

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

A DIVIDED DECISION BLESSED BY THE LORD: THE IMPACT OF THE
AMALGAMATION ON THE WELS PRE-SEMINARY PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

For 130 years, the pre-seminary training for prospective WELS pastoral candidates took place at Northwestern College in Watertown, WI. In 1995, the pre-seminary program moved to New Ulm, MN, as Northwestern College amalgamated with Dr. Martin Luther College—the WELS training college for the teaching ministry—and became Martin Luther College. The decision to amalgamate these two ministerial education colleges was highly debated, and the disputes centered on the impact which such a merger might have upon the pre-seminary program and its students, the synod’s future pastors. This paper seeks to begin an open and amicable discussion of the amalgamation by exploring the historical discussions of the potential positive and negative impacts of the amalgamation on the pastor track and assessing whether, to what extent, and why they have or have not transpired over the past twenty-five years.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the many blessings God gives to his church for the benefit of his church is the gift of pastors.¹ And yet, as God often does, he gives these gifts through means. Not only does the divine call into the public ministry come indirectly through people, but God also uses others to teach, prepare, and equip pastors before they are called. The God-given qualifications of a pastor demonstrate the necessity of prior instruction: “He must hold firmly to the trust-worthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9 NIV).

Thus it should be no surprise that for over 150 years, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) has regarded the faithful and thorough preparation of pastors as one of its most essential goals. Since God has not prescribed exactly how to train pastors, the WELS has much freedom as it does so. Nevertheless, the system and structure the WELS has chosen to use for pastoral training faithfully strives to recognize and prepare “reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim 2:2) to whom the present-day public ministry of the gospel is then entrusted.²

The pastoral preparation of the WELS ministerial education system centers on the training received at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS). At the seminary, those men willing to present themselves as candidates for the pastoral ministry receive their final, most intense, and most practical training. But in order to maintain the high level of biblical, systematic, historical, and practical theological training at the seminary level which the WELS has repeatedly

1. 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11-13 speak of God appointing public ministers of the gospel as gifts for the church. The pastoral office is certainly not the only form of the public ministry, but it is the one which this paper focuses on. The present-day office of pastor also is the most similar to the ancient elder position, and thus the same God-given requirements apply.

2. “One way of describing pastoral education is to say that a pastor needs to know God's Word and man and how to communicate God's Word to man.” Quoted from Joel Fredrich, “Our College Pastoral Training Curriculum: A Channel of Blessings from Our God” (WLS Essay File, 2009), 1.

maintained is the optimal and most faithful way it can see to prepare men to serve as pastors, an incoming seminary student must possess a number of prerequisite tools. Those tools—such as biblical knowledge, language skills, and the ability to think critically—allow an incoming seminarian to jump into the seminary’s in-depth studies.³

For 130 years, beginning in 1865, the majority of men in the WELS who set their sights on the noble task of the pastoral ministry received these tools as part of their pre-seminary training at Northwestern College (NWC), an all-male school in Watertown, Wisconsin.⁴ As the world changed over that time, the life and training of NWC students changed as well. But since the Word did not change and neither did the need to communicate that saving Word to sinful people, much remained the same.⁵ For generations, hundreds of men were prepared and equipped for their seminary training and consequent pastoral service by their time at NWC, making the school a special blessing from God with an abundantly rich heritage.

In 1995, the WELS pre-seminary program moved to New Ulm, Minnesota, as NWC amalgamated with Dr. Martin Luther College (DMLC)—the WELS training college for the teaching ministry—and became Martin Luther College (MLC). Before, during, and after the 1993 Synod Convention at which the convention delegates voted to move forward with the amalgamation, many within WELS discussed numerous potential pros and cons of the change.

3. The Greek and Hebrew skills that WLS requires of incoming students for the sake of engaging in exegetical courses are one primary example. The extreme value, if not necessity, of such requirements and a specific pre-seminary program which corresponds to those requirements is underscored by a comparison to the Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod (LCMS). Not long after changes were made to the LCMS worker training schools at the high school and collegiate level, the Greek and Hebrew skills of incoming seminary students dropped significantly. In 1996, only a third of incoming students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, had taken Greek before, and only a fifth had taken Hebrew before. See James Borgwardt, “The Erosion of Missouri’s Pastoral Education System” (WLS Essay File, 1997), 25.

4. “Northwestern College” did not become the school’s official name until 1910.

5. For an excellent summary of the major shifts in the WELS pre-seminary curriculum throughout the years and an explanation of the reasons behind these changes, see Micah Plocher, “Pre-Seminary Curriculum Re-evaluation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Non-biblical Language Requirement” (WLS Essay File, 2018).

Much of the consideration centered on the impact which such a merger might have upon the pre-seminary program and its students, the synod's future pastors.

Both proponents and opponents of the amalgamation held strong convictions about the correct course of action, and both sides desired to make a wise decision for the future of the synod and, more importantly, for the continued ministry of the gospel. The issue was not doctrinal and thus did not lead to any breaks in fellowship, but it was divisive. To some, the amalgamation presented exciting opportunities for growth and posed the potential to usher in a new era of pre-seminary training. Others had serious concerns and questions about how the amalgamation would impact the quality and quantity of future WELS pastors. No one denied that the amalgamation would bring about change for the pre-seminary program. But what would change—and to what extent? Would those changes be positive or negative?

Up until now, no one has attempted to study what has changed and how the amalgamation has impacted the WELS pre-seminary program and its students. A couple of reasons stand out as to why no one has undertaken such a study. First of all, the amalgamation is still a relatively recent event and therefore difficult to examine from a historical perspective. In addition, the amalgamation discussions were highly contentious. Words and actions from both sides crossed the line, and the decision greatly affected many people's lives on a personal level. For years, even an attempt at an unbiased analysis could have revived intense arguments and reopened painful wounds. As a result, public conversations about the amalgamation and its impact have remained, for the most part, non-existent.

But in many ways, the amalgamation of NWC and DMLC is almost ancient WELS history and thus in need of examination. This coming fall will begin the 25th year of pre-seminary training at MLC. The majority of men who will graduate from the pre-seminary

program at MLC this May were not even born when MLC began. Within the next decade, more active WELS pastors will be graduates of MLC than NWC. Furthermore, the fact that many of the men who were heavily involved in discussing and implementing the amalgamation are still alive and able to share their insights and perspectives presents a window of opportunity to study this topic. The willingness of these men to talk to me seems also to be evidence that enough time has passed for this subject to be considered. Although differing opinions and painful memories still are present, they are no longer quite the barriers to discussion which they might have been at one time.

But combined with those factors is an even more compelling reason for such a study. As it was in 1995 when the amalgamation occurred, the WELS is still striving to prepare a high quantity of high-quality pastors. As we continue to make evaluations and decisions concerning the pre-seminary program in order to do so, we first and foremost put our full trust and confidence in the Lord who is ruling over all things for the good of his church. At the same time, we also recognize that God has called us to be faithful stewards of all the resources he has given us—including the minds he has given us to explore, analyze, and learn from history. Thus, faithfulness calls for an understanding of the impacts of previous decisions and courses of action. With such knowledge, we will be better to equipped to properly appreciate our present-day blessings and opportunities, critically assess our present-day challenges and areas for improvement, and wisely plan for the future of our pre-seminary program.

Therefore, now seems to be a fitting time to begin an open and amicable examination of the impact which the amalgamation has had on the WELS pre-seminary training program and its students. This paper is in no way an attempt to evaluate whether or not the amalgamation was the wisest course of action for the WELS to take and will not focus on why or how the

amalgamation occurred, accordingly. Rather, this paper's examination of the changes in our pre-seminary program and its students as a result of the amalgamation is all done with a view toward the WELS's continuing, dedicated, and faithful pre-seminary training and gospel ministry in the present and the future.

Nonetheless, the first section of this paper provides the historical framework and context necessary to accurately understand the discussions which were taking place at the time. Each of the three subsequent sections concentrates on a major area of consideration in the amalgamation discussions: recruitment and retention, intellectual preparation, and interpersonal preparation. These sections detail the potential pros and cons which were suggested concerning the pre-seminary program before the amalgamation occurred and offer a comparison and evaluation of what has actually happened since. These comparisons and evaluations are based on written records, researched and compiled statistics, and personal interviews.⁶ In doing so, this paper will attempt to distinguish whether or not and to what degree the potential changes which were discussed—both pros and cons—have transpired, as well as estimate whether or not and to what degree the amalgamation itself has produced those changes.

In regard to certain aspects of each area, changes—or lack thereof—can be demonstrated by objective evidence. Still, the twenty-five years at MLC since the amalgamation have not happened in a vacuum. Many other external and internal variables have affected whatever changes do or do not exist. I have done my best to identify as many of these variables as I can and come to conclusions accordingly. Other aspects, however, are highly or completely

6. The names of all the men I interviewed can be found in Appendix 8 on page 105. However, due to the nature of this topic and out of respect for the men I interviewed and gratitude for their willingness to speak openly with me about the amalgamation and the surrounding and subsequent discussions and impacts, I have decided not to cite any interviews specifically in this paper. While this entire paper—especially the historical background section—is highly informed by these interviews in a broad sense and also includes details and differing personal views shared with me in these interviews, the paper presents my perspective from everything I have heard, read, considered, and calculated. Therefore, any disagreement with anything said in this paper cannot properly be directed at anyone I interviewed, but rather, only at me.

subjective by nature. Nevertheless, I hope the perspective I present based on my research and the numerous perspectives I have gathered from many of the people closest to the amalgamation discussions, the pre-seminary program at NWC, and the present-day pre-seminary program at MLC will be a valuable resource—even where one may disagree with my conclusions.

In addition to the already difficult task of attempting to assess to what extent the amalgamation itself is the cause of any changes to the pre-seminary program because of all the outside variables and subjectivity involved, I also recognize another potential pitfall. Although I did not have an opinion at the time of amalgamation (since I was not even a year old when the vote to amalgamate the two schools passed), I realize that to remain completely unbiased is impossible, and yet, I have made every effort to do so.⁷

As expected, the amalgamation has produced both positive and negative effects for the pre-seminary program. Many of the concerns expressed by those who opposed the amalgamation—although still valid concerns today—have not transpired, or at least not to an extent that has notably hurt the pastor track. On the other hand, a number of the potential benefits which were suggested have taken place, but perhaps not to the extent which some anticipated. All in all, God in his grace has clearly blessed the decision to amalgamate the two worker training colleges into one, and through the faithful service of MLC's faculty and leadership in particular, he has enabled the pre-seminary program to continue to prepare well-rounded men with the tools to continue their theological studies at WLS and pursue the pastoral ministry.⁸

7. Here are some of my potential sources of bias which hopefully serve to somewhat balance each other out: I have been greatly influenced and blessed by many NWC graduates—particularly my father, many DMLC graduates—particularly my mother, many MLC graduates—both teachers and pastors, my four years at our synod's Watertown campus as an LPS student, and my four years at our synod's New Ulm campus as an MLC student.

8. Saying that God has blessed this decision is not to say that God willed the amalgamation—as if those opposing the amalgamation were therefore consciously or unconsciously opposing God's will—or even that a different decision would not have produced an equal or greater number of apparent blessings. Such an approach would take a fatalistic approach to God and his will. Rather, the statement is a thankful and joyous recognition of the

I pray that through this paper you may grow in your appreciation for the many gifts and opportunities with which the Lord blessed our pre-seminary program at NWC and has continued to bless our pre-seminary program with at MLC. I pray that you may become aware of some of the present-day challenges facing our pre-seminary program and our synod. I pray that your confidence in the reliability of the Lord's promise to always bless his people may be reinforced. And I pray that your desire to encourage and assist in any way you can with the training of many more well-rounded, well-qualified, and faithful pastors will be renewed.

evident grace and providence of God toward the WELS, its pre-seminary program, and its pre-seminary students over the past twenty-five years—much of which will be discussed to some extent in this paper. Concerning the amalgamation, as well as “in all of the decisions that God has left free to us and that are contingent, we have God's providence as our consolation. So great is his power that he rules over all of our history. He carries out that rule in grace and mercy, intervening for our protection, acting for our ultimate good, and, yes, even taking into account our contingent decisions and actions (Romans 8:31-39). Gladly we commend ourselves to his care.” Quoted from Daniel Deutschlander, *Grace Abounds*, (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2015), 144. See pages 139-146 for an excellent explanation of necessity and contingency in regard to God's providence and will.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Perhaps the first formal suggestion to amalgamate the two worker training colleges came in 1961 when the Planning Committee for Educational Institutions of the Synod (PCEIS) recommended that NWC and DMLC “be combined at a new campus in the Milwaukee area.”⁹ In the following years, multiple reports opposed this course of action. The 1962 “Keller Report” advised keeping the two colleges separate, and in 1965, the Committee on Teacher-Training Facilities contended that “such a combination would undermine the integrity of the instructional programs of both schools.”¹⁰ The synod rejected the PCEIS recommendation and resolved to keep the two colleges separate. When the proposal of an amalgamation of the colleges was resurrected in 1978, it was once again “dismissed as unacceptable.”¹¹

Then in 1989, a report by the Preparatory School Study Commission (PSSC) recommended the amalgamation of the two worker training colleges as a necessary step for preserving and strengthening the synod’s preparatory high schools in the face of financial difficulties.¹² The NWC and WLS faculties both wrote in opposition to this recommendation, but on the whole, those who disapproved of this proposed course of action did not expect it to actually gain traction.¹³ Not until after a resolution to amalgamate the two worker training

9. Michigan District Special Synodical School Study Committee, “Michigan District Special Synodical School Study Committee Report,” (15 June 1993, The Amalgamation Collection), ix. Appendix 3 of this report provides a summary of recommendations and changes to WELS worker training structure from 1960 to 1993.

10. “Michigan District Special Synodical School Study Committee Report,” ix.

11. “Michigan District Special Synodical School Study Committee Report,” x-xi.

12. Prep School Study Commission, “Report of the Preparatory School Study Commission to the Board for Worker Training,” *Reports and Memorials for the Fiftieth Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, (7 August 1989), 13-34. The merger of Martin Luther Preparatory School (MLPS) with NPS and selling of the MLPS campus in Prairie du Chien, WI, were major factors in these discussions.

13. RSVP Committee, “Response of the Northwestern College Faculty and Board to the Board for Worker Training Concerning the Preparatory School Study Commission Report,” (June 1989, The Amalgamation Collection) and Faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, “Unanswered Questions about the Proposed

colleges onto the DMLC campus was brought to the 1991 Synod Convention and approved—pending proof that such an amalgamation was feasible—did the detailed discussions of potential pros and cons actually begin.¹⁴

In accord with the resolution, synod president Carl Mischke appointed a committee to study whether the amalgamation of the colleges would, in fact, be feasible. That committee—aptly named the Feasibility Study Committee (FSC)—devoted many hours to its task over the next two years as its members researched, analyzed, calculated, and weighed up potential pros and cons. Many others also shared their own views concerning the feasibility and potential impacts of the merger and offered their own proposals for the structure of the worker training system.

Although synodical stewardship and finances were all part of the considerations, the FSC decided “that there must be benefits beyond financial ones for the 1991 resolution to be feasible.”¹⁵ This conclusion seems to imply that the FSC recognized the potential risk of changing the structure that was in place and the sizeable upheaval such a change involved. Thus, the amalgamation discussions focused on the program which would undergo the most drastic

Amalgamation of Colleges and Prep Schools,” (Undated, The Amalgamation Collection). Although this paper focuses on discussions concerning the pre-seminary program at the collegiate level, the proposed transition from three prep schools down to two was also a significant factor and cause for concern among some who opposed the amalgamation.

14. Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Proceedings of the Fifty-first Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, (9 August 1991), 74-76.

15. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the Feasibility Study Committee,” *Report to the Twelve Districts: Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, (June 1992), 31. Accordingly, this paper will not focus on what has or has not happened financially. Even though financial impacts have certainly affected the pre-seminary program since the amalgamation, they do not directly impact most of the areas under consideration and thus have not been explored for this paper.

changes and upheaval—the pre-seminary program.¹⁶ These discussions about the pre-seminary program became very impassioned, polarizing, and personal. Fundamental differences in approach to the amalgamation discussions among those involved led to continued division and disagreement.

In my evaluation, there were three different schools of thought concerning the pre-seminary program and amalgamation at that time. An individual generally identified with the “group” with which his views, values, and conclusions most closely aligned.¹⁷ However, within each group there was still a wide spectrum of opinions. The relationship between these three groups is also best pictured as a spectrum. For the sake of explanation, I have named these groups the “Anti-NWC Men,” the “FSC Men,” and the “NWC Men.” As their names suggest, the Anti-NWC Men and NWC Men had highly different perspectives. The group labeled the FSC Men was in the middle and shared some common ground with both of the other groups.

A desire to get rid of NWC was the defining feature of the Anti-NWC Men, the group which preferred the greatest amount of change. In general, these men believed that NWC had a fraternity feel, failed to promote proper social skills and graces, fostered an unhealthy rivalry with teachers, and cultivated arrogance.¹⁸ Some in the group felt similarly about Northwestern Preparatory School (NPS) as well. Perhaps directly linked to their dislike of these schools, the

16. The relative dearth of discussion about the teacher track in the Report of the FSC demonstrates the general consensus that the amalgamation’s impact on the synod’s teacher training program would be both positive and relatively minimal.

17. These “groups” were not physical groups with specified members. Rather, these groups are my way to describe the different prevailing schools of thought and how they interacted with each other—somewhat similar to the distinctions of the Gnesio-Lutherans, Philippists, and the middle or centrist party used to explain the sixteenth-century viewpoints, discussions, and disagreements within Lutheranism.

18. From what I have been told, many of the Anti-NWC Men were pastors who had had very poor personal experiences at NWC and perhaps NPS as well—something which sadly seemed rather common among the older pastors at that time. Others in this group (including teachers) had had poor personal experiences with pastors and traced at least some of the problem back to the culture and mindset these men had learned or acquired or failed to shake off at NWC.

Anti-NWC Men generally wanted more money to be spent on missions instead of ministerial education.¹⁹ Moreover, some in this group wanted the synod's pastoral training to become more practical and less language- and doctrine-intensive. Therefore, from the perspective of the Anti-NWC Men, the amalgamation would either help resolve most of the major issues or at least be a good step in the right direction.

The FSC Men, the middle group of the three, also favored the amalgamation.²⁰ These men were sympathetic to many of the sentiments of the Anti-NWC Men and believed that the amalgamation could bring about improvement in these interpersonal and attitudinal areas. However, they did not believe NWC was failing, but merely that it could be better. The FSC Men valued and respected NWC and the education and training it provided. On the whole, they were not looking to change the program and its curriculum, but simply to enhance them. They cared very much about preserving and protecting the pre-seminary program and were optimistic that as everyone worked together, the amalgamation would actually strengthen and enrich the preparation which the synod's future pastors would receive.²¹

19. The term "kingdom balance" was often thrown around in discussions about how to structure the percentages of the synodical budget going toward various aspects of the synod's work. In my opinion, the Michigan District Special Synodical School Study Committee summed up the correct approach well, including quotations from John Brug's still-applicable 1991 *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* article, "Worker Training vs. Outreach": "He points out that there is 'plenty of room for debate among us about the most efficient way to operate both our worker training program and our mission program' and he laments that at times the various aspects of the church's work are seen as 'competitors fighting for the same limited resources, rather than as partners in the same indivisible work.'" See "Michigan District Special Synodical School Study Committee Report," vi.

20. This group includes not only to the pastors, teachers, and laymen who were on the FSC, but also to all the pastors, teachers, and laymen who essentially held to the views expressed in the "Report of the FSC."

21. While some of the members of the DMLC faculty would be included in the FSC Men, it is interesting to note that the DMLC Amalgamation Committee became less optimistic and desired much more information upfront about the changes and implications of amalgamating the colleges at a new location in Wisconsin in comparison to the amalgamation of the schools on the New Ulm campus. See David Pelzl, Letter to Herbert Prahll on behalf of the DMLC Amalgamation Committee (15 February 1993, The Amalgamation Collection).

The NWC Men opposed the amalgamation—and for the most part, strongly opposed. These men highly valued the pastoral preparation which the preparatory schools and especially NWC provided and fervently desired to protect such training.²² They believed the old saying “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” aptly applied to NWC and were thus against any attempts to “fix” any interpersonal or curricular “problems” which they did not believe were problems in need of fixing. The NWC Men certainly did not think NWC had no room to improve, and not all of them were completely opposed to the idea of an amalgamation, but they were extremely hesitant about any changes which could potentially hurt the quality or quantity of the synod’s pastoral candidates.²³ They did not want to lose a school with historical success in producing an adequate number of well-equipped seminarians and replace it with a minority program in a new and seemingly less-ideal location which would thus be incredibly more vulnerable to what they considered to be many new and presumably harmful changes and uncertainties.²⁴

Yet despite this three-group classification I propose, the reports and responses generally only present the views of the FSC Men and the NWC Men. This absence is, in part, due to the overlap in views between the FSC Men and the Anti-NWC Men, but it can also be attributed to the fact that the Anti-NWC Men did not often express their fervent anti-NWC feelings in public documents during the amalgamation discussions—an approach which would have likely caused the amalgamation to be met by even greater resistance. Instead, they openly supported and

22. The majority of the NWC Men were graduates of NWC—including most of the NWC faculty, most of the WLS faculty, and many parish pastors.

23. Many of the NWC Men also believed that many of the criticisms against NWC were not accurate or fair. Problems that may have plagued NWC to an extent in the past were being projected onto NWC in the present, even though the college had already resolved them or had since taken many positive steps toward resolving them.

24. Some of the concerns about the vulnerability of the pre-seminary program at a school where it would be a minority program were supported and strengthened by the history of the Missouri Synod’s worker training restructuring and its negative results. See Paul Eickmann, “Changes in LC-MS Worker Training” (4 November 1991, The Amalgamation Collection).

pushed the amalgamation on the basis of other areas of proposed improvement, especially synodical stewardship. Since they also agreed with many of the amalgamation benefits which the FSC Men proposed, even if they themselves felt even stronger about current deficiencies in the pre-seminary program and the need for a change, they did not feel the need to say so publicly.

The result of this approach, however, was a deterioration of trust among brothers. Even without written reports, the NWC Men were very well aware that some within the WELS held to these anti-NWC views. But the lack of candidness caused some of the NWC Men to call the motivations of the FSC Men into question as well. The FSC Men acknowledged, but also downplayed or dismissed, many of the concerns of the NWC Men, based on the conclusions they drew from their research and their optimism concerning the amalgamation. When the NWC Men disagreed with many of these conclusions, the responses primarily focused on the validity and depth of the research and details, the soundness of the conclusions drawn, and the potential risk if one or more of these conclusions were incorrect. In the background, however, was often an element of uncertainty or suspicion as to what was really driving the push for the amalgamation.²⁵

The NWC Men viewed every aspect which the amalgamation might impact in connection with the others. They anticipated many changes to the pre-seminary program because of the

25. John Braun, the president of NWC asked, "Should we be discussing other issues instead of Synodical school structure? What are the real issues in this discussion? Is it finance? Is it the pastors which we are currently training? Should we alter the curriculum during the eight years of a pastor's training to achieve a different result, overcome some of the weaknesses and maximize some of the strengths?... Is the Synodical Committee's report and resolution aimed at Northwestern for being too stiff in its approach to training future pastors? Are we viewed as unwilling or unable to change and adapt to the concerns of our contemporary ministry? Is this one of the issues that must be addressed by NWC's committee and entire faculty?" See John Braun, "Questions I Hope Will Be Asked: Discussion on the Synodical School Question," (19 September 1991, The Amalgamation Collection). After the "Report of the FSC" came out, the NWC Men wrestled with a similar and complex question such as this: Are these people optimistic about the amalgamation because they have become thoroughly convinced by their research that the amalgamation will work and be beneficial, or does solid research not really matter to them anyways since they are already convinced that NWC needs to end and therefore they are just trying to provide enough seemingly credible research and evidence to make the amalgamation appear to be a good idea, so that enough of those who do not want to just get rid of NWC will still vote in favor of the amalgamation anyways?

amalgamation and presumed that just one of a number of potential negative impacts could seriously harm the entire program. Due in part to their distrust and the pre-seminary program's new minority status at the combined college, they were not completely confident that curricular questions would be answered to their liking and thus had considerable concerns about the quality of seminarians and ultimately pastors which the system would produce. Furthermore, even if the curriculum and program did stay the same at the outset, the reality of being the minority program would permanently make the pastor track much more susceptible to changes from people whose primary concern was not always and only the preparation of future pastors.²⁶

But even if there were never any deliberate changes in curriculum and instruction, the prospective problems which the new location and structure could present in the realms of recruitment and retention could end up having a similar undesirable effect. If recruitment and retention took a considerable hit (which they considered likely in view of the location, the reduction of the prep school system, and the close proximity to the teacher track), the synod would either face a significant reduction in its number of pastors or be compelled to reduce the length and/or level of pastoral training in order to get and retain more pastoral candidates. Either way, the entire synod could be critically harmed—and all because the synod had failed to value and protect the successful pre-seminary program it once had.²⁷

The FSC Men were also looking at the big picture, but they seemed to compartmentalize the concerns. Since they sincerely expected that the curriculum questions would eventually be

26. Questions about and challenges to the doctrines of the roles of men and women and church and ministry were also floating around and fueled a fear that the push for the amalgamation would soon or someday turn into a push to make the pastor track more practical and the college more like a Bible college geared toward training generic church workers.

27. The domino-effect viewpoint of the NWC Men helps to explain why some continued to fight adamantly against the amalgamation even after the decision had been made. Although the decision to merge the two schools was clearly not doctrinal, *per se*, some really did think that the amalgamation would eventually drastically alter the training or number of pre-seminary students, which would impact the quality and quantity of WELS pastors, which could eventually put the entire synod and its doctrinal purity in jeopardy.

answered satisfactorily and that recruitment and retention numbers would either remain at the status quo or improve, they did not venture to discuss the possible results if those did not happen. Even so, the “Report of the FSC” actually recommended amalgamating the two schools on a new college campus in Wisconsin (which the NWC Men heavily favored as opposed to the New Ulm location).²⁸ All in all, the FSC Men surmised that keeping the system the way it was could critically harm the entire synod financially and be a missed opportunity to adapt appropriately and take advantage of a prime opportunity for both unity and improvement.

The Anti-NWC Men also believed that failing to amalgamate the schools could critically harm the entire synod since they believed that NWC would continue to produce men who were less than suitable for the pastoral ministry but would end up becoming pastors anyways. The inability or unwillingness of the synod to admit that there was a serious problem at NWC and work toward a resolution would end up resulting in more strife and turning people away. Thus, many people from each of the three groups hoped or feared that the amalgamation might be a monumental event or major turning point in the synod’s history.

Because of the high value all three groups placed on the decision, the discussions were clearly already highly-debated and polarizing, but the mistrust made them heated and divisive. Differences of opinions and conclusions became personal. Legitimate doubts which the NWC Men had concerning the financial and recruitment projections in the “Report of the FSC” came across as doubts about the honesty and integrity of the FSC Men. Genuine confidence of the FSC Men that the amalgamation could help create more cooperation and trust between pastors and

28. See Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 52, and Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 10. After the resolution to amalgamate the colleges passed at the 1993 Synod Convention, the resolution to amalgamate the two schools on the New Ulm campus passed 199-150, and a resolution to continue studying where the prime location of the amalgamated college would be was defeated by a vote of 257 to 85. See Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Proceedings of the Fifty-second Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, (6 August 1993), 67-74.

teachers and better social skills among pre-seminary students was taken as a personal attack and criticism of NWC and its graduates and fostered greater resistance. The whole conversation became surrounded with hostility which was impossible to escape.

It is hard for anyone who was not involved to fully grasp this human element and how personal and emotional these discussions were for many. The memories of poor or painful past experiences, the false accusations, the unwarranted criticisms, the personal attacks, the degrading insinuations, the fear for the future of the synod, the loss of an alma mater, and the loss of a home were all a crucial part of the picture. For each individual, these experiences and emotions were intimately connected to the facts, details, and projections, and they all contributed to presuppositions and conclusions.

These discussions primarily took place during the two years between the 1991 and 1993 synod conventions. The initial "Report of the FSC" came out in April of 1992 in time for that year's district conventions to study it. Interestingly enough, the majority of the district conventions rejected the FSC's feasibility proposal.²⁹ At the 1993 Synod Convention, however, the convention delegates voted to move forward with the amalgamation by a vote of 195-176.³⁰ The close vote clearly demonstrates that the synod was still divided on the decision. In the year that followed, the resolution continued to be met by resistance and even many calls for reconsideration.³¹ Nonetheless, the amalgamation preparations continued and no such reconvening ever occurred.

29. "Michigan District Special Synodical School Study Committee Report," xiii.

30. The resolution resolved to have "one ministerial school with separate pastor training and teacher training colleges." It also said that NWC and DMLC would "amalgamate on one campus," whereas NPS and MLPS would "combine on one campus." See Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Proceedings of the Fifty-second Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, (6 August 1993), 67-68.

31. Many of the same concerns were presented again, and the disagreement about the financial projections became a primary issue since the actual cost of the amalgamation and the necessary campus improvements ended up

In the fall of 1995, the pre-seminary program made its official start at the newly combined Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN. The pastor track students and teacher track students were still separate in the classroom for the most part, but they lived together and participated in co-curriculars together. The initial transitions and adjustments were not always easy, especially as a wide variety of opinions about so many different aspects existed among the MLC faculty.³² After a few years, more classes began to be “cross-taught” (that is, pastor track and teacher track students together), and the pre-seminary and education programs were clearly no longer two separate schools on one campus, but rather, two distinct programs of one school. The pre-seminary program settled in and adjusted to its new location and situation and has continued its work of preparing men with the tools needed to become serious theologians at the seminary on their way to becoming WELS pastors.

As stated previously, these descriptions of the three groups, their views, interactions, and discussions are only a characterization. The nuance of the situation and much broader range and variance of individuals’ concerns, opinions, and experiences would be difficult to explain at all and certainly cannot be conveyed in such a brief section. Nevertheless, hopefully these generalizations help to put the amalgamation discussion as a whole into perspective and provide a solid framework to better understand the potential pros and cons presented in each specific area.

being much greater than the estimated cost which was presented to the 1993 Synod Convention. See An Open Letter to the Members of the WELS with handwritten footnotes, (May 1994, The Amalgamation Collection).

32. In particular, the faculty members who had come from NWC tended to want to keep the two tracks separate as much as possible—in line with the “separate pastor training and teacher training colleges” spoken of in the resolution—in order to maintain the integrity and identity of the pastor track. The faculty members from DMLC, on the other hand, tended to want to bring them together. From each perspective, the strong convictions carried over into areas which appeared quite petty to the other side.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The ability to recruit and retain enough pastoral candidates was directly related to one of the top priorities and thus concerns of many—the quantity of pre-seminary students. An impending pastoral shortage was already on the horizon in the early 1990s. If the synod’s recent trend of producing only thirty to forty new pastors per year continued, some projected the possibility of “over 300 pastoral vacancies by the end of the decade.”³³ Opinions varied as to whether such a significant change as the amalgamation and complete relocation of the pre-seminary program would reverse the troubling trend or make it worse.

Recruitment and Retention Discussions

Three main impacts of the amalgamation which could perhaps boost enrollment, or at least offset any other recruitment disadvantages of the amalgamation, were suggested. First of all, the combined college would unite both internal and external recruitment efforts toward one WELS worker training college. Because the negative perceptions and indifference toward NWC would be gone, the amalgamation would lead to “more effective recruitment from pastors and teachers currently in the field.”³⁴ Since the college would also be for teachers, recruitment to the college from teachers would likely be “less hindered by pastor-teacher divisions than in the past.”³⁵ In other words, teachers who did not promote NWC would be much more likely to recruit students to the amalgamated school, including some who would enroll in the pre-seminary program.

33. Faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, “Unanswered Questions,” 1.

34. RSVP Committee, “Response Concerning PSSC,” 3. Not all NWC faculty members necessarily agreed with this statement or any subsequent statements from this document since a note on page 1 says “the faculty by no means endorses all of these arguments; some of them are supported by only a minority and are dismissed by the rest as weak or untenable.”

35. RSVP Committee, “Response Concerning PSSC,” 3.

Pastors who currently did not recruit to the pre-seminary program for various reasons “would be more likely to view the merged college as a fresh start” and begin recruiting to it as well.³⁶

In respect to the recruitment efforts of the college itself, the “Report of the FSC” projected that “better coordination, more intensive and more frequent recruiting efforts would be realized” because the pastor recruiter and teacher recruiter would be coming out of one office and be recruiting for the ministry and no longer a particular school.³⁷ In other words, the recruiters for each track would be working with each other rather than against each other. Such teamwork would allow for more efficient and more effective recruitment.

Secondly, the amalgamated college would be a more normal school. Most obviously and importantly, the combined college would be coeducational, whereas NWC was an all-male school. Between the pastor track and teacher track, the New Ulm campus would have a fairly balanced ratio of men and women, which would certainly be an encouragement to some prospective pre-seminary students which the all-male atmosphere of NWC would have dissuaded from enrolling.³⁸ A school with a larger student body would also seem to offer more fun since curricular, co-curricular, and social opportunities for students with varying interests would potentially expand.³⁹

Finally, the friends of potential pre-seminary students who were enrolling in the teacher track would also serve as an encouragement to come to the college. Up to that time, high school friends pursuing different kinds of public ministry were split between Watertown and New Ulm. With the amalgamated college, however, they would all be heading to the same place. For an

36. RSVP Committee, “Response Concerning PSSC,” 3.

37. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 42.

38. Northwestern College Faculty. “Report of the Northwestern College Faculty to the Feasibility Study Committee,” (10 January 1992, The Amalgamation Collection), 1.

39. RSVP Committee, “Response Concerning PSSC,” 3.

uncommitted high school graduate, perhaps a couple friends going to each school was not a strong enough pull to get him to try the pre-seminary program, but a larger group of friends all going to New Ulm would be.⁴⁰ Or perhaps none of a young man's friends wanted to be a pastor, but he did have friends enrolling in the teacher track. Because of the amalgamation, he would be more likely to pursue the pastoral ministry since he would still be able to go to a college where he would already know some people and have some friends.

On the other hand, many reasons why the amalgamated college in New Ulm might negatively affect enrollment in the pre-seminary program were also enumerated. One of those factors was the loss of a historical legacy and alumni loyalty that would come with the loss of NWC. Recruiting for a pre-seminary program at a school and location with no pre-seminary history or pastor alumni could end up presenting a challenge. For the most part, however, all of the major concerns about recruitment stemmed from the school's location in New Ulm, Minnesota, rather than in Wisconsin, the heartland of the WELS.⁴¹

NWC's location in Watertown, Wisconsin, was extremely strategic for recruitment. First of all, the highest concentrations of WELS congregations and members were in fairly close proximity to Watertown. Naturally, Wisconsin was also the home of more WELS high schoolers and thus pre-seminary candidates (including prep school and ALHS students) than any other state by far. Southeastern Wisconsin was also a much more central location for the synod's overall membership because it was right in the middle of Minnesota and Michigan—the two states after Wisconsin from which the highest number of pre-seminary students came.⁴²

40. Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 1.

41. Primarily for this reason, the majority of the NWC Men favored the alternative proposal of the FSC to create a new combined college somewhere in Wisconsin as opposed to amalgamating on the New Ulm campus.

42. Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 2.

Thus, the change in location would curtail certain organic and deliberate recruitment efforts. The school's natural exposure to the synod's highest population centers would be lost. The greatly increased distance between the college and the majority of prospective students would make campus visits—a critical component in a high schooler's college decision—"fewer and more difficult to arrange."⁴³ In addition, the recruitment trips to NWC (called "Focus on Ministry" trips) also included a trip to WLS, which gave many prospective pre-seminary students a glimpse at what their years after NWC would be like if they continued preparing for the pastoral ministry. The college's recruitment efforts would no longer include that informative and perhaps influential experience.⁴⁴

Additionally, moving the program to Minnesota seemed especially dangerous in view of societal higher education trends which revealed that "88% of Wisconsin students entering college as first-time freshmen chose to enroll at campuses in the state of Wisconsin."⁴⁵ However, the "Report of the FSC" argued that this would not have as much of an effect on the pre-seminary program because the lower cost of in-state tuition—something which did not apply nearly as much to the pre-seminary program as to secular institutions—was the primary reason for such a high percentage of students attending college in state. Moreover, even if a young man considered New Ulm to be a less-than-desirable place to attend college, his desire to prepare for the pastoral ministry would be the overwhelming factor in his decision. Thus, the encouragement

43. Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 2. In addition, the students at the prep school in Watertown who had always just been on campus already would all have to be transported to New Ulm.

44. Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 2.

45. This quotation is from a 1991 report from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* cited in Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 2.

of others, the increasing mobility of the youth, and all the previously laid out recruitment advantages would still draw students and offset the possible disadvantages of the new location.⁴⁶

The NWC faculty, however, concluded that the move to Minnesota “could precipitate a considerable drop in enrollment in the pastor track.”⁴⁷ Although money and location would not influence prospective pastor track students as much as they would students set on attending a state university, they would still have negative impacts. Wisconsin residents would lose some in-state grant money. The distance would increase for most. The desire to become a pastor would outweigh this distance factor for some, but most high school graduates and even many throughout their college years were still uncommitted to the pastoral ministry.⁴⁸

Thus, the new location seemed to be somewhat stacking the deck against the majority of students.⁴⁹ During the twelve year span of the 1980-81 to 1991-92 school years, “half (50.2%) of NWC’s new students came from Wisconsin.”⁵⁰ Most of those Wisconsin residents would have to pay a little more and drive a little farther. Students from Michigan, who represented the next highest percentage of the student body during those years (14.9%) would all have to drive over three hundred more miles.⁵¹ Therefore, more uncommitted students would have more reasons not

46. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 46.

47. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 2.

48. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 2.

49. There was also a concern that the New Ulm location would hurt the quantity of pastors by discouraging men from enrolling in the Seminary Certification program or adding significant difficulties and stress to those who still decided to do it. At NWC, men in the Seminary Certification program could choose to live about halfway between Watertown and Mequon and not have to uproot their families and jobs as many times. See John Braun, “Study of Feasibility Study Committee Report: Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church Bible Class, (17 May 1992, The Amalgamation Collection), 7. He summarized, “It would be a tragedy to inspire people to sacrifice to study for the work of the Lord and then place their marriages, families and survival in jeopardy.”

50. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 2.

51. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 2.

to even give the pre-seminary program a try, and any kind of drop in pre-seminary enrollment was something the synod could not afford to risk.

Furthermore, there was a concern that Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC)—which offered a WELS college education in Milwaukee—would attract “less than fully committed students” who would have come to NWC in Watertown but would opt to stay closer to home than New Ulm.⁵² Somewhat connected to the WLC conversation was the difficulty which the New Ulm location would present in recruiting people of different ethnic backgrounds into the pre-seminary program. Admittedly, NWC had always struggled in its efforts to do so, but a college in a rural area farther away from Milwaukee, the metropolitan area where the synod had the most churches, seemed to be taking a step in the completely wrong direction.⁵³

The loss of one of the synod’s three preparatory schools was also a concern, but perhaps the strongest concern about recruitment to the pastor track of the amalgamated college was the loss of the special relationship with NPS, the preparatory high school which shared the Watertown campus with NWC. Separating the two would mean separating many of the natural ties of recruitment and connection which had historically and consistently made NPS the best feeder school for NWC and the pastoral ministry. Only twice from 1969 to 1988 did another high school send more new students to NWC in a given year.⁵⁴ From 1980-1991, almost a quarter of NWC’s new students (24.4%) were graduates of NPS.⁵⁵

While NWC did intentionally recruit NPS students, the majority of the recruitment just happened naturally. The young men of NPS got to know the college students and professors from

52. RSVP Committee, “Response Concerning PSSC,” 5.

53. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC, 2.

54. RSVP Committee, “Response Concerning PSSC,” 5.

55. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC, 2.

sharing the same campus, and they were already taking language courses to prepare them for the pre-seminary program. A NPS student had no difficulty picturing what his life would be like as a pre-seminary student. While that may have deterred some NPS graduates from enrolling at NWC, the statistics showed that overall, NPS and its relationship with NWC positively fostered and strengthened a young man's willingness to enroll at NWC. Thus, to enter into uncharted territory and depart from this historically successful and valuable symbiotic relationship at a time when pastoral vacancies were anticipated to increase seemed to be an unwise mistake in the eyes of many.⁵⁶

Moreover, the NWC faculty voiced a strong concern that the changed essence of the Watertown preparatory school would also negatively impact the number of graduates it would send to the pre-seminary program at the amalgamated college. The merged preparatory school would no longer be a single purpose school and would therefore promote and prepare for the teacher track equally. Consequently, the lack of a single focus on the pastor track—especially when coupled with the lack of all the previous interactions with pre-seminary students and professors—would result in fewer graduates enrolling in the pastor track.⁵⁷

The close link between NWC and NPS was not the only special relationship which the amalgamation would alter. The close proximity to WLS allowed WLS students and professors to return to NWC regularly for events and activities. Their presence alone was a natural and frequent encouragement for the NWC men to continue carrying on with their studies there and then to continue them further at WLS. With the move to New Ulm, this kind of close connection would be impossible and an impactful connection between the two would need to be

56. RSVP Committee, "Response Concerning PSSC," 4.

57. Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 2,3.

manufactured. Thus, the relocation farther away from WLS and the resulting decrease of unofficial face-to-face seminary encouragement could be a factor in more students dropping out of the pre-seminary program and fewer pre-seminary graduates ever enrolling at the seminary.⁵⁸

However, even more of a concern was “crossover.” “Crossover” referred to students switching from pastor track to teacher track or vice versa. One of the reasons people predicted pastor track students could potentially be lost in this way was the fact that the college would no longer have preparation for pastoral ministry as its only purpose. Therefore, neither the entire student body nor everything about the school would serve to prepare and encourage men for pastoral ministry. Just like with the loss of the close connection with WLS and its students, this shift would weaken some of the inherent power of the system to persuade pre-seminary students to persist.⁵⁹

While many agreed that a certain amount of “crossover” could actually be quite healthy and result in fewer men being lost to the gospel ministry overall, some still asserted that “crossover” could put the pastor track in danger.⁶⁰ They feared that the high intensity of work, the language requirements, and the sometimes unapparent practicality of courses in the pastor track would hurt the morale of pre-seminary students, especially as they compared their program to the much more practical education program at MLC which also did not require learning any languages. Coupled with fact that training to become a pastor was a four-year-longer commitment, more men would likely be prompted to switch to the teacher track.⁶¹

58. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 3.

59. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 3.

60. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 39.

61. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 3. The staff ministry program was also beginning to materialize at this time and would present another more practical option without the language requirements.

Furthermore, dropping out of the pre-seminary program no longer needed to be such a big decision. At NWC, leaving the pastor track meant leaving the school, which also meant leaving friends and the entire college experience with which one was familiar. With the amalgamation, this would no longer have to be a factor. Certainly not everyone who decided he did not want to keep studying for the pastoral ministry would want to pursue the teaching ministry. But even when the two tracks were many miles apart, there was already a small but steady flow of students from the pastor track at NWC to the teacher track at DMLC. At the combined college, changing tracks would only require a trip to the registrar's office, and much of a young man's immediate life could stay very much the same.⁶²

On the other hand, the "Report of the FSC" argued that highly rigorous and specialized tracks at secular colleges and universities were often some of the strongest programs and did not struggle to retain students.⁶³ However, how much similarity the pastor track would have with specialized secular tracks in its ability to retain was questioned since the pastor track could not offer the future prospect of a big paycheck or prestige as a reason to stay.⁶⁴ And as mentioned previously, if the amalgamation did significantly hurt the pastor track's ability to retain its students, the repercussions would be felt throughout the synod.

Recruitment and Retention Impacts

Perhaps the opening paragraph of this section sounded rather familiar—small graduating classes from the seminary, a growing number of vacancies, and thus an increasing need to recruit men for the pastoral ministry. In those respects, the WELS is in a very similar place as it was twenty-

62. Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 3.

63. Feasibility Study Committee, "Report of the FSC," 39.

64. John Braun, "Study of Feasibility Study Committee Report," 4,5.

five years ago. By the Lord's blessing and through the faithful work of many, the WELS pre-seminary program has not faced a serious decline in enrollment.⁶⁵ Even so, Jesus's words to his disciples still ring true today: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Luke 10:2).

Societal and synodical factors have influenced recruitment both positively and negatively. On a societal level, negative factors include the continued diminishing respect for the pastoral ministry, periods of economic downturn, increasing expectations of what is needed to have an acceptable standard of living, and the constantly rising costs of higher education. Positive factors include the growing percentage of young men pursuing higher education, an increasing percentage of people going out of state for college, and transportation improvements and a cultural mindset which have made traveling longer distances quicker and more common.

At the synodical level, the higher and lower demands for pastors can affect recruitment efforts and thus enrollments.⁶⁶ In addition, a decrease in synodical subsidy for MLC caused an even greater increase in MLC tuition.⁶⁷ But the decline in WELS membership—including the constantly decreasing pool of high school students—is by far the biggest factor. The raw enrollment numbers of the pre-seminary program, after experiencing an immediate revival, have

65. See Appendix 1, beginning on page 66 for all the recruitment and retention statistics.

66. Since high school students are generally not aware of the vacancy rate or whether all of the seminary graduates are getting assigned, I believe this to primarily be a result of how much pastors in the field are actively recruiting. Therefore, we should consciously continue to strongly recruit for the pastoral ministry with an eye toward the future regardless of the current synodical circumstances.

67. Around 2000, MLC's synodical subsidy dropped from \$6 million a year to about \$700,000. See Robb Murray, "Martin Luther College president heeded call," (*The Free Press*, Mankato, MN, 9 October 2007), 28 January 2019. Some would argue that this was a result of the amalgamation—either because the amalgamation was part of a shift away from focusing on funding ministerial education or because the amalgamation's higher-than-expected costs drained the synod's financial resources and thus caused this huge decrease in subsidy. One small financial change which happened as a direct result of the amalgamation was the financial counsel which pre-seminary students received. NWC strongly discouraged taking student loans, especially since students would need to begin paying back student loans once they began at the seminary. From the very beginning of MLC, however, as had been the case at DMLC, students were encouraged to use student loans to cover the costs of tuition and room and board. The amount of debt which pre-seminary students incur during their time at MLC is still problematic today. In 2018, the average MLC graduate had \$27,926 in debt. See Dan Schmidt, Luke Werre, Ed Lindemann, Bruce McKenney, and Dave Nottling, "Memorial: Subject: Publicity of Student Debt," forthcoming.

been at consistently low levels since the amalgamation. However, in comparison to the pool of potential pre-seminary candidates—based on the number of youth confirmations in the WELS four years prior—pre-seminary recruitment has had its statistical ups and downs since the amalgamation but is currently at a historic best.⁶⁸

Although many more societal and synodical influences could undoubtedly be enumerated, this paper—and statistics in general—can only look at the broad picture. Each individual who does or does not enroll in the pre-seminary program is impacted by any number of other personal factors and circumstances which would be impossible to ascertain or list.

Overall, the positive recruitment impacts of the amalgamation which were proposed are very difficult to assess since they were broad in nature and not linked to specific geographic areas or schools. Nevertheless, every indication seems to be that all three major impacts have occurred. With respect to uniting recruitment efforts throughout the synod, pastors and teachers in the field are and have been willing to promote MLC, including the pastor track specifically. There no longer seems to be an outspoken group of individuals who dislike the pre-seminary program, and those who maintain their alumni loyalty to NWC are naturally also supporters of the pre-seminary program at MLC since it carries on the same mission and purpose. Though the discussion of this impact is brief—due especially to the fact that it is impossible to quantify—its importance is immense and should not be overlooked, especially since the specific encouragement of one’s own pastor or teacher is often one of the greatest influences which lead a young man to pursue the pastoral ministry.⁶⁹

68. See Figure 3 in Appendix 1 on page 67.

69. Gary Baumler, “Providing the Next Generation of Pastors in the WELS: An Essay on the Role of Pastors in Recruiting More Pastors,” (WLS Essay File, 1987). For this reason, I am also convinced that pastors serving in the parish and at WELS high schools have an even more influential role in recruitment than those at the college. A young man likely will not be inclined to strongly consider what an MLC admissions counselor says unless he has previously been encouraged to consider the pastoral ministry by someone else as well.

On the other hand, the amalgamation does not seem to have had a significant effect on the level of recruitment efforts from the college itself. For several years after the amalgamation, one pastor recruited primarily for the pastor track and one teacher recruited primarily for the teacher track, while both also represented MLC as a whole. The united efforts effectively erased any appearance of competition, but from the perspective of the pre-seminary recruiter, not very much had changed. His primary purpose was still to pastor young men as they were considering the pastoral ministry and deciding on a career path.⁷⁰

Many of the recruitment efforts from NWC have expanded over the years at MLC, but I personally am convinced that the pre-seminary recruitment program's efforts would have grown regardless of location or consolidation with the teacher track. Thus, I do not necessarily consider much of that growth to be a result of the amalgamation. The "Focus on Ministry" trips which began at NWC have continued at MLC and are still important for introducing prospective students to the college and encouraging them for the public ministry. However, these trips are more difficult to coordinate since most of the students must come from farther distances than before. In addition, "Focus on Ministry" trips are not completely focused on pre-seminary recruitment and the pastoral ministry—a result of the amalgamation and the nature of MLC.

Similarly, the shift in the overall approach to recruitment by the admissions staff can also be indirectly attributed to the amalgamation. While the individual approach of each admissions counselor may vary, the present-day recruitment efforts from MLC consist more of encouragement toward the public ministry in general than specific counselors or endeavors focusing on specific candidates for a specific track. An MLC student's ability to switch tracks or

70. Thus, the terms "recruiter," and even "admissions counselor," while handy shorthand and reflections of how these positions somewhat parallel positions in the secular realm, do not accurately reflect what these men do. These men are called not just to get high school students enrolled but rather to pastor them, including reminding them of the doctrine of vocation, helping them think through how best to use their gifts, and maybe even encouraging them not to go to MLC, but rather, to pursue a different God-pleasing career.

transfer to another college rather easily are emphasized more strongly than before as an encouragement for high schoolers to give MLC a try as they continue deliberating what career path to take. This more generic recruitment for the public ministry would never have become the approach at a single purpose school with only the one pre-seminary program.⁷¹

In my estimation, the more normal college experience which MLC offers has had a similar effect to that of pastors and teachers in the field promoting the pre-seminary program. By that, I mean that the impact has likely been very favorable but is impossible to really prove or explore. Societal trends strongly suggest that NWC's all-male student body likely would have become more detrimental to recruitment than it had been in the past. Thus, the coeducational aspect of the college has certainly eased recruitment and increased enrollment for the pre-seminary program. The wider range of experiences and opportunities which a bigger school with a larger student body presents has also had a positive impact on recruitment. On the one hand, MLC is still not able to compete with all the different programs and activities other colleges and universities can offer. But on the other hand, for most who are considering the pastoral ministry, MLC provides an adequate number and level of opportunities for participation and enjoyment.⁷²

71. While there is nothing wrong with the current approach and I do not at all mean to criticize the fine work that the MLC admissions staff does, I do wonder whether or not the current approach is an improvement from a pre-seminary perspective. With less direct encouragements for the pastoral ministry and more for just ministry in general, many ALHS students who are encouraged to attend MLC are likely inclined to consider the teaching ministry since they are more familiar with it, they understand better what it entails, and it does not require an additional four years of school and the learning of multiple languages. Furthermore, some ALHS do not get a visit from a pastor recruiter every year. These may be some of the reasons why the number and percentage of ALHS graduates enrolling in the pastor track has been consistently lower since the shift away from a specific pastor recruiter was made. The increased percentage of youth confirmands enrolling in the pre-seminary program seems to be most closely linked to the increase percentage of youth confirmands attending one of the preparatory schools. It seems to me, and the statistics seem to demonstrate, that the most effective recruitment for the pastor track would come from a pastor. Moreover, an experienced pastor—who thus knows what it is like to be a pastor and also has the special gift of relating well with young men—would seem to be the prime candidate to encourage young men to think about preparing to become pastors and enroll in the pre-seminary program at MLC. See Appendix 1, pages 74-89, for statistics on the prep schools and the ALHS.

72. Maintaining and adding on-campus activities would have become even more difficult at NWC as finances became tighter and especially if enrollments became lower. In turn, fewer activities at a lower level

The proposition that more young men would try the pre-seminary program since their friends—male and female—who were training for the teaching ministry would be at the same school makes logical sense but is once again difficult to substantiate. It certainly can be a comforting component, especially when one is already going against the grain in considering the pastor track at MLC, but that does not mean that it would necessarily be a deciding factor for or against enrolling.⁷³ Thus, in my assessment, this social influence has likely had a positive but relatively minor impact on recruitment to the pastor track.

Regarding the potential negative impacts discussed, the New Ulm location remains the biggest factor. The location fosters very little organic exposure. Consequently, recruitment efforts such as the “Focus on Ministry” trips and individual campus visits have become even more important, and the present-day admissions staff accordingly makes them a priority. However, these trips can no longer include a trip to WLS. This lost connection is probably rather insignificant in comparison to most other factors, but it should not be completely overlooked.⁷⁴

The recruitment difficulty of distance, however, does not end with being able to get prospective students on campus. As predicted, the greater distance does also seem to be

probably could have been detrimental to recruitment. See the next section and also Appendix 4 on page 94 for more on co-curricular opportunities at NWC and MLC.

⁷³ Julian Wyllie, “The 7 Things Students Think About When Choosing a College,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 13 February 2018, 30 January 2019, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-7-Things-Students-Think/242544>. The seven major categories listed are affordability, availability of a desired program, reputation/academic quality, career outcomes/job opportunities, value of education for cost, feeling of fit, and proximity to home. Having friends who are enrolling could play a role in the “feeling of fit” category.

⁷⁴ A young man who enrolls in the pastor track at MLC is at least expressing an open mind to enrolling at WLS four years later. Thus, any recruitment efforts for the pastor track at MLC are essentially recruitment efforts for WLS and ultimately the pastoral ministry. Recent intensified recruitment efforts from WLS are helping to fill some of the void created by the relocation of the pre-seminary program, and an increase in the number of the young men from the ALHS visiting WLS could help recruitment at the collegiate level as well. In my opinion, since the uniqueness of the school and specificity of classes at WLS make it stick out more than the pastor track at MLC, a visit to WLS can still be an influential and impactful trip. Especially with the New Ulm location being farther away from the majority of congregations and high schoolers, perhaps it is imperative for pastors, congregations, and schools to personally shoulder the responsibility for pastor track recruitment through their own encouragements and efforts, while still arranging trips to take these students to WLS and MLC as well.

somewhat of an issue in getting young men to actually enroll. MLC's location can be a critical disadvantage in recruiting students from ALHS in Wisconsin and throughout the synod, as well as from Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS). While the location of Watertown, WI, was probably not much more favorable—if at all—to people in the outlying districts, perhaps a desire to not go too far away for college has contributed to the decline in the percentage of male graduates from MLS and ALHS in Wisconsin enrolling in the pastor track.⁷⁵

The concern that WLC would fill the recruitment void created by the move away from Wisconsin and severely hurt the pastor track has not materialized. Young men who want to become WELS pastors naturally enroll at MLC and not WLC.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, since most high school graduates are uncommitted to any career choice, MLC probably does lose some potential pre-seminary students who desire a WELS college education but would rather stay closer to home and are perhaps also attracted by the greater number of activities, better amenities, and urban setting which WLC has to offer.

For that reason, MLC's ability to recruit minority students into the pre-seminary program has likely been impacted by WLC as well, but NWC probably still would have faced a similar dilemma. The move from Watertown to New Ulm has undoubtedly not helped in recruiting minorities from Milwaukee, which remains a struggle to this day, but the number of minorities

75. See Appendix 1, pages 74-89. In addition to the previously listed outside factors, other factors specific to each WI ALHS have also had an impact. Therefore, how much impact the increased distance has had is difficult to determine. That the proximity of an ALHS to the pre-seminary program, at least in the Midwest, is not the strongest factor for enrollment can be argued by a comparison of the pre-seminary enrollments of graduates from some of the individual WI ALHS and those of the ALHS in MN since the amalgamation. The loss of grant money for Wisconsin residents is a factor, but it seems to be a rather minor one in comparison to the location and the long-term financial implications of the relatively low prospective salary of a pastor. The high school students who are being recruited are not the only ones who have expectations and aspirations about their future income. Often, this drive for a high-paying job, which conversely is a discouragement for pursuing the pastoral ministry, comes from the parents. While this is nothing new, it underscores the importance of not only recruiting the young men for ministry, but fostering a ministry mindset among parents as well.

76. The same cannot necessarily be said about men and women preparing for the teaching ministry.

who have received WELS training for the pastoral ministry has actually increased since 1995.⁷⁷ This increase in minority pastoral candidates is not at all linked to the amalgamation, but this blessing from God has helped to somewhat alleviate this concern.

Although the loss of a prep school does not seem to have affected pastor track enrollment, the loss of the special relationship between NPS and the pre-seminary program at NWC has had an immediate and continuous adverse impact.⁷⁸ Luther Preparatory School (LPS), the prep school formed by the merger of MLPS and NPS, became a public ministry preparatory high school instead of primarily a pastoral preparatory high school as NPS was. At the same time, LPS lost the proximity and close connection with the college which NPS enjoyed, and both changes have certainly been substantial causes of the negative trends which the statistics show.

In the twenty-four years since the amalgamation, 45% or more of LPS male graduates have enrolled in the pastor track the following year only three times. In the twenty-four years prior, NPS failed to reach that mark only twice.⁷⁹ Over those years, an average of 58% of male NPS graduates enrolled at NWC. Since the amalgamation, an average of only 37% of male LPS graduates have enrolled in the pastor track at MLC in a given year. That percentage corresponds closely to the combined average (38%) of male graduates from Martin Luther Academy (MLA), Northwestern Lutheran Academy (NLA), and Martin Luther Preparatory School (MLPS) who enrolled at NWC over that twenty-four year span prior to amalgamation. This statistic should not be surprising since LPS more closely resembles those three schools than it does NPS in regard to its essence and location in relation to the pre-seminary program.

77. The Lord has opened up many other mission opportunities throughout this country and the world which have led to the WELS being able to train many men of different cultures and ethnicities as pastors. For some, this training has occurred at MLC and WLS. Many, however, have been trained through the Pastoral Studies Institute.

78. LPS actually had more male graduates in its first ten years than MLPS and NPS combined had had in their last ten years.

79. And one of those two years was 1994, after the decision to amalgamate had already been made.

Overall, LPS undoubtedly still remains the best feeder school for the pastor track and maintains a close relationship with the college. Over the past twenty-four years, 35% of new pre-seminary students and 38% of pre-seminary graduates have been graduates of LPS. Not even taking into account the high quality of preparation students at LPS receive, these statistics demonstrate and underscore the continued importance of LPS for producing new generations of pastors.⁸⁰

After LPS, MLS provides the second most pastoral candidates to MLC. Unfortunately, even though the amalgamation did not directly impact MLS, the statistics show that in the twenty-four years since the amalgamation, only 25% of male MLS graduates have enrolled in the pastor track at MLC, down from 33% in the twenty-four years prior. Thus, even with the slightly higher number of male graduates since amalgamation in comparison to that same span before (751 to 734), the number of MLS graduates starting the pre-seminary program has been significantly smaller (241 to 184).⁸¹ As mentioned previously, the farther distance from home for students may be the most obvious culprit, but the change in the preparatory school structure may also have had a significant impact.⁸²

80. LPS has struggled with recruitment at times, and the pre-seminary program has suffered accordingly. The growth and expansion of ALHS (which in itself is a very good thing), combined with many parents not wanting to send their sons away to high school, can make recruitment to the prep schools difficult.

81. See Table 6 in Appendix 1 on pages 85-86.

82. LPS in many ways became the premier public ministry preparatory high school in the WELS. LPS has a more prime location than MLS since it is much closer to many more WELS congregations than MLS is. From a personal perspective, it has more ties for pastors who all attended school on that campus. In addition, called workers in outlying districts who send their children to one of the prep schools are more likely to have relatives in Wisconsin since again, more of the synod's congregations and members are in Wisconsin. Furthermore, LPS has Lakeside Lutheran High School and other ALHS very close and thus students who come to LPS from a shorter distance are more likely to attend because they are already thinking about the public ministry. Since MLS does not have an ALHS within a hundred miles and has many more commuting students than LPS, some parents may be using MLS more like an ALHS and send their sons even though they are not really considering the public ministry. Thus, there may not be as much student commitment and peer encouragement for the pastor track. Moreover, the cloud of possible closure which loomed over MLS had an adverse effect on recruitment and perhaps steered some toward sending their sons to LPS or another school. Despite these factors, the faculty and staff at MLS are still very committed to encouraging young men toward the pastoral ministry and MLC, and that dedication continues to show.

Nevertheless, MLS has still provided an average of 15% of the new pre-seminary students each year. That means that since the amalgamation, the two prep schools—LPS and MLS—have provided almost exactly half of the new pre-seminary students. Furthermore, since the amalgamation, the two schools together have sent 32% of their male graduates on to the pre-seminary program, whereas the ALHS have only sent 3.2% of theirs. Again, these statistics stress the importance of the preparatory high schools because of the vital role they play in maintaining a healthy quantity of future WELS pastors.

The overall retention rate of pastor track students at MLC has actually been slightly better than it was at NWC. During the twenty years before the amalgamation, only 69% of those who enrolled at NWC graduated from there. Conversely, 73% of students who have enrolled in the pastor track at MLC have completed the pre-seminary program.⁸³ The statistics also show some interesting trends in regard to the different high schools. The persistence rate for ALHS graduates, MLS graduates, and those students who did not attend an ALHS or prep school have stayed relatively the same in the twenty years before and after the amalgamation.

The retention rate for graduates of the Watertown prep school, however, has greatly increased (from 73% to 81%). The most likely cause of such a significant increase is that many young men who graduated from NPS and were not sure what career they wanted to pursue were more inclined to go back to the Watertown campus the next year and give NWC a try. With the change in campus and move to New Ulm now required, fewer uncommitted LPS graduates who would eventually leave the pastor track are even trying it in the first place.

83. For all the following retention statistics, see Appendix 1. While someone might assert that the increase in retention could be attributed to an easier program or system, that does not seem to be the case, as will be demonstrated in the next section. All retention rates are calculated by comparing graduation numbers to enrollment numbers four years prior.

However, these twenty-year statistics do not tell the whole story. The overall retention rate rose significantly soon after the amalgamation, which has balanced out the recent decline in retention in the overall statistics. Since 2010, only 66% of new pastor track students have completed the program. Thus, the causes of this current challenge and any potential solutions deserve a place in the ongoing conversations about the pastor track.⁸⁴

The impact of the amalgamation on the “crossover” of men from the pastor track to the teacher track and vice versa has been fascinating.⁸⁵ A small, steady stream of students switching from the pastor track to the teacher track continues. But fortunately, fewer men who leave the pastor track leave MLC, and a higher percentage of men have been retained for the gospel ministry. From 1970 to 1994, seventy men left the pastor track and enrolled in the teacher track at DMLC (13% of those who left NWC). Of those seventy men, forty-five of them graduated from DMLC. Since the amalgamation, another seventy men have “crossed over” to another MLC program (20% of those who have left the pastor track). Of those students, thirty-one completed the program, and seven are still in it.

The biggest change has come in the number of men who have switched from the teacher track to the pastor track. From 1970 to 1994, only sixteen men transferred from DMLC to NWC, and only five of those men graduated from NWC. But since the amalgamation, thirty-three men have switched from the teacher track to the pastor track. Fifteen of them completed the pre-seminary program, and seven of them are still in it. Therefore, from a statistical standpoint, the “crossover” has had an overall positive effect on the pastor track.

84. See Figure 5 on page 71. The recent decline in retention can perhaps, in part, be attributed to a stronger push in recent years—both from MLC and from local pastors—for students to give the pre-seminary program a try. If that is the case, it is likely that more students whose gifts and interests are not the most suited to the pastoral ministry have found themselves in the pastor track. Factors at MLC—including, but not limited to location, retention efforts, curriculum, and campus life—should be considered as well, and an analysis of reasons why students leave the pastor track could point to areas which could be improved, or at least serve to explain the trend.

85. “Crossover” statistics can be found in Appendix 2, beginning on page 90.

A number of reasons exist why the feared migration out of the pastor track has not happened. For one, friendships and peer encouragements to persist in the pastor track are common and powerful. Additionally, despite the similarities, the pastoral and teaching ministries are quite different, and the gifts and interests which lead many of the men to enroll in the pastor track keep them focused on that same goal despite other options around them. Another factor is the academic advisor situation. At the amalgamation, some wanted students to be assigned to faculty advisors regardless of their track to promote a sense of unity. The pastor track professors, however, fought strongly to keep the pre-seminary students as their advisees. They considered the advisor position—and still do—to be more than just helping a student to select the right courses to fulfill his degree requirement. The advisor seeks to build a personal relationship with that student and personally encourage him for the pastoral ministry.

Along with constant verbal encouragement from classmates and professors in and out the classroom, other intentional and concerted efforts at the college and in connection with the seminary have been positive factors toward retention. SPaM gatherings, SPaMball, a trip to WLS for Mission and Ministry, and a trip to WLS for Eisodos all help to connect pastor track students with others who are preparing for the pastoral ministry, foster that esprit de corps, and give mutual encouragement.⁸⁶ These efforts have also helped to slightly raise the percentage of men who go on to WLS from the pre-seminary program and have retained the strong and close bond between the two schools, despite the much greater physical distance between the two.⁸⁷

86. SPaM stands for “Studies in Pastoral Ministry.” SPaM gatherings occur on Sunday evenings once every quarter. The pastor track professors and students of every class gather together for some entertainment provided by one of the classes and a professor, some food, and a devotion. SPaMball is an annual softball tournament held in New Ulm which includes many teams of pastor track students from MLC and WLS and is full of fellowship and encouragement opportunities. Mission and Ministry is an annual conference at WLS which juniors in the pre-seminary program attend as well. Eisodos, which means “entrance,” is the name for the trip which pre-seminary seniors take to WLS to further introduce them to life at the seminary and prepare them to attend the following year.

87. For the Seminary Recruitment Statistics, see Appendix 6, beginning on page 101.

INTELLECTUAL PREPARATION

Along with the quantity of pastors, the other major area of concern about the amalgamation was the quality of training which pre-seminary students would receive. At NWC, the welfare of the pastor track guided every decision. Every class, every co-curricular activity, and every aspect of campus life were able to be geared toward preparing young men for the seminary, and ultimately, for the pastoral ministry. The same would not be true at an amalgamated college. Therefore, special ongoing efforts would be necessary to ensure that the quality of pre-seminary training and preparation would not be diminished.

But the larger faculty and student body would also offer opportunities for growth and expansion both in and out of the classroom. Accordingly, the discussions regarding the educational experiences and preparation of pastor track students included curriculum and classroom matters, as well as conversations about co-curricular activities and opportunities—all of which are highly important and influential in a man’s training for the pastoral ministry.⁸⁸

Intellectual Preparation Discussions

Some believed that the amalgamation would provide pastor track students with “the richest possible education which our Synod can offer.”⁸⁹ For one, the amalgamation would bring many different people with many different views together, and the interaction of these differing views would stimulate growth. This sharing of different perspectives and subsequent growth among the faculty itself—especially among pastor and teacher faculty members in the same department—would be a benefit to all their students.

88. Everything in this section does not primarily focus on intellectual preparation, but the term helps to distinguish between the next section which focuses on interpersonal preparation. The discussions and impacts include many different opportunities and experiences which all serve to shape one’s mind and perspective.

89. DMLC Synodical School Structure Study Committee, “Dr. Martin Luther College Theses on Amalgamation,” (8 February 1992, The Amalgamation Collection), 4.

In the same way, pastor track and teacher track students would each “bring some diversity of experience and insight to classroom learning.”⁹⁰ Not only would this expand pre-seminary students’ outlook on life, ministry, and their course material, but the ability to interact with a wider variety of people and personalities would make students’ educational experience more stimulating and challenging. These proposed benefits took for granted that some classes at the combined college would be cross-taught. The FSC listed four areas where it found the most overlap between the courses that were currently being taught at DMLC and NWC and could be combined and cross-taught with the fewest number of adjustments: history, English, math, and religion.⁹¹

The amalgamation would also enable increased scheduling flexibility. With more professors and a larger student body, the combined college would be able to offer pre-seminary students a broader range of elective offerings than NWC had. The larger faculty and student body would also require core courses to be offered more often, which would allow students to shape their own class schedules to fit better with work schedules and personal preferences. This increased flexibility would also benefit transfer students who needed to take specific courses which had not been offered as often in the past. In addition, students would appreciate the increased flexibility to choose between two or more professors for some of their courses.⁹²

In regard to a richer academic experience, many believed that the amalgamated college would be better equipped to offer stronger course offerings than NWC had in certain areas.⁹³

90. DMLC Synodical School Structure Study Committee, “Theses on Amalgamation,” 5.

91. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 39.

92. DMLC Synodical School Structure Study Committee, “Theses on Amalgamation,” 5.

93. DMLC Synodical School Structure Study Committee, “Theses on Amalgamation,” 5. The main reason for this was that the combined college faculty would have more educators with a higher level of expertise in their specific area and courses than either of the two schools previously had.

Math, computers, and science were specifically mentioned. Music and choir (which would also benefit from the presence of female voices) were mentioned as well.⁹⁴ Due to the consolidation of resources and money, the library and technology would also be better together.⁹⁵ In addition, the pastor track would be able to take advantage of the useful summer school program which DMLC already had in place.⁹⁶ Just as with recruitment, many who opposed the amalgamation acknowledged many of these potential benefits of bringing the two schools together. Looking at the entire picture, however, the NWC faculty still concluded that “most of the advantages would be minor improvements at best” and that these potential improvements did not outweigh the likely disadvantages and potential risks of the amalgamation.⁹⁷

Among the disadvantages they anticipated was the loss of some of the pastoral perspective and modeling. Since students would have more classes taught in cross-taught settings and by teacher-track professors, some level of pastoral development would be lost. Even in classes where the content was generally the same, professors’ goals at DMLC and NWC were somewhat different since they were seeking not only to teach history or English per se, but also to prepare their students for the ultimate goal of the teaching or pastoral ministry. But with both pastor and teacher candidates together, a professor would no longer be able to teach that way.⁹⁸

A new cross-teaching arrangement would also make it more difficult for some pastor track faculty members to get to know the pastor track students well. Some professors would not teach as many pre-seminary students, and they would also have many teacher track students to

94. DMLC Synodical School Structure Study Committee, “Theses on Amalgamation,” 6.

95. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 4.

96. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 4.

97. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 4.

98. “Michigan District Special Synodical School Study Committee Report,” 7.

get to know. In addition, the amount of interaction outside the classroom would likely decrease since fewer pastor professors would be involved in co-curricular activities. Not only would professors be less equipped to evaluate potential pastoral candidates, but the amount and quality of relationships between students and professors—which are invaluable—would also diminish.⁹⁹

Accreditation also remained an important question. Both colleges were already accredited, but a merger would necessitate a new evaluation. The North Central Association (NCA) accreditation agency had accredited NWC “in spite of a curriculum ... and a staffing policy ... markedly out of step with prevailing models of education.”¹⁰⁰ However, the combined college would no longer have that same single purpose of preparing men for WLS, and the NCA might force changes upon the pastor track in order for the school to stay accredited. The NWC faculty contended,

Might not NCA assessors reasonably expect that the curriculum and faculty of the pastor track should conform more fully to standard liberal arts or pre-professional educational models? Then the synod might face a difficult dilemma: either to conform its pastoral training program even more closely to the teacher track in order to save accreditation and government financial aid for future pastors (\$148,034 in 1990-91); or risk the loss of accreditation and the concomitant government aid for pastor-track students (and possibly for teacher-track students as well) in order to preserve a unique pre-seminary program.¹⁰¹

Moreover, the NWC faculty expressed its concern that the sharing of a campus with the teacher track would provide pressure toward curriculum changes in a variety of ways, especially since decisions about the curriculum and the structure of school leadership and decision-making would not be made until after the decision to amalgamate had already passed:

The pastor track will appear at a disadvantage in comparison with the teacher track, which has no foreign language requirements and more quickly involves the students in

99. Northwestern College Faculty, “Integrity and Identity of the Pastor Training College,” (18 December 1993, The Amalgamation Collection) 3.

100. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 7,8.

101. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 8.

practical and professional courses.... There will also be increased dissatisfaction on the part of those who remain.... There will be pressure to conform the pastor track to the teacher track, not because the changes will better equip young men for the seminary, but because they will alleviate the problems of morale and attrition.... Even if the organization of the new institution should be entrusted to men who share our ideals and seek to preserve the pre-seminary education we now offer, the movement of NWC to the DMLC campus could in itself create a situation that would undermine the best of intentions. If as a result the proposed move blurs or compromises the mission of the synod's college-level pastor training program, any hoped-for educational advantages would ultimately cost the church too much.¹⁰²

Outside of the classroom, “the sharing of dreams and experiences” among the bigger and dual-track student body was the major anticipated advantage, but more and better co-curricular opportunities were also predicted.¹⁰³ Some argued, however, that “bigger does not mean better in all respects.”¹⁰⁴ NWC's small student body encouraged extensive participation, and with the number of co-curricular activities available at NWC already quite high in comparison to the student body's small size, the larger student body would likely result in less participation by pastor track students. Such an effect would be unfavorable for a program seeking to prepare well-rounded men with a view toward the pastoral ministry.¹⁰⁵

Another concern was the loss of off-campus cultural and academic experiences in cultural cities like Milwaukee and Madison. New Ulm did not have any such urban centers in as close proximity, which would make certain liberal arts experiences for students and professors much more difficult.¹⁰⁶ Somewhat tangentially linked to the off-campus preparation was a student's

102. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 5-6. This also explains why the NWC faculty wrote so much about what the organizational structure of the combined college should be in order to safeguard the identity and integrity of the pastor track.

103. DMLC Synodical School Structure Study Committee, “Theses on Amalgamation,” 6.

104. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 5.

105. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 5.

106. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 5.

need to pay for his education. Many were concerned that New Ulm would not provide enough job opportunities for the increased student body, but others argued that the city of New Ulm was spearheading the potential problem. Besides, the lack of job opportunities had never been an issue in the past, even when DMLC had a larger student body than the combined college was anticipated to have.¹⁰⁷

Intellectual Preparation Impacts

Overall, people within the WELS have been very pleased with the pre-seminary program at MLC and the quality of students it has prepared. In fact, the word “well-rounded” came up in multiple interviews as a general description of the men who have graduated from the pre-seminary program. In other words, the integrity of the pastor track has not been lost. The pre-seminary program at MLC still provides men with the tools needed for their more intense seminary training, and the core curriculum—including the languages—is still very similar to what it was at NWC.¹⁰⁸

Although there was a time of transition when various situations and discussions remained difficult and tense, the structure and relationships eventually seemed to settle in. The MLC leadership and faculty are perhaps the major human reason why the pastor track remains in the position it is today. The current school leadership has continued to strongly support and look out for the pastor track. Both pastor and teacher professors have built on the foundations left by previous generations and have faithfully and diligently labored to prepare young men for the

107. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 46.

108. See Appendix 3, beginning on page 92, which compares the present-day curriculum with the 1996-97 curriculum at MLC, which still remained the same as it had been in the final years of NWC.

seminary as best as they are able. On the whole, the intellectual preparation pastor track students receive at MLC in and out of the classroom remains a rigorous and yet positive experience.¹⁰⁹

In my estimation, four major external factors and one major internal factor—apart from the amalgamation—have had a greater impact on the intellectual preparation of pre-seminary students than the amalgamation itself. The first would be the rapid explosion of technological advances which have changed the education world. Besides technology, educational and learning theories have altered the way in which educators teach around the country and world, including at MLC. The changes—both positive and negative—in the emphases and expectations of education at the elementary and high school levels have naturally also influenced the education at the collegiate level as well. Additionally, the increasing number of pre-seminary students who work throughout the school year and the increasing number of hours they work have contributed to the amount of time available outside of class for studying and co-curriculars. The major internal factor is the ever-changing faculty. While a number of current professors taught at NWC, the majority of professors which pre-seminary students have for class—whether pastors or teachers—are new variables in the equation.

In connection with the anticipated broader and richer academic experience, many of the individual aspects have been realized. During interviews, multiple pastor-trained professors who have taught at MLC mentioned that the different views and perspectives discussed with teacher-trained colleagues have benefited them as educators in their field. In addition, the stronger and more standard review of courses which some teacher professors have been highly influential in implementing has, in turn, helped pastor professors to improve their courses as well.

109. Some pastor interviewees actually expressed their belief that the level and scope of the academic training pre-seminary students receive has improved in comparison to what they had received as a student. Any specific areas of decline which were mentioned—except those mentioned later in this section—did not seem to be linked to the amalgamation, but rather a decline in the educational level and work ethic of incoming students.

The broader range of views shared on the student level is also a benefit. While each pastor track student has his own personal thoughts, opinions, and experiences, classroom time with future teachers—including women—does present a wider range than the same time with only pre-seminary men would. Additionally, most students probably appreciate hearing different views and different people talking in each class, as the average number of different students with which a pastor track student will take a class during his four years has increased considerably. The high number of cross-taught courses facilitates these opportunities. In the first few years after the amalgamation, only a few courses were cross-taught, but now, all the biblical isagogics, history, English, science, math, cultural, physical education, and fine arts courses which a man needs to fulfill the pre-seminary program requirements are cross-taught.

The proposed greater scheduling flexibility has also become a reality. The list of course offerings which can fill a requirement in the pre-seminary curriculum is significantly longer, both in regard to area-specific requirements and free electives. Pre-seminary students with a specific interest in music or science or literature, etc. have more opportunities to expand their knowledge of that topic. As had been suggested, the flexibility to shape one's own schedule is an aspect which most students appreciate. Non-cross-taught classes still have minimal flexibility, but the majority of courses are offered more often, at different times, and with different professors. A student can mold his schedule based on his personal preferences and priorities.¹¹⁰

In my opinion, the amount of flexibility and thus control put into the hands of the students is a potential weakness of the current set-up which has resulted from the amalgamation. The variance of teaching abilities as well as demands and expectations of students for each

110. For a non-cross-taught class, a student can usually choose between two or three different class periods, depending on the size of the pastor track at his grade level. For required cross-taught classes, a student can generally choose from multiple years and semesters in his program as to when to take the class, from a variety of different class periods, and from two or three different professors. With electives, the choices expand even more.

specific class is a factor. This comment is not made to elevate some and put down others, but rather to help demonstrate a reality of something that has changed between NWC and the present-day pre-seminary program at MLC.¹¹¹ At NWC, every pre-seminary student received the exact same instructor for all of his required courses. Although some certainly got more out of certain classes and professors than others, they were all receiving the same information, expectations, and guidance. At MLC, that is not the case. Especially pertinent courses in biblical isagogics, history, and English have multiple different professors teaching them. Naturally, each professor shares somewhat different information, has somewhat different expectations, and offers somewhat different guidance. In addition, NWC students had many fewer professors from which to choose in regard to electives as well.

Thus, the structure of the current system has a different potential weakness than NWC did. At NWC, the potential weakness was that a professor who struggled to communicate material to the students well or failed to hold them to high standards would hurt the entire class who all had him as a professor. While the same potential weakness exists in many of the courses specific to the pre-seminary program, for the rest, the potential weakness is the student's ability to navigate the path of least resistance. From their own experience and from conversations with students who have taken a particular professor, students can weigh up which professor will provide them with the required credits by means of the least or easiest amount of work. For instance, a student who struggles at writing can choose his English and history courses based on which professors he believes will have the lowest writing expectations.¹¹²

111. God gives different gifts to different people, but it is important to recognize that pastor track graduates from MLC do not all receive the same education—not even graduates of the same class. Even though their transcripts may look practically identical, the variance of professors they had equates to a variance in their education. This variance can be beneficial, but it can also be negative.

112. In the end, such an approach does nothing but hurt the student, but more than a few college students have been known to make decisions based on present-day ease rather than long-term benefits.

Of course, many students do not take this approach when picking classes. Furthermore, a young man picking a course which he believes will require less work is not necessarily a poor or wrong decision for a pastor track student, but the temptation to do so purely out of laziness does exist. At NWC, this less-than-ideal way of choosing classes did not present itself until picking electives. But in the pre-seminary program today, a student can utilize this method before even stepping on campus as a student for the first time.¹¹³

Going back to the potential pros, those who have taught at both schools agreed that certain areas now present stronger course offerings than NWC had in the past. The specific areas mentioned were science and music. While the fine quality of MLC professors in these areas should not be eliminated from the equation, I think it is fair to say that the structure of the two colleges being together naturally lends itself toward these courses being stronger. Science professors are able to focus on their specific areas of expertise. More specialized music professors, many piano and organ instructors, mixed choirs, and a larger band all contribute to a stronger music program in which pastor track students can participate or simply appreciate.

In regard to the library, most professors probably still have the same complaint that students do not use it enough. With the growth of technology as a whole and the availability of resources online, two separate libraries likely could have been maintained fairly easily. However, keeping up with the technological innovations in the educational world would have likely been quite cost-consuming and required extra personnel on two campuses. With the increase in technology and the ease of communication via the internet, the summer school program is also no longer a factor. Courses offered over the summer months are almost all taught online.

Concerning the potential cons which were discussed, I do not find any evidence that pastoral modeling has suffered. The entire faculty serves as role models of public ministers of the

113. This ability to mold one's schedule as an incoming freshman is a fairly recent development.

gospel and the pastor track faculty does take advantage of the many such opportunities which do still remain. As for the number and level of personal relationships between students and professors, some drop off has likely occurred, especially since some pastor track students never even take a course with some on the pastor track faculty. Nevertheless, the entire pastor track faculty seems to make a concerted effort to get to know the pastor track students. Thus, the faculty is still able to evaluate, assess, and encourage students.

The amalgamation and the resulting cross-taught classes have, however, somewhat diminished some opportunities for professional development. Pastor track professors who teach cross-taught classes are not able to gear their instruction, course goals, and objectives specifically toward men preparing to be pastors. Professors who came to MLC from NWC assert that while adding future teachers—including women—to their classes did somewhat affect how they taught, the biggest impact of the amalgamation in that regard was the much higher number of students in certain classes.¹¹⁴ Especially in English and history, more sections of the same course and more students in each section have impeded the professors' ability to spend as much time helping pre-seminary students hone their writing and critical-thinking skills.¹¹⁵ Even though I am convinced that the frequent complaint from WLS to MLC concerning incoming students'

114. The way in which a professor communicates with his students and the classroom environment does change somewhat with women present. That is not to say that it is worse, but it is different. In addition, the specific knowledge a professor could allude to or take for granted based on the other courses he knew his students had taken or were taking is not the same because the teacher track students do not take many of those courses.

115. For example, at NWC, the beginning English course was extremely writing intensive. Students were expected to write a two-page paper every week, and they received a great deal of feedback. This standard assignment was considered foundational work for future pastors who would write a two-page paper every week—better known as a sermon. Although such frequent and critical writing is not something expected of most WELS teachers, these professors decided to keep assigning the two-page papers since they helped to prepare future pastors and were certainly beneficial for future teachers as well. Nevertheless, the weekly two-page papers eventually ended because these professors were teaching so many students in these courses that they were greatly overworking themselves with correcting. Attempting to give constructive critiques and corrections on over a hundred students' papers on a weekly basis was too much. Similar stories about papers and the amount of individual time the professors were able to give to students during the writing process also came from the history department as well.

writing abilities has much more to do with the decreasing high school and grade school instruction levels, the professors' decreased ability to take as much time with individual pre-seminary students at the collegiate level has certainly not helped.¹¹⁶

But the cross-teaching and larger class sizes are not the only changes which have affected the humanities courses in the pre-seminary program. Some reductions were made in these areas which were not favored by many on the pastor track faculty, such as the cutting of specific elective course offerings (like a course on Milton) and the cutting of credit hours from two of the required history courses.¹¹⁷ These reductions certainly did not radically alter or damage the pre-seminary program, but they have contributed to the overall feeling by some that the humanities have been devalued and do exhibit the anticipated vulnerability to undesired change which comes with being the minority program. On the whole, however, and even more in recent years, the pastor track faculty has been highly involved in the curriculum decisions and changes.¹¹⁸

Contributing to the strong and similar curriculum has been the lack of impact from the accreditation agency. Because of the college's single purpose of preparing WELS called workers and the pre-seminary program's single purpose of preparing men for WLS, the NCA has not forced MLC to change its curriculum and staffing policies in any ways that have markedly

116. Another cross-taught area which some believe has suffered is biblical isagogics. The pastor track students at NWC, and initially at MLC, had two four-credit courses labeled Survey of the Old Testament and Survey of the New Testament. Today, those courses are combined with the teacher track biblical survey courses as Biblical History and Literature I, II, and III. The change from two four-credit classes to three three-credit classes actually allows for more time in and out of the classroom for the structured survey of the Bible. Still, some believe that the present-day expectations of students in these cross-taught BHL courses are not high enough—primarily because so many students are coming in with a much lower level of biblical knowledge. While it is especially important not to leave any teacher track students behind since these classes will be the last formal survey of the Bible in their training, that very fact seems to call for the courses to be taught at a higher and more in-depth level, which would be an advantage for pastor track students as well.

117. State licensure requirements for the education program have at times motivated the changes.

118. The Curriculum Oversight Committee, which has an even number of pastor track and teacher track faculty members, is primarily responsible for studying and discussing potential changes to the curriculum.

affected the pastor track. As a result, the pastor track faculty at MLC and the WLS faculty remain highly pleased with the pre-seminary curriculum and classroom instruction overall.

As for outside of the classroom, the sharing of different perspectives and experiences happens in the dormitory, on the field and court, and in the cafeteria and library as pre-seminary students are roommates, teammates, and friends with many teacher track students. In addition, co-curricular opportunities have somewhat expanded. Although MLC actually offers the same number of male intercollegiate sports as NWC did, MLC provides many more and a broader range of school-sanctioned clubs and organizations than NWC did.¹¹⁹ Another advantage is the enhanced quality of some of these co-curricular opportunities. There seems to be unanimous agreement that the choir, band, and drama groups at MLC offer pre-seminary students a significantly higher level experience than those at NWC did. Since music and public speaking are integral parts of the worship services which these future pastors will lead, these improvements appear to be extremely beneficial.

Nevertheless, also as anticipated, more opportunities do not necessarily mean more involvement. The larger size of MLC's student body tends to make each co-curricular activity—especially those with a set number of participants—more specialized. Therefore, the same pastor track individual is actually less likely to participate in as many different activities as he may have at NWC, which leads to less involvement overall by pre-seminary students. The lack of participation in such a specialized activity can come from failing to make the team, choir, production, etc. or not seeming to fit in with that particular crowd or not desiring to take that activity so seriously. Although there are no hard statistics, the percentage of pastor track students involved in intercollegiate sports, band, and drama all appear to be down. In an area such as

119. See Appendix 4, beginning on page 94, for a comparison of co-curricular activities at NWC and present-day MLC.

intramurals, the larger student body does not provide the same strong encouragement for almost all to participate as the closer-knit NWC student body did.¹²⁰

At the same time, the increase in the amount of time many pastor track students spend working also plays into how much they participate in co-curriculars. From 1995 to the present, finding a job in New Ulm has never seemed to present an issue (at least if one has a vehicle). The real problem is often for students to find a balance with their work hours, studies, and co-curricular activities. While care must be taken that students are not working so much that they are hurting their pre-seminary studies and on-campus involvement, the experiences students receive at their part-time jobs throughout the year can be extremely valuable in their preparation for the pastoral ministry.

A comparison of off-campus cultural and academic experiences is extremely difficult because there really is no record of what those NWC experiences included. New Ulm certainly is further removed from any big cities, but students still have many opportunities for cultural experiences. In particular, the “Daylight” program has expanded immensely and offers students not only a familiarity with different places and cultures around the United States but also firsthand ministry experience in those settings.¹²¹ Growing opportunities for immersion trips and studying abroad have also increased the cultural experiences and bigger worldview which pastor track students receive. While these expanding opportunities do not stem from the amalgamation, they are undoubtedly easier to facilitate with just one worker training college and have served to

120. While the percentage of students involved in intramurals at MLC may not accurately reflect the pastor track involvement, the 90% involvement at NWC compared to the 60% involvement at MLC is striking. See “Martin Luther College 2018-19 Quick Facts,” (Martin Luther College, 21 February 2019), <https://mlc-wels.edu/about/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/07/MLC-Quick-Facts-2018-19.pdf>. and Carleton Toppe, *Holding the Course: Northwestern College 125*, (Northwestern Publishing House: Milwaukee, WI, 1990), 139.

121. The “Daylight” program offers all MLC students the opportunity to gain firsthand experience assisting a WELS congregation with its ministry and outreach efforts.

counteract this potential concern. The same can be said about continuing education. The ability for pastor track professors to pursue further degrees while living in New Ulm has grown with the advancement of technology and more off-site coursework for higher education.

From an MLC student's perspective, New Ulm sometimes seems boring and very far away from anything fun, but its location has also had some positive effects on campus life.¹²² MLC's close proximity to Flandrau State Park and relationship with Vogel Arena give students access to running trails and swimming. Much more impactful, though, is the fact that MLC is rather far away from any big cities and even farther away from most students' homes. For this reason, the majority of MLC students are usually on campus at night and on weekends throughout the school year. The result is a rather active campus life and a close-knit campus community.¹²³ All in all, MLC provides pre-seminary students many different ways to learn and grow inside and outside of the classroom, which all contribute to a well-rounded college education and experience for a pastoral candidate.

122. As someone who grew up in Watertown, WI, I cannot say that Watertown itself offers any more fun than New Ulm although Madison and Milwaukee do offer more than Mankato. Some who view New Ulm less favorably than I do might also assert that the isolation and bitter cold of New Ulm better prepare pastoral candidates to be willing to go and serve anywhere.

123. Although there may be some truth to the idea that this isolation is an adverse effect and contributes to a sheltered or closed-minded outlook sometimes referred to as the "MLC bubble," I believe there are plenty of positives. The strengthening of faith and friendships which takes place in this close Christian community helps prepare future called workers to be able to stand firm in their faith and share it. Furthermore, in addition to all the previously mentioned cultural opportunities available to students, New Ulm and the surrounding area still offer many opportunities for students to interact with many different people with many different views.

INTERPERSONAL PREPARATION

The interpersonal discussions surrounding the amalgamation focused primarily on the pre-seminary students. While many also believed that the better male-female ratio at the combined college would be an advantage over the imbalance of females to males at DMLC, the issues of debate centered on whether or not and to what extent a coeducational college would be an improvement over NWC. The three major issues were pastor-teacher relations, pastor-women relations, and social graces.

Interpersonal Preparation Discussions

Perceptions of the state of pastor-teacher relations in the early 1990s varied. Some perceived a pervasive problem which needed to be addressed.¹²⁴ From their perspective, pastors who exemplified a misguided “Herr Pastor” aura and domineered over other called workers—especially principals—with a “my way or the highway” attitude seemed all too common. Others seemed to think that although certain scenarios and individuals presented individual problems, there was no widespread dilemma. All strife between pastors and teachers was serious, but there was no reason for serious concern about the issue as a whole from a synodical standpoint.¹²⁵

Some of the people who perceived a problem believed NWC was the cause, or at least, one of the causes. They cited the absence of extensive or positive interactions between pastors and teachers as a beginning source of blame which the culture at NWC worsened. The rivalry that existed between NWC and DMLC on the athletic fields at times carried over into personal opinions about the other school and its students. Too many pre-seminary students made unkind

124. Nathan Pope, “Pastor and Teacher: Working Together to Glorify God,” (WLS Essay File, 1995). Nathan Pope anonymously quotes a pastor in a synodical leadership position who asserted that the most important reason for the amalgamation was to foster “better relations between pastors and teachers.”

125. Peter Markgraf and Ethan Steinbrenner, “Defining, Nurturing, and Improving Relationships among Pastors and Teachers,” (WLS Essay File, 1993), 1.

and uncalled-for comments about DMLC and its students.¹²⁶ And DMLC males did not always appreciate NWC men coming to DMLC in search of girlfriends either.

Thus, putting the two tracks together on one campus would “make teammates out of rivals” and do much to alleviate the problem.¹²⁷ Future pastors and teachers would learn to understand and appreciate each other better. They would view each other as equals in the ministry, especially since they would already start practicing cooperation with each other in and out of the classroom. They would develop more respect for the different roles and responsibilities that come with the different forms of public ministry. And friendships between individuals of both tracks would blossom and grow and carry over into ministry.¹²⁸ Many who would not have necessarily blamed NWC for causing pastor-teacher problems also believed that the amalgamation would improve relations between the two groups.

Conversely, others argued that any problems that did exist had little to nothing to do with NWC. The sinful nature was the real problem and the reason why pastors and teachers did not always get along.¹²⁹ The amalgamation would not change that. The sinful nature was also the reason why pastors did not always get along with other pastors and teachers did not always get along with other teachers. The NWC faculty promoted respect for the teaching ministry and even modeled a positive relationship between pastors and teachers with its own mixed faculty. For every example of a NWC graduate who had failed to work well with teachers, many more examples could be cited of those who did. Therefore, NWC was not the problem. Ultimately, the

126. One such well-known and uncalled-for comment was that the acronym DMLC stood for “Dumb Man’s Last Chance,” specifically a reference to the fact that some students who had struggled at NWC, especially with the language courses, had transferred to DMLC.

127. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 44.

128. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 44.

129. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 4.

sinful nature was the problem, and it often latched onto the “differences in the amount and type of training received by pastors and teachers and in their responsibilities and annual salary when they enter the ministry.”¹³⁰ Thus, such a “superficial approach” which focused on physically bringing the two together rather than repeatedly drowning the sinful nature could actually make those differences “much more conspicuous” and cause more tension.¹³¹

A fairly similar and quite contentious discussion occurred concerning the ability of NWC students and graduates to relate to women. Both sides recognized that a pastor’s ability to relate well to women was critical for almost every aspect of his ministry, and yet, two sides with very different perspectives emerged. Some believed that pre-seminary students’ social skills with women would increase as they would have more social interactions with women at a coeducational college. Furthermore, these additional and closer interactions in and out of the classroom would increase their sensitivity to and understanding of females, which would be especially necessary as the American society was becoming increasingly gender-sensitive.¹³²

Again, the other side argued that the ability of pastors to relate to women was not a widespread problem and any issues that did exist stemmed from an individual’s personal problems with sin or social skills and not NWC. NWC students already had plenty of social interactions with many different women, so the amalgamation would not change much in this regard. The NWC faculty also maintained that such a view unfoundedly implied that NWC students and graduates were inferior to their DMLC male counterparts at relating to women.¹³³

The issue of social graces was only mentioned as a side note, but there did seem to be a

130. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 4.

131. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 4.

132. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 44.

133. Northwestern College Faculty, “Report to FSC,” 4.

growing sentiment that an all-male school was not getting the job done.¹³⁴ This carried over into the critique that too many pastors not only struggled to get along with teachers and women, but also with anyone who was not a pastor or in their close circle of friends.¹³⁵ The other side admitted that the pre-seminary men's social graces would likely improve "to some degree" but asserted that this would probably be a very minor benefit.¹³⁶ All in all, they did not consider these interpersonal reasons to be anywhere close to warranting such a mass upheaval.

Another social aspect which was discussed had to do with the bonding which takes place among pastor track students. Some contended that the bonding would actually improve at the amalgamated college due to the loss of aspects of NWC which contributed to a fraternity feel. The change would encourage students to build each other up more and cut each other down less, and thus, more trust would build among the brothers.¹³⁷ Others maintained that the change would have little effect on such bonding.¹³⁸ Still others believed that the bonding would suffer. With the bigger student body and less time together in classes and participating in co-curricular activities, pastor track students would not get to know as many other pastor track students at all or as well. The close bond with brothers, which was somewhat connected to NWC traditions and which so many NWC graduates treasured, would not be as strong.¹³⁹

One aspect which everyone seemed to agree upon was that more pre-seminary students would get married to young women in the teacher track and that they would get married

134. Carl Mischke, Letter to John Seifert, (2 March 1993, The Amalgamation Collection), 2.

135. Carl Mischke, Letter to John Seifert, 2.

136. Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 4.

137. Carl Mischke, Letter to John Seifert, 2.

138. Feasibility Study Committee, "Report of the FSC," 44.

139. Northwestern College Faculty, "Report to FSC," 4.

sooner.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, there was still disagreement as to whether more early marriages would be a positive or a negative development. More early marriages could lead to losing more students from the ministry, as men might opt to settle down and start a family and career rather than continue on to the seminary for four more years and multiple moves. In addition, those married students who did continue on to the seminary would perhaps be less devoted students since they would have to balance a marriage, and possibly a family, along with their work and studies. Others argued that the personal commitment to seminary training should not be underestimated and that the college would be in a good position to help pre-seminary students and their future wives “chart their courses through dating and marital waters in such a way as to land them in full-time ministry.”¹⁴¹ Furthermore, the increase in pastors’ wives with training for the gospel ministry would be an added benefit.

Interpersonal Preparation Impacts¹⁴²

In general, the amalgamation seems to have helped to foster continuing improvement in the social opportunities and interpersonal preparation pre-seminary students receive. The coeducational structure of MLC presents many occasions for interactions with future teachers—many of whom are women—and this is a blessing. The importance of understanding and being able to communicate and work with others in the ministry would be hard to overemphasize, and the amalgamation seems to have contributed to growth for pastor track students in those areas.

Overall, pre-seminary students who have gone through MLC naturally seem to have a better understanding of both the teaching ministry and the prior training which teachers receive

140. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 40.

141. Feasibility Study Committee, “Report of the FSC,” 40.

142. This section is naturally the most subjective section of this paper. Again, I hope that the perspective which I have gained from the perspectives of many people very close to the situations will be a valuable one.

than those who went to NWC. The frequent contact and opportunities to work together with teacher track students both inside and outside of the classroom which today's pastor track students have are certainly a blessing, as are the many strong friendships between pastors and teachers which were forged during their time together at MLC. Not only are these Christian friendships valuable, but they also help to create mutual respect for the other vocation. This impact of the amalgamation is extremely important and positive.

Nevertheless, this impact should not be exaggerated. Many, many pastors who went to college at NWC also had a strong appreciation for teachers and their ministry, worked well with teachers, and even became close friends with teachers in their congregations. So to say that this kind of previous knowledge or teamwork is necessary for pastors and teachers to work together in the ministry would be a gross overstatement. In addition, stereotypes of the two tracks do still exist, and selfish pride and insecurity still show themselves all too often in the interactions between pastor track and teacher track students both at MLC and in the ministry.¹⁴³

Thus, NWC, the distance between the two tracks, and even the rivalry were certainly not the root of the problem. Just as with strife between two pastors or between two teachers, the sinful nature is ultimately always the core problem when difficulties between a pastor and a teacher arise. Even so, those who proposed that the amalgamation could help eliminate some of the tension between pastors and teachers were not denying this truth or attempting social engineering. The separation of the two schools, the rivalry that existed between them, and the stereotypes and jokes which could influence people's perception of reality were perhaps giving the devil a foothold with some men. Similarly, the gut feeling of many interviewees that pastor-teacher relations "seem to be better" does not imply that MLC pre-seminary students have

143. The stereotypical views which pastor track students have of teacher track students and vice versa are very much the same. One difference, however, is that every pre-seminary student knows many exceptions to those stereotypes, but the closeness and familiarity do give the sinful nature plenty of new opportunities to show itself.

become more sanctified than their NWC counterparts, but simply that various aspects of the single ministerial education college may be an advantage to helping pre-seminary students to see teachers more clearly as both friends and co-workers in the gospel ministry.¹⁴⁴

Concerning the preparation which pre-seminary men receive in communicating with and relating to women, I find it hard to imagine how the amalgamation would not have helped. I do not at all mean to imply that NWC students were poor or inferior in this regard, but the opportunities to hear and understand young women's perspectives in and out of the classroom at MLC as well as the practical experience which comes from numerous daily interactions with women are beneficial in a pastor's preparation. In other words, MLC offers pre-seminary students certain opportunities to grow in learning to treasure and cherish their sisters in Christ which NWC simply could not.

In my opinion, such expanded opportunities for discussion and interaction with women at the collegiate level may be even more important today because of all the current social movements. Pastors need to be able to discern the good and bad of these movements so that they may be prepared to love, listen to, equip, and empower women for lives of service while still wholeheartedly maintaining and faithfully applying the principles of the roles of men and women established by God. The coeducational structure of MLC makes it better equipped to prepare young men to consider and handle this serious issue than an all-male college would be.¹⁴⁵

The constant presence and close proximity of women also seems to have had a positive effect on the social graces of pre-seminary students. Open dorms serve as an incentive for cleanliness in the dorms, just as cross-taught classes and a coeducational campus life have

144. Perhaps the two being together also leads to more specific law and gospel being proclaimed both in chapel and in the classroom concerning attitudes toward and relations with other public ministers of the gospel.

145. The cross-taught Interpersonal Communication class, better known as IPC, also aids in this area.

somewhat raised the standards of dress. In other words, a college guy is more likely to dress and act refined when women are around—especially when one of them is (or he hopes will become) his girlfriend. Men’s refinement tends to improve when trying to impress women, whereas trying to prove one’s manliness to other men often has a way of leading in the other direction.

Even so, many pre-seminary men since the amalgamation have not always appeared highly refined. Many of them are living away from home for the first time and still have room for growth in cleanliness. The hair, facial hair, and attire of these college men can still leave much to be desired. Thus, even if the amalgamation has brought about some improvement in this area, it was not some kind of magic cure for what some might consider uncivilized behavior.¹⁴⁶

As for the bonding among pre-seminary students, many interviewees asserted that the close camaraderie among classmates remains very strong at MLC. In addition, the amalgamation also seems to have helped to remove or diminish some of the aspects typically associated with a fraternity from the pre-seminary culture.¹⁴⁷ Two general differences in the bonding were noted. The first is that the tight bonding of a class as a whole typically does not come as soon as it once did. Nevertheless, by junior and senior year, when the pre-seminary men are finally taking most of the same courses with the same professors, the class usually grows noticeably closer together.

The second observance is that the separate class levels do not seem to know each other as well. The larger student body probably has the biggest impact on that since pastor track students simply have more options for close friends and more people to get to know. Less involvement in campus events and the same co-curricular activities also contributes to students knowing fewer pastor track students in the other classes. More separation and segregation of classes in the

146. Nevertheless, the occasional crazy beard or peculiar wardrobe choice during the college years is not always such a horrible thing or a strong indication of whether or not a man is able to be normal and serve in the public ministry. (At least I sure hope so.)

147. Certain traditions which were not always wholesome did disappear or decrease with the loss of NWC.

dormitories, more men spending time with their girlfriends or wives, and more men spending time watching Netflix or playing video games probably all have some impact. Despite those factors, pre-seminary students still have a healthy and treasured esprit de corps which carries over to the seminary and into the ministry.

The close proximity of single women to pre-seminary students has unquestionably resulted in more and earlier marriages for pastor track students, as was anticipated. However, very few of these marriages happen until after college, so the impact is mostly only felt at the seminary.¹⁴⁸ Although a few seminarians in every class have wives who never attended MLC, the majority of seminarians' wives since the amalgamation did, and the percentage of married WLS students greatly increased, despite societal marriage trends going in the other direction. In the ten years before the amalgamation, an average of about a third of the WLS student body (not including vicars) was married in a given year. Since the amalgamation, about half of WLS students are married.

Whether more of these earlier marriages have had a positive, negative, or neutral impact is still debated. Since this paper focuses primarily on the impact of the amalgamation on the pre-seminary, just a few brief remarks will suffice. Campus life at the seminary has changed, as the percentage of students living in the dorms has declined considerably.¹⁴⁹ Marriage can have a positive or negative impact on a seminarian's studiousness, depending on the individual. Some probably become more focused while others undoubtedly pull back to spend more time with their

148. Since 2001, only 42 of the 679 pre-seminary graduates, or 6.2%, have been married at the time of graduation. However, many more pre-seminary students do get married before starting at WLS.

149. Some professors mentioned that fewer classroom conversations are continued in the dormitory because of this shift. However, the easy access to unlimited entertainment due to the changes in technology has probably had just as great, if not a greater, impact on this aspect of campus life. The decrease in seniors still living in the dormitory to serve as role models and share their experiences with the underclassmen is also an undesirable effect. On a more lighthearted yet historical note, since WLS has so many married students who live off campus, WLS even had its first ever snow day and first ever cold day in January, 2019.

wives (and sometimes kids). Although the WLS retention rate has gone down, every indication is that these early marriages are not a primary factor.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless, for those men who have been married for a few years already by the time they do become pastors, perhaps they are more aware of and better prepared to confront the challenge of balancing pastoral ministry and being a husband (and sometimes father) from the outset.¹⁵¹

The benefit of more pastors' wives having a high level of gospel ministry training should also not be overlooked or emphasized too heavily.¹⁵² Since these women trained to be WELS teachers, they naturally tend to share a desire to proclaim the gospel, a willingness to go wherever called, and an understanding of the time commitment and some of the other challenges of the public ministry. Their MLC education and preparation are undoubtedly a blessing. Even so, those pastors' wives who did not attend MLC also bring their own various educations and preparations, which also serve as blessings in many ways.

150. See Appendix 7, beginning on page 103, for the WLS retention statistics.

151. Adding to the challenge, however, can often be financial issues, especially when the young man acquired debt at MLC and marries a woman who also acquired debt at MLC. That additional debt, together with the lack of parsonages and the need for a new pastor to often find and pay for housing upon entering the ministry, can cause for a very stressful situation to start one's ministry.

152. From the perspective of the present-day number of teaching vacancies, however, the number of MLC-trained women who are pastors' wives and do not ever teach in a WELS school or do so only for a very short time because of where their husbands' ministries take them could be considered a disadvantage.

CONCLUSION

What if the amalgamation had not happened? While this paper has purposely avoided such conjecture up to this point, the question remains. In my opinion, a major change to the synod's Watertown campus was going to happen soon. The ongoing financial problems, the declining perception of an all-male school, and the increasing sensitivity to the potential for trouble with prep school students living on the same campus with collegians were all leading to a change.¹⁵³ What if the amalgamation had taken place at a new campus near an urban center in Wisconsin? In addition to the financial considerations, that specific course of action would have likely impacted recruitment and campus life. These questions can make for interesting debates and conversations, but because neither actually happened, they cannot produce any solid conclusions.

Therefore, the focus should remain on what has happened and the blessings and challenges facing the pre-seminary program at MLC today. The Lord's blessings can be seen in the many faithful pastors who received part or all of their pre-seminary training at MLC. The bottom did not drop out in regard to recruitment or retention. God's grace is also evident in the strong pre-seminary program which still gives men the tools necessary to continue and deepen their pastoral preparation at WLS. The identity and integrity of the pastor track have not been lost. A joyful unity of faith still exists within the WELS, and many personal bonds of friendship have stemmed from the amalgamation as well.

At the same time, the amalgamation has brought challenges, and even many of the concerns voiced about the impact of the amalgamation on the pre-seminary program which have not materialized still remain valid concerns. Just because they have not happened in the past

153. Potential issues involving college and high school students due to the former structure of NWC and NPS on the same campus could have forced a change and hurt the schools and the synod, especially as technology and social media have made everything more public. In addition, the financial issues and enrollment decreases could have made it difficult to maintain the co-curricular activities, which could have hurt recruitment.

twenty-five years does not mean they will not happen in the future. As a minority program at the school, the pre-seminary program is somewhat vulnerable and must continue to be protected. As retirement comes for those professors and leaders who knew NWC, were involved in the amalgamation discussions and implementation, and strove to keep their concerns from becoming a reality, the next generations of professors and leaders need to be aware of NWC's important role in our synod's history, keep in mind those concerns, and preserve the identity and integrity of the pastor track.¹⁵⁴ Continued curriculum changes are likely to come as the WELS strives to train present-day pastors in the best and most faithful way possible, but these changes should not be made simply because of finances, expediency, or even because of other programs at MLC.¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, the day may still come when the college will have to choose between accreditation and undesired changes or the loss of accreditation and financial aid to keep its program intact. Recruitment and retention problems could also surface at any time. LPS and MLS—the prep schools which serve a vital role in encouraging young men for pastoral ministry and thus in sustaining a sufficient quantity of pastoral candidates—may themselves face more difficulties and dilemmas which would directly impact the pre-seminary program.

No matter the angle from which the challenges come, MLC and the WELS must prioritize maintaining the ability to faithfully prepare an ample number of pastors who are

154. Again, just as during the amalgamation discussions, this statement is not meant to imply that anyone is out to get the pastor track, but simply to present the reality that non-pastors are not as aware of some of the needs and concerns for pastoral training, and that the pre-seminary program's minority status can make it more susceptible to changes not desired by those who have firsthand experience as parish pastors. The following quote about that identity and integrity is still applicable: "A church body needs pastors who are theological leaders in their congregations and who can, at times and in various crises, do in depth exegetical studies of God's word, explore historic and current problems in the church, and prepare apologetical studies of God's truth that take into account most of what is going on both in the unbelieving world and the Christian world. This presupposes the ability to interpret the word of God on the basis of the original languages, to read many kinds of other texts with discrimination, and to think independently." See Northwestern College Faculty, "Integrity and Identity," 2.

155. The current reevaluation of the place and purpose of the non-biblical languages within the pre-seminary program is the most prominent example.

“reliable,” “qualified to teach others,” “hold firmly to the trust-worthy message,” and “can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (2 Tim 2:2; Titus 1:9). As disagreements occur on this non-doctrinal issue of how best to do that—and they will—all sides must address these disagreements with openness and honesty, trust and humility, and the faithful and diligent use of reason and all the tools God provides, in order that the synod may move forward walking together as we trust the Lord’s promise to bless his people.

The Lord has given the WELS a wonderful blessing in its ministerial education system as a whole, and specifically in its pastoral education programs—a blessing which he has preserved and which we too should thankfully, joyfully, and wholeheartedly strive to preserve. The Lord has also given the WELS the wonderful privilege to be a part of many opportunities to go and share his saving Word with people who know their desperate need for their Savior Jesus and with many who sadly do not. Therefore, may we all continue to carry out the glorious and undeserved task which our gracious God has given us to be a part of his saving work.

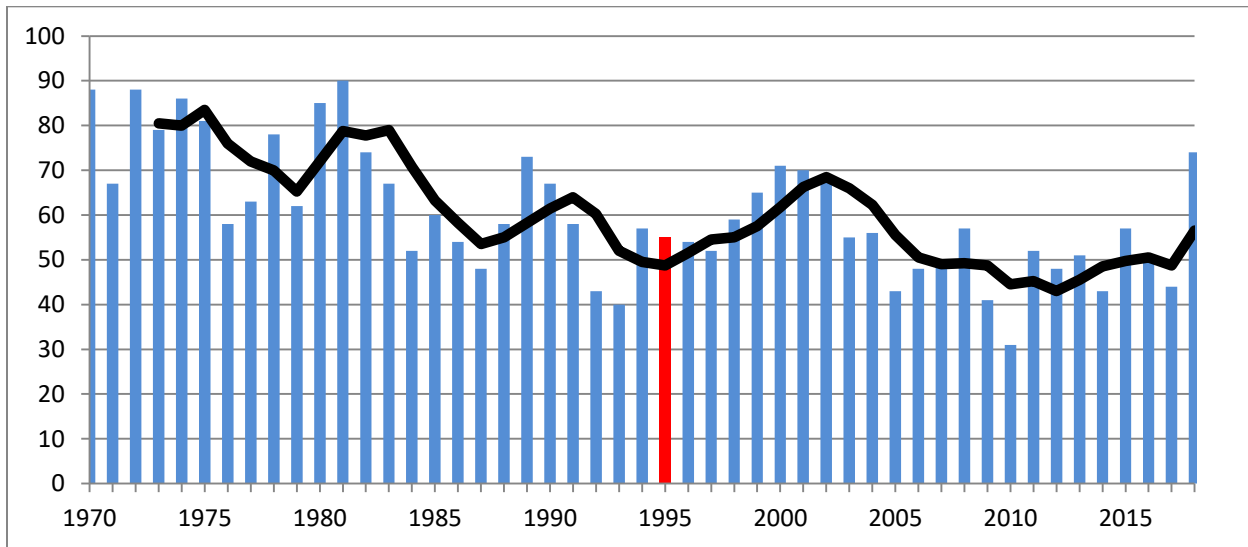
Let us continue to earnestly pray to the Lord to send out workers into his harvest fields. Let us continue to joyfully uphold the pastoral ministry as a noble task. Let us continue to identify young men who display gifts for ministry and deliberately encourage them and their parents with the gospel to consider LPS or MLS, the pre-seminary program, and ultimately, the pastoral ministry. Let us continue to steadfastly protect and provide for the great blessing the Lord has given us in the preparatory schools, the pre-seminary program, and the seminary as the Lord gives us the opportunity. Let us continue to faithfully teach pastoral candidates God’s Word and prepare them to share that life-giving message with others. And as we do so, let us continue to give thanks and rejoice that the Lord of all history has been with us with his grace and blessings over these past twenty-five years and will be in each and every year to come as well.

APPENDIX 1: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION DATA

The following pages give some of the statistical data which directly or indirectly relate to recruitment and retention in the pre-seminary program. The data have come from a wide variety of sources, and I have compiled and calculated the data together into these statistical charts and graphs.¹⁵⁶ The different statistics serve to provide the whole picture and to prevent the data from being skewed by only a couple facets.

Throughout this and the subsequent sections, the black line on any of the charts indicates the four-year moving average. What that means is that each point on the black line is the average for that year and the three previous years. A segment of four years has been used because students are generally in the pre-seminary program for four years and thus the black line gives a rough estimate of a statistic's relation to the entire pre-seminary student body in a given year.

Figure 1 – New Pre-Seminary Students



156. A huge thank-you to Laura Stelljes from MLC who provided most of the data, as well as Professor Dan Balge for helping to coordinate these efforts. I would also like to include a special thank-you to Professor Prost and Bonnie Kuerth from LPS, and Laurie Starr from MLS for their help. Other sources of data include the WELS Statistical Reports and ALHS statistics available on the WELS Yearbook online page. Also, with the great deal of transcribing and calculating, there is a good chance of some minor mistakes in the data. Nevertheless, the data has been compiled and calculated very carefully to give an accurate view of the pre-seminary program and its students. Not all of the compiled and calculated data has been included in these appendices. If you are interested in more of the statistical findings of this research, please feel free to contact the author.

Figure 2 – WELS Youth Confirmations

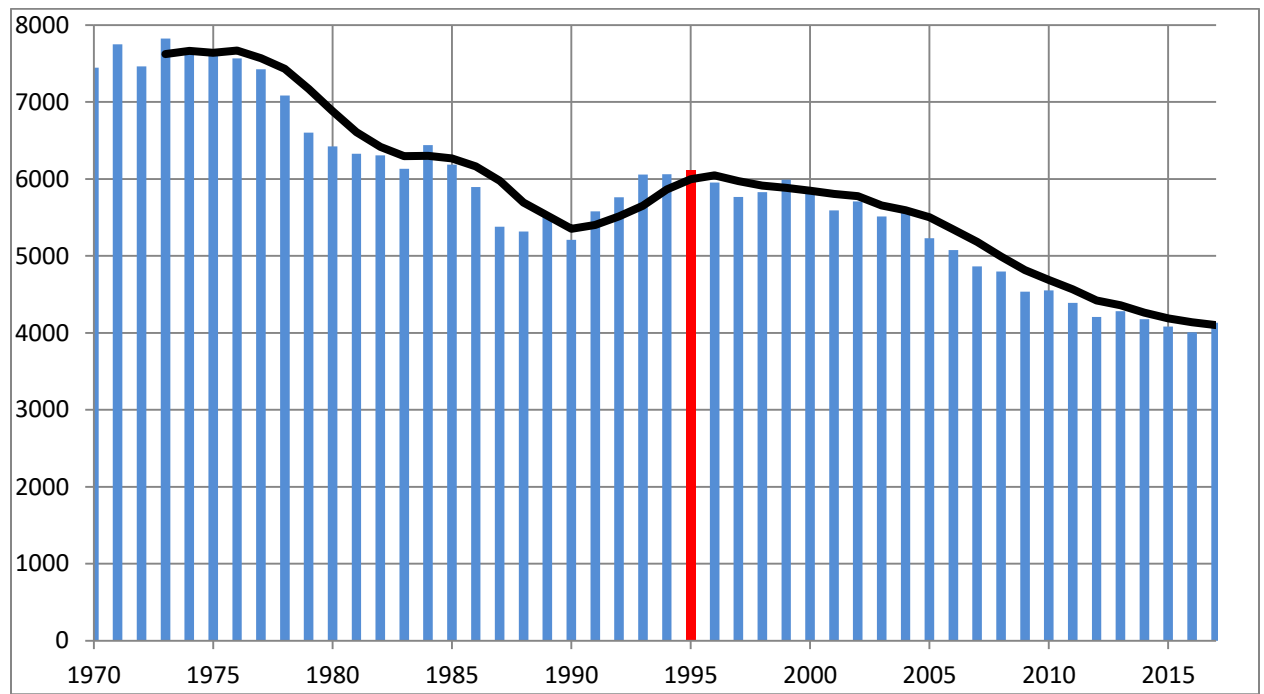
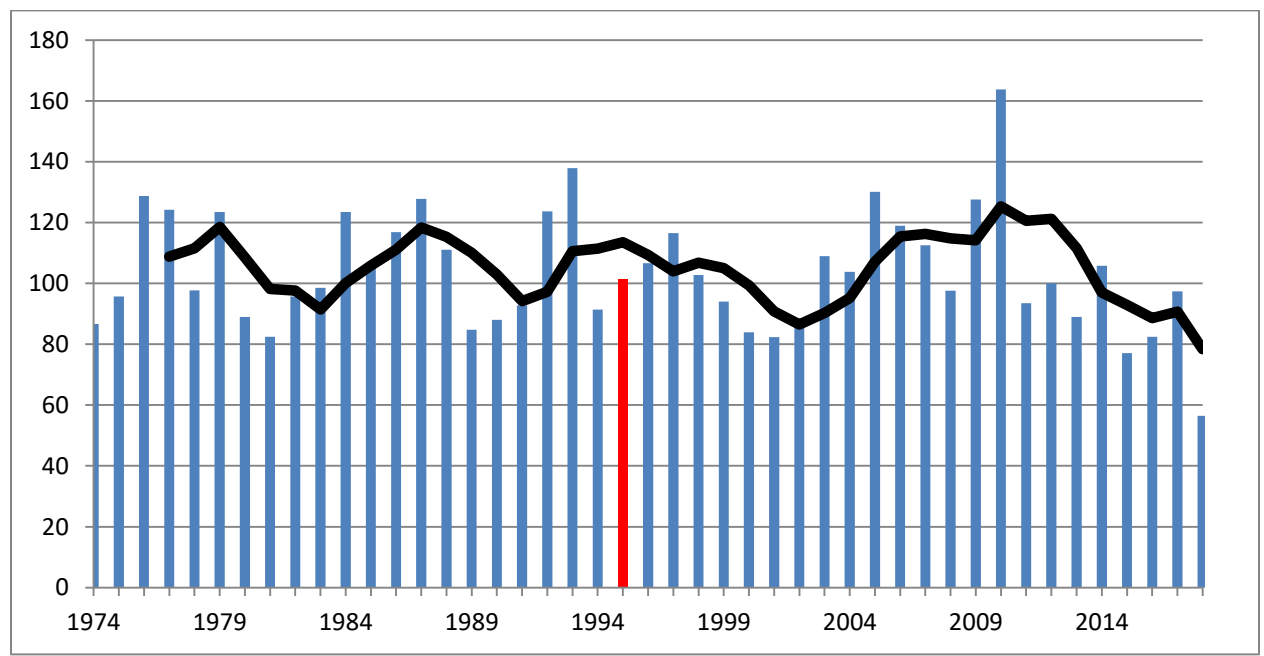
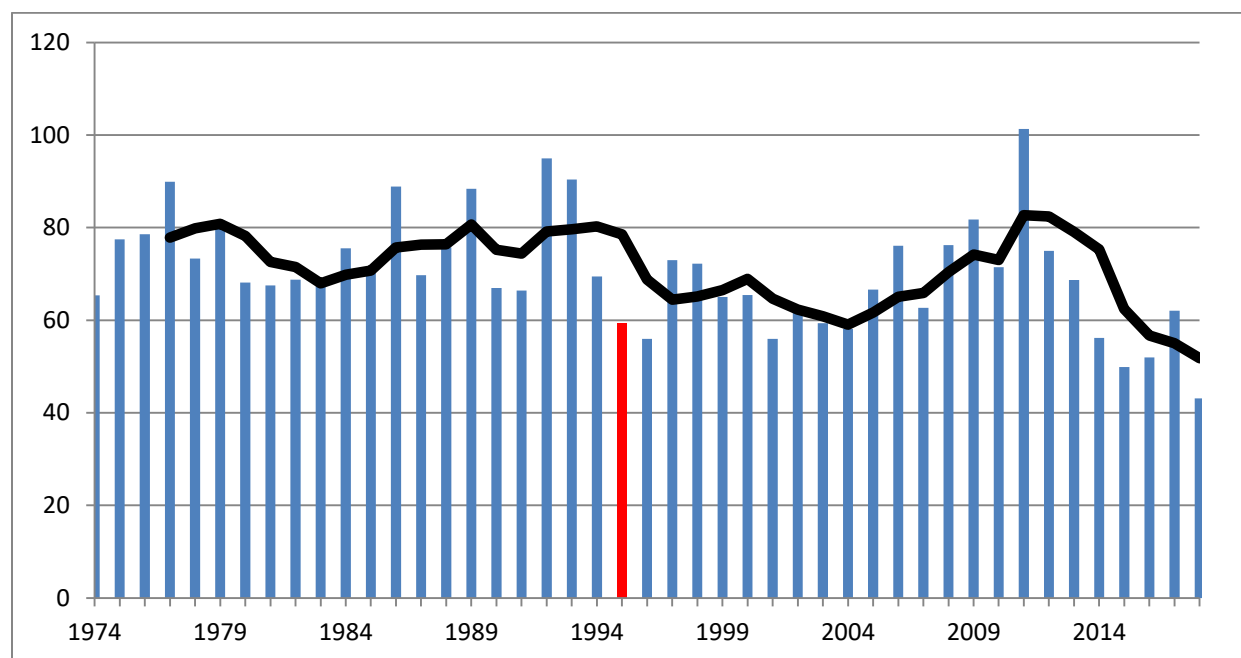


Figure 3 – Youth Confirmations Needed To Produce 1 New Pre-Seminary Student¹⁵⁷



157. The idea for this statistic came from Paul Eickmann, "Changes in LC-MS Worker Training." In this chart, the lower the number, the better for the pre-seminary program. This number is found by dividing the number of youth confirmations four years prior by the number of new pre-seminary students.

Figure 4 – Youth Confirmations Needed To Produce 1 Male Prep School Graduate¹⁵⁸**Table 1 – Pre-Seminary Enrollment by High School**

Year	MLA/ NLA/ MLPS	NPS/LPS	Combined WI/MN Prep Schools	MLS	Total Prep Schools	ALHS	Other	Total
1970	18	32	50	13	63	18	7	88
1971	12	15	27	14	41	11	15	67
1972	12	16	28	19	47	21	20	88
1973	4	30	34	10	44	24	11	79
1974	19	20	39	19	58	23	5	86
1975	8	24	32	12	44	26	11	81
1976	12	16	28	7	35	12	11	58
1977	5	17	22	8	30	19	14	63
1978	20	14	34	12	46	20	12	78
1979	6	22	28	9	37	11	14	62
1980	22	23	45	10	55	21	9	85
1981	21	22	43	12	55	19	16	90
1982	11	20	31	4	35	27	12	74
1983	12	15	27	10	37	21	9	67
1984	12	14	26	8	34	16	2	52

158. Notice how the downward trajectory since 2010 corresponds with the downward trajectory in how many youth confirmands it takes to produce a new pre-seminary student (Figure 3). The higher the percentage of WELS confirmands graduating from a prep school, the higher the percentage of WELS confirmands enrolling in the pre-seminary program as well.

1985	13	18	31	7	38	15	7	60
1986	12	12	24	9	33	16	5	54
1987	9	12	21	6	27	16	5	48
1988	12	10	22	7	29	21	8	58
1989	14	13	27	15	42	28	3	73
1990	9	26	35	8	43	16	8	67
1991	10	13	23	12	35	18	5	58
1992	9	8	17	4	21	13	9	43
1993	6	10	16	9	25	13	2	40
1994	6	11	17	10	27	23	7	57
1995	9	17	26	5	31	14	10	55
1996		21	21	14	35	13	6	54
1997		17	17	8	25	21	6	52
1998		21	21	9	30	26	3	59
1999		16	16	11	27	29	9	65
2000		27	27	12	39	24	8	71
2001		23	23	9	32	33	5	70
2002		18	18	10	28	30	10	68
2003		27	27	6	33	16	6	55
2004		19	19	12	31	18	7	56
2005		17	17	6	23	13	7	43
2006		10	10	12	22	19	7	48
2007		24	24	5	29	15	5	49
2008		11	11	10	21	25	11	57
2009		15	15	6	21	13	7	41
2010		10	10	4	14	13	4	31
2011		12	12	9	21	19	12	52
2012		21	21	5	26	16	6	48
2013		12	12	10	22	20	9	51
2014		13	13	6	19	11	13	43
2015		22	22	2	24	24	9	57
2016		24	24	4	28	19	4	51
2017		14	14	8	22	18	4	44
2018		38	38	6	44	20	10	74

Table 2 – Pre-Seminary Enrollment Percentage by High School

Year	MLA/ NLA/ MLPS	NPS/LPS	Combined WI/MN Prep Schools	Total Prep Schools	MLS	ALHS	Other
1970	20.5%	36.4%	56.8%	71.6%	14.8%	20.5%	8.0%
1971	17.9%	22.4%	40.3%	61.2%	20.9%	16.4%	22.4%
1972	13.6%	18.2%	31.8%	53.4%	21.6%	23.9%	22.7%
1973	5.1%	38.0%	43.0%	55.7%	12.7%	30.4%	13.9%
1974	22.1%	23.3%	45.3%	67.4%	22.1%	26.7%	5.8%
1975	9.9%	29.6%	39.5%	54.3%	14.8%	32.1%	13.6%
1976	20.7%	27.6%	48.3%	60.3%	12.1%	20.7%	19.0%
1977	7.9%	27.0%	34.9%	47.6%	12.7%	30.2%	22.2%
1978	25.6%	17.9%	43.6%	59.0%	15.4%	25.6%	15.4%
1979	9.7%	35.5%	45.2%	59.7%	14.5%	17.7%	22.6%
1980	25.9%	27.1%	52.9%	64.7%	11.8%	24.7%	10.6%
1981	23.3%	24.4%	47.8%	61.1%	13.3%	21.1%	17.8%
1982	14.9%	27.0%	41.9%	47.3%	5.4%	36.5%	16.2%
1983	17.9%	22.4%	40.3%	55.2%	14.9%	31.3%	13.4%
1984	23.1%	26.9%	50.0%	65.4%	15.4%	30.8%	3.8%
1985	21.7%	30.0%	51.7%	63.3%	11.7%	25.0%	11.7%
1986	22.2%	22.2%	44.4%	61.1%	16.7%	29.6%	9.3%
1987	18.8%	25.0%	43.8%	56.3%	12.5%	33.3%	10.4%
1988	20.7%	17.2%	37.9%	50.0%	12.1%	36.2%	13.8%
1989	19.2%	17.8%	37.0%	57.5%	20.5%	38.4%	4.1%
1990	13.4%	38.8%	52.2%	64.2%	11.9%	23.9%	11.9%
1991	17.2%	22.4%	39.7%	60.3%	20.7%	31.0%	8.6%
1992	20.9%	18.6%	39.5%	48.8%	9.3%	30.2%	20.9%
1993	15.0%	25.0%	40.0%	62.5%	22.5%	32.5%	5.0%
1994	10.5%	19.3%	29.8%	47.4%	17.5%	40.4%	12.3%
1995	16.4%	30.9%	47.3%	56.4%	9.1%	25.5%	18.2%
1996	0.0%	38.9%	38.9%	64.8%	25.9%	24.1%	11.1%
1997	0.0%	32.7%	32.7%	48.1%	15.4%	40.4%	11.5%
1998	0.0%	35.6%	35.6%	50.8%	15.3%	44.1%	5.1%
1999	0.0%	24.6%	24.6%	41.5%	16.9%	44.6%	13.8%
2000	0.0%	38.0%	38.0%	54.9%	16.9%	33.8%	11.3%
2001	0.0%	32.9%	32.9%	45.7%	12.9%	47.1%	7.1%
2002	0.0%	26.5%	26.5%	41.2%	14.7%	44.1%	14.7%
2003	0.0%	49.1%	49.1%	60.0%	10.9%	29.1%	10.9%
2004	0.0%	33.9%	33.9%	55.4%	21.4%	32.1%	12.5%
2005	0.0%	39.5%	39.5%	53.5%	14.0%	30.2%	16.3%
2006	0.0%	20.8%	20.8%	45.8%	25.0%	39.6%	14.6%
2007	0.0%	49.0%	49.0%	59.2%	10.2%	30.6%	10.2%

2008	0.0%	19.3%	19.3%	36.8%	17.5%	43.9%	19.3%
2009	0.0%	36.6%	36.6%	51.2%	14.6%	31.7%	17.1%
2010	0.0%	32.3%	32.3%	45.2%	12.9%	41.9%	12.9%
2011	0.0%	23.1%	23.1%	40.4%	17.3%	36.5%	23.1%
2012	0.0%	43.8%	43.8%	54.2%	10.4%	33.3%	12.5%
2013	0.0%	23.5%	23.5%	43.1%	19.6%	39.2%	17.6%
2014	0.0%	30.2%	30.2%	44.2%	14.0%	25.6%	30.2%
2015	0.0%	38.6%	38.6%	42.1%	3.5%	42.1%	15.8%
2016	0.0%	47.1%	47.1%	54.9%	7.8%	37.3%	7.8%
2017	0.0%	31.8%	31.8%	50.0%	18.2%	40.9%	9.1%
2018	0.0%	51.4%	51.4%	59.5%	8.1%	27.0%	13.5%

Figure 5 – Overall Pre-Seminary Retention Rate

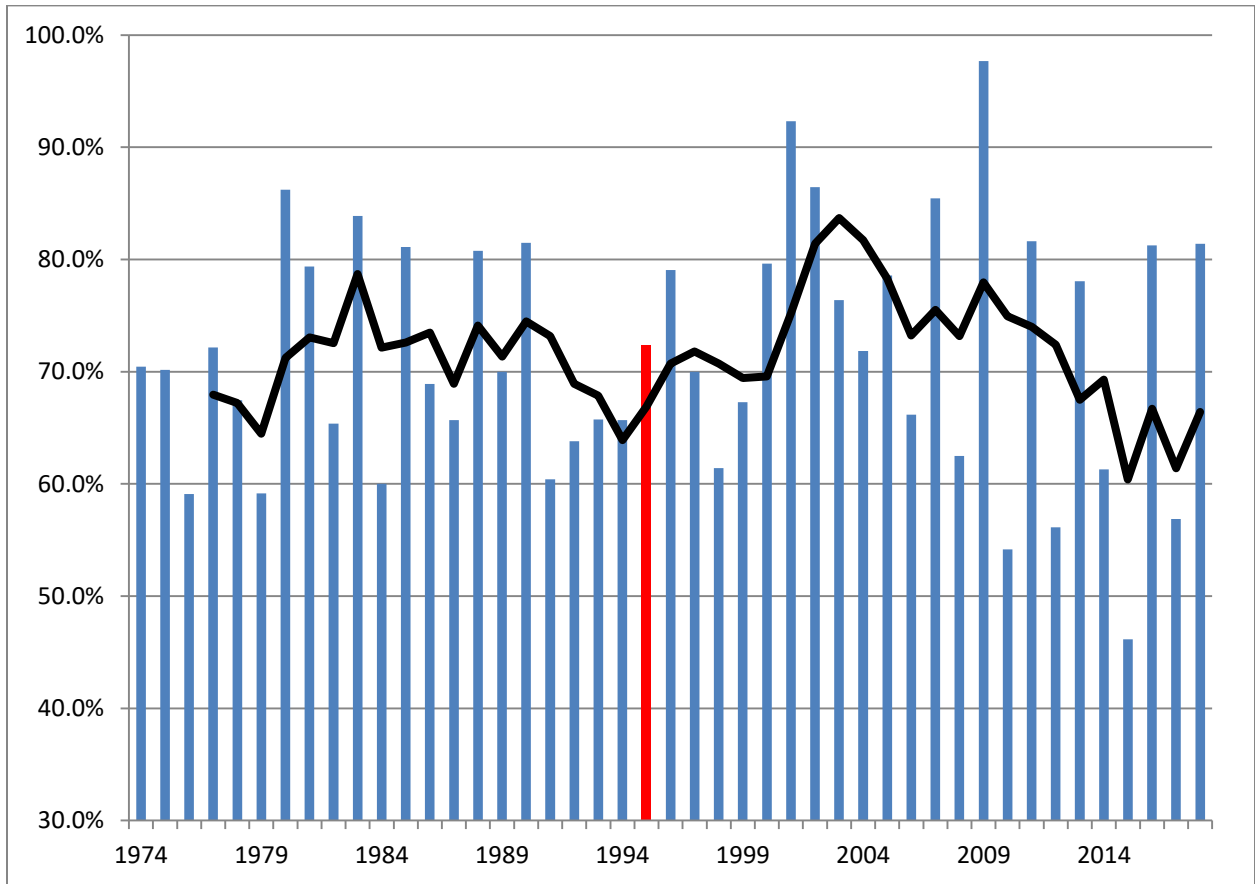


Figure 6 – Pre-Seminary Enrollment by High School (1972-1995)

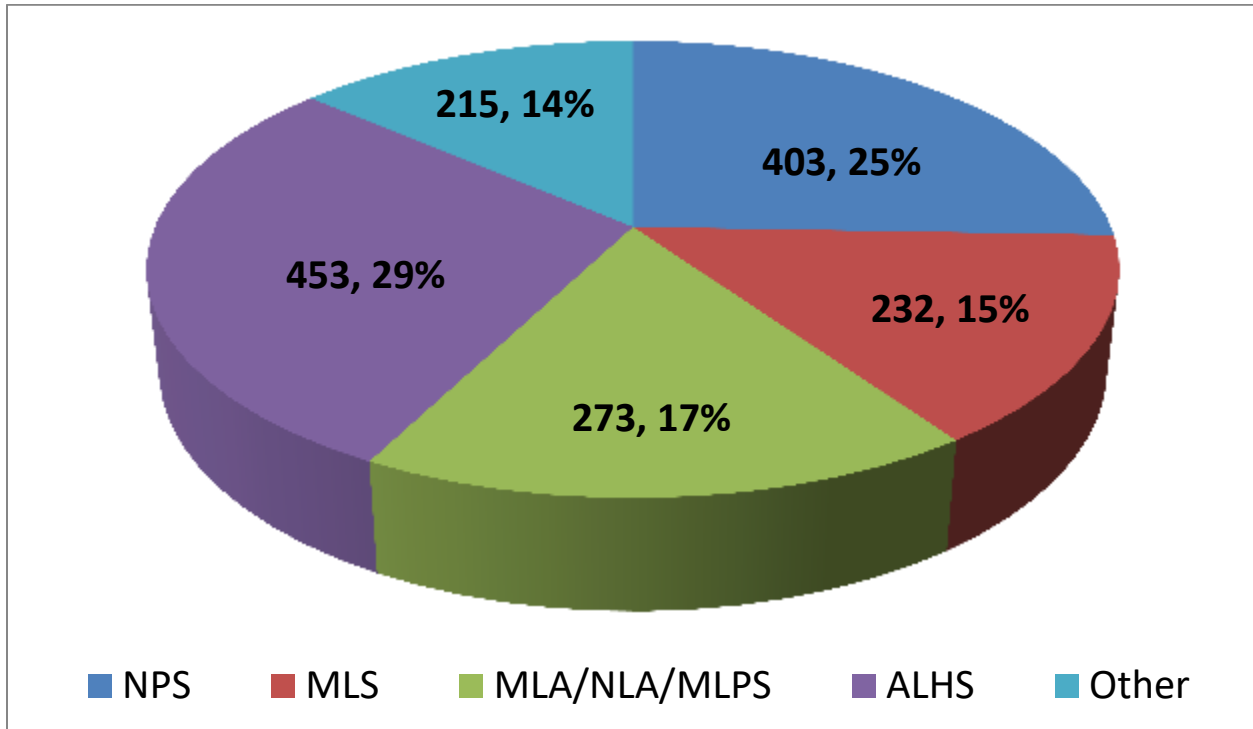


Figure 7 – Pre-Seminary Enrollment by High School (1996-2018)

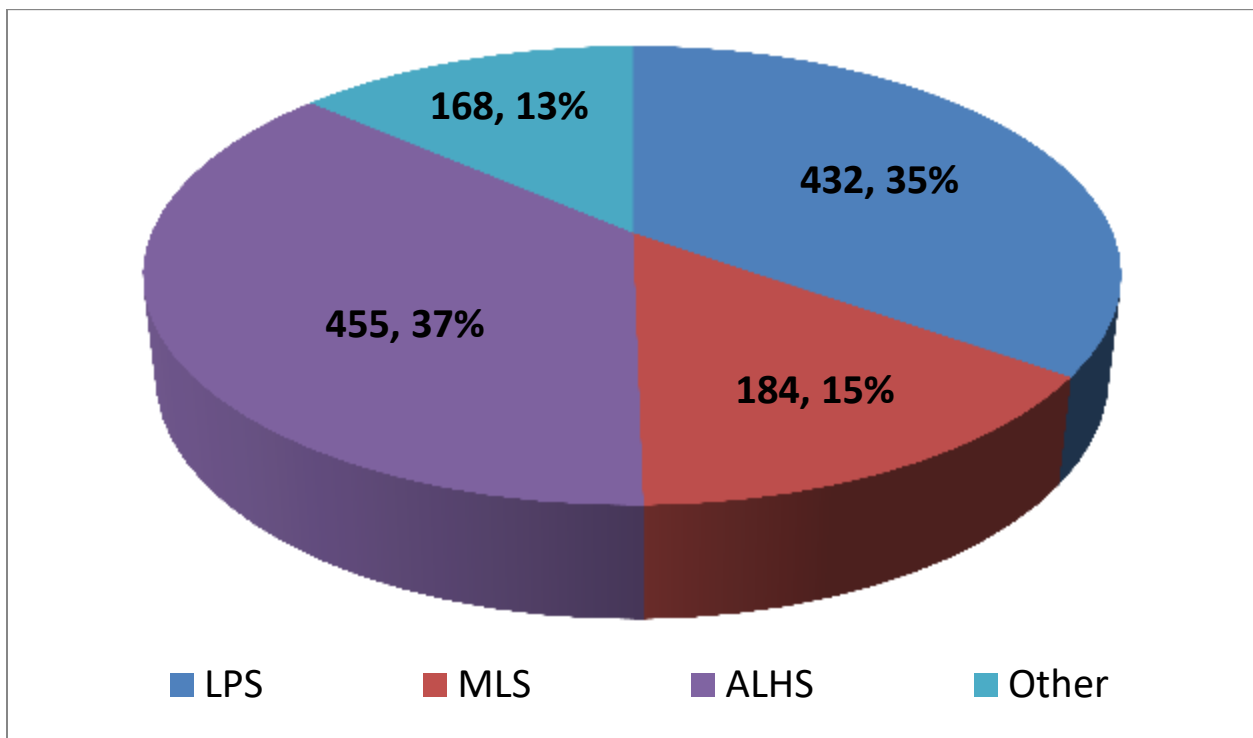


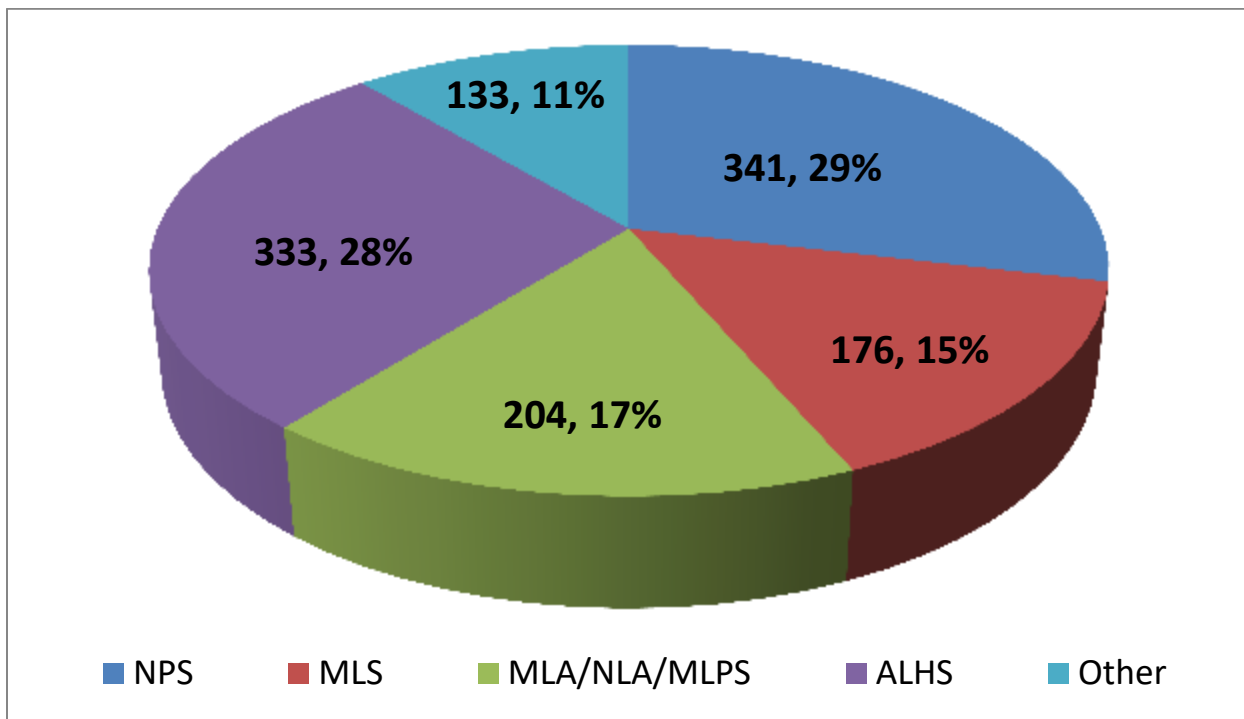
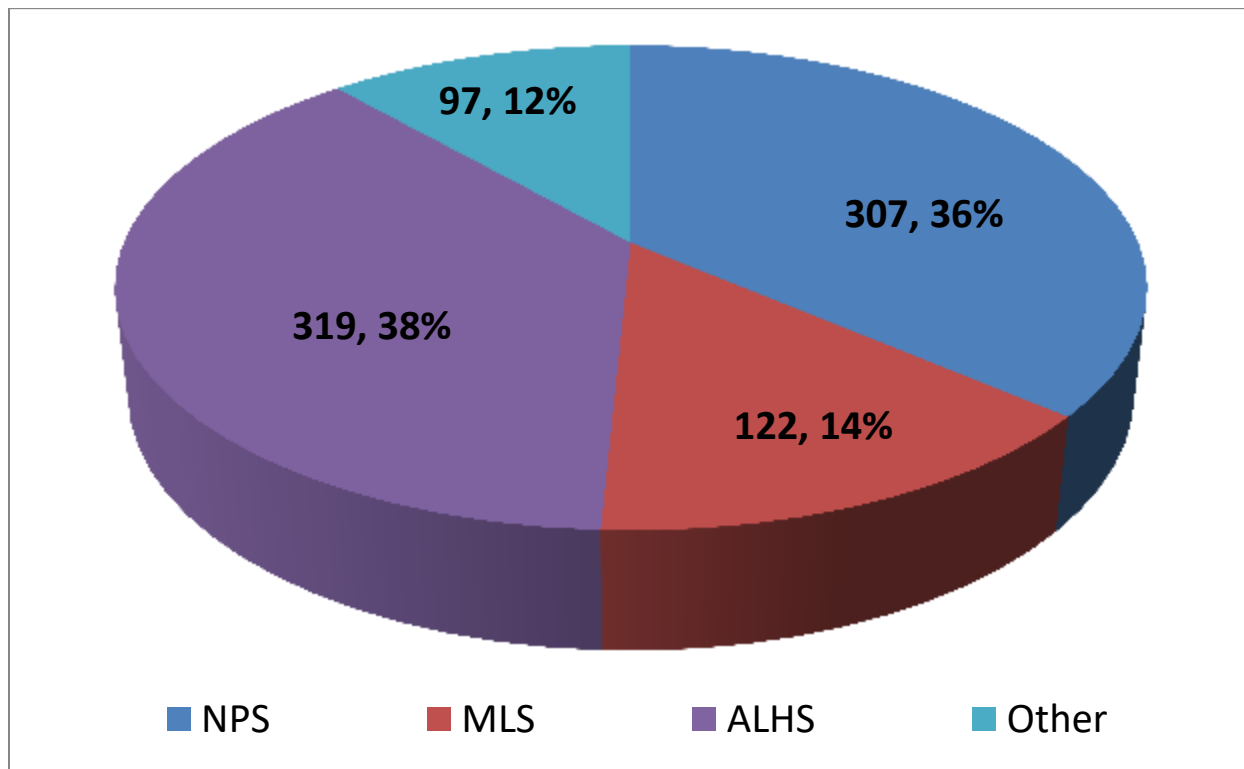
Figure 8 – Pre-Seminary Graduates by High School (1972-1995)**Figure 9 – Pre-Seminary Graduates by High School (1996-2018)**

Figure 10 – Percentage of Male WI ALHS Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track¹⁵⁹

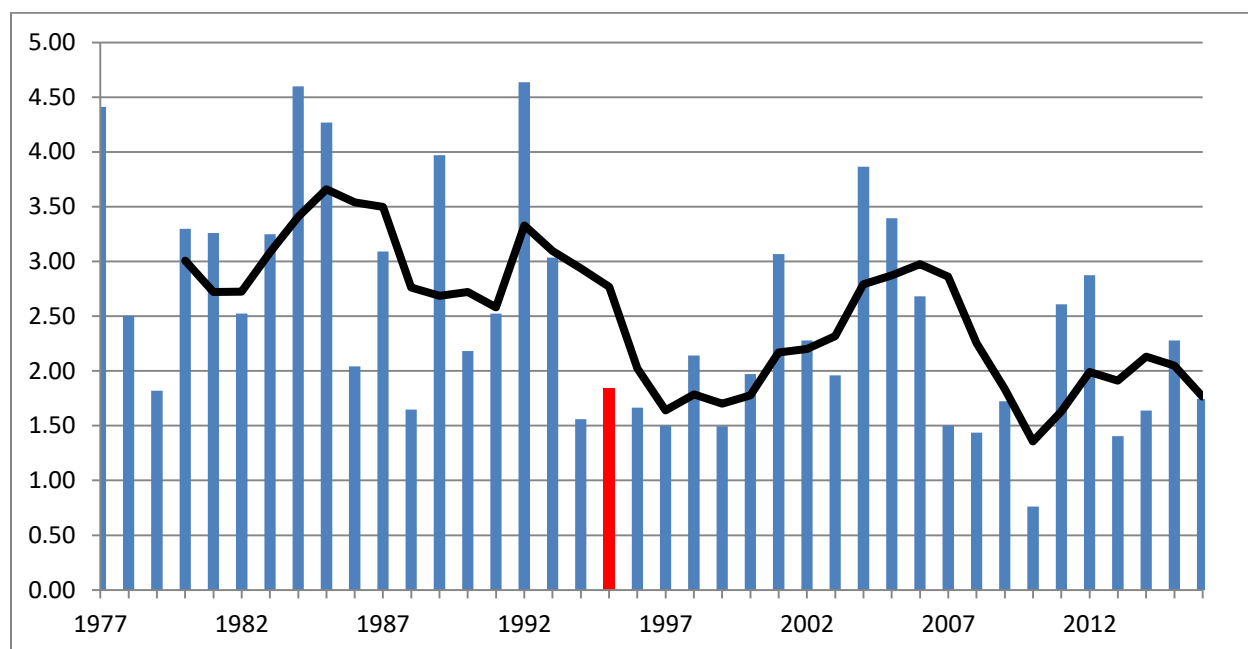
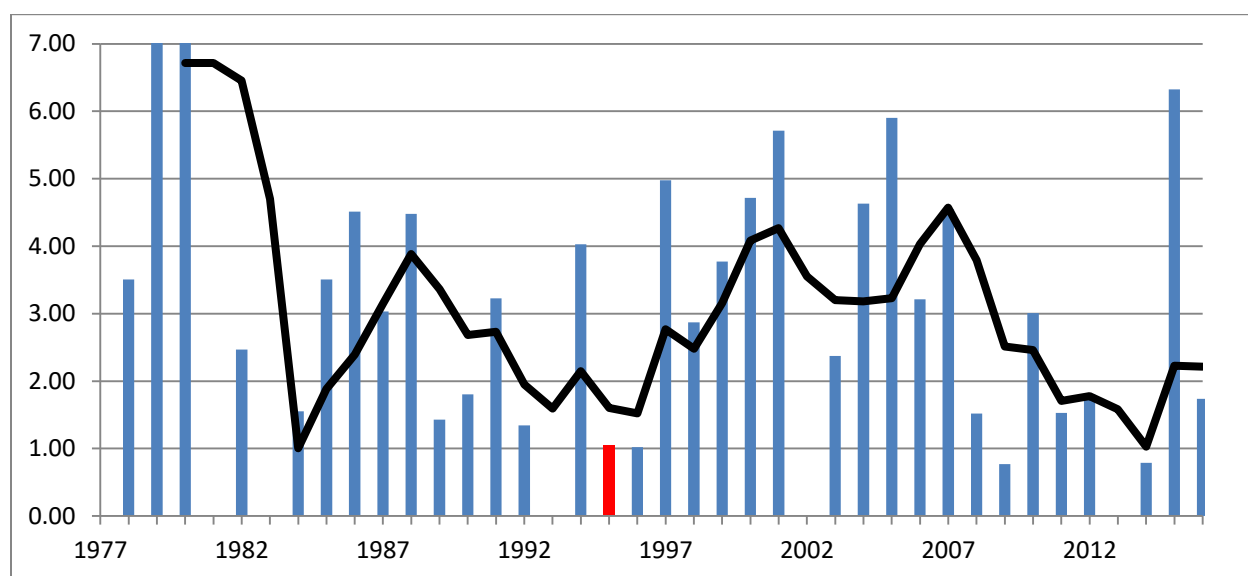


Figure 11 – Percentage of Male MN & SD ALHS Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track¹⁶⁰



159. The schools included in the WI statistic are Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Lakeside Lutheran High School, Luther High School, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Northland Lutheran High School, Shoreland Lutheran High School, Winnebago Lutheran Academy, and Wisconsin Lutheran High School. The number of male graduates from these ALHS and in all subsequent ALHS statistics was estimated by taking the graduation statistics from the WELS Yearbook and dividing them by two (which assumes that approximately half of the graduates each year are male).

160. The schools included in the MN & SD statistic are Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, Saint Croix Lutheran Academy, West Lutheran High School, and Great Plains Lutheran High School in South Dakota.

Table 3 – ALHS Recruitment and Retention

Year	Estimated number of male graduates	Number who enroll in the pastor track	Percent who enroll in the pastor track	Number of pastor track graduates four years later	Percentage of those who enrolled in the pastor track who complete it	Percentage of all ALHS male graduates who graduate from the pastor track
1978	431	20	4.6%	13	65.0%	3.0%
1979	437	11	2.5%	12	109.1%	2.7%
1980	436	21	4.8%	12	57.1%	2.8%
1981	471	19	4.0%	19	100.0%	4.0%
1982	467	27	5.8%	23	85.2%	4.9%
1983	482	21	4.4%	10	47.6%	2.1%
1984	470	16	3.4%	13	81.3%	2.8%
1985	493	15	3.0%	10	66.7%	2.0%
1986	531	16	3.0%	15	93.8%	2.8%
1987	505	16	3.2%	10	62.5%	2.0%
1988	513	21	4.1%	11	52.4%	2.1%
1989	529	28	5.3%	20	71.4%	3.8%
1990	492	16	3.3%	11	68.8%	2.2%
1991	465	18	3.9%	13	72.2%	2.8%
1992	462	13	2.8%	10	76.9%	2.2%
1993	495	13	2.6%	9	69.2%	1.8%
1994	464	23	5.0%	15	65.2%	3.2%
1995	541	14	2.6%	13	92.9%	2.4%
1996	559	13	2.3%	11	84.6%	2.0%
1997	607	21	3.5%	13	61.9%	2.1%
1998	596	26	4.4%	23	88.5%	3.9%
1999	599	29	4.8%	15	51.7%	2.5%
2000	602	24	4.0%	14	58.3%	2.3%
2001	618	33	5.3%	24	72.7%	3.9%
2002	642	30	4.7%	24	80.0%	3.7%
2003	673	16	2.4%	18	112.5%	2.7%
2004	637	18	2.8%	15	83.3%	2.4%
2005	642	13	2.0%	10	76.9%	1.6%
2006	646	19	2.9%	9	47.4%	1.4%
2007	637	15	2.4%	10	66.7%	1.6%
2008	651	25	3.8%	15	60.0%	2.3%
2009	668	13	1.9%	13	100.0%	1.9%
2010	656	13	2.0%	5	38.5%	0.8%
2011	638	19	3.0%	7	36.8%	1.1%

2012	637	16	2.5%	21	131.3%	3.3%
2013	586	20	3.4%	10	50.0%	1.7%
2014	608	11	1.8%	15	136.4%	2.5%
2015	611	24	3.9%			
2016	597	19	3.2%			
2017	582	18	3.1%			

Figure 12 – Estimated Number of Male ALHS Graduates

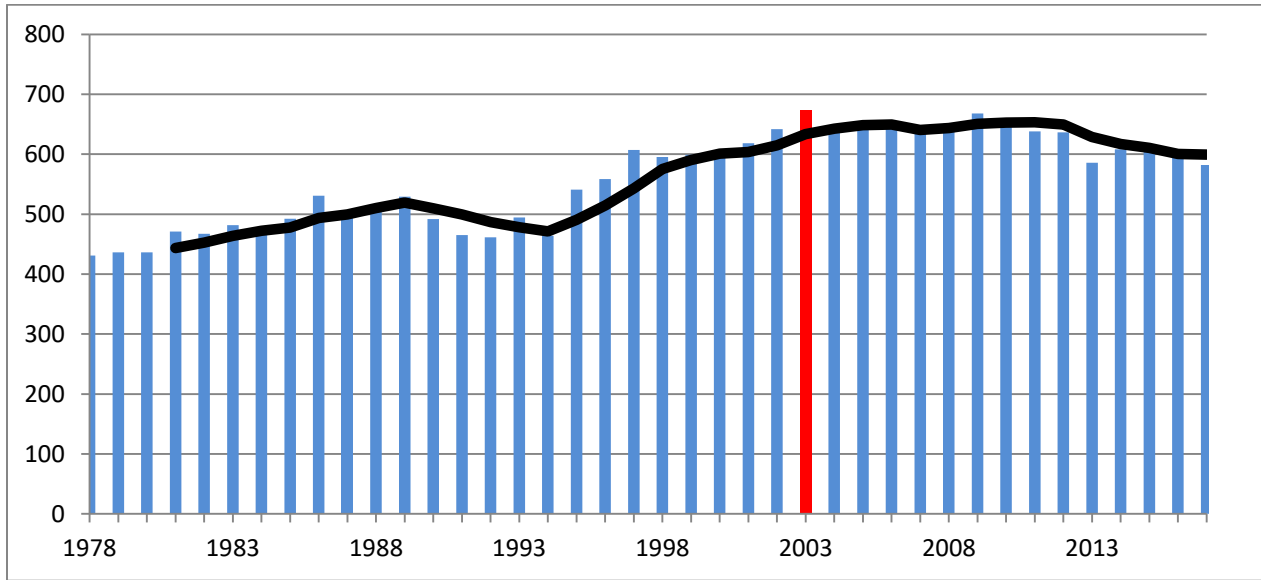


Figure 13 – Number of ALHS Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track

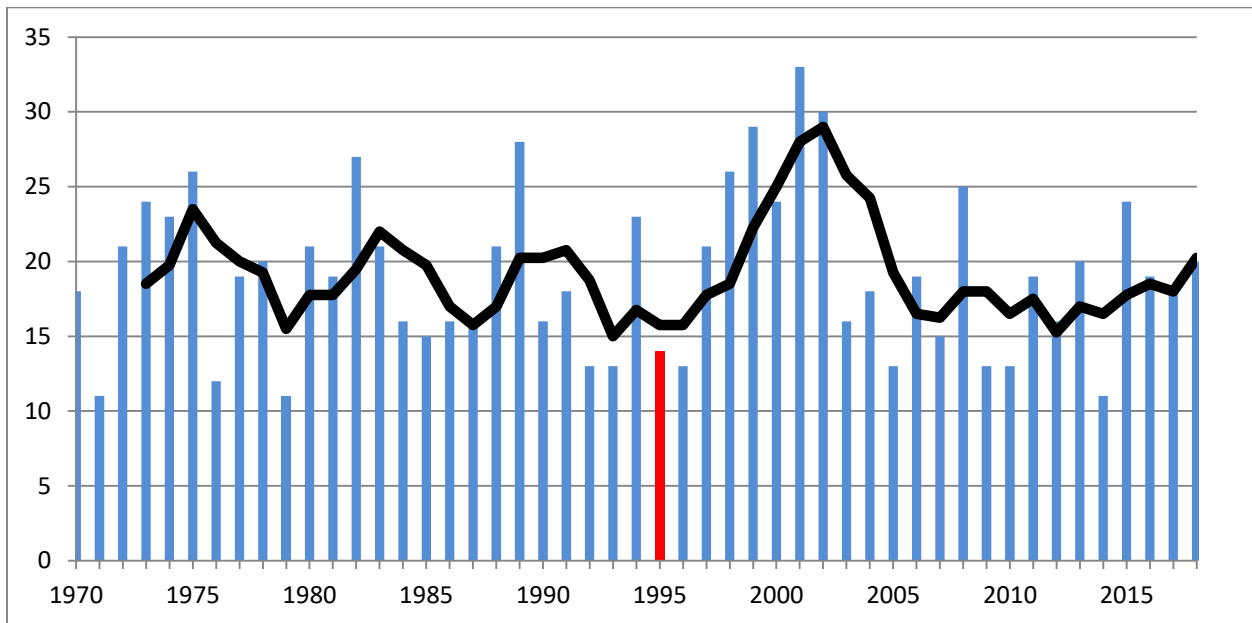


Figure 14 – Percentage of Male ALHS Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track

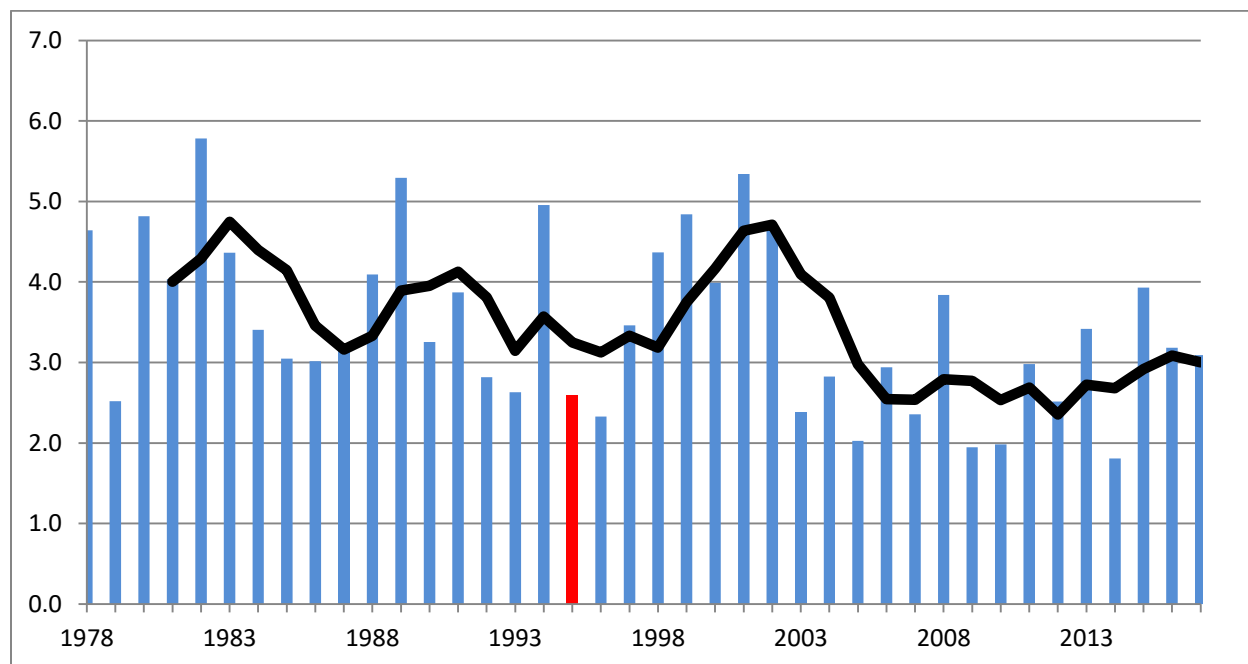
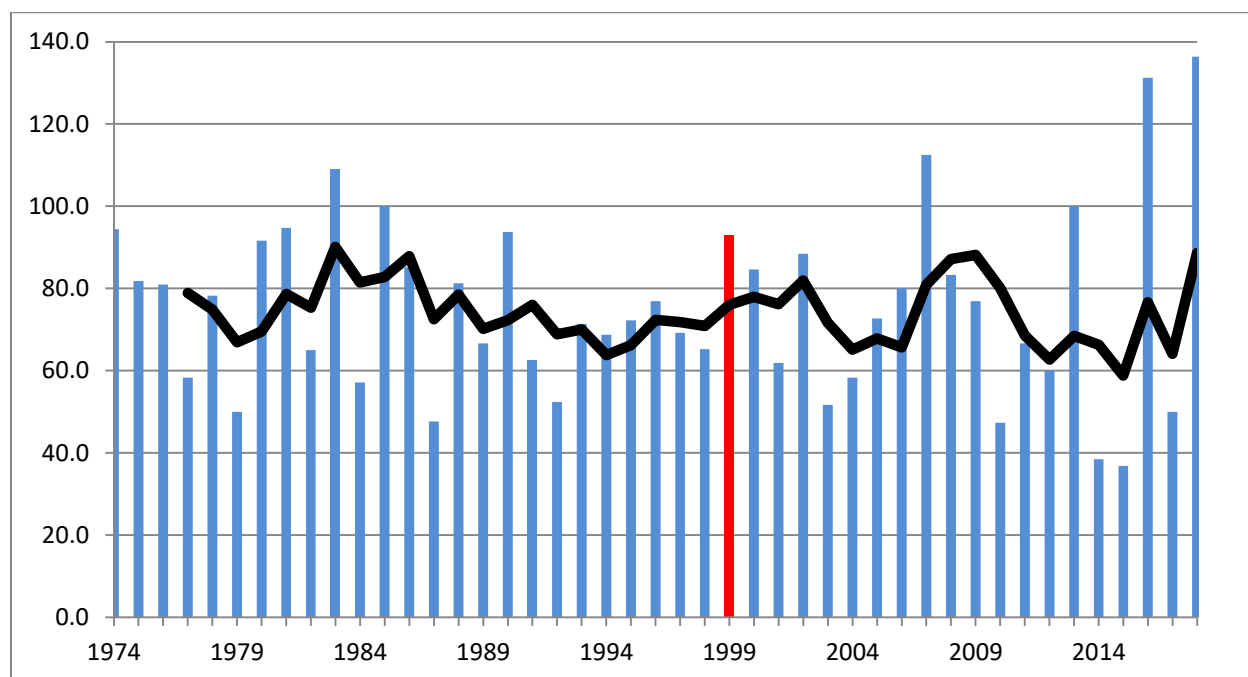


Figure 15 – Pre-Seminary Retention Rate of ALHS Graduates¹⁶¹



161. In this chart, and all subsequent charts which focus on retention or the completion of the pastor track, the year 1999 is highlighted as the graduation year of the first freshman class of MLC. Thus, unlike the tables, which use the year of pre-seminary enrollment, these charts on retention use the year of pre-seminary graduation.

Figure 16 – Percentage of All Male ALHS Graduates Who Completed the Pre-Seminary Program

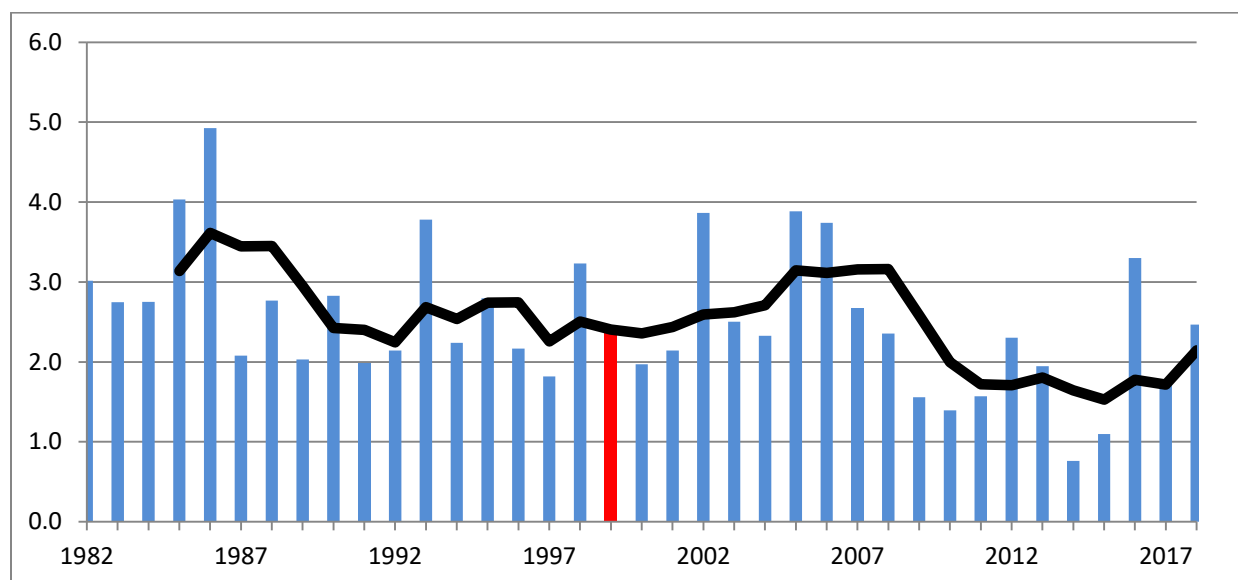


Table 4 – MLA/NLA/MLPS/NPS/LPS Recruitment and Retention

Year	Number of male graduates	Number who enroll in the pastor track	Percent who enroll in the pastor track	Number of pastor track graduates four years later	Percentage of those who enrolled in the pastor track who complete it	Percentage of all male graduates who complete the pastor track
1970	89	50	56.2%	37	74.0%	41.6%
1971	62	27	43.5%	21	77.8%	33.9%
1972	57	28	49.1%	14	50.0%	24.6%
1973	70	34	48.6%	26	76.5%	37.1%
1974	76	39	51.3%	24	61.5%	31.6%
1975	65	32	49.2%	17	53.1%	26.2%
1976	68	28	41.2%	28	100.0%	41.2%
1977	58	22	37.9%	18	81.8%	31.0%
1978	69	34	49.3%	24	70.6%	34.8%
1979	69	28	40.6%	26	92.9%	37.7%
1980	79	45	57.0%	27	60.0%	34.2%
1981	81	43	53.1%	36	83.7%	44.4%
1982	77	31	40.3%	17	54.8%	22.1%
1983	63	27	42.9%	22	81.5%	34.9%
1984	51	26	51.0%	18	69.2%	35.3%

1985	55	31	56.4%	28	90.3%	50.9%
1986	46	24	52.2%	15	62.5%	32.6%
1987	58	21	36.2%	14	66.7%	24.1%
1988	44	22	50.0%	21	95.5%	47.7%
1989	46	27	58.7%	14	51.9%	30.4%
1990	53	35	66.0%	24	68.6%	45.3%
1991	43	23	53.5%	15	65.2%	34.9%
1992	31	17	54.8%	16	94.1%	51.6%
1993	38	16	42.1%	12	75.0%	31.6%
1994	49	17	34.7%	11	64.7%	22.4%
1995	61	26	42.6%	16	61.5%	26.2%
1996	56	21	37.5%	21	100.0%	37.5%
1997	52	17	32.7%	18	105.9%	34.6%
1998	51	21	41.2%	17	81.0%	33.3%
1999	59	16	27.1%	18	112.5%	30.5%
2000	51	27	52.9%	18	66.7%	35.3%
2001	66	23	34.8%	17	73.9%	25.8%
2002	57	18	31.6%	12	66.7%	21.1%
2003	65	27	41.5%	23	85.2%	35.4%
2004	63	19	30.2%	14	73.7%	22.2%
2005	50	17	34.0%	19	111.8%	38.0%
2006	43	10	23.3%	8	80.0%	18.6%
2007	63	24	38.1%	20	83.3%	31.7%
2008	41	11	26.8%	8	72.7%	19.5%
2009	37	15	40.5%	12	80.0%	32.4%
2010	47	10	21.3%	5	50.0%	10.6%
2011	27	12	44.4%	11	91.7%	40.7%
2012	41	21	51.2%	12	57.1%	29.3%
2013	41	12	29.3%	12	100.0%	29.3%
2014	48	13	27.1%	11	84.6%	22.9%
2015	51	22	43.1%			
2016	60	24	40.0%			
2017	48	14	29.2%			
2018	66	38	57.6%			

Figure 17 – Number of MLA/NLA/MLPS/NPS/LPS Male Graduates

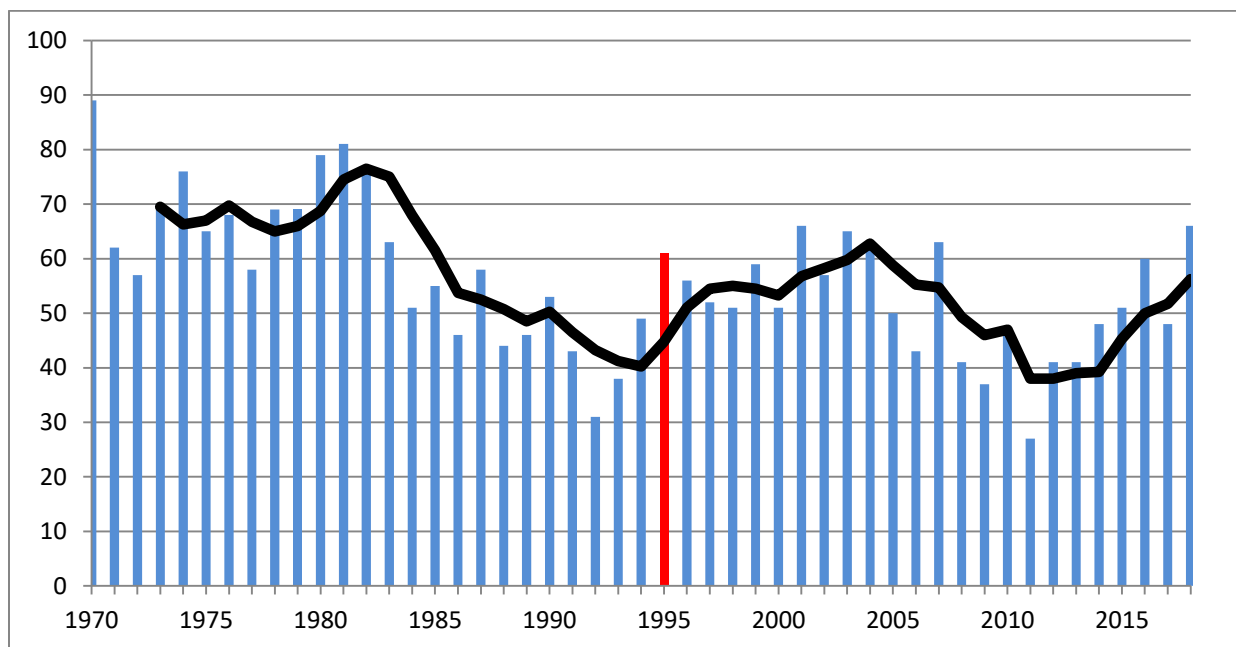


Figure 18 – Number of MLA/NLA/MLPS/NPS/LPS Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track

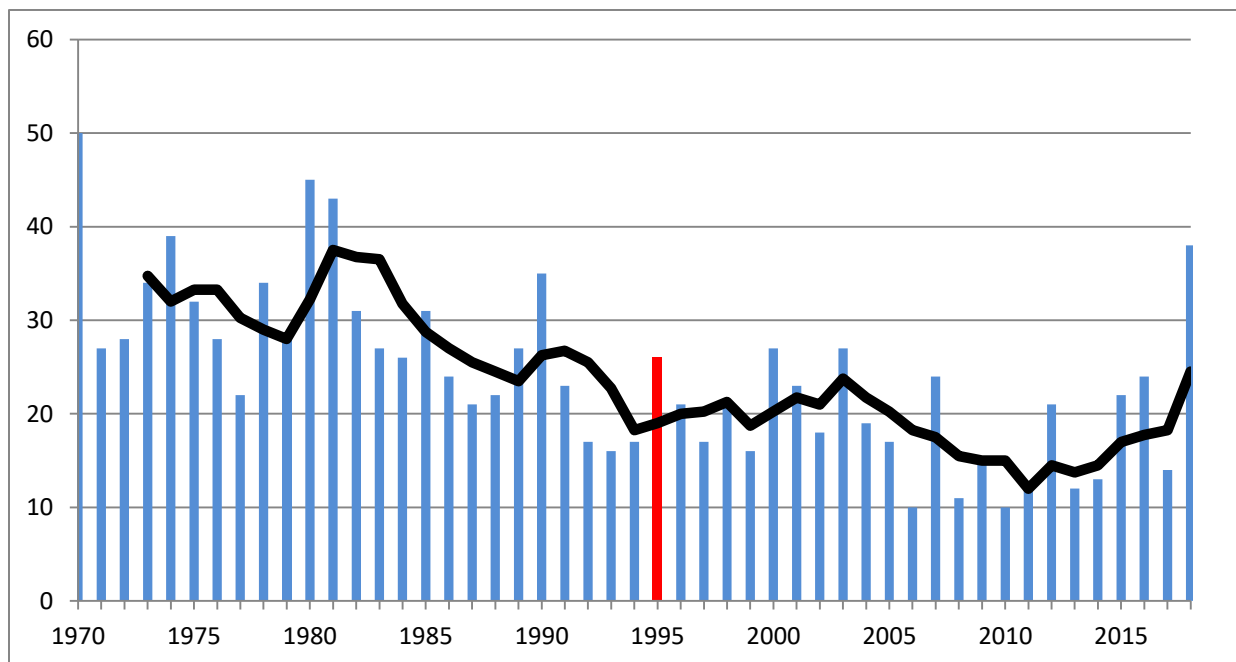


Figure 19 – Percentage of Male MLA/NLA/MLPS/NPS/LPS Male Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track

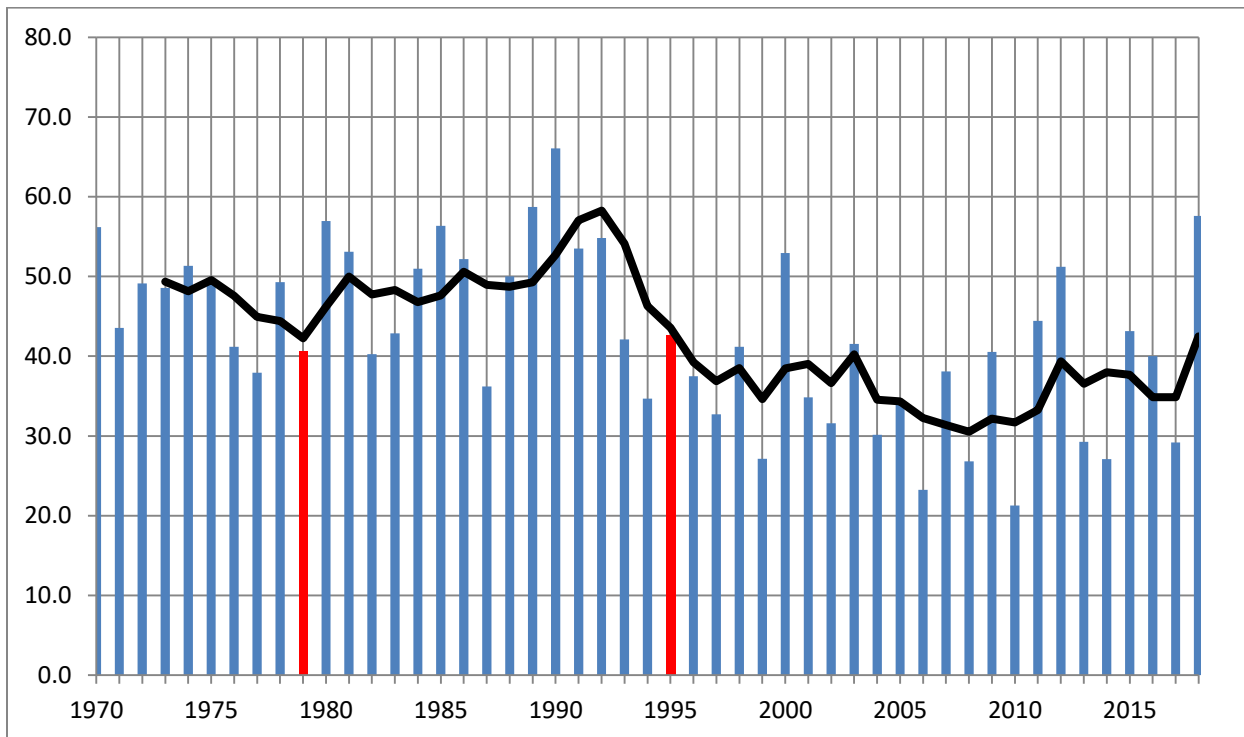


Figure 20 – Pre-Seminary Retention Rate of MLA/NLA/MLPS/NPS/LPS Graduates

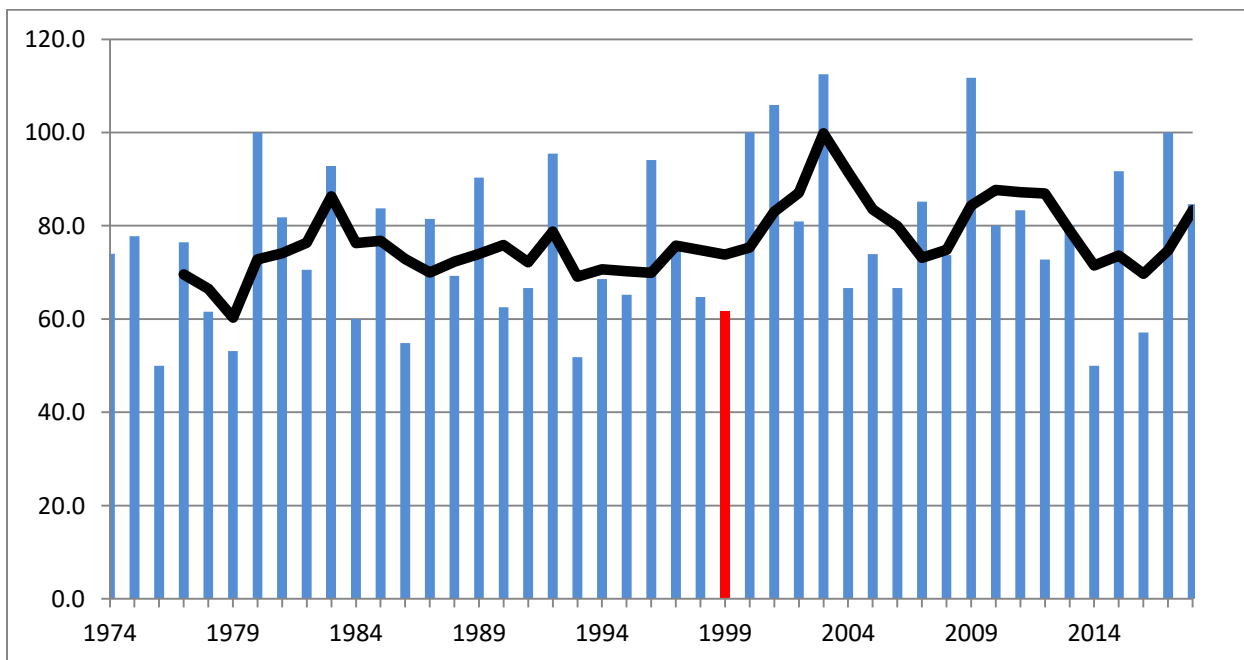


Figure 21 - Percentage of All Male MLA/NLA/MLPS/NPS/LPS Male Graduates Who Completed the Pre-Seminary Program

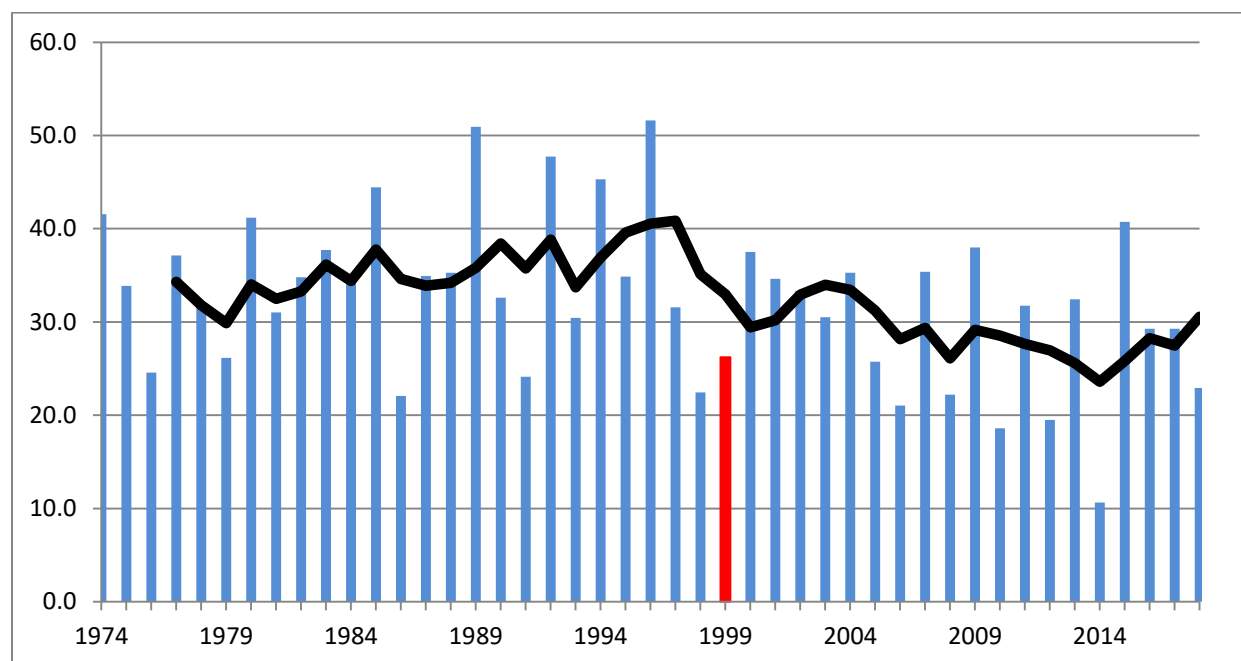


Table 5 – NPS/LPS Recruitment and Retention

Year	Number of male graduates	Number who enroll in the pastor track	Percent who enroll in the pastor track	Number of pastor track graduates four years later	Percentage of those who enrolled in the pastor track who complete it	Percentage of all male graduates who complete the pastor track
1970	44	32	72.7%	26	81.3%	59.1%
1971	28	15	53.6%	15	100.0%	53.6%
1972	29	16	55.2%	7	43.8%	24.1%
1973	38	30	78.9%	21	70.0%	55.3%
1974	30	20	66.7%	16	80.0%	53.3%
1975	33	24	72.7%	14	58.3%	42.4%
1976	30	16	53.3%	19	118.8%	63.3%
1977	30	17	56.7%	15	88.2%	50.0%
1978	26	14	53.8%	8	57.1%	30.8%
1979	32	22	68.8%	19	86.4%	59.4%
1980	38	23	60.5%	16	69.6%	42.1%
1981	45	22	48.9%	15	68.2%	33.3%
1982	44	20	45.5%	11	55.0%	25.0%
1983	28	15	53.6%	12	80.0%	42.9%

1984	22	14	63.6%	11	78.6%	50.0%
1985	28	18	64.3%	15	83.3%	53.6%
1986	22	12	54.5%	8	66.7%	36.4%
1987	24	12	50%	7	58.3%	29.2%
1988	23	10	43.5%	11	110.0%	47.8%
1989	20	13	65%	7	53.8%	35.0%
1990	34	26	76.5%	16	61.5%	47.1%
1991	23	13	56.5%	6	46.2%	26.1%
1992	17	8	47.1%	8	100.0%	47.1%
1993	17	10	58.8%	9	90.0%	52.9%
1994	28	11	39.3%	7	63.6%	25.0%
1995	34	17	50%	11	64.7%	32.4%
1996	56	21	37.5%	19	90.5%	33.9%
1997	52	17	32.7%	17	100.0%	32.7%
1998	51	21	41.2%	16	76.2%	31.4%
1999	59	16	27.1%	18	112.5%	30.5%
2000	51	27	52.9%	18	66.7%	35.3%
2001	66	23	34.8%	17	73.9%	25.8%
2002	57	18	31.6%	12	66.7%	21.1%
2003	65	27	41.5%	23	85.2%	35.4%
2004	63	19	29.7%	14	73.7%	22.2%
2005	50	17	34%	19	111.8%	38.0%
2006	43	10	23.3%	8	80.0%	18.6%
2007	63	24	38.1%	20	83.3%	31.7%
2008	41	11	26.8%	8	72.7%	19.5%
2009	37	15	40.5%	12	80.0%	32.4%
2010	47	10	21.3%	5	50.0%	10.6%
2011	27	12	44.4%	11	91.7%	40.7%
2012	41	21	51.2%	12	57.1%	29.3%
2013	41	12	29.3%	12	100.0%	29.3%
2014	48	13	27.1%	11	84.6%	22.9%
2015	51	22	43.1%			
2016	60	24	40%			
2017	48	14	29.2%			
2018	66	38	57.6%			

Figure 22 – Percentage of Male NPS/LPS Male Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track

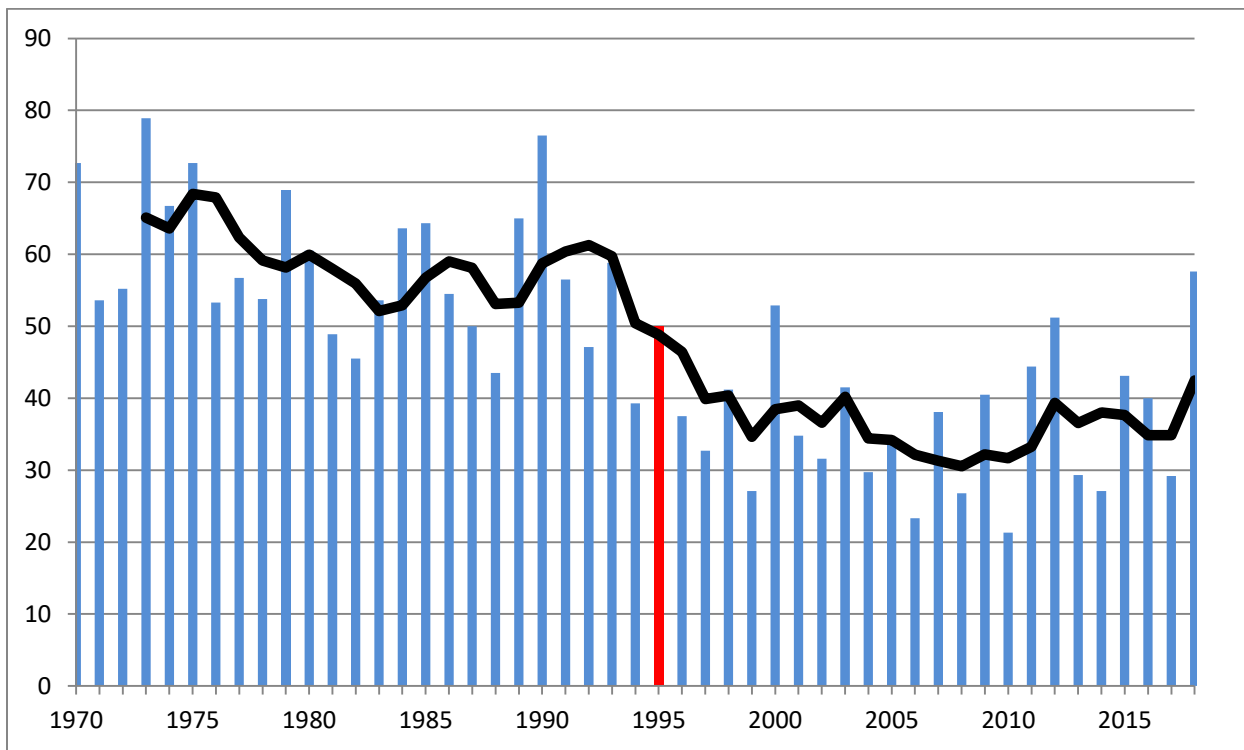


Figure 23 – Pre-Seminary Retention Rate of NPS/LPS Graduates

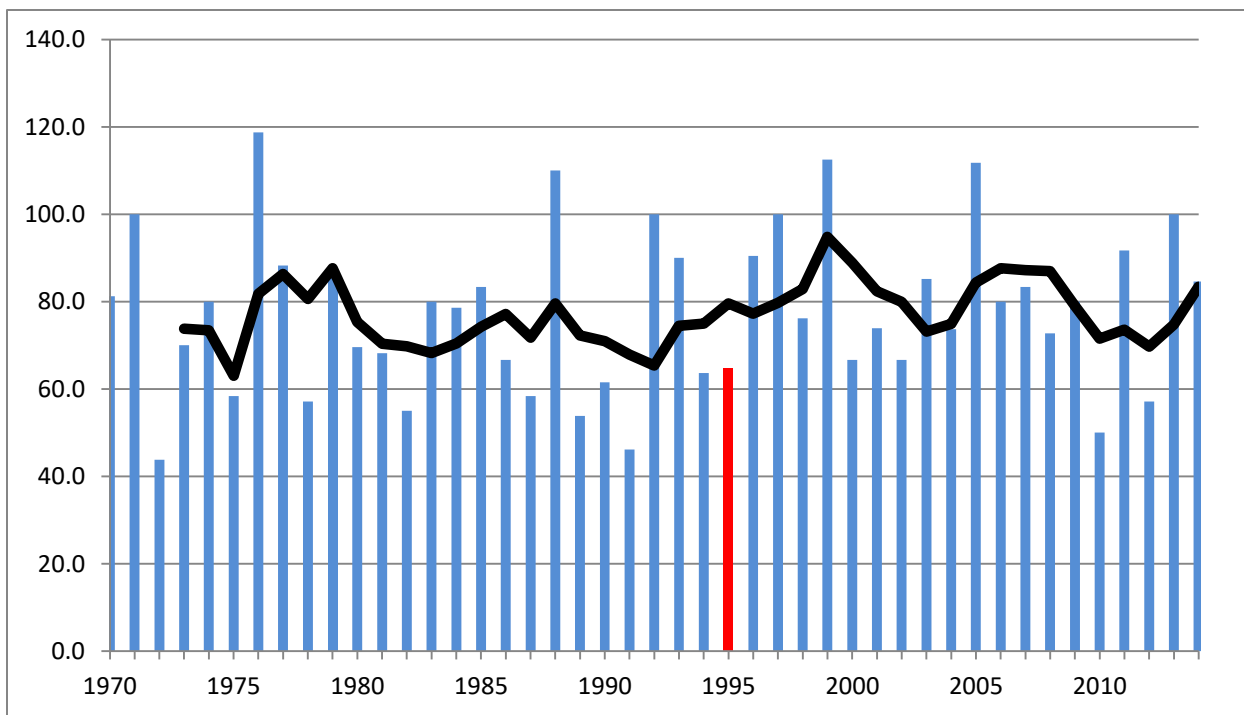


Figure 24 - Percentage of All Male NPS/LPS Male Graduates Who Completed the Pre-Seminary Program

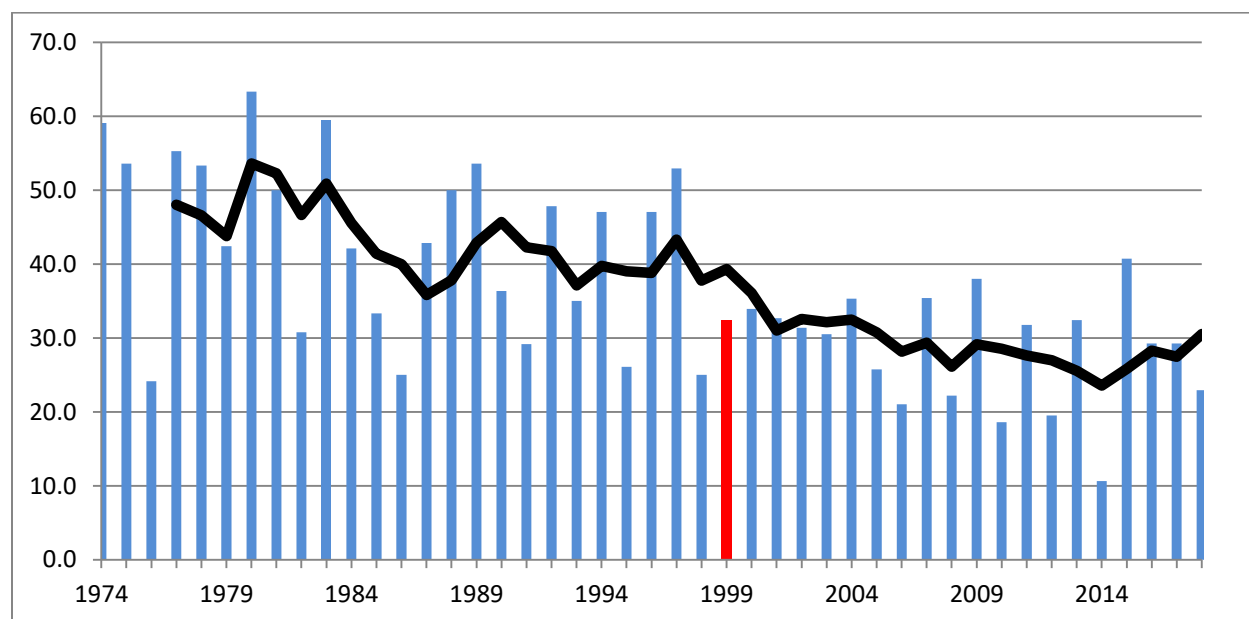


Table 6 – MLS Recruitment and Retention

Year	Number of male graduates	Number who enroll in the pastor track	Percent who enroll in the pastor track	Number of pastor track graduates four years later	Percentage of those who enrolled in the pastor track who complete it	Percentage of all male graduates who complete the pastor track
1970	29	13	44.8%	6	46.2%	20.7%
1971	28	14	50.0%	10	71.4%	35.7%
1972	32	19	59.4%	16	84.2%	50.0%
1973	28	10	35.7%	5	50.0%	17.9%
1974	38	19	50.0%	11	57.9%	28.9%
1975	35	12	34.3%	9	75.0%	25.7%
1976	27	7	25.9%	5	71.4%	18.5%
1977	29	8	27.6%	6	75.0%	20.7%
1978	35	12	34.3%	6	50.0%	17.1%
1979	25	9	36.0%	4	44.4%	16.0%
1980	32	10	31.3%	3	30.0%	9.4%
1981	29	12	41.4%	9	75.0%	31.0%
1982	26	4	15.4%	4	100.0%	15.4%
1983	35	10	28.6%	8	80.0%	22.9%
1984	34	8	23.5%	8	100.0%	23.5%

1985	34	7	20.6%	2	28.6%	5.9%
1986	25	9	36.0%	10	111.1%	40.0%
1987	30	6	20.0%	2	33.3%	6.7%
1988	41	7	17.1%	5	71.4%	12.2%
1989	24	15	62.5%	10	66.7%	41.7%
1990	35	8	22.9%	7	87.5%	20.0%
1991	38	12	31.6%	11	91.7%	28.9%
1992	25	4	16.0%	3	75.0%	12.0%
1993	23	9	39.1%	4	44.4%	17.4%
1994	26	10	38.5%	5	50.0%	19.2%
1995	33	5	15.2%	4	80.0%	12.1%
1996	47	14	29.8%	5	35.7%	10.6%
1997	31	8	25.8%	10	125.0%	32.3%
1998	33	9	27.3%	7	77.8%	21.2%
1999	35	11	31.4%	6	54.5%	17.1%
2000	40	12	30.0%	14	116.7%	35.0%
2001	37	9	24.3%	7	77.8%	18.9%
2002	36	10	27.8%	7	70.0%	19.4%
2003	36	6	16.7%	4	66.7%	11.1%
2004	37	12	32.4%	4	33.3%	10.8%
2005	34	6	17.6%	8	133.3%	23.5%
2006	32	12	37.5%	7	58.3%	21.9%
2007	25	5	20.0%	3	60.0%	12.0%
2008	32	10	31.3%	3	30.0%	9.4%
2009	27	6	22.2%	4	66.7%	14.8%
2010	24	4	16.7%	4	100.0%	16.7%
2011	21	9	42.9%	3	33.3%	14.3%
2012	23	5	21.7%	1	20.0%	4.3%
2013	25	10	40.0%	6	60.0%	24.0%
2014	33	6	18.2%	3	50.0%	9.1%
2015	37	2	5.4%			
2016	21	4	19.0%			
2017	21	8	38.1%			
2018	31	6	19.4%			

Figure 25 – Number of MLS Male Graduates

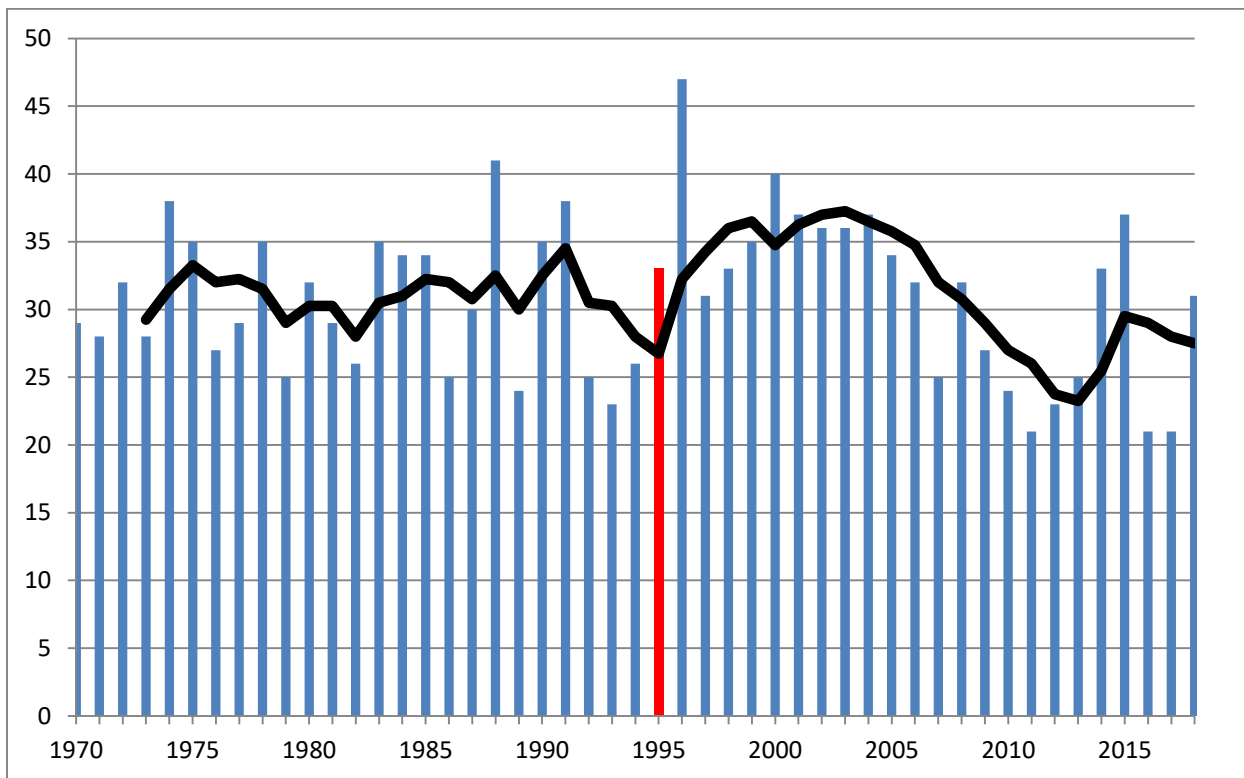


Figure 26 – Number of MLS Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track

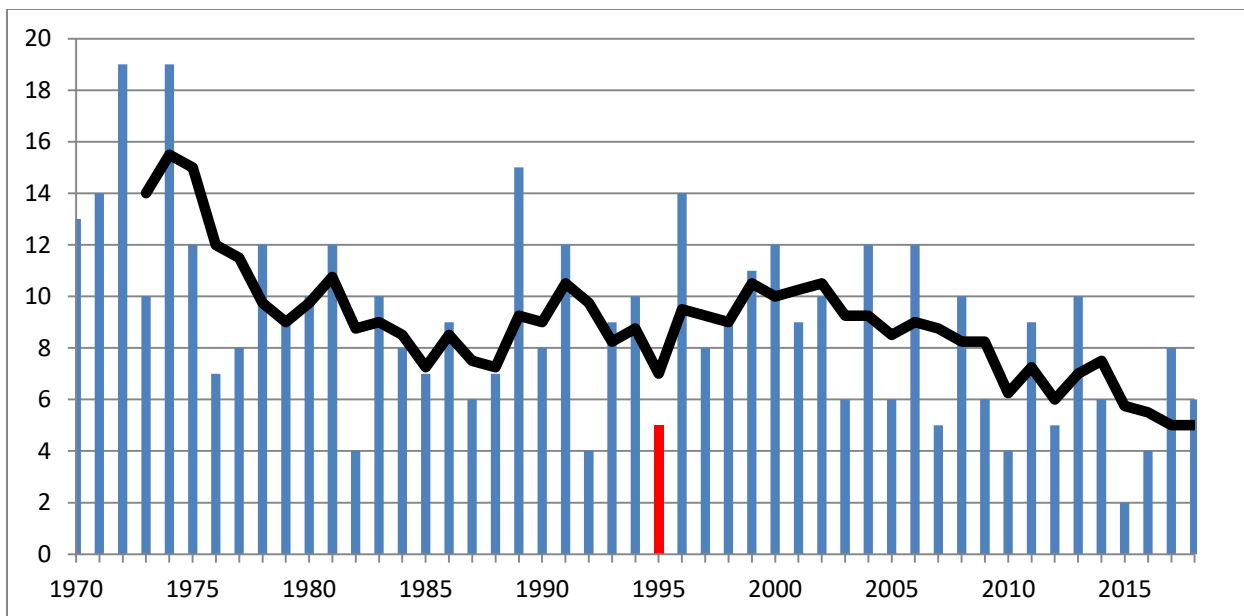


Figure 27 – Percentage of Male MLS Graduates Enrolling in the Pastor Track

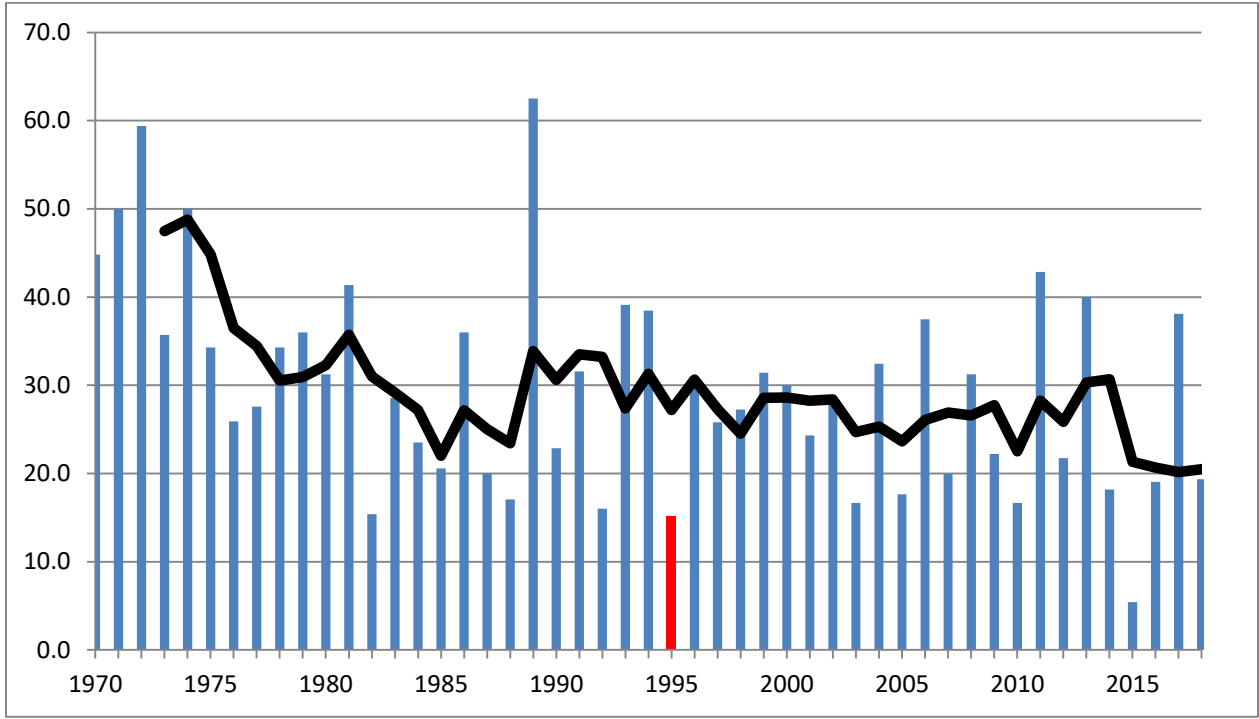


Figure 28 – Pre-Seminary Retention Rate of MLS Graduates

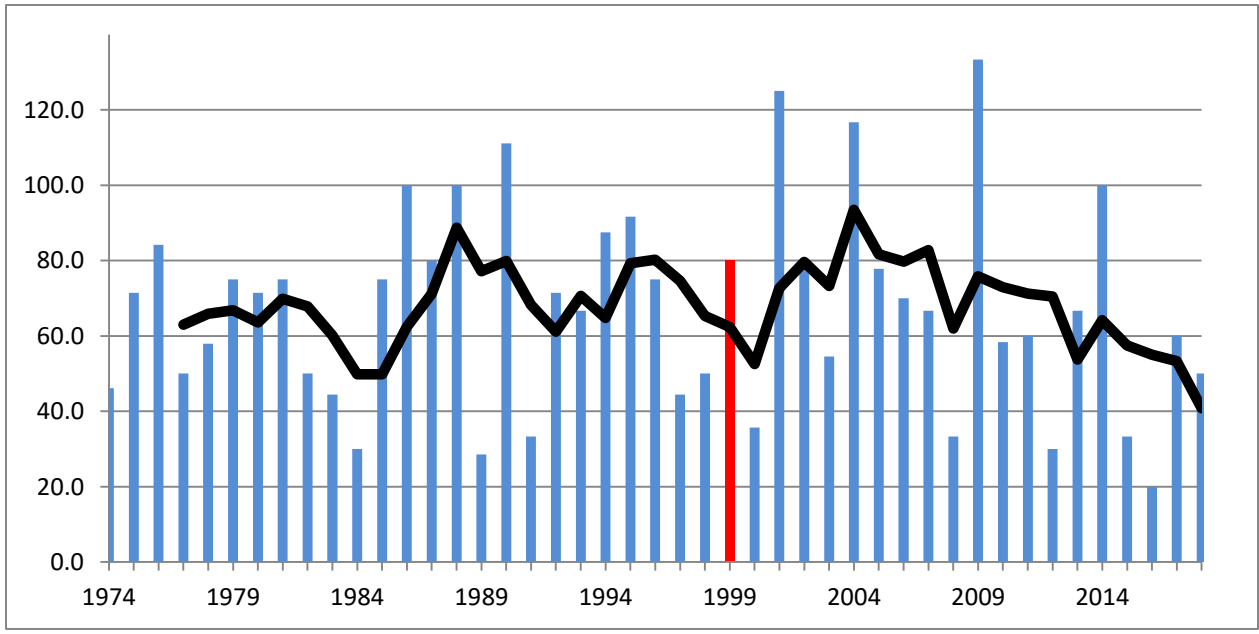
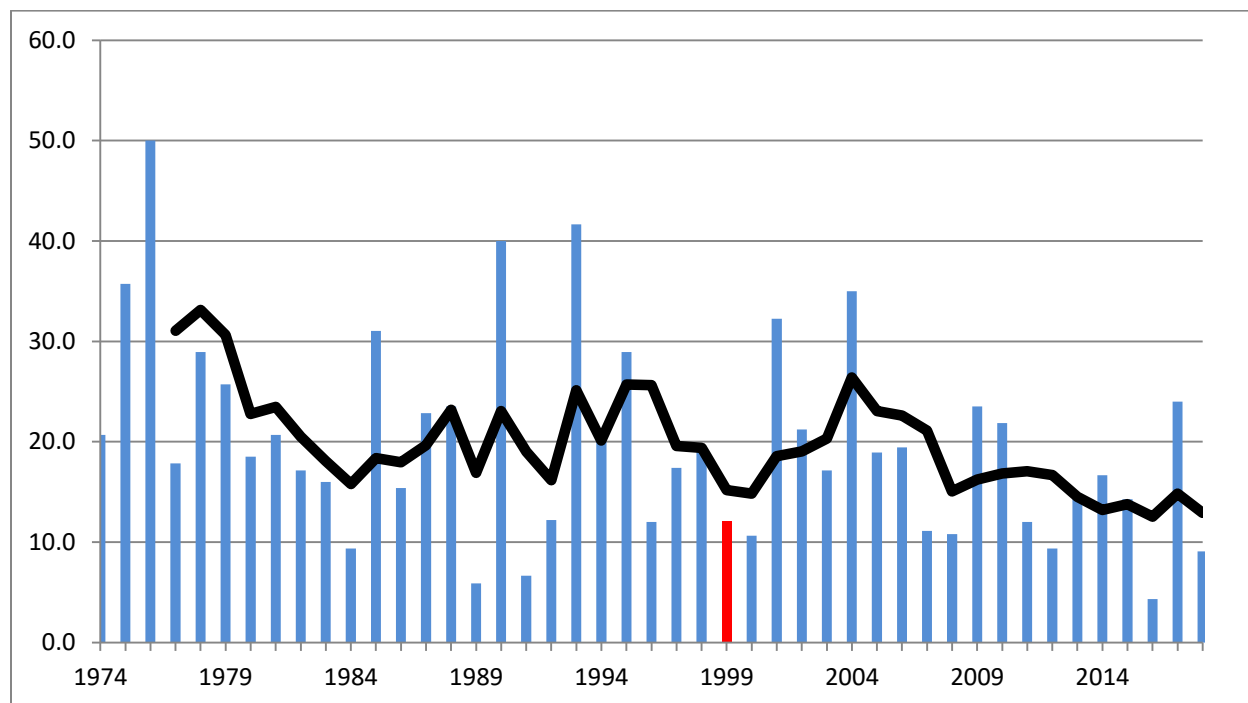


Figure 29 – Percentage of All Male MLS Graduates Who Completed the Pre-Seminary Program



APPENDIX 2: CROSSOVER STATISTICS

As mentioned in the body of the paper, the “crossover” numbers have actually favored the pastor track since the amalgamation, when compared to what was happening before the amalgamation.

The following charts show the crossover to and from the pastor track.¹⁶²

Discontinued the Pastor Track

Years	1970-1995	1995-2018
Number of students who discontinued from the pastor track	522	342
Percentage of students who discontinued from the pastor track	31.1%	28.0%
Number of these students who enrolled in a program at DMLC or MLC	70	70
Percentage of these students who enrolled in a different program at DMLC or MLC	13.4%	20.3%
Number of these students who completed a different program at DMLC or MLC	45	30
Number of these students still in the education or staff ministry programs	0	6
Percentage of these students who finished the education or staff ministry program	64.3%	44.3% (54.3%)*
Total percentage of those who discontinued from the pastor track who finished a program at DMLC or MLC	8.6%	9.0% (11.0%)*

**The percentages in parentheses would be the percentage if all still in the program complete it.*

¹⁶² Neither chart includes information about students who left the pastor track and later returned and finished. They also do not include the men who completed an education program and then enrolled in the seminary certification program, which has happened a number of times as of late. The numbers presented were up-to-date in October, 2018.

Joined Pastor Track

Years	1970-1995	1995-2018
Number of students who left another program at DMLC or MLC and joined the pastor track	16	33
Number of those students who completed the pastor track	5	15
Number of students still in the pre-seminary program	0	7
Percentage of students who finished the pre-seminary program	31.3%	45.5% (66.7%)*

** The percentage in parentheses would be the percentage if all still in the program complete it.*

An interesting aspect concerning these statistics is the timing. The majority of the crossover has taken place in recent years. Out of the seventy who switched from the pastor track to the teacher track or staff ministry program, forty-five of them have done so since 2010. Similarly, of the thirty-three men who have switched to the pastor track, twenty-two have done so since 2010. Thus, crossover is becoming more of a factor, but those numbers—although the pastor track loses two for each one it gains—still favor the pre-seminary program in comparison to what the crossover rates had been before the amalgamation. Additionally, since these students who switch to the pastor track are well aware of the demands of the program and likely have a strong and encouraging group of pastor track friends, more of those who switch are actually completing the program and continuing on to the seminary.

APPENDIX 3: PASTOR TRACK CURRICULUM COMPARISON

The two columns on the following page compare the pre-seminary program curriculum from the 1996-97 school year to the current school year. Since the pastor track curriculum did not undergo any immediate changes with the amalgamation, the left column essentially represents what the pastor track curriculum was at NWC in its final year. I have attempted to line up classes which correspond directly or most closely with each other in the two columns.

The name of the course or area is listed first. Anything inside parentheses indicates how many courses a pastor track student had to take in that area and how many different course options the pastor track student had to choose from. (For example, in the 1996-97 school year, a pastor track student had to take three science courses, and he had five different science courses to choose from. In the 2018-19 school year, a student had to take one non-biblical language, and he had four different languages—Latin, German, Spanish, and Mandarin—to choose from.)¹⁶³ The last number indicates the credit value for the listed course or cluster of courses.¹⁶⁴

As noted in the body of the paper, for a span of twenty-five years, relatively little has changed in regard to the curriculum as a whole. The required number of credits has dropped from 134 to 130/131. The options of classes which fit specific course requirements have expanded. The options of area-specific and free electives have somewhat changed and expanded. Even though a current pre-seminary student actually has less credit hours designated for free electives, he still has more choices all along the way and many more choices in the area of free electives.

163. In the case of the Greek Elective, the number of available courses for a student was dependent upon whether he was taking Koine or Classical Greek.

164. The differing number of credits required in Basic Greek also depends upon whether the student is in Koine or Classical Greek. Koine requires 22, whereas Classical requires 19. This difference in credits directly affects how many credits a student needs from free electives as well. The variance of credits required for the Non-biblical Language also depends upon which language is chosen: Confessional Languages – 19; Latin – 13; German, Spanish, and Mandarin – 12. (Thus, Confessional Language students will usually have even fewer free electives.)

1996-97 School Year

Basic Greek – 14
 Greek Elective (1 of 6) – 3/4
 Hebrew – 14
 Non-biblical language (1 of 3) – 9
 Introduction to Psychology – 4
 Introduction to Philosophy – 3
 Symbolics – 3
 St. John’s Gospel – 3
 Acts – 3
 First Corinthians – 3
 OT Introduction – 4
 NT Introduction – 4

 Western Civilization I – 4
 Western Civilization II – 4
 20th Century America – 3

 English Composition – 3
 Introduction to Literature – 4
 British Literature Elective (1 of 5) – 3
 Public Speaking – 3

 Math – 3
 Science Electives (3 of 5) – 9/10

 Psych./Sociology Elective (1 of 3) – 3

 Introduction to Computers – 3

 Perception of Music – 3

 Physical Education – 1

 Free Electives – 18

2018-19 School Year¹⁶⁵

Basic Greek – 19/22
 Greek Elective (1 of 5/7) – 3
 Hebrew – 14
 Non-biblical Language (1 of 4) – 12/13/19
 Introduction to Psychology – 4
 Introduction to Philosophy – 3
 Symbolics – 3
 St. John’s Gospel – 3
 Acts – 3
 1 Corinthians – 3
 ****BHL I, II, & III*** – 9

 The Rise of the West – 3
 ****The Modern West*** – 3
 ****U.S. History Since 1945*** – 3
History Elective (1 of 13) – 3

 ****Rhetoric and Composition*** – 3
 ****Literature Seminar Elective (1 of 3)*** – 3
English Elective (1 of 9) – 3
 Advanced Christian Rhetoric – 3
 ****Interpersonal Communication*** – 3

 ****Mathematics (1 of 4)*** – 3
 ****Science (1 of 7)*** – 3
Science Elective (1 of many) – 3

 ****Intercultural Elective (1 of 10)*** – 3-6

Vocal Music Requirement (1 of 3) – 1
 ****Fine Arts Elective (1 of 4)*** – 3

 ****Physical Education*** – 1
 ****Fitness for Life*** – 1

 Free Electives – 9/12

165. Bold and italics indicate a class is cross-taught and generally has a fairly balanced mix of pastor and teacher track students. An asterisk indicates that a class is part of the required general education curriculum at MLC.

APPENDIX 4: PASTOR TRACK CO-CURRICULAR COMPARISON

The lists below indicate the various co-curricular activities available to pre-seminary students at NWC in its final years and at MLC presently. The majority of the lists are much longer for MLC than NWC, however, that is in part due to the fact that MLC provides some lists of its co-curricular activities, whereas the lists of co-curricular opportunities offered at NWC have been pieced together by a variety of sources and are perhaps incomplete.¹⁶⁶ However, not all of the co-curriculars found on MLC's lists seem to actually occur regularly or on a yearly basis, and I have attempted to note that.

NWC Intercollegiate Athletics

Football, Soccer, Basketball, Baseball, Tennis, Golf, Track, Wrestling

MLC Intercollegiate Athletics

Football, Soccer, Basketball, Baseball, Tennis, Golf, Track, Cross Country

NWC Intramurals

Flag Football, Indoor Soccer, Basketball, Bowling, Volleyball, Softball, Tennis

MLC Intramurals¹⁶⁷

Sand Volleyball, Indoor Volleyball, 5-on-5 Basketball, 3-on-3 Basketball, Softball¹⁶⁸

166. The information for NWC has been compiled from Toppe, *Holding the Course* and the 1990, 1991, and 1992 NWC "MNEMA" yearbooks, accessed from "Northwestern College," Yearbooks, MLC History—The Way It Was, Martin Luther College, 22 February 2019, <https://mlc-wels.edu/history/yearbooks/northwestern-college/>.

167. The listed intramurals are the ones which were there while I attended MLC and, to my knowledge, still have annual seasons. The Martin Luther College 2018-19 Undergraduate Catalog also lists tennis, indoor soccer, bowling, badminton, and flag football. While opportunities to play most of these sports in a somewhat organized way do usually occur at least once a year, I am not aware of them being official school-sanctioned intramural sports.

168. Both volleyballs and softball are coed leagues, whereas both basketballs have separate leagues for men and women.

NWC Music Opportunities

Piano Lessons, Organ Lessons, College Band, Jazz Ensemble, College Quartet, College Male Chorus, Touring Choir

MLC Music Opportunities¹⁶⁹

Piano Lessons, Organ Lessons, Instrumental Lessons, Jazz Band, Brass Ensemble, String Ensemble, Pep Band, Hosanna Ringers, Pit Orchestra, Percussion Ensemble, Woodwind Ensemble, College Band, Men's Chorus, Chorale, College Choir

Other NWC Opportunities

Forum, Yearbook, Campus Newspaper, Dorm Council, Athletic Board, Intramural Board, Audio-Visual Crew, Basketball Cheerleaders, Travel-Canvass-Witness

Other MLC Opportunities¹⁷⁰

Forum, Anchor Service Club, Art in Ministry, Audio-Visual Service Organization, Aulic Committee, Campus Tour Guides, Health & Wellness Committee, Hockey Club, Intramural Board, Meet Math, New Friends Group, Photography Team, Newspaper Club, Student Ambassadors, Student Athletic Advisory Committee, Student Senate, Daylight Ministry, Study Abroad

169. This list is taken from "Martin Luther College 2018-19 Quick Facts," Martin Luther College, 21 February 2019, <https://mlc-wels.edu/about/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/07/MLC-Quick-Facts-2018-19.pdf>. Although smaller bands and ensembles do end up playing for different events or worship services on and off campus, I do not believe that many of the smaller groups listed exist as regular and specific school-sanctioned bands or ensembles.

170. This list comes from "Quick Facts," Martin Luther College, 21 February 2019, <https://mlc-wels.edu/about/quick-facts/>. As noted previously, NWC may have had many more opportunities which would have fallen under the "club" category which many of these MLC opportunities do, but they are not well-documented.

APPENDIX 5: SEMINARY MARRIAGE RATES

The table and charts below show the marriage rates of WLS classes from 1986 to the present, with the listed year indicating the calendar year in which the school year began. The information has been compiled from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Student Directories for those years. Thus, the data reflects the class information on number of students and marriages at the beginning of the school year and does not take into account the fact that some of those students perhaps dropped out or got married during that school year.

The highlighted years on the table and charts correspond to the first graduating class of the MLC pre-seminary program. Since these men only spent one year at the amalgamated college, however, the rates for that class were not noticeably affected. Nevertheless, the percentage of Juniors who were married the next year—after spending only two years at MLC—rose significantly, and the percentage of Juniors who are married has customarily remained much higher ever since. The impact of the amalgamation on the marriage rates of the other classes can also be seen as well.

Overall, during the last ten years when NWC graduates entered WLS, 13.2% of the Juniors were married; 28.0% of the Middlers; 41.1% of the Vicars; 55.4% of the Seniors; 34.6% of the entire student body; and 32.5% of the on-campus student body (non-vicars). Since the amalgamation, those numbers have all risen. In the past twenty-three years, 27.4% of the Juniors were married; 44.7% of the Middlers; 58.4% of the Vicars; 67.5% of the Seniors; 49.0% of the entire student body; and 46.1% of the on-campus student body.¹⁷¹

171. These statistics do also include the Middler, Vicar, and Senior classes during the first few years after the amalgamation, although they were NWC graduates and would not have been affected by the amalgamation. Even so, the differences in the marriage rates are quite significant.

Table 1 – Seminary Marriage Rates

Year	Juniors Married	Juniors Total	Percentage of Juniors Married	Middlers Married	Middlers Total	Percentage of Middlers Married	Vicars Married	Vicars Total	Percentage of Vicars Married	Seniors Married	Seniors Total	Percentage of Seniors Married	Percentage of Entire Student Body Married	Percentage of Non-Vicars Married
2018	13	33	39.4%	15	28	53.6%	15	26	57.7%	17	27	63.0%	52.6%	51.1%
2017	12	31	38.7%	12	26	46.2%	15	27	55.6%	23	26	88.5%	56.4%	56.6%
2016	10	32	31.3%	12	30	40.0%	19	25	76.0%	22	27	81.5%	55.3%	49.4%
2015	8	31	25.8%	12	28	42.9%	23	30	76.7%	21	33	63.6%	52.5%	44.6%
2014	9	29	31.0%	17	30	56.7%	19	32	59.4%	20	30	66.7%	53.7%	51.7%
2013	10	32	31.3%	14	31	45.2%	18	34	52.9%	13	23	56.5%	45.8%	43.0%
2012	10	37	27.0%	14	35	40.0%	12	23	52.2%	22	37	59.5%	43.9%	42.2%
2011	9	35	25.7%	7	23	30.4%	20	35	57.1%	25	30	83.3%	49.6%	46.6%
2010	5	29	17.2%	16	38	42.1%	27	33	81.8%	20	41	48.8%	48.2%	38.0%
2009	10	39	25.6%	24	35	68.6%	19	41	46.3%	33	42	78.6%	54.8%	57.8%
2008	18	36	50.0%	12	41	29.3%	29	44	65.9%	27	38	71.1%	54.1%	49.6%
2007	14	46	30.4%	27	47	57.4%	26	40	65.0%	25	42	59.5%	52.6%	48.9%
2006	19	48	39.6%	26	43	60.5%	21	41	51.2%	24	35	68.6%	53.9%	54.8%
2005	15	53	28.3%	18	43	41.9%	22	38	57.9%	34	43	79.1%	50.3%	48.2%
2004	5	46	10.9%	16	42	38.1%	27	47	57.4%	37	52	71.2%	45.5%	41.4%
2003	10	44	22.7%	19	46	41.3%	29	52	55.8%	26	37	70.3%	46.9%	43.3%
2002	10	52	19.2%	21	54	38.9%	24	34	70.6%	27	39	69.2%	45.8%	40.0%
2001	14	51	27.5%	18	36	50.0%	25	39	64.1%	24	36	66.7%	50.0%	45.5%
2000	4	38	10.5%	23	42	54.8%	23	34	67.6%	19	31	61.3%	47.6%	41.4%
1999	13	44	29.5%	19	35	54.3%	15	28	53.6%	24	38	63.2%	49.0%	47.9%
1998	14	39	35.9%	11	28	39.3%	18	40	45.0%	22	35	62.9%	45.8%	46.1%
1997	9	31	29.0%	11	40	27.5%	11	33	33.3%	25	41	61.0%	38.6%	40.2%
1996	5	41	12.2%	8	32	25.0%	18	37	48.6%	32	49	65.3%	39.6%	36.9%
1995	6	36	16.7%	12	40	30.0%	29	52	55.8%	19	35	54.3%	40.5%	33.3%
1994	5	39	12.8%	17	53	32.1%	15	32	46.9%	19	31	61.3%	36.1%	33.3%
1993	8	54	14.8%	8	33	24.2%	14	30	46.7%	26	37	70.3%	36.4%	33.9%
1992	2	33	6.1%	8	30	26.7%	16	39	41.0%	20	37	54.1%	33.1%	30.0%
1991	6	31	19.4%	12	40	30.0%	14	36	38.9%	13	39	33.3%	30.8%	28.2%
1990	5	41	12.2%	9	37	24.3%	10	40	25.0%	27	42	64.3%	31.9%	34.2%
1989	7	42	16.7%	7	42	16.7%	18	44	40.9%	34	59	57.6%	35.3%	33.6%
1988	3	43	7.0%	16	44	36.4%	28	62	45.2%	30	57	52.6%	37.4%	34.0%
1987	4	44	9.1%	17	61	27.9%	17	57	29.8%	26	55	47.3%	29.5%	29.4%
1986	10	61	16.4%	17	60	28.3%	21	51	41.2%	31	50	62.0%	35.6%	33.9%

Figure 1 – Percentage of Seminary Juniors Married

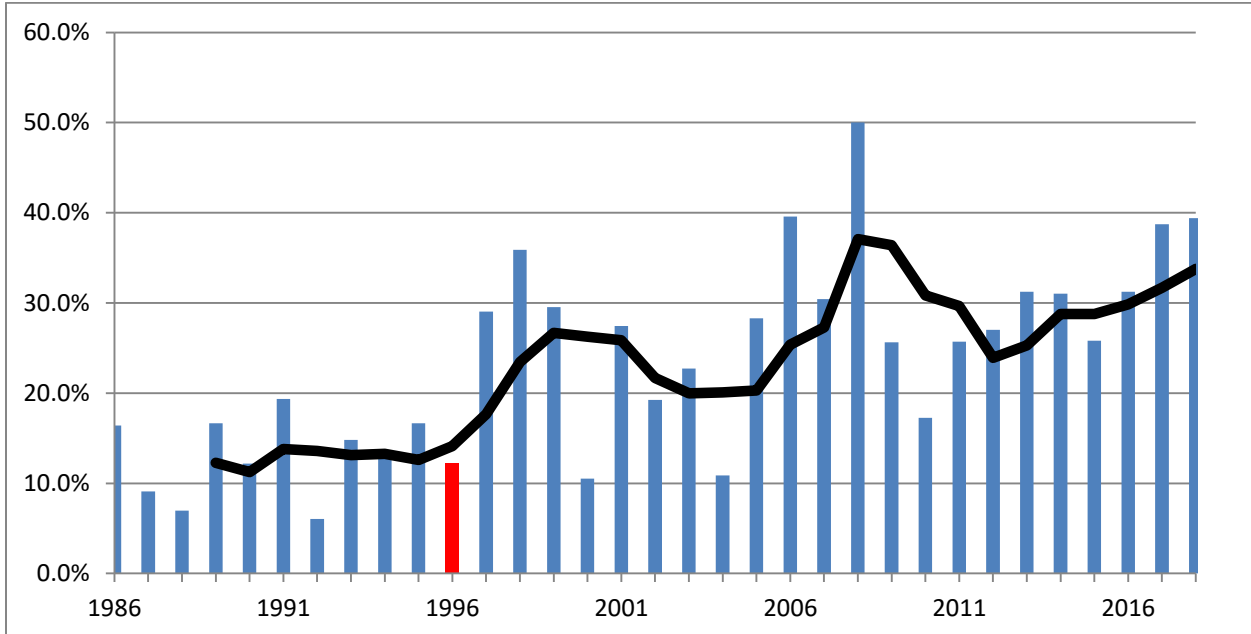


Figure 2 – Percentage of Seminary Middlers Married

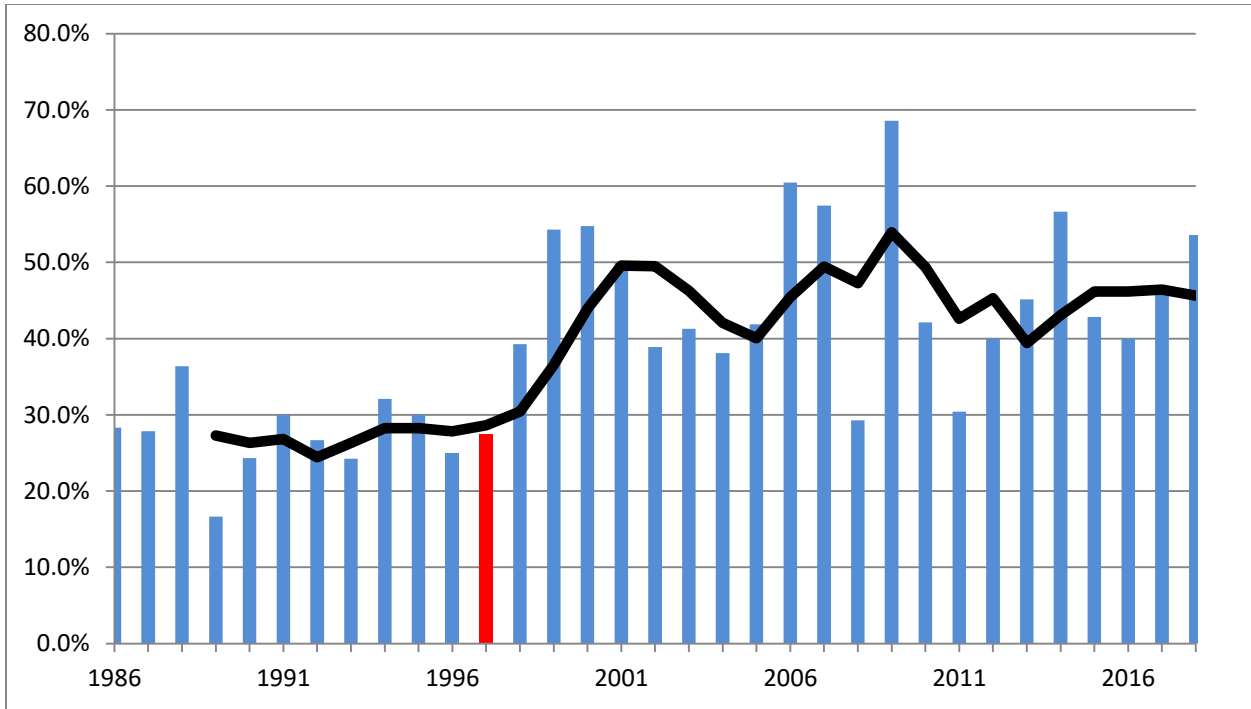


Figure 3 – Percentage of Seminary Vicars Married

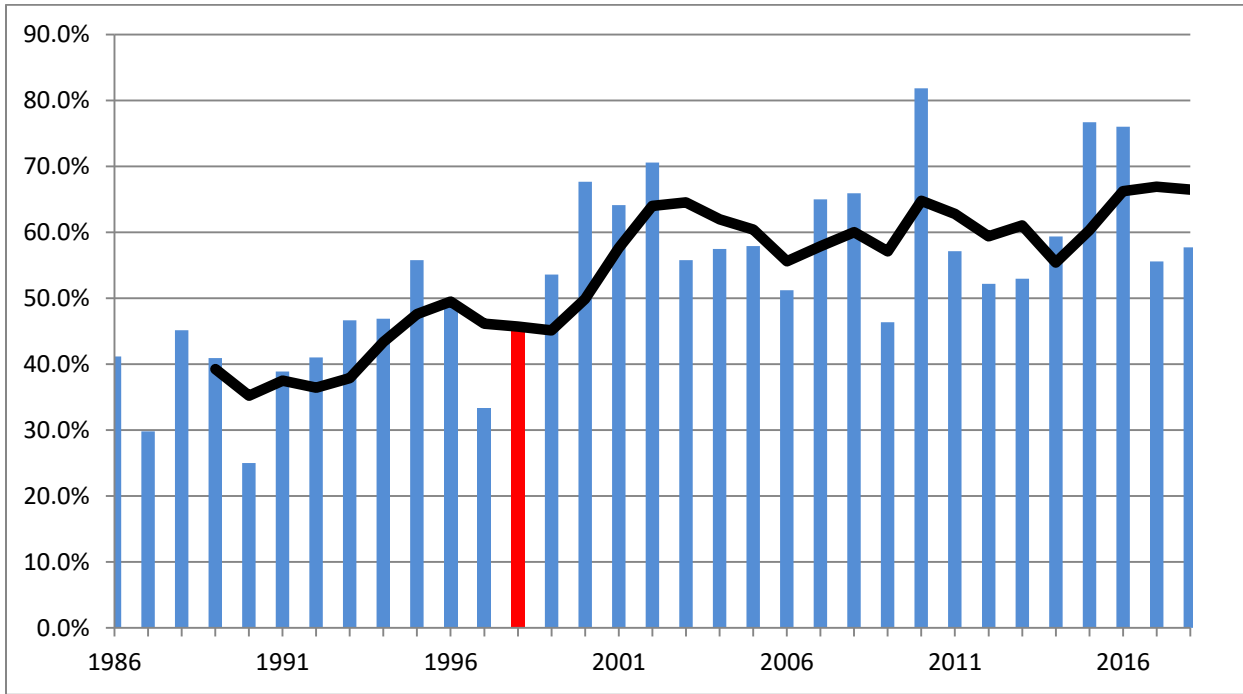


Figure 4 – Percentage of Seminary Seniors Married

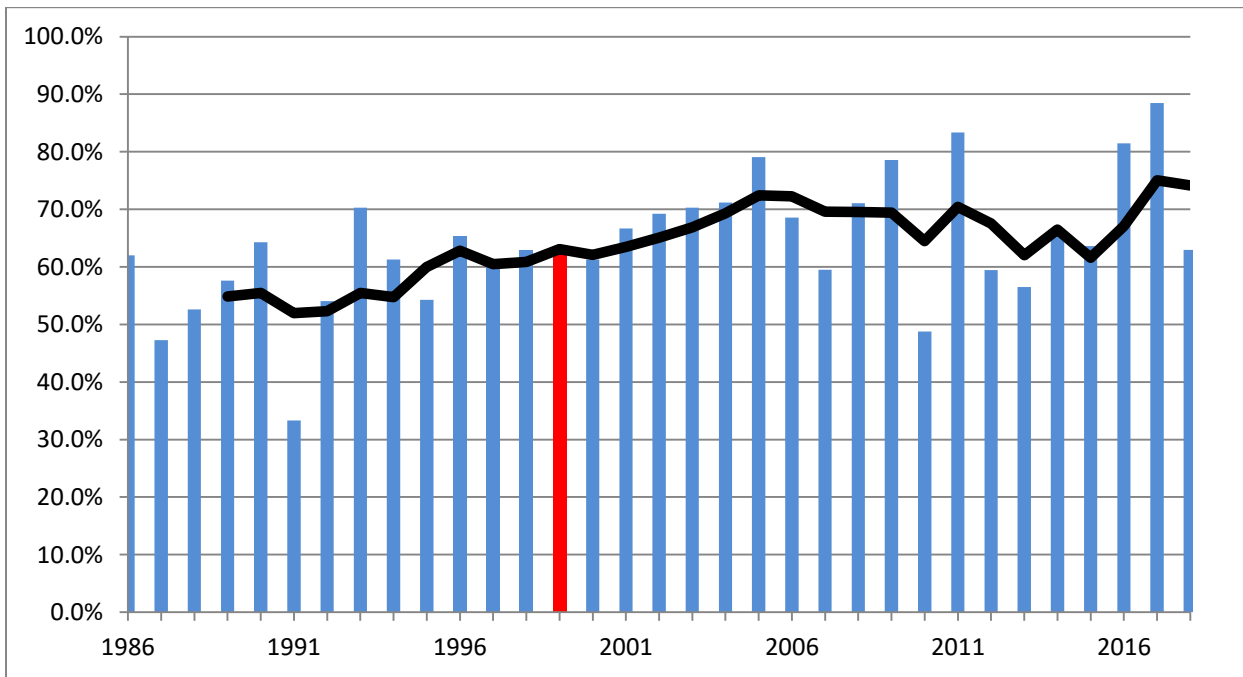


Figure 5 – Percentage of Total Seminary Student Body Married

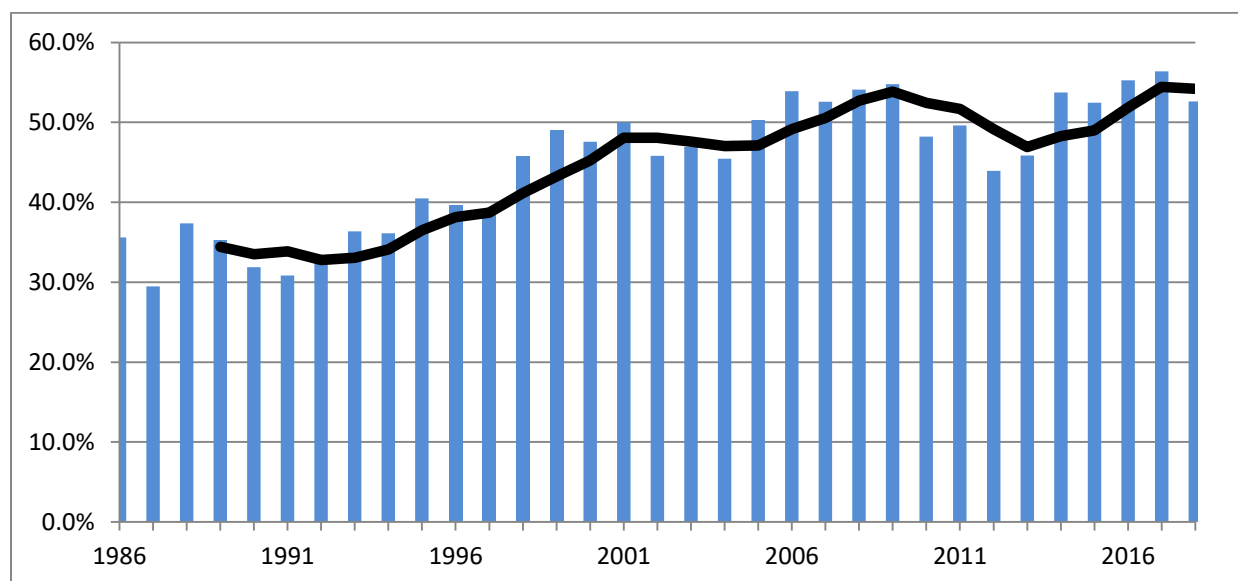
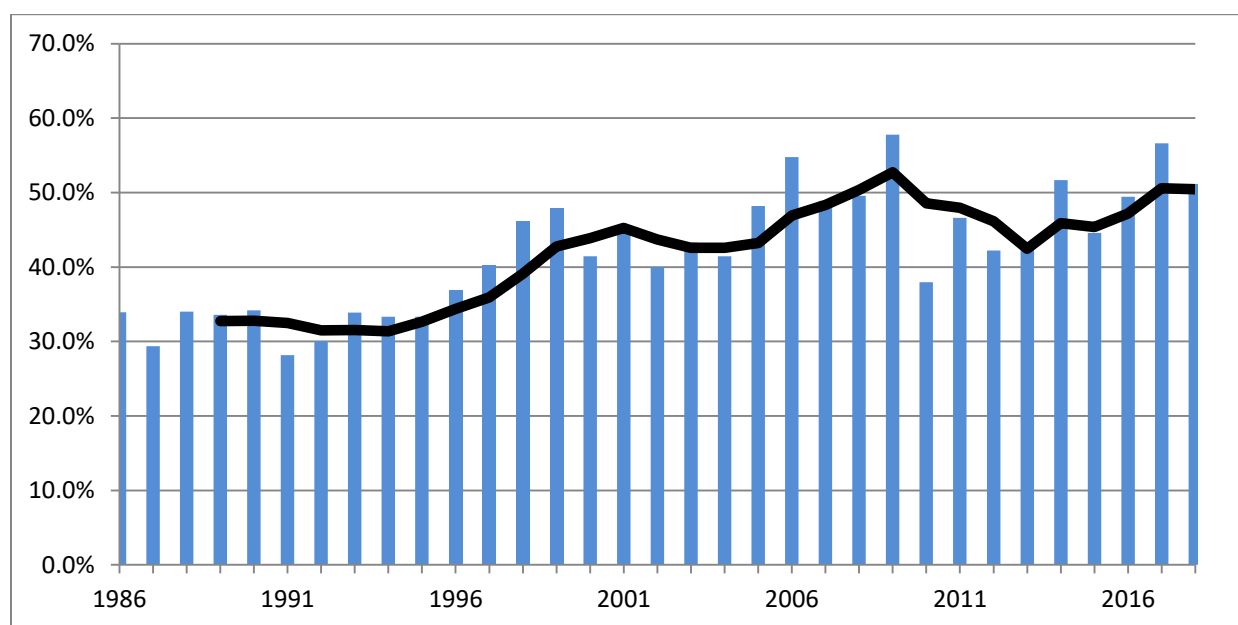


Figure 6 – Percentage of On-Campus Seminary Student Body (Not Vicars) Married



APPENDIX 6: SEMINARY RECRUITMENT RATES

One of the concerns of the amalgamation was that perhaps fewer graduates of the pre-seminary program would continue on to WLS. The chart and table below show the recruitment rate of WLS over the past thirty years. The years on the chart correspond to the pre-seminary graduation and seminary enrollment year, and the percentage is calculated by comparing the number of Juniors with the number of pre-seminary and Seminary Certification graduates of the same year. The percentage of pre-seminary graduates continuing on to WLS has remained at a high and healthy percentage.

Figure 1 – Seminary Recruitment Rate

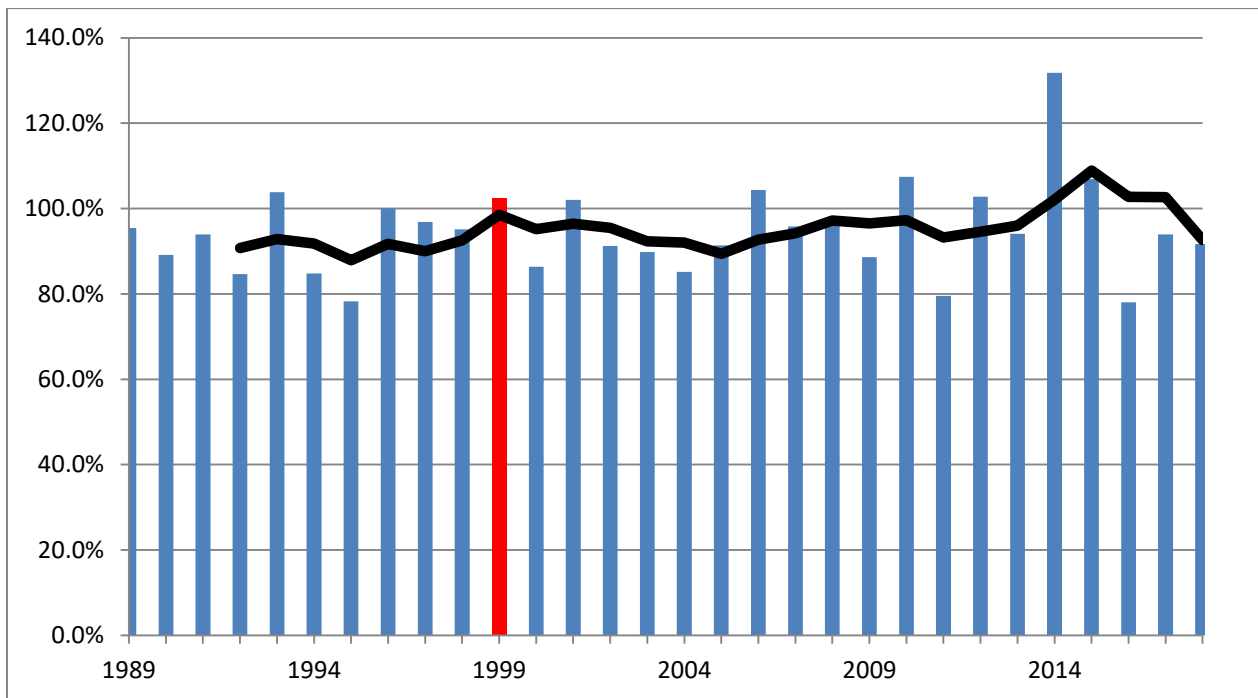


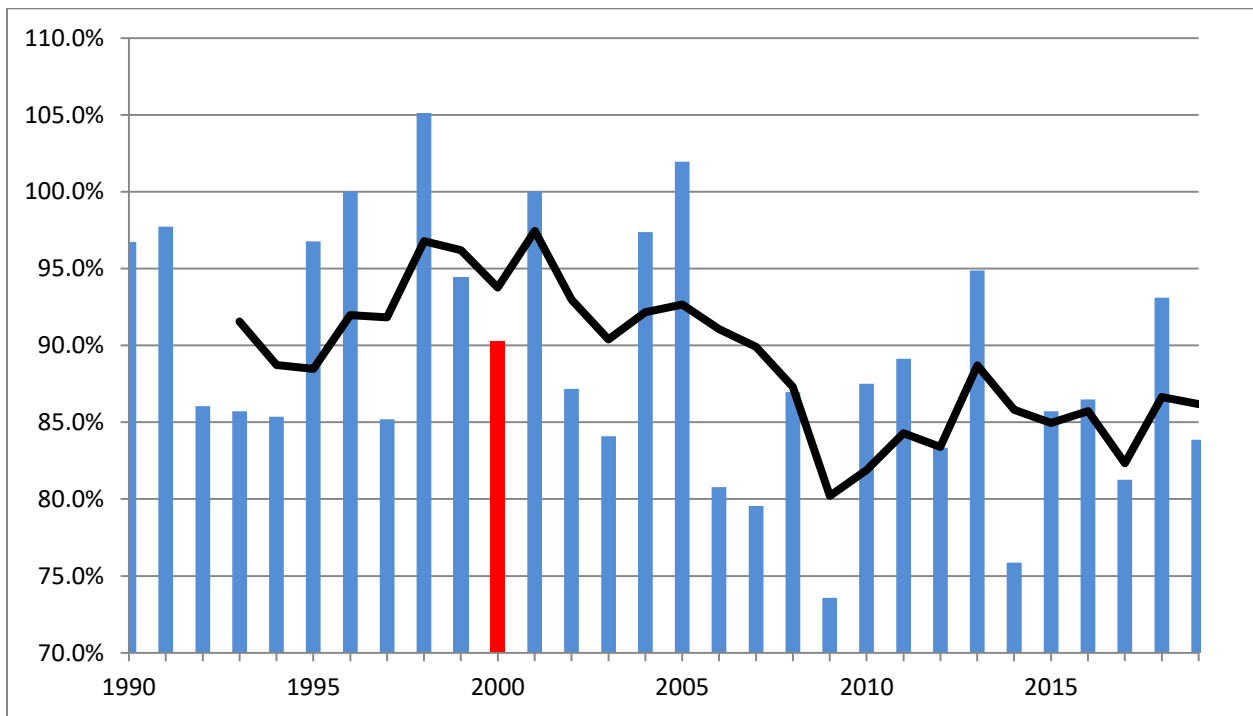
Figure 2 – Seminary Recruitment Rates

Pre-seminary Graduation and Seminary Enrollment Year	Number of Pre-Seminary Graduates	Number of Seminary Certification Graduates	Total Number of Seminary Candidates	Number of WLS Juniors	Percentage of New Seminary Candidates Who Enroll at WLS
2018	35	1	36	33	91.7%
2017	29	4	33	31	93.9%
2016	39	2	41	32	78.0%
2015	24	5	29	31	106.9%
2014	19	3	22	29	131.8%
2013	32	2	34	32	94.1%
2012	32	4	36	37	102.8%
2011	40	4	44	35	79.5%
2010	26	1	27	29	107.4%
2009	42	2	44	39	88.6%
2008	35	2	37	36	97.3%
2007	47	1	48	46	95.8%
2006	45	1	46	48	104.3%
2005	55	3	58	53	91.4%
2004	51	3	54	46	85.2%
2003	42	7	49	44	89.8%
2002	51	6	57	52	91.2%
2001	48	2	50	51	102.0%
2000	43	1	44	38	86.4%
1999	37	6	43	44	102.3%
1998	35	6	41	39	95.1%
1997	28	4	32	31	96.9%
1996	34	7	41	41	100.0%
1995	42	4	46	36	78.3%
1994	44	2	46	39	84.8%
1993	48	4	52	54	103.8%
1992	37	2	39	33	84.6%
1991	29	4	33	31	93.9%
1990	44	2	46	41	89.1%
1989	42	2	44	42	95.5%

APPENDIX 7: SEMINARY RETENTION RATES

The chart and table below show the retention rate of WLS over the past thirty years. The years on the chart correspond to the seminary graduation year, and the percentage is calculated by comparing the number of graduates with the number of Juniors four years prior. The highlighted year and statistics once again indicate the first MLC pre-seminary graduates. As you can see, the retention rate has decreased since the amalgamation. Whether or not the amalgamation has contributed to this trend is a topic for more consideration.¹⁷² Thus, the following charts are not included to indicate the correlation equals causation. Rather, they simply display the reality. On average in the past twenty years, about five men who enroll in the seminary each year will not graduate from the seminary and become pastors. In the ten years prior with NWC graduates, the average was three.

Figure 1 – Seminary Retention Rate



¹⁷² Another interesting study would compare the pastor retention rate through 3,5,10, and 20 years see if the decreasing retention rate at MLC and WLS has had a positive effect on the retention rate in the pastoral ministry.

Table 1 – Seminary Retention Rate

Year	Juniors	Middlers	Vicars	Seniors	Graduates	Retention Percentage
2018-19	33	28	26	27	26	83.9%
2017-18	31	26	27	26	27	93.1%
2016-17	32	30	25	27	26	81.3%
2015-16	31	28	30	33	32	86.5%
2014-15	29	30	32	30	30	85.7%
2013-14	32	31	34	23	22	75.9%
2012-13	37	35	23	37	37	94.9%
2011-12	35	23	35	30	30	83.3%
2010-11	29	38	33	41	41	89.1%
2009-10	39	35	41	42	42	87.5%
2008-09	36	41	44	38	39	73.6%
2007-08	46	47	40	42	40	87.0%
2006-07	48	43	41	35	35	79.5%
2005-06	53	43	38	43	42	80.8%
2004-05	46	42	47	52	52	102.0%
2003-04	44	46	52	37	37	97.4%
2002-03	52	54	34	39	37	84.1%
2001-02	51	36	39	36	34	87.2%
2000-01	38	42	34	31	31	100.0%
1999-00	44	35	28	38	37	90.2%
1998-99	39	28	40	35	34	94.4%
1997-98	31	40	33	41	41	105.1%
1996-97	41	32	37	49	46	85.2%
1995-96	36	40	52	35	33	100.0%
1994-95	39	53	32	31	30	96.8%
1993-94	54	33	30	37	35	85.4%
1992-93	33	30	39	37	36	85.7%
1991-92	31	40	36	39	37	86.0%
1990-91	41	37	40	42	43	97.7%
1989-90	42	42	44	59	59	96.7%
1988-89	43	44	62	57	56	
1987-88	44	61	57	55	54	
1986-87	61	60	51	50	50	

APPENDIX 8: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

- Daniel Balge (former NWC tutor and current MLC professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.
- John Boeder (current MLC campus pastor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.
- John Braun (former NWC tutor and professor and president), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Watertown, WI, November, 2018.
- John Brenner (former NWC tutor and current WLS professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Mequon, WI, November, 2018.
- Lawrence Czer (former DMLC professor and current MLC professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.
- Daniel Deutschlander (former NWC and MLC professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Watertown, WI, November, 2018.
- Brian Dose (former NWC instructor and professor and current MLC Professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.
- Joel Fredrich (former NWC instructor and professor and current MLC Professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.
- Karl Gurgel (former WELS president), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Phone Interview, November, 2018.
- Phil Hirsch (former NWC tutor and recruiter and MLC recruiter), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Phone Interview, January, 2019.
- John Isch (former DMLC and MLC professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.
- Paul Koelpin (former NWC tutor and professor and current MLC Professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Phone Interview, January, 2019.
- James Korthals (former NWC and WLS professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Phone Interview, November, 2018.
- John Lawrenz (former DMLC professor and president and MLC dean of students and WLS professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Mequon, WI, November, 2018.
- Ed Lindemann (former NWC tutor and dean of students), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Watertown, WI, November, 2018.

Thomas Nass (former NWC instructor and professor and current MLC Professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.

Mark Paustian (current MLC Professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.

Paul Rutschow (former member of the feasibility study committee and SE WI district president), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Phone Interview, November, 2018.

David Scharf (current MLC professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.

John Schmidt (former NWC professor and current MLC Professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Phone Interview, October, 2018.

Nicholas Schmoller (former MLC recruiter and current MLC professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.

Jeff Schone (current MLC vice president of student life), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.

Mark Schroeder (former NPS president and current WELS president), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Waukesha, WI, December, 2018.

John Seifert (former member of MI district special synodical school study committee and MI district president), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Phone Interview, November, 2018.

Mark Stein (current MLC head of admissions), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Phone Interview, January, 2019.

Ross Stelljes (former NWC tutor and MLC recruiter and current MLC professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.

James Tiefel (current WLS professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Mequon, WI, November, 2018.

Earle Treptow (former MLC recruiter and current WLS professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Mequon, WI, November, 2018.

Paul Wendland (former NWC instructor and professor and MLC professor and current WLS president), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, Mequon, WI, November, 2018.

Keith Wessel (current MLC professor), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.

Mark Zarling (former WLS professor and current MLC president), interviewed by Nathanael Jensen, New Ulm, MN, October, 2018.

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