	39.33 ( $\pm 2.70$ )	14.01	19	68
<b>E-10 (A)</b>	35.55 ( $\pm 3.55$ )	11.78	24	55
<b>E-10 (W)</b>	45.25 ( $\pm 6.10$ )	12.20	34	62
<b>G-10 (J)</b>	43.40 ( $\pm 4.76$ )	10.64	31	60
<b>G-10 (O)</b>	38.45 ( $\pm 2.63$ )	8.72	22	52
<b>G-10 (C)</b>	52.44 ( $\pm 5.15$ )	15.44	33	74
<b>G-10 (A)</b>	47.83 ( $\pm 2.90$ )	7.11	40	60
<b>G-10 (W)</b>	52.29 ( $\pm 4.25$ )	11.24	33	64
<b>G-11 (J)</b>	41.23 ( $\pm 3.60$ )	12.98	27	66
<b>G-11 (O)</b>	40.30 ( $\pm 2.93$ )	14.04	15	72
<b>G-11 (C)</b>	39.82 ( $\pm 2.45$ )	10.11	25	60
<b>G-11 (A)</b>	44.50 ( $\pm 3.75$ )	12.98	27	67
<b>G-11 (W)</b>	54.33 ( $\pm 4.86$ )	11.89	44	75
<b>G-10/11 (J)</b>	41.83 ( $\pm 2.85$ )	12.10	22	66
<b>G-10/11 (O)</b>	39.71 ( $\pm 2.14$ )	12.46	15	72
<b>G-10/11 (C)</b>	44.19 ( $\pm 2.63$ )	13.39	25	74
<b>G-10/11 (A)</b>	45.61 ( $\pm 2.65$ )	11.25	27	67
<b>G-10/11 (W)</b>	53.23 ( $\pm 3.08$ )	11.10	33	75
<b>All (J)</b>	39.40 ( $\pm 1.77$ )	11.49	22	70
<b>All (O)</b>	40.69 ( $\pm 1.49$ )	11.74	15	72
<b>All (C)</b>	41.72 ( $\pm 1.89$ )	13.79	19	74
<b>All (A)</b>	41.79 ( $\pm 2.28$ )	12.29	24	67
<b>All (W)</b>	51.35 ( $\pm 2.79$ )	11.51	33	75

**Table 7: Results of Objective Measurements by Campus**

Table 8 summarizes the scores for *MDiv students only* across all campuses.

The difference between the mean scores for entering students and graduating students was not found to be statistically significant.

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Lowest Score	Highest Score
<b>E-10</b>	41.31 ( $\pm 1.63$ )	13.12	19	70
<b>G-10</b>	43.65 ( $\pm 2.97$ )	12.26	22	74
<b>G-11</b>	44.18 ( $\pm 1.77$ )	12.54	25	75
<b>G-10/11</b>	44.04 ( $\pm 1.51$ )	12.38	22	75
<b>All</b>	42.70 ( $\pm 1.11$ )	12.77	19	75

**Table 8: Results of Objective Measurements (MDiv Students Only)**

## 5. Conclusions

The following conclusions may be drawn from the survey results:

- The distribution of scores for the 40 factual questions suggests that this portion of the survey is well targeted and will serve as a useful tool for objectively measuring students' basic knowledge and understanding of Islam and for detecting any improvement in learning as a result of implementing the QEP recommendations.
- Neither entering nor graduating students are confident about their familiarity with the history of Islam and contemporary Muslim faith and practice.
- There is no good evidence that graduating students are more likely than entering students to have had significant conversations with Muslims about the Christian faith.
- Both entering and graduating students agree that it is important for Christian leaders to have a good understanding of Islam.
- There is some evidence that graduating students generally have greater knowledge and understanding of Islam than entering students, although this is not the case for MDiv students taken alone.
- It appears that students at the Washington campus tend to have greater knowledge and understanding of Islam than students at the other four campuses. However, in light of the sample sizes for the Washington campus (see Table 1) there is no statistical basis for concluding that this tendency is due to educational differences between the campuses.
- If the survey measurements are taken as indicative of the learning of students during their seminary studies, there is considerable room for improvement in these areas.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **“OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBORS” (BROCHURE)**

# Our Muslim Neighbors





Reformed Theological Seminary is in the midst of its reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). A key component of reaffirmation is the development of a Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, designed to enhance student learning in a particular area of the seminary curriculum.

RTS's QEP is entitled, "Our Muslim Neighbors," and seeks to improve student understanding of the diversity of Islamic faith and practice.

### The RTS vision is to cultivate

**A Mind for Truth**, including a broad understanding and articulate knowledge of the Bible, theology, and the world in which we are called to serve;

**A Heart for God**, including a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians;

**A Life of Servant Leadership**, which entails an ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.

This vision is foundational for these QEP student learning outcomes:

- **Demonstrate knowledge of Islamic history**
- **Improve knowledge of present-day Islamic faith and practice**
- **Formulate apologetic and evangelism strategies for ministry to Muslims**

This plan will be accomplished through several curricular initiatives that RTS will implement over the next five years. RTS will submit its QEP to SACS in February 2012, in anticipation of the reaffirmation site visit in April 2012.

For more information, or to share thoughts and ideas you may have on "Our Muslim Neighbors," please contact Prof. John Muether, chair of the QEP committee, at [jmuether@rts.edu](mailto:jmuether@rts.edu).



## **APPENDIX E**

### **“CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH ISLAM”:**

#### **SYLLABUS**

## **Christian Encounter with Islam (2 hours)**

Theology Core Requirement in MDiv program  
Theology Course Elective in RTS MA programs

### **Course Description**

An introduction to the history, culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices of Islam. Students will reflect on the ways in which Islamic faith and life have been shaped by historical and cultural circumstances, study the diversity of Islam both in history and in contemporary expression, and develop a deeper understanding of Islam in order to love Muslims as their neighbors and witness more effectively to them.

### **Course Outline**

1. Overview
  - a. Christianity and World Religions
  - b. Definition of Terms
  - c. Life of Muhammad
  - d. The Qur'an
  - e. Pillars of Islam
2. History of Islam
  - a. Pre-Islam Arabia
  - b. Origins of Islam
  - c. Islam as a Political Presence
  - d. World-wide Expansion
3. Islam and the West
  - a. Contributions to Western civilization
  - b. Challenges to Western civilization
4. Christian witness to Islam
  - a. Evangelical voices
  - b. Reformed voices
5. Contemporary Diversity within Islam
  - a. Sunni, Shi'ite, and Sufi Muslims
  - b. Ideal Islam vs. Folk Islam
  - c. A religion of peace or a religion of violence?
6. Islam in Global Perspective
  - a. Europe
  - b. Latin America
  - c. Asia
  - d. Africa
  - e. North America

## Course Reading

- *Qur'an*: to be read in its entirety
- Choose one among the following surveys of Islam:  
  
Brown, Daniel W. *A New Introduction to Islam*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.  
  
Chedid, Bassam M. *Islam: What Every Christian Should Know*. New York: Evangelical Press, 2004.
- Choose one among the following studies of contemporary Islam  
  
Ansary, Mir Tamim. *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World Through Islamic Eyes*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2009.  
  
Camp, Lee C. *Who Is My Enemy? Questions American Christians Must Face About Islam and Themselves*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011.
- Collection of articles describing the variety of Christian approaches to Islam (assembled as a Class Reader)

## Course Requirements

- Class attendance and participation
- Reports on the required reading assignments
- Report on the experience of visiting an Islamic mosque
- Major research paper (10-15 pages)



**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: Christian Encounter with Islam

Professor:

Campus:

Date:

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong</li> <li>➤ Moderate</li> <li>➤ Minimal</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>	
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	The research paper enables students to articulate a responsible understanding of the theological, historical, cultural, and global realities of Islam.
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	Lectures and reading assignments I enable students to appreciate and articulate a scriptural response to Islam.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Study of the Reformed tradition insofar as it informs a response to other religions.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Contributes to the shaping of the Christian mind and heart, and thus to the love of God and neighbor.
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Lectures, reading assignments, research paper will contribute to an integrated Christian view of Islam.
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Promotes a charitable (i.e., wise, fair, and discerningly critical) approach to engaging Islam.
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	None	
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	None	
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Promotes a responsible Christian engagement with Islam, one of the major cultural institutions that is shaping public discourse today.

# **APPENDIX F**

## **RTS MDIV ASSESSMENT PLAN**

**Assessment Plan for the Master of Divinity Degree Program  
As Revised Beginning AY 2007-2008**

*[Revised June 2008; to include RTS-A and RTS-DC]*

**Introduction**

Assessment of SLOs is not evaluating individual students for the purpose of giving them personal feedback. Rather assessment is taking the pulse of students within the degree program.

For the AY 2007-2008, the SLOs were officially modified; hence, this revised plan.

This assessment plan is the generic MDiv plan for assessing student learning at each of the RTS campuses with an MDiv. For the AY 2007-2008, this then includes RTS/Jackson, RTS/Orlando, and RTS/Charlotte. If other RTS campuses are granted the Master of Divinity degree by the accreditors, this plan will also apply to these locations. [As of June 2008, RTS received approval to offer the MDiv at RTS/Atlanta and RTS/Washington DC. This plan applies to all five MDiv degree-granting locations.]

While the plan will be primarily the same, each campus will be allowed a modicum of flexibility in implementation. Implementation of the assessment plan is the responsibility of the academic dean for each campus, along with his faculty, under the direction of the institutional Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and Director of Institutional Assessment (DIA).

**History of the SLOs Approval Process**

Historically, although RTS had curriculum goals listed in a variety of documents, there were no official SLOs for any of the degrees. There were many discussions and listings of goals, but no *official* one. In fall 2006, extensive research was begun to take the current variety of “goals” and reformat them into a manageable amount of SLOs. This reformatting took into consideration the four ATS MDiv Degree Program goals, the previously documented RTS goals, the RTS purpose and mission, and new research related to making SLOs measurable.

This approval process was finalized in October/November 2007 with final faculty discussions and recommendations followed by final academic dean revision and review in November 2007. The Chief Academic Officer and Chancellor submitted these reformatted SLOs to the Executive Committee of the Board for approval. Final approval was received on January 10, 2008.

**Formal RTS Statements**

**Purpose Statement**

“The purpose of RTS is to serve the church in all branches of evangelical Christianity, especially the Presbyterian and Reformed family, by preparing its leaders, with a priority on pastors, and including missionaries, educators, counselors, and others through a program of theological education on the graduate level, based upon the authority of the inerrant Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Bible, and committed to the Reformed faith as set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms* as accepted by the Presbyterian

Church in the United States of America as its standard of doctrine at its first General Assembly in 1789. This program shall be characterized by biblical fidelity, confessional integrity, and academic excellence, and committed to the promotion of the spiritual growth of the students. The breadth of this ministry will include multiple campuses and extensions as led by the Lord.” (RTS Catalog 2007-2009, 7-8)

### **Mission Statement**

“The mission of Reformed Theological Seminary is to serve the Church by preparing its leaders, through a program of graduate theological education, based upon the authority of the inerrant Word of God, and committed to the Reformed Faith.” (RTS Catalog 2007-2009, 8)

### **Master of Divinity Degree Program Purposes (Design of the Curriculum)**

“The M.Div. curriculum is designed to offer training for the pastoral ministry. Concentrated study in three basic areas—Bible, systematic theology, and practical theology—characterizes this three-year program. In addition to training for pastoral ministry, the curriculum is designed to aid in the student’s sanctification.

Bible courses include the basic structure and content of each book of the Bible along with such details concerning major characters, dates, and places as are necessary. Principles of hermeneutics and exegesis, using the original languages as well as the English Bible, are also included. Students learn to apply Scripture to contemporary circumstances.

Building upon and integrated with a biblical foundation, theology is a major area of concentration. The purpose of this study is to provide the theological and historical foundations, along with current cultural contexts, to understand and live the Christian faith.

The practical theology courses are designed to enable students to develop competence in ministry including preaching, worship, leadership, and individual shepherding. A variety of experiences and instructors enable students to develop methods and styles of ministry suited to their individual gifts. The number of class hours per week may exceed the number of semester hours of credit. Some of the preaching and pastoral course requirements may be adjusted for women and other non-ministerial candidates so as to provide the appropriate preparation and setting for their needs. Women and other non-ministerial candidates will substitute additional elective course hours for the Preaching Labs.” (RTS Catalog 2007-2009, 13)

### **Master of Divinity Student Learning Outcomes**

Although the SLOs are separated to represent individual outcomes, the following are necessarily integrated.

- I. A Mind for Truth
  - a. Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. (**Articulation**)
  - b. Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and

- integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)  
**(Scripture)**
- c. Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. **(Reformed Theology)**
- II. A Heart for God
- a. Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification. **(Sanctification)**
  - b. Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. **(Desire for Worldview)**
  - c. Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)**(Winsomely Reformed/Evangelistic)**
- III. For Servant Leadership
- a. Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. **(Preach)**
  - b. Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. **(Worship)**
  - c. Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. **(Shepherd)**
  - d. Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. **(Church/World)**

### Curriculum Mapping to SLOs

What level of contribution does each course make toward the achievement of each individual SLO? To determine this, each individual course was mapped to each individual SLO using a rubric of "Strong, Moderate, Minimal, Not Applicable."

For a curriculum mapping example, see "Curriculum Map MDiv to SLO" for the Charlotte campus (Appendix 2 [not included]). Note that 90-95% of the MDiv curricula across RTS campuses are equivalent.

This mapping is particularly useful for a seminary like RTS with multiple campuses. This practice ensures that our content is similar. There are some variances between campuses due to different professors and slightly different emphases in specific courses. This multi-campus mapping allows our faculty to discuss best practices between campuses, to benefit from the strengths of specific professors, as well as to appreciate the differences between campuses, while still achieving the same goals.

[In addition, in order to assist in curriculum mapping, and in order to show faculty and students how each required MDiv course contributes to the overall student learning outcomes, RTS added a "Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes" Rubric to all faculty syllabi for required MDiv courses. (As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in each syllabus.)]

Although this mapping only considers specific courses, obviously co-curricular activities aid the students in achieving the SLOs. These co-curricular activities include, for example, church internships, chapel

services, prayer groups, small groups, special academic and spiritual lectures, and professor-student relationships. Some of these co-curricular activities are included in the direct and indirect measures.

### **Direct and Indirect Measures**

Measures used in the assessment process include a variety of approaches, methods, and data sources. Both direct and indirect measures are used for gathering information about achievement of the SLOs. Multiple measures are used to assess each outcome. Some measures may be used to assess more than one outcome. What specifically is to be measured? What method or instrument will be used? Where in the curriculum will outcomes be assessed? Where outside of the curriculum will outcomes be assessed?

Note that certain measures are required by all campuses at specific points within the curriculum, while other measures are optional and decisions can be made regarding these on a per campus basis. Also note that certain measures may be performed on a trial basis at a specific campus in order to test the usefulness for the institution. For a chart showing specific measures related to specific SLOs, see "Assessment Chart for MDiv SLOs" (Appendix 3 [not included]).

The following are the direct and indirect measures for this plan:

#### **Direct Measures:**

##### **Juried Review of Course Assignments**

Using five representative students per course, each RTS campus will collect student assignments from the following three specific courses:

First Year Student Coursework = Greek Exegesis paper

Second Year Student Coursework = Systematic Theology paper

Third Year Student Coursework = Preaching Lab II preaching tape (capstone course)

The sampling of student work will be reviewed by a jury of professors, which at a minimum will include a Bible professor, a theology professor, and a practical professor. These assignments will be evaluated and measured according to a set institutional rubric. This practice will be reviewed at the May 2008 RTS Faculty Retreat in order to ensure consistency and to standardize expectations at campuses.

The Preaching Lab II course in the senior year is considered the capstone course and will be juried review by professors. At RTS/Orlando, there is an additional capstone course and project (Senior Seminar) that will be considered under this rubric. Depending on the usefulness of this consideration, other campuses may add this course for assessment purposes.

##### **English Bible Exam**

RTS requires students to take a comprehensive examination of biblical content upon entrance into the seminary. Students are not expected to pass the exam at this time. This initial examination is only for assessment purposes. In their senior year, the same comprehensive examination is taken again and must be passed with an 80%.

##### **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

All MDiv students are required to memorize the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. It is recommended that students complete these exams during their second year.

### **Field Education**

Field education is one area of theological education in which the theory of the classroom is tested and applied in the life and ministry of the Church. The purpose of field education is to provide opportunities for MDiv students to exercise and improve their gifts and skills and to equip them with diversified backgrounds of firsthand experience in the service to which God has called them. RTS requires 400 hours of field education experience for MDiv students.

Upon completion of the 400 hours, an evaluation report is submitted to the Director of Field Education by a non-RTS mentor (usually a pastor, elder, or evaluation committee). Following submission of this report, the student registers for the Field Education Seminar. As part of the course, the student reflects upon, both written and oral, his field education experience. The professor and other students give written feedback to the student based upon his reflections.

Field education evaluations used for assessment purposes include the mentor evaluation, the professor evaluation, and other MDiv student evaluations from the Field Education Seminar, as well as self-evaluation from the individual student. (The self-evaluation is an indirect measure.)

### **Presbytery Performance**

The majority of RTS students are members of denominations that require licensure and ordination examinations. Thus a significant number of MDiv graduates pursue ordination and are required to be examined by presbyteries. These presbytery examinations typically consist of exegesis papers; written and oral examinations in Bible, theology, and history; and preaching on the “floor” of presbytery. The percentage of graduates that pass presbytery examinations on an annual basis is used for assessment purposes. Feedback from presbyters is also used.

### **Denominational Focus Groups**

Periodically, RTS personnel meet with denominational and presbytery leaders for feedback on presbytery exams and general pastoral abilities of RTS students and graduates.

### **Juried Review of Seniors/Graduates**

Using a representative sampling of seniors for each campus, a jury of professors will evaluate each student using a rubric to see if each student “Exceeds, Meets, Does Not Meet” each individual SLO. In documentation of this, the student’s name will not be used, and this juried review is only for assessment purposes.

### **Church-Based Professor/Intern Evaluations**

RTS has several professors working part-time in local churches and overseeing RTS students in the local church context. Because the professor will know the student well, this has additional aspects for assessment purposes.

Similar to the Juried Review of Seniors, these professors will evaluate each student using a rubric to evaluate if each student “Exceeds, Meets, Does Not Meet” each individual SLO. In documentation of this, the students’ name will not be used, and this juried review is only for assessment purposes.

One benefit of this measure is that the student is evaluated by an RTS faculty member in an external setting that best mimics post-seminary jobs prior to graduation. This is as opposed to (1) the field education experience where a non-RTS mentor is evaluating, and (2) the Juried Review of Seniors evaluation where most professors do not interact with most students outside of the seminary experience.

### **Job Placement**

RTS compiles an annual report concerning job placement statistics each December following the May graduation. The percentage of graduates with jobs is recorded for accreditation and assessment purposes.

### **Indirect Measures:**

#### **Entering Student Questionnaire**

Students participate in the ATS Entering Student Questionnaire upon entry into RTS. This questionnaire is offered at each of our campuses every fall semester. This questionnaire provides helpful information regarding the characteristics, demographics, and backgrounds of the particular entering class. These questionnaires not only allow RTS to compare the institution to all other participating institutions, but also allow RTS to compare campus by campus, which is actually more helpful.

RTS began offering the ATS version of this questionnaire in Fall 2006. Prior to this, all student questionnaires were developed in-house.

#### **Graduating Student Questionnaire**

Students are expected to participate in the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire in their final semester at RTS. This questionnaire provides helpful information regarding the characteristics, demographics, and backgrounds of the particular graduating class. These questionnaires not only allow RTS to compare the institution to all other participating institutions, but also allow RTS to compare campus by campus, which is actually more helpful.

RTS began offering the ATS version of this questionnaire in Spring 2006. Prior to this, all student questionnaires were developed in-house.

### **Alumni Survey**

RTS will begin offering the ATS alumni survey as soon as the development of this survey is finalized. RTS has offered a variety of different alumni surveys in the past.

### **Course Evaluations**

Student course evaluations are partially used for the students' evaluation of the extent to which the course helped them develop particular course objectives and SLOs.

### **Field Education Self-Reflection**

Although most of the field ed documents are direct measures, the self-evaluation document is an indirect measure.



**Criteria**

For each SLO and specific measure, what is acceptable as an evidence of success? This evidence of success is determined by the group-performance standard or criteria to be achieved. RTS has chosen the criteria for success to be 80% or 90% for the vast majority of measures. As the plan progresses, this may be adjusted. To see the required criteria, see "Assessment Plan for MDiv SLOs" (Appendix 3 [not included]).

**Frequency of Assessment Cycle**

RTS implements a cycle of assessing the different degree programs. For the time being, the MDiv program will be assessed every two years. This frequency is justified because the MDiv program is the major degree program at RTS.

**Closing the Loop**

"Closing the loop" is an important, and often neglected, aspect of assessment. If a change has been made, the change still needs to be evaluated in the future to determine if it had its desired effect. This future evaluation is "closing the loop."

To ensure that recommended changes are implemented and reassessed, RTS has empowered the full-time DIA to accomplish this task. The DIA serves directly under the CAO and is part of the CAO Office. In addition, the DIA is part of the Academic Dean Committee, which also includes the CAO and academic deans from each campus. This committee meets monthly via phone conference and three times a year face-to-face.

# **APPENDIX G**

## **QEP ARTIFACT RUBRIC**

### Juried Review of QEP Artifacts – MDiv Degree

Campus: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course/Artifact: \_\_\_\_\_

Professors: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Please analyze one artifact at a time, by adding a "tick" mark for each line item. Total tick marks per row should equal total # of student artifacts.**

<i>MDiv Degree Programs – Juried Review of QEP Artifacts</i> <small>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following rubric for QEP artifacts, which includes the intended outcomes of the QEP as well as some of the intended outcomes (SLOs) of the MDiv student learning process. An asterisk represents the primary aspect of a specific SLO.</small>	<b>Rubric</b>				<b>Additional Comments</b>
	Exceeds	Meets	Does Not Meet	Not Applicable	
<b>QEP SLOs</b>					
<b>Historical Islam:</b> Demonstrating knowledge of Islamic history					
Knowledge of historical origins of Islam					
Awareness of major events in history of Islam					
Familiarity with important texts in Quran					
<b>Present-Day Islam:</b> Improving knowledge of present-day Muslim faith and practice					
Knowledge of central/common Islamic beliefs and practices					
Awareness of diversity of present-day Islam beliefs and practices					
<b>Strategies for Interaction:</b> Formulating apologetic and evangelism strategies for ministry to Muslims					
Demonstrates gospel-driven love for Muslims					
Awareness of cultural obstacles to evangelizing Muslims					
Use of Christian apologetics material					
<b>MDIV SLOs</b>					
<b>Articulation</b>					
<b>Thesis statement:</b> It makes a viable claim					
<b>*Argumentation:</b> It presents warrants for its claim appropriately					
<b>Engagement:</b> It shows awareness of the discussion & options in making its assessment					
<b>Clarity, grammar, spelling, word usage</b>					
<b>Number &amp; use of sources</b> (For meets; 8 good sources)					
<b>Scripture</b>					
<b>Use of original language(s)</b> (For meets: ST=minimal)					
<b>*Understanding of original meaning of Scripture</b> (For meets: ST=moderate)					
<b>Reformed Theology</b>					
<b>Integration of biblical, theological, &amp; historical concepts</b> (For meets: ST=significant)					
<b>*Awareness of Reformed theological issues</b> (For meets: ST=significant)					
<b>Worldview</b>					
<b>Interaction w/ modern cultural/global perspectives &amp; awareness of worldview issues</b> (Meets: ST=moderate)					
<b>Winsomely Reformed/Evangelistic</b>					
<b>Winsomely reformed ethos</b>					
<b>Church/World Repeat from above "Worldview"</b>					
<b>Interaction w/ modern cultural/global perspectives &amp; awareness of worldview issues</b> (Meets: ST=moderate)					

**Miscellaneous comments** (Please add any other comments from the jury to the back of this paper. Comments to include strengths, weaknesses, possible improvements, etc.):