*Executive Summary*

**A New Day Dawning**:

Plan of Transformation for the

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

February 11, 2015

Trustee Seminary ReVisioning Task Force

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**A New Day Dawning** identifies a Plan of Transformation for UDTS in response to the nearly two year process of discernment and study which has centered on the question, *“If we could invent UDTS from the ground up to address the contemporary missional situation of the church and our context as part of a university, what would we look like?”*

The proposed direction outlines a substantially different way of providing theological education at a time when the demographics for new theological students look pretty grim. If this plan is approved, and if we successfully execute it, we will be a singularly unique seminary in the world, in my opinion.

The document identifies challenges with enrollment, finances, and the general decline in what I have identified as mainline theological education, and its impact on UDTS. It also affirms what our seminary has accomplished in an increasingly difficult environment, but it does not accept inertia or staying the course as a helpful future strategy. Even though nobody has done anything wrong, faculty and staff positions may nevertheless be affected by this plan, which is one of the unfortunate outcomes of the present situation.

I’d like to be able to summarize the document for you in a few easy sentences, but that would be difficult to do. Essentially, pp. 2-8 provide a review and clarify the case for change; pp. 9-14 outline my response to the challenges, i.e., reorganization of the seminary and a proposed *(Named) Center for Christian Renewal and Engagement*; and pp. 15ff outline the new organizational structure, financial assumptions, timelines, etc. The detailed financials, enrollment projections, tuition revenue, etc., are not at this point required to endorse the Plan’s direction, but it is important to note that it is assumed that this new direction will provide positive cash flow to the University’s bottom line. Additionally, I have purposely left out projections of personnel downsizing, as my preference is to make necessary adjustments in personnel through retirements, phased retirements, voluntary dismissal, or absorption into other open positions within the University by qualified individuals. All of these details will be clarified no later than December 2015.

Finally, as the document’s primary author, I believe it is important to note that I have gone through an emotional journey in this process. As you will soon see, given the current and future demographics of theological education, an argument can be made that our mission of theological education has reached its natural conclusion, and that we should end this chapter of our mission. We’ve ended programs before, and our mission of theological education is no exception. As President, I felt that it was my responsibility to seriously consider that option. I concluded, however, that though this epoch will be challenging, a significant part of our organization’s DNA rests in our historic commitment to integrate the wonder and awe of the Christian faith into all disciplines of study and inquiry. I cannot begin to count the number of times that alums from the college have pulled me aside and said something like, “You know, I was a business major and, at the time, I really resented having to take a class in Bible. But, in retrospect, it was one of the most important classes I took while I was at the University.” On the opposite side of the continuum, I’ve had numerous conversations with seminary graduates who’ve wished that they’d had an opportunity to absorb more of the wider experience that the University had to offer. Something was missing for them. This proposal “listens” to those reflections and, rather than moving away from our commitments, it endeavors to take us even closer to our core values. If ever there were a time when our world needed professionals and leaders who excelled in their fields while they understood that their gifts and abilities had been given to them for a faithful purpose, now is that time. If ever there were a time when ordained and lay church leaders needed to be immersed in the current and emerging culture so that, with recognized and earned authority, their words and actions could be received as constructive guidance and leadership, now is that time. With absolutely no hesitation, I believe that it is for such a time as this that our University has been created, and I believe that this Plan will strengthen our reputation and educational culture in ways that we cannot yet anticipate.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jeffrey F. Bullock, Ph.D.

President

**Process**

February 16-20, 2015 Distribute to Trustee Review Task Force

Present and Distribute to Seminary Faculty and Staff and the UPFC Committee

March 2015 Receive feedback from Trustee Task Force, Seminary Faculty and Staff, and the UPFC Committee

Update to Board Executive Committee

May 2015 Board approves plan