

**DIVINE WORD COLLEGE**

**RELIGIOUS FORMATION PROGRAM**  
**FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS**



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**DIVINE WORD COLLEGE**  
**FORMATION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS**  
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**STATEMENT OF MISSION**

The Divine Word College Religious Formation Program aims to foster within each student a life-long commitment to serving God's people, whether that be as a religious-missionary, a religious, a diocesan priest, or a lay person. The Program encourages the development of the student's intellectual capability, spiritual gifts, growth in community and ministerial skills. This occurs within a community intentionally cross-cultural and shaped by the missionary spirituality of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD).

**CORE BELIEFS AND VALUES OF THE FORMATION PROGRAM**

- The Trinity is the source of life and energy.
- The Incarnate Word is the model of total surrender to God.
- The Church is missionary by its very nature; therefore, all Christians, through their baptism, are called to witness to the Gospel.
- A commitment to mission involves a passing over from one's own culture and circumstances to proclaim the Good News and help usher in the Reign of God.
- A call to mission, whether as religious or lay is best discerned and confirmed in community. To hear and respond to a genuine calling, requires maturity--a maturity which integrates cultural, social, spiritual and intellectual identity.
- A capacity for intellectual growth and a commitment to lifelong learning and ongoing formation in the areas of physical health, emotional growth and social development in interpersonal relations, and leadership are foundational for effective leadership among God's people.
- Students participating in this program accept responsibility for their own growth in light of the charisms of their religious communities or dioceses.

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS**

*The goal of all formation and education at Divine Word College is growth by the power of the Holy Spirit into unity with the Incarnate Word of the Father and into missionary ministry in a world-wide, multi-cultural church. This growth is a lifelong task, a shared responsibility to be faced by both the individual and the community. In this way we become capable of carrying out the mission of the church: to be witnesses of the gospel of Christ to all by our personal lives, our community living and our preaching so that Christian communities may be built up. (Based on SVD Constitutions, 501)*

The Religious Formation Program provides an environment in which students can learn about mission, as understood by the Society of the Divine Word. It gives direction to the discerning student seeking to meet the challenges of the program in preparation for mission. The Program provides the means by which formation personnel assess a student's suitability for community life and mission service.

The Program is developmental. The student grows in the self-awareness and personal identity essential to a healthy spiritual life and mission commitment. She demonstrates that she has adopted as her own the values underpinning the different dimensions of religious mission formation: the human, intellectual, spiritual, communal and ministerial.

### **Human Formation**

**Develops mature persons able to deepen both their desire to live in religious community and their readiness to engage in mission.**

*Our formation is total and integral: it seeks to foster human maturity, professional competence and committed faith. Growth in human maturity occurs in a progressive deepening of self-knowledge, in the unfolding of one's personal qualities and in the achievement of that inner freedom which makes responsible decisions possible. (Based on SVD Constitutions, 503)*

The Religious Formation Program encourages the student to grow in self-knowledge and self-acceptance. It promotes good physical and psychological health and formation in sexuality and celibacy. It teaches the skills for interpersonal relationships essential to a free, mature living of religious mission.

## Spiritual Formation

**Develops faith-filled, discerning students rooted in Jesus Christ and committed to personal and communal prayer as foundation for mission service.**

*We must shape our lives according to our faith by always listening for the voice of the Holy-Spirit, who speaks to us in scripture, in the life of the community and of the Church, as well as in contemporary events. Our response should be in prayer and action. In the spirit of the Society of the Divine Word, our spiritual lives are inspired by St. Arnold Janssen's example, for he was a man of faith and prayer, of openness and dedication. (Based on SVD Constitutions, 508)*

The Religious Formation Program invites the student to grow in her awareness of God's presence in the world and her understanding of the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus. As the Incarnate Word proceeds from the communion of the Trinity in service to others, so the student learns that religious life in mission is always communal and rooted in a concrete social and historical reality. As Jesus emptied himself and "took on our human likeness," so the student learns to empty herself of her cultural predispositions and biases, even her language, in order to become one with others, to be re-formed in a new mission spirituality.

While centered on the Eucharist, the spiritual life of the College includes many additional aspects that challenge the student to grow in her personal devotion and in community. Through life in community and service to others, the student experiences the presence of God. In the mystery of her own person and that of others, in the known and the unknown, she meets God anew. The student's spiritual growth also supports her vocation and deepens her desire for life in a religious and mission context.

## Intellectual Formation

**Instills a commitment to acquiring and developing the knowledge and the skills necessary to interpret and communicate the Gospel.**

*Our students achieve proficiency in English, acquire foundations in the liberal arts, and pursue knowledge in a major subject area. These efforts serve to increase their knowledge of human nature and society and to deepen their growth into the mystery of Christ...The program of studies for our students should deliberately emphasize the mission dimension and the value of social, cultural and religious plurality for the proclamation of the Gospel. (Based on SVD Constitutions, 516 and 516.1)*

The Academic Program is the primary instrument to help the student grow in knowledge of the liberal arts. The Religious Formation Program works with the Academic Program in assisting her in a growing appreciation of learning by understanding its significance for effective future ministry. The student comes to understand that learning and religious formation are parts of an integrated process necessary for mission service.

## **Cross-Cultural Community Formation**

**Enables the student to be rooted in her own culture and to cross over to other cultures with respect and sensitivity, while deepening skills for religious community.**

*...we meet with friendliness and goodwill those among whom we announce the gospel, growing into their historical situation, customs and mentality...we make every effort to master the language of the people and become familiar with their history and culture. Following the principles of the gospel, we respect the customs and habits of the people among whom we work, avoiding every derogatory criticism and comparison. (SVD Constitutions, 120.1 and 2)*

The Religious Formation Program invites the student to develop the skills and abilities vital for crossing over to other cultures and for ministering in a multicultural church. The Program first enables the student to grow in appreciation of her own culture and to learn about and appreciate other cultures. It then enables her to develop the ability to challenge and critique her own and other cultures, even as she grows in awareness and respect for those cultures. The Program calls the student to gradually deepen her commitment to life in religious community through actively building up the community and accepting support from others. The life of study, work, and worship within the College's cross-cultural environment provides opportunity for developing this commitment.

## **Formation for Mission**

**Allows the student to develop her ministry skills and to apply her gifts and education to mission service.**

*In order that this vocation can develop fully, formation must be integral, rooted in one's own culture, community-forming, directed towards apostolic service and open to the needs of the world... (SVD Constitutions, 502)*

Besides the skills and knowledge requisite for mission, the Religious Formation Program offers opportunity for applying these tools in concrete activities within a Christ-centered community. This practical service helps the student see how her coursework and other activities fit in with a vocation to religious mission life.

Careful preparation, supervision and support, reflection and evaluation characterize the service experience. Challenges inherent in working with people of differing socioeconomic or cultural groups offer significant opportunities for growth. The structure of the program helps educate the student about her own areas for growth, and helps her develop critical insight and sound judgment. The process further stimulates the student's desire for service as she learns of the needs of the world and her own gifts in meeting those needs.

## **RELIGIOUS FORMATION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS**

The Religious Formation Program of Divine Word College fosters the maturity and growth of the student oriented toward mission in five facets of development: human, spiritual, intellectual, cross-cultural community, and mission ministry. The student's growth is demonstrated through observed behaviors and expressed ideas, manifestations of the student's own deepening discernment of her call which allow others to help evaluate her readiness for mission.

The student is challenged to see the Program's expectations as an invitation to freely choose, out of love and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a way of life that leads to dedicated mission service, personal fulfillment in a shared community life, and her own ever-deepening spiritual life.

Each facet of the Program consists of a rationale, means of implementation, outcomes, and the means used to assess those outcomes.

### **Facet One: Human Formation**

Human Formation requires an integration of knowledge and acceptance of self, physical and psychological health, sexuality and celibacy, and interpersonal relationships. Each contributes to the development of the others. This integration moves the individual to healthy holistic human development.

#### **Knowledge and Acceptance of Self**

Self-awareness and acceptance of self are an essential component in the mature student's ability to respond freely to her call to religious mission.

Every year, each student is assigned to a formation group. This group is led by a Formation Director who accompanies the student for the year. This assignment is based on whether the student is in final or temporary vows. Formation Groups meet twice each month for those in temporary vows and once every three weeks for those in final vows. The purpose is to present information regarding religious life, mission, and issues of personal and vocational growth. The formation group also offers an environment in which members of the group interact in such a way as to deepen their understanding of each others' values and perspectives. The group is a lived experience of community, a place to enjoy and learn from each other, share personal journeys, discuss and solve problems, and develop skills essential to religious community life.

To facilitate the student's increasing self-awareness, her Formation Director helps her set reasonable and measurable personal goals at the beginning of each academic year, including the steps she will take to achieve the goals. The goals can be modified as needed during the year. This process encourages the student to undertake greater responsibility for her own growth. Individual interviews once a semester with the student's Formation Director involve discussions of her progress in the context of the five facets of the Formation Program.

The result of this process will be that the student can write increasingly insightful self-evaluations which are shared with her Formation Director. In this evaluation, the student demonstrates an increasing awareness of her interpersonal and emotional life, sexual development, accomplishments and leadership. She notes areas that may still need maturing. The Formation Director writes a comprehensive behavioral evaluation at the end of each academic year based on the five facets of the Religious Formation Program. The student has an opportunity to review this evaluation with her Formation Director to add information or provide greater insight. This process assists the student to grow in awareness of and commitment to her vocational call.

Evaluations by the student, her peers for those in temporary vows, and her Formation Director provide the basis for assessment in this category. The Formation Director reviews goals the student set for herself and how she achieved them, looks for evidence of greater insight into herself and considers her ability to speak clearly to issues involved in her vocational choice for religious mission. The Dean of Student's will forward a copy of the written evaluation to the student's major superior and religious community formation director.

### **Physical Health**

Life in mission can present significant physical challenges. It is thus important that the student is aware of the need not only to take care of her own physical health but to develop the physical stamina necessary for work in mission.

In order to encourage habits that promote good physical health, the College provides balanced meals, and recreational facilities with a swimming pool, weight room, gym, tennis courts, and outdoor sports fields. Intramural activities are also offered. Students are expected to avail themselves of these facilities and activities according to their own interests and abilities. The Program also provides a regular series of formation topics related to a healthy lifestyle.

The student demonstrates her commitment to good physical health by her choice of regular exercise, maintenance of an appropriate weight, healthy eating habits, and regular medical and dental care.

### **Psychological and Emotional Health**

Religious mission is dedicated to service characterized by a commitment to cross-cultural living. To live among people whose cultures and belief systems are often different from her own, she must possess strong emotional health and skills for maintaining it. The healthy student is stable, handles conflict satisfactorily, moves past disappointments and defeats, is able to tolerate differences of opinion, and copes successfully with the normal tensions resulting from community life.

The Religious Formation Program provides a regular series of formational topics on healthy emotional development and offers opportunities to meet with a Spiritual Director, Formation Director and/or professional Counselor. There are also opportunities for the student to work with



others in a range of leadership positions that can at times be demanding and stressful. With the guidance of members of the Formation Team and other supervisors, the student learns how to cope with the emotional demands required in leadership.

In the Religious Formation Program, this development is measured through the Formation Director's direct observation of the student's emotional stability and ability to exercise leadership in working with others.

### **Sexuality and Celibacy**

God created humankind as sexual beings in order to participate in the continuity of creation. The sexual energy present in each individual is at its richest when it is expressed in appropriate witness to bring about ever more fully the Kingdom of God. The call to the religious life necessitates a mature response to live the consecrated life of celibacy. The response to this call is to find mature love in relation to others and in particular to the people one serves and to find sexual expression in positive activity. Formation for religious mission requires that the student come to deeper understanding and appreciation of the physiological, psychological and spiritual aspects of her spirituality and their implications for life-giving ministry.

The Religious Formation Program utilizes a number of means for developing growth and understanding of sexuality. Academic courses in Human Sexuality and Sexual Ethics are offered on an annual basis. Regular assembly presentations address topics in human sexuality. Each formation group studies issues on human sexuality appropriate to the group's formation level, starting with topics on basic biology and moving on to topics such as sexual orientation, boundaries, addiction, and male/female relationships. College policies clearly define appropriate sexual conduct and use of electronic and publication media. The student participates in activities with a broad spectrum of individuals both within and outside of the College. Every other year, the College provides the workshop "Protecting God's Children" to raise awareness regarding the importance of protecting minors from sexual abuse.

The Academic Program, formation group discussions and College-wide presentations and forums facilitate the development of sensitivity and respect.

The student may speak confidentially about sexual issues with the College Counselor and/or her Spiritual Director. Positive experiences and challenges in lived relationship with others come from social activities and living in a close community. Outlets for sexual energy can be found through sports, study, work, service and prayer. There are also important opportunities for the student to come to appreciate herself and reflect on the life she has committed herself to through times of solitude and retreat.

Within the context of spiritual direction and with other trusted formation personnel, the student begins to learn how to share how her sexuality impacts her personality, spirituality, and ultimately her ministry. Sisters have regular opportunities to meet with female spiritual advisors and counselors. The College exercises special sensitivity to the personal and cultural needs of individual students in the discussion and consideration of human sexuality.

A student who has a healthy sexual identity as a celibate will demonstrate this through her ability to maintain appropriate boundaries with friends and those with whom she ministers and interacts. She will have accurate knowledge about human biology regarding her sexuality.

The Formation Director notes the student's ability to maintain healthy boundaries.

### **Interpersonal Relationships**

In order to be an effective minister in working with others, in leadership, in positive contributions to community living, the student requires good interpersonal skills. Opportunities to learn and practice interpersonal skills are present in formation groups, working through issues related to community living and the various recreational opportunities offered at the College.

A student demonstrates these growing abilities by active participation in the life of the College community through the exercise of leadership, responsible fulfillment of assigned duties, volunteering, and social interaction with both peers and staff. The successful development of interpersonal skills is verified through the Formation Director and peer evaluations for those in temporary vows and through the sensitivity and insight the student shows in her own self-evaluation and her evaluation of others-for those in temporary vows.

## **Facet Two: Spiritual Formation**

A core foundation for mission service is a strong personal and communal relationship with Jesus Christ. Divine Word Missionaries emphasize the importance of a solid life of prayer to support them in carrying out their work of spreading the Gospel. Jesus Christ modeled this in His own life through frequently going to a quiet place to commune with the Father. The core areas of development for the religious mission student are strong faith development, personal prayer, participation in communal prayer and vocation development.

### **Faith Development**

Faith in God and its expression are personal to the individual and her relationship to the Creator. Genuine faith can be seen in one's active response to God's Word and in a life based on Christian values. A deep faith in Jesus Christ and His Church as community of faith is foundational for dedicating oneself to religious mission.

To assist the student in her faith, the Religious Formation Program offers liturgical formation, content topics related to faith, annual retreats, and days of recollection. There are ample spiritual reading resources in the College library and reading room. Opportunities exist for the student to participate in student-initiated prayer groups and sharing. A key component for faith development is the student's participation in regular spiritual direction. Priests are available for personal Reconciliation, with a communal Reconciliation service offered each semester.

The faith life necessary for religious-mission is best demonstrated through her self-evaluation, the student's own articulation of her faith as demonstrated in community. The student also expresses her faith and spiritual journey in formation group Bible sharing and by showing she places her faith on a level of importance equal to or greater than other aspects of her total development.

### **Personal Prayer**

Within the context of faith, a personal relationship with the Lord is best developed in prayer. The student exhibits the importance of setting aside time for private prayer, meditation and Scripture.

To facilitate personal prayer, the College provides the main chapel and small private chapels with particular devotional and ethnic themes for places of solitude, quiet times in the evening in the Sisters' residence, and tranquility weekends where College activities are curtailed, allowing the student additional time for prayer or spiritual reading. Further prayer resources are available through the library and in the various chapels on campus.

A student who sees the importance of personal prayer in her life will set aside regular times in her daily schedule where she can meet the Lord in reflection or Sacred Scripture. She uses the various chapels, opportunities for prayer times and spiritual readings provided by the College.

The Formation Director assesses a student's personal prayer by asking about her satisfaction with the nature and quality of her prayer life.

### **Communal Prayer**

The community comes together to worship God and to pray as mutual support and expression of the spirituality of the Society of the Divine Word. The student learns to go beyond her individual expression of prayer and enters into the prayer of the community.

As a community, the College comes together for daily Eucharist, Sunday Vespers, services offered during Holy Week or special occasions, and formation group Bible Sharing. There are opportunities for communal prayer with small prayer groups outside of formal community prayer and the weekly Holy Hour. The College encourages particular cultural expressions of liturgy by setting aside a day each week for Masses to be celebrated in English and other languages.

A student who has come to internalize the importance of the Eucharist in the daily life of the Church and community is present on a daily basis. She also actively participates in the life of the faith community by attendance at Vespers, shared formation group prayer, and special religious events such as during Holy Week.

The communal prayer outcome is measured through the student's faithful attendance and active participation at daily Eucharist, Sunday Vespers and other designated communal and formation group prayer times.

## **Vocation Development**

Divine Word College provides an environment for discernment. A student's serious efforts to discern, clarify and deepen her religious commitment are an essential component of her spiritual development. This discernment takes place through the processes of faith development, personal prayer and reflection, and active participation in communal prayer.

The Program schedules regular presentations by SVD missionaries and special sessions within Formation Groups to help the student understand the nature of mission activity. In spiritual direction, students discuss and refine their discernment within a confidential setting. The College Counselor has various psychological instruments to assist the student to further understand herself and her abilities. Various College celebrations such as Mission Sunday provide additional context for understanding mission.

A student who takes seriously these core dimensions of faith development and fully participates in them gives evidence of a serious effort to clarify and respond to her vocational call. Other evidence is the student's ability to articulate the important questions in her discernment to her Formation Director. Her presence at College sponsored activities supports her genuine commitment.

## **Facet Three: Intellectual Formation**

As a future leader in the Church, the student must come to recognize that her education and intellectual development are essential tools for becoming a knowledgeable leader and communicator in the Church. A strong intellectual foundation plays an essential role in the student's total development, especially through reading as a way to continue to gain knowledge about herself and to more deeply appreciate and understand the world within which she lives. As a minister, the student will find herself engaging in dialog with others of differing perspectives, which will require strong intellectual skills. Key components are the student's attitude towards learning and her commitment to becoming an educated person and a life-long learner.

### **Attitude to Learning**

A religious preparing for mission shows an intellectual curiosity and a positive attitude toward learning. This attitude is crucial to complete a rigorous course of studies.

The Formation Program provides interviews and formation groups as both places and resources for further positive intellectual development. Formation group discussions include topics such as techniques for effective study, which will help the student thrive in her academic work. Divine Word College also provides cultural events, reading materials, and access to electronic media.

A successful student works to acquire a solid education that will serve her as a foundation for the rest of her life and develops a dedication to continuing intellectual growth. With such an attitude she will read outside of academic requirements and make use of educational media available to her. This attitude is expressed in curiosity about the world. The regular reading of newspapers,

scholarly magazines and journals is evidence of the student's growing intellectual curiosity and sophistication.

The student's attitude toward intellectual development is demonstrated in her cumulative grade point average and its maintenance and improvement. The student's Formation Director and the Dean of Students receive a copy of her semester grade report and have access to her daily progress through on-line grade reports.

### **Commitment to Learning**

A successful student completes the Formation Program with a strong commitment to intellectual development needed for life-long learning. To help facilitate a commitment to intellectual growth and life-long learning, the College provides an excellent library, a reading room with a large number of magazines and newspapers, various cultural events, and access to the worldwide web. The Formation Director assists the student in establishing personal academic goals for her intellectual development and in evaluating her progress toward those goals.

Evidence for this growing commitment can be measured through a student's participation in extra-curricular programs and attendance at special cultural events. This commitment is measured in the student's dedication to personal study and genuine interest in improving the quality of her learning. The Formation Director asks the student about her intellectual activities and notes her participation in extra educational activities.

## **Facet Four: Cross-Cultural Community Formation**

In the spirit of the Society of the Divine Word, students dedicate themselves to the goal of the proclamation of God's Word to all peoples. To achieve this goal, the student may have to be ready to leave her own culture and to "pass over" to other cultures and live and work in communities comprising members of many cultural backgrounds. An important facet of the Religious Formation Program, therefore, is preparation for cross-cultural living. This facet involves respect, participation, skills, and the appreciation and ability to analyze one's own culture.

### **Development of Respect**

To successfully interact with other members in cross-cultural community and mission, and work in cultures beyond her own, a student must respect and appreciate cultural differences.

The College offers opportunities for the student to develop cultural respect. The Formation Program provides a student with the opportunity to live with students from cultures other than her own. Cultural dinners, cultural music, ethnic magazines, and art from different areas of the world offer a multitude of perspectives.

A student has the opportunity to participate in Mission Sunday, Lunar New Year, and other cultural celebrations. To offer students an opportunity to develop on-going relationships with families in the local area, the College sponsors the Friends Across Nations Club.

Issues related to understanding and respect are discussed openly in the Dean's Forum and formation groups.

The student demonstrates respect by reaching out to and having close friendships with individuals outside of her own cultural background. She reaches out by engaging in activities such as sharing meals in the dining room, sports activities, mixing in social events, walks and conversations. The Formation Director considers the student's attendance and genuine participation in cultural events and celebrations.

The student is expected to develop a growing understanding and appreciation of the various and changing roles of women in society and the Church.

### **Community Participation**

In addition to cultural celebrations, the College sponsors ministries of service to people beyond the immediate College community with the elderly, homeless, physically and mentally disabled, ethnic parish events, and youth. Students are assigned to different ministries during their time at Divine Word College. The formation group charters aim to bring students together in various activities. Recreational facilities such as the Pour House, student lounge, and sports areas are designed to bring students together for greater interaction.

A student who comes to appreciate other cultures will demonstrate this appreciation through positive interaction with others from different cultures in leadership positions. She interacts in the classroom, dining room, chapel and sport events. She learns about other cultures through reading and other media. She learns a language other than her own and gains the cultural understanding that goes with that language. The Formation Director observes that a student takes the initiative to reach out to members of other cultures by inviting them to join in social activities.

### **Skills for Cross-Cultural Living**

A student learns skills for cross-cultural living and service in such courses as World Art, World Music, Humanities Survey and other academic settings. A student learns to sing in different languages through liturgy preparation and by preparing for cultural events in which all students participate. Weekly ministries, language classes, and community service teach further skills.

As a student completes her formational experience at Divine Word College, she builds skills in living and working cross-culturally, including leadership skills for working with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

### **Critical Appreciation of One's Own Culture**

A student becomes more aware of her culture and its assumptions when exposed to a different culture or set of values. She comes to a greater awareness and appreciation of the gifts of her culture, yet must be able to critique aspects of her culture.

The student comes to a greater awareness of her own culture through making presentations, preparing foods, sharing in her formation group and participating in Masses celebrated in her native language. Cross-cultural courses present the student with intellectual tools for reflection on her own culture and other cultures. The library has a significant collection of books in different languages about various countries and their cultures. The College educates on immigrant experiences and adaption to new cultures. The Religious Formation Program is structured so that the student will be able to discuss and write about the values explicit and implicit in her own culture.

### **Facet Five: Formation for Mission**

The student continues to develop awareness of her own gifts and how these may be applied to the mission endeavors of the church in the spirit of the Society of the Divine Word. In the future the student will use her gifts in service of the Christian Community and the proclamation of the Good News. At the College level, the student begins to become aware of what will be required of her as a religious engaged in mission. Growth in mission ministry involves establishing and or deepening ministry skills and developing awareness of what may be required of her in mission.

#### **Ministry Skills**

The College provides opportunities for ministry which are often cross-cultural experiences for the student. These experiences are evaluated with the student's on-site supervisor and are shared in reflection with her formation group twice a semester. The student completes an end-of-year self-evaluation of her own ministry efforts both within and outside the College.

Skills for ministry are measured through the student's willingness to go beyond simply meeting her own needs to extending herself to be of genuine service to others. She exhibits this through her willingness to volunteer for common activities as her gifts allow. She is willing to explore skills and activities she may not have tried before because she realizes their development may be helpful in communal mission life. The student shows responsibility and commitment to do her best in carrying out community assignments. She develops confidence in completing assigned tasks and taking initiative.

#### **Vocational Awareness for Ministry**

By awareness, the student is able to come to a theological reflection, both oral and written, of her ministerial experiences and how they might be a lived reality of the Gospel message. Satisfaction and growth in ministry in the context of the theological reflection become important components for vocational growth. Along with her formation group and her Formation Director the student takes a realistic look at her faithfulness in fulfilling various ministries both within and outside the College.

The College provides opportunities for the student to deepen her vocational call. Academic offerings, a program of cultural events, as well as the décor of the College celebrate the universality of the Church's mission, its grounding in all cultures. Students have opportunities to

interact with Divine Word Missionaries who have served in other parts of the world. They participate in a lively Mission Sunday liturgy and international food festival. Through formation group activities and interviews with formation directors, students reflect on their growth in readiness for ministry across cultures, social and economic classes, for dialogue with persons of other religions.

The student's self-evaluation and her reflection with her formation group and Formation Director provide a gauge of her understanding and sense of her vocation. Work-study evaluations provide evidence of her faithfulness to basic community responsibilities. Participation in campus activities shows her willingness to go beyond minimum expectations.

## **EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT \***

### **Students Evaluate the Program**

Student evaluations of the Religious Formation Program occur at the end of the academic year during the final formation group meeting. The students in each formation group give oral evaluations to the Formation Director. Students evaluate the overall Program, their own formation group, their Formation Director, retreats, recollections, topics presented, counseling services, spiritual formation, and ministry program. Formation Directors give both oral and written summaries to the Formation Team during the school year's final meeting. The information from these evaluations is discussed and evaluated, leading to adjustments in the Program as needed.

### **Evaluation of the Students to Measure the Effectiveness of the Program**

At the end of each academic school year, Formation Directors assess how well the Religious Formation Program has met its stated outcomes for the students. In this process, the Formation Directors use a student's evaluations, Formation Director's observations and formation group input to assess the progress of the student in the Program. A student's progress is assessed two years after her entrance into the ESL Institute, at the end of her second year in the College Program and at the completion of her program at Divine Word College. A student is assessed using a Likert-Scale to measure her progress toward competence in each facet of the Program. Formation Directors set a target score in each area. To assess the Program itself, a total score for each item and the cohort group is ascertained and studied to determine any areas where expected outcomes are not being met. This allows Formation Directors to make adjustments in the requirements or activities meant to help the students meet the outcomes. This Program assessment also helps identify other areas in the Program that may be in need of modification, increased emphasis, or further development.



## **Evaluation of Student**

A student is evaluated at the end of each academic year by self evaluation, peer evaluations for those in temporary vows and her Formation Director. Information from this evaluation is used to help the student be a mature, responsible leader and member of the Divine Word College community. She is evaluated using the five facets of the Formation Program.

## **SUMMARY**

The Religious Formation Program helps Divine Word College realize its Mission to assist women religious grow into religious mission in the spirit of the Society of the Divine Word. All dimensions of the Program, particularly its developmental outcomes, assist the student in discerning and deepening her vocation to religious mission and ministry.

\*Evaluation and Assessment are fully explained in the Assessment Tools for the Religious Formation Program. Please refer to that document for more detail.