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**Pastors & Stewards:**

***“The Formation of Catholic Seminarians for***

***Pastoral Leadership & Financial Responsibilities”***

**Project Summary, March 2014**

**Project Objectives:**

The Pastors and Stewards Grant will enable Mount St. Mary’s Seminary

* to assess the level of impact of indebtedness on the diocesan selection process;
* to assess seminarians’ financial readiness for priestly ministry;
* to research, design, and deliver an efficient administrative and financial competency program;
* to monitor its application in the priestly ministry of our graduates in the leadership and governance of Catholic parishes.

**Project Activities:**

The Roundtable One

* topics regarding parish leadership, financial management, and legal issues

The Diocesan Survey - 26 Vocation Directors from 32 Roman Catholic Dioceses

* Pastoral leadership and other human qualities considered important in seminary candidates;
* The consideration given, and policies regarding, the personal indebtedness of candidates in the selection process;
* The level of importance of financial management education at the seminarian level, and;
* Pastoral leadership and financial management skills considered crucial for pastors in the future and the skills in which seminarians should become proficient.

Computer-Aided Learning Modules (CAMs)

 Parish Finance, Leadership, Human Resources, Personal Finance

* the Information Technology and Instructional Design Committee (IT)
* Content and Assessment Committee (Content)

**Impact:**

Some of the most noted impacts of the grant initiatives in 2013 have come from the Vocation Director’s Interviews and Report. Due to the key findings in this report the project team has made changes to the CAMs in the areas of personal finance and parish finance. As noted above in this report, these two areas of a seminarian’s education have been mentioned time and again as we move through each step of this grant. The following excerpt from the Vocation Director’s Report explains the impact and importance well:

 *“A large majority of the vocation directors, furthermore, consider it very important that basic financial management skills relating to parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions be taught in seminary education. Crucial for pastors in the future, they say, are financial skills, in particular, budgeting, financial planning, and fund-raising, along with other leadership skills such as building parish relationships, communicating with diverse populations, and developing and utilizing the expertise of parishioners and staff. Good stewardship of financial resources, both parish and personal, are considered to be some of the challenges pastors face today.*

*In the current environment of declining numbers of priests, the potential for overseeing multiple parishes, and the shortened time frame in which priests become pastors, early training in the basics of financial management and other pastoral leadership skills should aid the future priest as pastor. While programs exist for continuing the education of priests and pastors, these vocation directors report a desire for earlier and more in-depth financial and pastoral leadership training. Many survey participants noted the importance of the information being gathered and expressed gratitude for addressing these issues.”*

**Reflection:**

While proceeding through each step of this grant in 2013 the project team has determined that the significance and need for an increase in the knowledge and responsibility of financial and leadership tools of our seminarians is imperative to their success as future pastors. Our initiatives are just a step towards achieving this goal but very important ones. The CAMs, especially, will be able to supplement information that may or may not already be given to seminarians. This additional instruction could be instrumental in the big picture of easing a seminarian into his role from ordained priest to pastor. In the future, these CAMs could be shared with other seminaries to benefit all men before they become a pastor of a parish.