**Aquinas Institute of Theology**

**Pursuing Financial Freedom for New Church Ministers**

**March 2014**

Significant Activities to Date:

1. Preliminary to securing the Lilly Pursuing Financial Freedom grant, Aquinas Institute of Theology secured a $25,000 Default Prevention Grant through the Missouri Department of Higher Education for July 2013 to June 2014. Funds from this grant have been used first toward a monthly stipend for a PhD student intern from the Saint Louis University department of higher education. The intern reports to the Academic Dean and has been doing research and program design toward establishing a Mission and Money financial literacy campaign for students and alumni. A spring term lunch series is being conducted, and three-day summer workshop on Financial Leadership in Pastoral Ministry is being given. The grant also is dedicated to reimbursing student services hours given to financial aid and student debt counseling.
2. With regard to the school’s Lilly Pursuing Financial Freedom goal of doing a feasibility study and early stage capital campaign planning, the school has returned the consultancy services of two seasoned professionals in Catholic philanthropy to rework the school’s institutional advancement from an event-driven to a major-donor strategy. The role description for the director of institutional advancement has been rewritten accordingly, and a new director of institutional advancement has been hired to fit this new role description effective March 24. Implementation of the new role will be closely monitored by the consultants for the next three months.
3. With regard to the school’s Lilly Pursuing Financial Freedom goal of launching expanding graduate student services to enhance the financial freedom of applicants to study at Aquinas Institute, of students to complete their degrees, and of graduates to afford to successfully enter employment in ministry, a bid has been submitted to a Saint Louis organizational consultant to do interviews and focus groups with current student services personal, students, and alumni for purposes of both talent and needs assessment. This information and analysis will guide the administration in the work of regrouping and expanding our student services accordingly to the purposes of the grant.

Most important resources we have discovered or produced:

1. Revised role description for Director of Institutional Advancement
2. Spring term Mission and Money lunch series
3. Summer term Financial Leadership in Pastoral Ministry workshop series

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