Please respond to each section by answering the questions listed in the Chair/Director's Report Guidelines.

I. Introduction and Context

A. Background and History of Program

Talbot began offering the Bachelor of Divinity in 1952, and updated the degree title to Master of Divinity in 1970. For many years, the MDiv has been regarded as the primary degree for pastoral ministry in many Evangelical denominations. Because of this, the MDiv remains Talbot's most popular degree, making up 45% of our student body.

B. Program Mission and Goals and Alignment with University’s Mission and Direction

The MDiv mission statement is closely aligned with Biola’s mission. Talbot’s MDiv prepares students to impact the world specifically through pastoral leadership in the church. Each item of Biola’s mission statement is central to what we try to accomplish in our MDiv graduates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The mission of the Master of Divinity program at Talbot School of Theology is</th>
<th>The mission of Biola University is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to equip servant leaders</td>
<td>equipping men and women in mind and character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for making disciples worldwide</td>
<td>to impact the world for the Lord Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by developing in them an accurate knowledge of the Word of God</td>
<td>biblically centered education, scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the skills necessary to communicate the Gospel effectively</td>
<td>biblically centered service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and character worthy of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ</td>
<td>equipping men and women in mind and character</td>
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<tr>
<td>for the leading of the church.</td>
<td>to impact the world for the Lord Jesus Christ</td>
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In addition, Biola’s vision, “to be identified among the world’s foremost Christ-centered universities – a community abiding in truth, abounding with grace, and compelled by Christ’s love to be a relevant and redemptive voice in a changing world” is championed by the MDiv program and faculty.
Several of the University’s “seven aspirations” are prominently advanced by the MDiv program:

**Lead in Biblically Integrated Education**: MDiv curriculum is focused on biblical truth and values, not only in classes with “Bible” or “theology” in their titles, but in every part of the curriculum.

**Attract and Develop Outstanding Christian Scholars**: In all MDiv hires, Talbot continues to attract candidates who are devoted to the church, experienced in Christian ministry, and capable scholars who advance their fields.

**Lead in Spiritual Development and the Proclamation of the Gospel**: Our MDiv “Spiritual Formation Focus” is admired and imitated by other seminaries, and we continue to sharpen it.

**Build a Cross-cultural Community**: Talbot’s MDiv is already ethnically diverse, with 46% Asian, 33% Caucasian, 7% Latino/a, and 6% African-American. 5.6% are international students. In addition, intentionally multicultural spiritual formation groups are helping build cross-cultural community.

**Extend our Educational Reach across the World**: Talbot MDiv professors are already involved in partnerships around the world and are encouraged by the administration in their efforts. In 2013-14, nine MDiv faculty were involved in teaching or missions endeavors in six countries.

**Ensure the Affordability of a Biola Education**: Through the generosity of donors and the faithful work of the Office of Development, Talbot continues to add significant funds to its scholarship fund. In addition, Talbot is focusing on student affordability through a commission aided by a grant from the Lilly Endowment.

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### C. Program Issues and Concerns/Response from Last Self-Study

Since the last self-study, the two most important changes have been 1) responding to 2006 concerns about assessment; 2) the inauguration of the Spiritual Formation Focus.

1) **2006 Self-Study concerns**:

a) The 2006 ATS self-study pointed out that there was a lack of clarity about mission and PLOs. MDiv faculty have made several changes to the mission statement and to PLOs to make them distinct from each other. The mission statement was revised in 2007. Each PLO was rephrased in 2012 to make assessment feasible. In 2015, the faculty reworked PLO 4, retired PLOs 6 and 7, and crafted a new PLO 6 related to ministry skills.

b) The 2006 ATS self-study recommended that program goals and learning outcomes be embedded directly in each course syllabus. A random survey of MDiv syllabi from 2013-2015 demonstrates that 100% of syllabi contain learning outcomes that are connected to PLOs. In most cases, individual assignments are connected with particular course outcomes.

c) The 2006 self-study recommended that more academic departments adopt assessment rubrics, since only one department used rubrics at the time. In assessment reports in 2014 and 2015, rubrics were used for New Testament Exegesis (PLO 2), Systematic Theology and Historical Theology (PLO 3), Spiritual Formation (PLO 4), and Preaching (PLO 5).

2) **The Spiritual Formation Focus (SFF)**, replacing the Intentional Character Development program, is the most significant change in MDiv curriculum and emphasis since the 2006...
self-study. The SFF program involves two important components: 1) additional course work in spiritual formation; 2) spiritual formation cohorts, individual spiritual direction, and spiritual formation retreats. The SFF program has been very successful; however, as a new program, it still needs some adjustment in response to student concerns. As an additional effort to address PLO 4, the dean of Talbot has asked that every required MDiv course include a spiritual formation component.

D. Discuss program alignment with where the discipline is heading.

In many ways, Talbot’s MDiv is a model program, admired and imitated by other seminaries. Elements of our spiritual formation focus, in particular, have been adopted by other schools. Talbot is known for balanced ministry preparation: shaping biblical and theological knowledge, ministry skills (especially preaching), and nurturing the souls of students.

Despite the strength of our program, two nationwide tendencies suggest the need to consider significant MDiv curriculum revision. First, MDiv enrollment is on the decline nationwide, as many churches no longer require the MDiv for ordination and students choose other seminary degrees. (Bucking the trend somewhat, Talbot’s MDiv enrollment has been steady or increasing for ten years, until finally a drop was seen in 2014-15; this drop mirrored the overall drop in all Talbot programs in 2014). Second, many of Talbot’s sister evangelical seminaries have been reducing the MDiv from 98 credits to 80 or lower. If this becomes the new standard, Talbot will need to consider recrafting the MDiv. In the process, this will allow reshaping the curriculum to fit the educational needs of students preparing for ministry.

2. Program Quality

A. Program Learning Outcomes and Curriculum

i. Degrees and Concentrations

Master of Divinity, with the following concentrations

- Christian Education
- Evangelism and Discipleship
- Messianic Jewish Ministry (offered only through the Charles Feinberg Center in New York)
- Missions and Intercultural Studies
- Pastoral and General Ministry
- Pastoral Care and Counseling
- Spiritual Formation

Further evaluation of two of these concentrations is necessary. The concentration in Evangelism and Discipleship has so few differences from the MDiv Pastoral and General Ministry concentration that it may not be correct to call it a concentration. The concentration in Missions and Intercultural Studies attracts very few students, perhaps because missionaries are choosing other degrees for their training.

ii. Number of Units Required

96 credits (thesis track) or 98 credits (non-thesis track)
iii. Give examples from your curriculum that indicate it is relevant to the career aspirations of your graduates today. Most of our students are pursuing vocational Christian ministry. The following courses are some of many that clearly contribute to pastoral ministry of various kinds:

Hermeneutics and Bible Study Methods
Exegesis in the Epistles
Exegesis in Genesis
Foundations of Pastoral Care and Counseling
Introduction to Spiritual Theology and Formation
Talbot Spiritual Direction
Theology III – Christ, Salvation and the Spirit
Church and Society
Educational Ministry in the Church
Biblical Leadership and Management
Expository Preaching

iv. What has been learned about the link between Program Learning Outcomes with Curriculum and Concentrations? Almost all courses clearly advance one or more PLOs. Three courses are less directly related: Introductory Greek and Hebrew do not directly contribute to a PLO, but introduce the study of the languages in order to prepare for the Hebrew and Greek Exegesis courses, which are essential for PLO 2. Theological Research Methods does not advance any PLO, but is necessary as a class to help students become familiar with the research and writing expectations in multiple other courses. This class is especially necessary given the amount of students who arrive with a BA in a field unrelated to theology.

Some of the MDiv concentrations have additional CLOs, but in many cases they were developed early, shortly after the 2006 self-study, and were not revised. In general the CLOs need revision (or deletion) to make sure they are able to be assessed.

v. What did you learn about your course sequencing and potential or realized gaps in curriculum? PLO 1 has to do with knowledge of the content of the Bible and its historical and cultural background. There are assessments for both New Testament and Old Testament in our two introductory Bible courses (TTBE 519 and 520). Although Bible content is important in many other courses, it is not clear how well we are building or assessing mastery of Bible content in other courses. Again, however, the PLO wording of “basic Bible content” suggests that development is less necessary. We have no required order of the four theology courses. This makes it difficult to ensure development in skill, although theological content is covered well in the four courses.
vi. What new Standards of Performance have been defined as a result of this self-study?
Discussion of PLOs by MDiv faculty in 2015 led to the addition of PLO 6, dealing with ministry skills. Although ministry skills are difficult to assess, the faculty felt that it was essential to include this as a PLO, since the mission of the MDiv is to prepare people for pastoral and parachurch ministry.

In addition, the MDiv faculty decided to retire two older PLOs. The MDiv previously had a PLO related to research and writing proficiency, but it was determined that this was only a goal related to helping students succeed within the program, not a final goal of the program. We also retired a PLO related to a specific counseling skill. This older PLO was too narrow, and was actually more of a particular course objective rather than a PLO.

vii. Describe your alignment with co-curricular activities.

Does the program provide students with sufficient opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills? Where are there gaps in the co-curricular?

The co-curricular alignment chart demonstrates that MDiv students have extensive opportunities to apply their knowledge and skill. Most such opportunities are in the form of required ministry internships and spiritual formation groups (PLOs 4 and 6). Other PLOs (1-3, 5) are easily practiced and demonstrated in an academic setting, and so are covered within traditional curricular rather than co-curricular settings.

B. Student Learning, Assessment, and Effectiveness
i. Describe how students are being assessed and evaluated in achieving the expected Standards of Performance.

PLO 1 (Biblical Knowledge): Objective multiple-choice exams at the end of two survey courses (TTBE 519 and 520); scores are regarded as “acceptable” if 80-91%; “good” if 92-95%; and “excellent” if 96 or above.


PLO 3 (Biblical Doctrine): Rubric assessment of final papers in four theology courses (TTHT 506, TTTH 512, 613, 614)

PLO 4 (Spiritual Intimacy): Rubric assessment of selected questions on the midterm exam in TTSF 501.

PLO 5 (Biblical Preaching): Rubric assessment of final sermons in two preaching classes (TTPT 609 and 610)

PLO 6 (Ministry Skills): This is a new PLO created by the faculty in 2015, and so it has not yet been assessed. Possible assessment may include rubric evaluation of ministry reports and ministry philosophy statements in pastoral ministry courses

ii. Explain how analysis was conducted to determine whether your students met
the expected Standards of Performance.

For rubric assessments, evaluations of “good” or “excellent” for each line in the rubric were considered the desired scores. For PLO 1, every student took the objective exam and the results were tabulated. For PLO 2, papers were randomly selected and evaluated by three professors. For PLOs 3 and 4, papers were randomly selected and evaluated by the department chair. For PLO 5, every sermon was evaluated by two students and the professor.

**PLO 1: Bible Knowledge.** Objective multiple-choice “Essentials Exams” were administered to all students in the required classes TTBE 519 and 520.

On the objective multiple-choice Old Testament Essentials Exams from 2012-14, 27% of students scored excellent; 20% scored “good”; 35% scored “acceptable”; and 18% scored “not adequate.”

On the New Testament Essentials Exams, 520 from 2012-14, 48% of students scored excellent; 22% scored “good”; 22% scored “acceptable”; and 9% scored “not adequate.”

**PLO 2: Biblical Interpretation.** Final exegetical papers were written by all students in TTNT 604 and 605. Five student papers from 2013 were randomly selected and each was evaluated by rubric by three NT professors. Categories included exegesis, context, application, presentation and research. Of the various category scores, 19% were outstanding, 47% were good/very good, 33% were acceptable, and 1% were not acceptable.

**PLO 3: Theology.** Essays on final exams in TTTH 511 were evaluated using a rubric, with the categories doctrinal explanation, biblical basis, contemporary relevance, and assessing non-evangelical doctrines. Each category received from 1-25 points, with a score of 24-25 considered superior, and 18 or below considered poor. MDiv students average scores in these five categories were, respectively, 21.6 (acceptable), 22.6 (good), 21.9 (acceptable) and 20 (acceptable).

**PLO 4: Spiritual Formation.** Two selected essays on midterm exams administered in TTSF 503 were evaluated by rubric in 2013-14. The two essays assessed student understanding of knowledge of God and knowledge of self. The average score on the first question was 8.91 out of 10, and the average score on the second question was 8.8 out of 10; both averages were considered to be in the “good” range.

**PLO 5: Biblical Preaching.** Final sermons in TTPT 609 and 610 were evaluated by rubric, with categories of accurate exposition, communication clarity, and doctrinal relevance/application. Each sermon was evaluated by two other students and the professor. In 2014, 35% of scores in individual categories were excellent (9-10 out of 10) and 65% were good (6-8 out of 10).

**PLO 6: Ministry Skills.** Not assessed directly yet, since this is a new PLO. However, indirect evidence from our alumni demonstrates that alumni feel that Talbot has prepared them very well for ministry (see below, under alumni, v. and vi.).

iii. What new insights have been learned about students’ opportunities to be Introduced, Develop, and Master PLOs?

**Biblical content classes (PLO 1)** have the least amount of development.
However, this is because PLO 1 is explicitly worded as a covering of “basic content” of the Bible.

**Interpretation classes (PLO 2)** have good progression; however, there is no requirement to take the most introductory course (TTBE 517) before the others (TTNT 503, TTOT 705).

**Theology classes (PLO 3)** do not have any planned skill development, because each required theology course covers one set of theological topics, without necessarily directly increasing theological skills. For this reason, the four theology classes do not have prerequisites.

Although there are only three **spiritual formation classes (PLO 4)**, there is still a clear progression from course to course.

Our **ministry and preaching courses (PLOs 5 and 6)** have courses at all three levels (I, D, M), allowing students to have a clear path of development.

### iv. Graduation and Retention Trends

**a.** How long does it take students to graduate from the program?

It is possible for a student to complete the MDiv in three years of 16-credit semesters, or even in five semesters if they receive advanced standing from an undergraduate Bible degree. Since many students are in vocational ministry and have families, not all finish within three years:

- Graduating in:  
  - 7 semesters or less: 50%
  - 8-11 semesters: 34%
  - 12 or more semesters: 16%

**b.** What concerns with graduation, retention, and completion arise when examining the data provided?

On average, 125 new students enter the MDiv program yearly, and about 52 graduate. The difference between the two arises from two sources of loss. Annually, about 24 MDiv students (5.6% of total MDiv enrollment) switch to a shorter MA program, and about 39 drop out (9.9% of total enrollment).

We have been concerned in the past that many students are switching from the ministry-oriented MDiv to an academic MA, providing less preparation for ministry. The new MA in Preaching and Pastoral Ministry (launching Fall 2015) will provide an appropriate degree for many MDiv students to switch to if they find themselves unable to complete the longer degree.

The dropout rate needs greater study. It is a lower dropout rate than the MA program at Talbot, but still of some concern. During the next five years, it may be of value to try to survey departing students to identify causes of dropout.

**c.** What on-going efforts are in place to retain students in the program and assist students in graduating in a timely fashion?

The Academic Coordinator in the Christian Ministries and Leadership Department emails and then calls all MDiv students who do not enroll for classes during the
initial enrollment period to encourage them and see if there is anything that can be
done to help them continue, by directing them to departments to deal with
financial issues or other stops on enrollment.

d. What roadblocks exist in the program for students when it comes to
graduating on time?
Many students have full-time jobs and families, making it difficult to take a full
load every semester. Talbot tries to offer many courses in non-traditional
formats (Saturdays, evenings, hybrid and online courses). However, increasing
the amount of online courses will likely help some students move more quickly
through their degree.

v. How are students being prepared for their careers and graduate school work?
The MDiv is a very practical degree. It not only covers all the academic subjects
(Bible and theology), but has 34 credits aimed directly at forming character and
ministry skills. In addition, even the “academic” classes are taught by professors who
are actively involved in the church and who shape their courses to show their
connection to ministry. A survey of Theology and Exegesis syllabi show that all have
some assignment related to personal spirituality, and most have assignments
connecting the content to pastoral ministry.

The Alumni Questionnaire (AQ) was administered in 2014 to MDiv alumni who had
graduated between five and ten years earlier. It shows that alumni felt very positively
about how Talbot had prepared them in general for ministry. When asked about the
effectiveness of their Talbot education in preparing them for their current work,
2007-8 alumni had a mean score of 3.3, where 4 is “very well” and 1 is “very
inadequately.” (2007-8 data was selected because significantly more 2007-8 MDiv
alumni responded to the AQ, making the data more statistically valid)

vi. According to your students and alumni, describe the program’s strengths and
weaknesses?

Alumni: The Alumni Questionnaire (AQ) shows a number of strengths in the MDiv.”
For example, when asked about the effectiveness of their Talbot education in four areas
of study, 2007-8 alumni gave a mean “religious heritage” score (which includes Bible,
theology and interpretation) of 3.7, where 4 is “very well” and 1 is “very inadequately.”
They also gave mean scores of 3.3 in the categories of “personal and spiritual
formation” and “capacity for ministerial and public leadership.”

Students: a focus group of current MDiv students was conducted in Fall 2014. It
revealed that students emphasized the excellence of professors, pointing out that faculty
were knowledgeable as well as practical, and open to relationships with students.
Professors combined high expectations with graciousness and understanding of student’s
life situations. Students also appreciated the depth and breadth of the MDiv: broad
coverage of theology, exegesis, and practical theology in multiple courses, and moving
deeply into course content. They noted that courses often gave assignments that helped
apply the content to ministry situations. Students felt that they were receiving the tools that they need to progress further after their formal education.

Students also perceived some weaknesses. Despite the overall positive response to the Spiritual Formation Focus (SFF) component, some students felt that there was a disconnect between the approach found in the Spiritual Formation classes and in their Bible and Theology classes. Some students observed that they were uncomfortable with the hermeneutics or theology employed by adjunct faculty in SFF cohort groups, and that they did not feel welcome to disagree in class. Similarly, some students felt unpersuaded by the integration of psychology and theology in SFF courses. MDiv faculty met in Spring 2015 to discuss this issue and have formulated a plan to address concerns.

Another concern by MDiv students was advising. Students felt that it was easier to get information from other students than trying to find a faculty member to advise on course planning.

A survey of Talbot students who received a BA in Bible from Biola indicated a widespread feeling that some of their introductory Talbot courses were repeating information from the BA.

C. Faculty

   i. Qualification and Achievements
   ii. Background, Expertise, and Professional Work

97% of our full-time MDiv faculty (i.e., all but one) hold earned doctorates. 55% are at the professor level. MDiv faculty hold their doctorates from a variety of institutions. 54% come from institutions that hold a confessional position, while 46% attended institutions of a non-confessional nature. Faculty all hold doctorates pertinent to their field of study.

MDiv faculty have wide experience in Christian ministry. Nearly all are actively involved in leadership in churches or parachurch organizations. 51% serve or have served in the past in vocational pastoral roles in churches.

In order to achieve promotion, faculty must demonstrate accomplishments in the scholarship of teaching, the scholarship of research, and the scholarship of service (to the university and to the community). Each full-time faculty member writes an annual report summarizing accomplishments in each area of scholarship and submits it to the appropriate department chair and to the dean. Faculty must demonstrate accomplishments in all three areas of scholarship to be promoted.

MDiv faculty have significant research interests. In the past two years, the MDiv faculty have published nine books. Academic accomplishments are celebrated at each faculty meeting; over the last year we have celebrated six scholarly articles, two chapters, and dozens of papers presented at scholarly conventions such as ETS or SBL.
iii. Describe how faculty workload is determined and distributed.
Since the MDiv faculty are arranged in departments by discipline (Bible Exposition, Christian Ministry and Leadership, New Testament, Old Testament, Spiritual Formation, Theology), faculty workload is determined within each department, following general Talbot guidelines. Faculty are required to teach 9-10 credits per semester, and may teach up to 3 additional credits each semester to receive overload pay. Faculty may also teach during the January term or summer school, but are not required to. Some faculty teach overload classes in other departments, such as undergraduate Bible, or Bible integration courses in other University departments. Faculty departments try to share the load for classes in less desirable time slots, such as evenings and Saturdays. The deans of Talbot assign committee and task force responsibilities before each school year begins, taking careful consideration of current workload, faculty interest and expertise.

3. Program Sustainability and Support
i. Program Demand

The Talbot Institutional Peer Profile Report for 2014-15 compares Talbot’s MDiv with the MDiv in peer institutions – other large Protestant seminaries such as Fuller Theological Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. It reveals the following interesting comparisons:
- Like most other seminaries, female enrollment is quite low (< 5%).
- Talbot’s MDiv is ethnically diverse. While most MDiv programs are about 31% non-white, Talbot’s MDiv is 74% non-white.
- As in most other programs, the largest single age group in Talbot’s MDiv is 25-29, followed closely by 30-34.

An comparison of MDiv curriculum in various CCCU seminaries (conducted by the Kern Foundation) showed that Talbot is similar to other MDiv programs in the way that curriculum is balanced between classes in ministry, biblical languages, preaching, theology, church history, spiritual formation and interpretation. Talbot has more credits devoted to spiritual formation than most seminaries.

As mentioned above, some seminaries have recently begun to launch MDiv programs that are less than 80 credits, although more seminaries are still keeping their MDivs at 96-98 credits, like Talbot.

iii. Explain projected trends in student enrollment.

MDiv enrollment grew from 333 in 2006 to a peak of 436 in 2009. Nationwide, MDiv enrollment has been in decline, primarily because many denominations no longer emphasize or require the MDiv. Talbot has so far been steady or growing; the only decline in recent years was from 2013 (424) to 2014 (390). This decline should be watched closely, but it is important to note that this decline was merely a return to the
The launch of the MA in Preaching and Pastoral Ministry (MA PPM) may divert some incoming students from entering the MDiv, so we may see a decline in the MDiv. However, this may have minimal impact on the whole seminary, since the MA PPM shares many classes with the MDiv, and we anticipate additional growth from the MA PPM, not just growth by attrition from other degrees.

Competition will also need to be watched. Golden Gate Seminary is in the process of moving to Southern California. Fuller Theological Seminary just lowered their MDiv to the equivalent of about 80 credits, and began offering an online MDiv, so some students may be attracted to their program. However, Talbot's primary competition lies primarily in other theologically conservative schools.

iv. If student enrollment is not at an optimal level, describe ways in which resource will be redirected within the department or academic unit.

We do not at present foresee the need to redirect resources.

v. If the program enrollment exceeds expected levels, explain how the program plans to accommodate growth.

Since average class size is currently at about 18, we can experience significant growth without having to hire more faculty or staff. The MDiv could likely grow by as much as 20% without requiring additional full-time faculty. In addition, faculty requests are made at the academic department level, not at the degree level, so each department monitors its faculty needs based on the demand as they serve several Talbot degrees.

vi. What is occurring in the profession, field, culture, and society that points to an anticipated need for this program to continue?

Despite the nationwide decline in demand for the MDiv over the last ten years, the MDiv at Talbot has increased from 39% of Talbot master's enrollment in 2006 to 45% of Talbot in 2014. There are two reasons for this: many of our students serve in denominations that have not changed their ordination requirements, and students want the rich combination of biblical languages and preaching that is not available in our MA degrees.

A. Resource Allocation
i. Describe whether the current level of faculty support is sufficient to maintain program quality.

Quality: Students and alumni indicate that the faculty are one of the primary strengths of
the MDiv program. IDEA course evaluations indicate that students ranked 60% of MDiv faculty as in the top 30% on the “excellent teacher” subscore, and another 20% fell into the middle 40%.

Quantity: Current class size for MDiv classes is 18.8, with only 18% of all classes rising above 30. The current amount of faculty appears to be adequate. However, with a number of senior faculty approaching retirement age, the challenge will be to continue to replace retiring faculty with excellent incoming faculty.

ii. Explain whether the current support systems that are in place are adequate to assist students in achieving their academic goals.

Talbot’s MDiv has a few systems in place to help students with their academic goals. The University Learning Center and the Greek Language Lab are available to help students with learning the biblical languages, which is one of the most important academic needs in the MDiv.

Students are encouraged to take TTSS 510, Theological Research Methodology, in their first semester. This course helps them meet the expectations for research and writing in the rest of their courses. However, many students are not interested in this class and delay taking it.

For students who have academic goals beyond the MDiv, such as a PhD, it is very common for MDiv professors to take time to advise such students and help them prepare for doctoral work.

These academic support systems seem to be adequate, since none of our assessments suggest that students are dissatisfied with academic support. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that some students switch from the MDiv to other degrees that do not require languages; this may indicate an increased need for support in the languages.

iii. Discuss the program’s current facilities, space, and equipment and whether they are adequate for sustaining the quality of the program.

The 2006 self-study gave the recommendation that Talbot pursue increased office space so that departments would not be so widespread. The construction of Talbot East has helped somewhat, so that the majority of MDiv faculty are in one of the three Talbot buildings. SFF faculty, however, are still at a far end of campus. The eventual replacement of Meyers Hall with a larger facility will be helpful for bringing student and faculty closer together. However, that construction is on hold as the University develops other building projects.

Classroom space is excellent, with every classroom having wifi and cable internet connections, projectors, sound systems, DVD players, and easily controlled connections
to laptops.

iv. Discuss whether current staffing is sufficient to support a quality program and adequate for faculty/student load.

Departmental Academic Coordinators are highly valued by the faculty, and handle their large workload well. Most Academic Coordinators have student workers, who are especially valuable during busy times such as the beginning of the semester.

MDiv students take the largest single portion of their degree in the department of Christian Ministry and Leadership, and so the Academic Coordinator there is perhaps more overloaded than some. Grant money for the new MA PPM (which is also in the CMA department) will assist by increasing the amount of student worker hours available.

Talbot has five deans, each with their own administrate support workers, all of whom assist the MDiv in different ways. At present, this administrative support seems adequate for supporting the MDiv.

The MDiv program is led by a program director, who receives a stipend for the additional administrative duties. Unfortunately, the MDiv lacked a director from 2009-2013, so some items of assessment and development did not receive attention.

v. Explain program budget trends and how increasing or decreasing revenues impact program sustainability.

The MDiv budget is not handled separately, but as part of the Talbot budget, treated in the overall Talbot review.

4. Program Goals and Planning for Improvement

A. What are the program’s primary goals for the next five years?

1. Revise and sharpen the current assessment efforts. Rather than collecting a variety of assessments each year, we will follow the new rotating assessment plan, evaluating one or two PLOs per year. This will allow us to respond to assessment and make changes, rather than just collect data.

2. Evaluate and revise the Concentration Learning Objectives. The CLOs were produced in the middle of Talbot’s assessment efforts, and are not adequately assessable as they are currently worded. Some concentrations have far too many CLOs, making assessment unwieldy.

3. Commission a task force to determine if the MDiv should be shortened. Since many MDiv programs are revising the MDiv down to 80 credits or less, we need to do careful research to determine if Talbot should follow suit. The task force will conclude by giving a recommendation to the Provost and the dean of Talbot.
4. **Commission a committee to revise the MDiv curriculum**, if the task force decides that the MDiv needs to be shortened. The committee will begin by gathering information about student needs from our constituents: current pastors and church leaders, alumni, current students, as well as Talbot faculty and administration.

5. **Revise the advanced standing policy for students entering the MDiv with undergraduate biblical studies.** WASC has requested that Talbot re-evaluate the entire advanced standing policy to address assessment issues. During this process, policies related to advanced standing for the MDiv need to be reviewed. A survey of Talbot students who received a BA in Bible from Biola indicated a widespread feeling that some of their introductory courses were repeating information from the BA. ATS allows up to 25% of the MDiv credits to be granted as advanced standing, but Talbot currently only allows 18%.

6. **Work with Talbot’s Distance Learning department to increase the amount of MDiv classes that are offered in hybrid or online format.**

B. **How will the program address any weaknesses while building on existing strengths?**

Some students have expressed significant concerns with this issue of disconnect between the theology and hermeneutics of the Spiritual Formation Focus (SFF) and the rest of their Talbot courses, especially in the cohort groups led by adjuncts. On the other hand, students express great satisfaction with the results of the SFF program in their lives, and the SFF program is of central importance in the MDiv program. The directors of the SFF program plan to work on a training program for their adjuncts to address this issue. After the changes, further assessment will help verify if the changes to the SFF program are helpful.

About 9.9% of MDiv students leave the program each year and do not return to Talbot. We need to find out why this is happening, and if we can increase this number. During one of the assessment years, exit interviews will be conducted to determine what can be done to lessen this number.

C. **How will the program make improvements with existing resources while continuing to collaborate and innovate?**

The proposals listed above should not require additional faculty resources.

D. **What additional resources will be needed to sustain the quality of the program?**

The MDiv is currently provided with excellent resources. We do not foresee a demand for additional resources beyond those already budgeted.

5. **Additional Comments**
This self-study and Executive Summary has been read and reviewed by the individuals indicated below prior to its submission to the Office of University Effectiveness.

______________________________________
Chair/Director’s Signature

______________________________________
Dean’s Signature

______________________________________
_______________________
Date

______________________________________
_______________________
Date