



## **Seminary Environmental Certification Program Standards Requirements and Elective Activities**

The following are the requirements and elective activities for schools participating in the Seminary Environmental Certification Program. The requirements and electives are divided into five areas:

- Education
- Liturgy, Ritual and Worship
- Buildings and Grounds
- Community Life
- Public Leadership

The Green Seminary Initiative (GSI) maintains an extensive collection of resources in relation to each of the requirement and electives. These resources will be posted to the GSI website during the fall of 2016 and will be publicly available.

In most areas of the program, participating schools will complete a combination of requirements and electives, shaping the substance of their experience of the Certification Program to fit their own context.

As evident from the following text, the completion of certain electives will provide seminaries with credit towards program requirements in more than one area of the Certification Program. We also understand that the significant differences between free-standing seminaries and those which are part of a larger university system will require the customizing of certain requirements and electives in consultation with the Green Seminary Initiative. In addition, GSI will seek to provide credit towards Certification for those schools that have carried out substantial amounts of work in relation to care for creation and environmental engagement. We look forward to the consultation with seminaries which this will involve.

### **A. Education**

#### **A.1 THEOLOGY AND ECOLOGY**

##### **Purpose of the Requirements**

To ensure that students have a thorough understanding of both the theological and ecological importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems, and to equip students to understand and act on a wide range of ecological concerns, the seminary's academic program will ensure that students gain a baseline level of religious eco-literacy.

GSI understands the broad area of theology and ecology as the study of how sacred texts, theologies, ethics, religious traditions and practices intersect with human and ecological well-being, along with the concurrent study of actions necessary to understand and meet the crises facing local and global ecosystems. Religious eco-literacy includes a basic understanding of planetary and ecosystem functioning along with a critical understanding of the interrelationships between socio-cultural, economic and political systems, the natural and built environment, food and energy systems, social and environmental justice, and the impact of these interrelationships on human communities. Please keep this expansive definition of theology and ecology in mind as you consider these standards.

### **Requirements**

- a. The seminary offers at least one elective course each academic year related to theology and ecology.
- b. Ecological concerns, including those related to environmental justice, are integrated substantively into at least one required or core course each year, such as Bible, Theology, Ethics, etc. through readings, presentations, or other pedagogical means.
- c. The school offers at least one public theology and ecology related lecture or presentation special event annually.

### **Electives**

*(Complete at least three electives)*

- Faculty members integrate related content into additional required courses, with at least one full class session devoted to this topic. Each required course, beyond that which meets the requirement above, counts as one additional certification elective.
- Faculty members integrate related content into additional elective courses. Each required course, beyond that which meets the requirement above, counts as one additional certification elective.
- The school offers an ecological, creation care, or environmental justice concentration or certification, either on its own or through a consortium of seminaries.
- Students have the opportunity to take courses on ecology, environmental science, environmental policy/law/advocacy, environmental justice, eco-humanities, or related subjects at the seminary or in other university settings.
- The school offers field study experience with organizations working on environmental or eco-justice issues in ministry settings, internships, cross-cultural or immersion experiences, or other means.
- The campus library offers substantial access to periodicals, books, videos and other materials in a range of areas of theology and ecology.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **A.2 FACULTY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Purpose of the Requirements**

To facilitate seminary faculty development in the broad area of theology and ecology as defined in A1, the seminary will seek ways to encourage faculty to integrate such content into coursework and provide opportunities for faculty to develop skills and competency in this regard.

### **Requirement**

- a. The seminary, on its own or in collaboration with GSI or other educational institutions regularly facilitates substantive faculty/instructor development in relevant the areas within theology and ecology.

### **Electives**

*(Complete at least one elective)*

- During the seminary's time in the Certification Program, a substantial number of faculty members carry out public scholarly activity addressing the relationship between religion and ecology. This activity may include submission of articles or chapters to scholarly journals or books, lectures, blogs, sermons, or other activities as determined in consultation with GSI.
- Faculty members engage with their peers to offer multi-disciplinary or integrated classes which link religious, ecological, and social justice themes. The seminary offers at least one such class in two of its three years in the Certification Program.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **A.3 SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

### **Purpose of the Requirements**

To enhance students' understanding and appreciation of the breadth and depth of ecological-based - spirituality, the seminary offers practices and experiences that foster eco-spiritual formation. Eco-spiritual formation is understood as encouraging an appreciation of spiritual experience in relation to the natural world, a knowledge of the interconnectedness of the human and beyond-human community, an understanding of and responsiveness to the spiritual, cultural and physical harm done by ecological degradation, particularly to vulnerable communities, and opportunities for cultivation of eco-spiritualities of praise, thanksgiving, awe, wonder, delight, resistance, despair and grief.

### **Requirements**

- a. The seminary includes eco-spiritual formation in at least one spirituality-related course.
- b. The seminary includes eco-spiritual formation in its broader strategy for student spiritual formation.

### **Electives**

*(Complete at least two electives)*

- At least one course or spiritual formation program offered annually through the seminary, or consortium of seminaries, is focused specifically on eco- spiritual formation.
- Field trips and outreach experiences that foster eco-oriented spiritual formation are offered regularly.

- At least one course or spiritual formation program includes time spent experiencing and learning about the local ecosystem and its human and beyond-human inhabitants, threats to its health, and efforts to protect and restore it. This time spent in the local eco-system should integrate reflection, prayer, or other form of spiritual practice.
- At least one course or field placement offers students the opportunity to learn about the spirituality of resistance and public engagement, including understanding the impacts of environmental degradation on vulnerable communities and how to be engaged in activism around such degradation.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **B. Liturgy, Ritual, and Worship**

### **B.1 INCORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES INTO LITURGIES, RITUALS, WORSHIP**

#### **Purpose of the Requirements**

The seminary chapel or liturgy/worship program will regularly include content oriented toward care of creation, ecological degradation, environmental justice, and eco-spirituality, and will help students develop skills and experience in developing and leading such liturgies, rituals, laments, and prayers.

#### **Requirements**

- a. Liturgies, rituals or worship services with an environmental focus are held at least once per semester, during the time that the seminary community normally gathers for liturgy/ritual/ worship.
- b. Eco-related elements such as prayers, sermons, ecologically-oriented readings, passages from sacred texts, music, praise and thanksgiving, confessions, laments, and praises are incorporated into services, communal prayer, or liturgies at least four times each semester.

#### **Electives**

*(Complete at least three electives)*

- At least once per year, the seminary holds an outdoor liturgy, ritual or worship service focused on creation-care, environmental justice, or eco-spiritual themes.
- The seminary chapel or worship space regularly utilizes environmentally sustainable elements, such as plants, natural and organic elements for religious feasts and rituals, organic bread and wine/juice, and other items appropriate to the religious tradition.
- The seminary chapel makes use of imagery and sounds related to the natural world or its degradation at least once each semester.
- The seminary organizes an interfaith environmental service once per calendar year.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

### **B.2 WORSHIP COMPETENCE**

#### **Purpose of the Requirements**

The seminary will provide training so that students develop competencies in creating sermons, liturgies, rituals, prayers, music and worship that include environmental themes/elements, consistent with the parameters of the requirements in section B1.

### **Requirement**

- a. Annually at least one seminary course on liturgy, ritual and/or worship will include one full class session or more (or equivalent) on the integration of environmental themes (see definition for section A) into these activities.

### **Electives**

*(Complete at least one elective)*

- A course on preaching will include one full class session or more (or equivalent) on preaching on themes of creation care, the intersection between environmental protection and social justice, and related topics.
- The seminary will offer an elective course on ecological hermeneutics and textual interpretation at least once every four semesters.
- The seminary will offer an elective course on ecologically oriented worship as described in B1 at least once every four semesters, which will include teaching on the use of music in relation to environmental concerns.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **C. Buildings and Grounds**

*Note: Several of the requirements in this section call for the completion of a specialized audit. These specialized audits, provided by GSI, include a more detailed level of activity than the initial more general self-audit schools complete during the initial stage of the program.*

### **C.1 ENERGY**

#### **Purpose of the Requirements**

To reduce the seminary's greenhouse gas emissions and to expose students to best practices in energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy, the seminary will implement energy conservation and efficiency efforts and utilize renewable energy as needed to reduce its carbon footprint by at least 15% from its baseline level during the course of the Certification Program.

**Requirements** *(Note: In this area, there are no elective activities. Instead, GSI will provide an extensive list of recommended activities with supportive resources to enable seminaries to meet the requirements in this area.)*

- a. The seminary will conduct an energy audit meeting ASHRAE Level 1 standards of its facilities.
- b. The seminary will benchmark and monitor its energy use through EPA's Portfolio Manager and has a plan in place to reduce its carbon footprint by a minimum of 15% during its time in the Certification Program. (This requirement may be modified if the seminary can demonstrate a significant carbon footprint reduction prior to entering the Certification Program.)

- c. Annually, the seminary will encourage its students to participate in free GSI webinar-based energy management training.
- d. Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **C.2 WATER**

### **Purpose of the Requirements**

The seminary will decrease its water use by at least 10%, takes steps to protect water quality, and expose students to best practices in these areas.

**Requirements** *(Note: In this area, there are no elective activities. Instead, GSI will provide an extensive list of recommended activities with supportive resources to enable seminaries to meet the requirements in this area.)*

- a. The seminary will benchmark its water use and takes steps to reduce its water use by at least 10% during its time in the Certification Program.
- b. The seminary will evaluate its impact on water quality and implements an Integrated Pest Management policy for buildings and grounds.
- c. Annually, the seminary will encourage facility staff, students, and faculty to participate in free GSI webinar-based water conservation and water quality protection training.

## **C.3 WASTE**

### **Purpose of the Requirements**

To expose students to best practices in waste management, the seminary will implement a waste reduction and recycling program and reduce its solid waste generation by 25%.

**Requirements** *(Note: In this area, there are no elective activities. Instead, GSI will provide an extensive list of recommended activities with supportive resources to enable seminaries to meet the requirements in this area.)*

- a. The seminary will conduct a self-administered waste audit.
- b. The seminary will develop and implement a waste reduction plan that results in a reduction of at least 25% in its solid waste generation during its time in the Certification process. (This requirement may be modified if the seminary can demonstrate that it has implemented substantial waste reduction and recycling efforts prior to entering the Certification Program.)

## **C.4 MATERIALS**

### **Purpose of the Requirements**

In order to lessen the environmental impact of the seminary's resource use, the seminary will use environmentally-friendly materials.

## **Requirements**

- a. The seminary will use recycled paper products with 100% post-consumer waste.
- b. The seminary will implement a paper use reduction policy that requires double-sided printing and copying, the re-use of paper printed on one side only, and protocols for paperless assignment submissions and print limits for students.

## **Electives**

*(Complete at least one elective)*

- The seminary will use recycled or environmentally preferable painting, building, or flooring materials in repairs, renovations and new building projects during the school's time in the Certification Program.
- The seminary will replace at least 50% of all cleaning supplies with Green Seal, EcoLogo or Design for the Environment chemicals during the school's time in the Certification Program.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **C.5 GROUND**

### **Purpose of the Electives**

The seminary will manage its grounds to minimize environmental impact, provide spiritual inspiration and raise environmental awareness.

### **Requirement**

- a. The seminary will develop an ecologically sensitive plan for its landscaping and grounds-keeping that minimizes the use of chemicals, water and pervious surface, enhances wildlife habitat, and provides opportunities for spiritual reflection.

## **Electives**

*(Complete at least two electives)*

- The seminary will provide space on-campus for community gardening.
- The seminary will encourage student, faculty and staff use of natural areas through paths, seating and landscaping.
- The seminary will utilize signage to increase awareness of ecological issues and conservation practices of the school.
- All plantings at the seminary during its time in the Certification Program will be native to the school's bio-region and drought-resistant.
- The seminary will create or designate an outdoor chapel or reflection place for use by students, faculty, and staff.
- The seminary will implement an initiative to reduce mowing and/or to return some portion of its land to a wild state or to an organically maintained state.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **D. Community Life**

## **D.1 FOOD SERVICES**

### **Purpose of the Requirements**

The seminary will manage its food services so that it provides food sourced and prepared in an environmentally healthy and humane manner.

### **Requirements**

- a. The food service provider will offer vegetarian food choices at all meals.
- b. The food service provider will offer organic and/or local produce at all meals.
- c. Food services will be included in the waste reduction plan.

### **Electives**

*(Complete at least three electives)*

- All coffee, and tea utilized on-campus will be organic and fair trade.
- The food service provider will use hormone-free, organic milk and cage-free, organic eggs.
- The food service provider will use organic meat.
- The food service provider will offer a vegan option at all meals.
- The seminary will purchase at least 25% of its food from local or organic food providers.
- The seminary will reduce the amount of meat served over the certification period by 30 percent.
- The seminary will eliminate the on-campus provision of bottled water and other bottled drinks.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **D.2. COMMUNITY ETHOS**

### **Purpose of the Requirements**

To develop and sustain a culture of respect for creation, the seminary will communicate regularly with its community members about the school's environmental commitments and will provide opportunities for these people to adopt environmentally sustainable behaviors.

### **Requirements**

- a. The seminary will implement an ongoing communications plan to inform its community members and stakeholders about its ecological commitments.
- b. Student and faculty orientation will include a discussion of the school's commitment to creation as well as the practices it has put in place to meet that commitment.

### **Electives**

*(Complete at least two electives)*

- Students, staff, administration and faculty will be invited to sign an annual pledge to reduce their environmental impact through an annual activity coordinated by GSI. GSI or the school

offers annual training and education empowering students and faculty to fulfill their commitments.

- The seminary will develop a sustainable transportation initiative which includes at least two of the following activities (worth 2 Electives)
  - encouraging carpooling, the use of public transportation and provides bicycle racks
  - including hybrid or electric vehicles in its fleet, and/or a schedule for replacing current vehicles with hybrid, electric or best-in-class mileage vehicles.
  - supporting hybrid and electric vehicle usage by faculty, staff and students through incentives such as reduced parking fees, designated parking spots, and/or charging stations.
  - Committing the school to purchase carbon offsets for official school-related travel by staff and faculty.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **E. Public Leadership**

### **E.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MISSION STATEMENT**

#### **Purpose of the Requirements**

To embrace publicly its commitment to creation and to meeting ecological challenges, the seminary will integrate its commitment into a widely used statement.

#### **Requirements**

- a. The seminary will develop a statement which expresses the ways in which the greening of the institution is consistent with its core mission.
- b. The seminary will communicate this statement clearly and regularly to its staff, faculty, students and Board (or high-level leadership team).

### **E.2 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES & BOARD/GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP**

#### **Purpose of the Requirements**

To ensure that the school's ecological commitment is fully integrated into its culture, the seminary will include environmental topics into orientation for new board, faculty and staff members, report to its board or high-level leadership team regularly about progress towards Certification, and adopt policies that reflect its commitment.

#### **Requirements**

- a. Orientation for new board members (or for new members of the school's high-level leadership team) and staff will include education about the seminary's environmental commitments.
- b. At least annually during the seminary's time in the Certification Program, the Board (or high-level leadership team) will be educated about the seminary's progress in the program.

- c. The seminary will integrate environmental requirements into its grounds, purchasing, food and other relevant policies, including an Energy Star appliance purchasing policy, and provides the means to implement and communicate about those policies.

### **Electives**

*(Complete at least one elective)*

- The seminary will integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria across at least 25% of its endowment and investments.
- The school will establish a Green Revolving Fund, using a portion of its endowment or investments to fund energy efficiency and other environmental retrofits which deliver interest plus the repayment of capital to the endowment of investment fund.
- Expectations of ecological competency will be written into relevant seminary job descriptions.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.

## **E.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ENGAGEMENT**

### **Purpose of the Electives**

To model public engagement as an expression of religious belief and practice, the seminary will support students and other members of the seminary community in addressing environmental concerns publicly.

### **Electives**

*(Complete at least one elective)*

- The seminary, either officially or through its faculty, staff or students, will participate annually in an environmental campaign of local, regional, national or international significance, with members of the seminary community participating in campaign activities such as planning meetings, mobilizations, advocacy, sign-on statements, or other.
- The seminary, in collaboration with local organizations, will provide annual internships, field placements or immersions in religious and environmental NGOs which are addressing environmental issues and concerns.
- Other, as developed by the seminary in consultation with GSI staff.