Q: What are the “semester conversion” and the “new curriculum”?  
We are preparing to convert our academic calendar from a quarter to a semester basis for all academic programs and developing a new curriculum for the M.Div. program.

Q: Why are we shifting to semesters?  
Using an academic calendar based on semesters will provide opportunities for flexibility in course delivery, including shorter “half semester” courses, full semester courses and a “winterim” for special courses, intensive class sessions, and off-campus learning opportunities. It also will align us with the colleges and universities of the Concordia University System for potential coordination of programs as well as with other St. Louis area institutions with which we share joint programs of study. Further, it will enable us to improve administrative processes and reduce operating expenses.

We are developing a new M.Div. curriculum in response to numerous issues related to emerging needs and opportunities of the congregations of the LCMS, learning and personal growth priorities for students, and student costs in both time and money.

Q: When would classes begin and end under the new semester calendar?  
We will follow the pattern used by most semester calendars, starting in late August and graduating in mid-May. The proposed calendar will end in the same week as the current schedule; orientation and the first day of class will likely be one week earlier. There will be, however, an extra week without classes during the academic year.

Q: Semesters and a new curriculum do not seem to be related. Are they?  
It would not make sense to develop a curriculum in a quarter-hours format and later convert this to semesters. They are related as a matter of practicality and will be implemented together.

Q: How will the modular and distance education programs be affected by a semester calendar?  
We will establish a course schedule for each program (M.A., S.T.M., Ph.D., D.Min., CHS, EIIT, SMP, SMP to GPC) that enables the courses to fit within semester terms. No changes to the courses themselves are planned at this time, apart from ongoing revision and planning, e.g., EIIT curriculum is also under a separate review and development process.

The SMP program will shift to a residential intensive format for the January winterim, rather than using the distance model (fall, spring and summer will remain as they are now). Current students have been made aware of this change, and suitable accommodation will be made for those unable to come to campus in January 2018 and 2019. New students will be admitted into the new model, which offers only residential intensives in the winterim.

(continued)
FAQ ON SEMESTER CONVERSION AND THE NEW CURRICULUM

Nov. 9, 2015

Q: Is it certain that the new semesters/curriculum will be in effect for the 2017-18 academic year?

Yes. A course structure will be in place by February 2016, and at that point, a second student management system will be developed using the new curriculum. This system will serve as a test during the 2016-17 academic year to ensure that all processes are working properly. This test system will then become live as admissions begin for the 2017-18 academic year.

Q: Who will be affected by these changes?

Everyone will be affected by the semester calendar. We cannot use two calendars simultaneously.

The courses under revision are those currently numbered 100-799 (used by Ministerial Formation and M.A. students, and to some extent by S.T.M. students).

Courses numbered 800-999 (Advanced Studies) will not be changed at this time. We will offer these courses for two semester credit-hours instead of three quarter hours (the same number of classroom minutes).

Q: How will a student select electives in his or her new academic plan?

When a plan is drafted for a student, he or she will have an opportunity to review the plan. Where there is an opportunity to take an elective, the student will be able to make this selection.

Q: How will registration work?

In the summer of 2017 the Registrar’s Office will manually register all students based on their academic plans. This will give us the opportunity to be certain that the system is working properly.

Q: What about self-registration after the transition?

We are planning for self-registration through the end of the 2016-17 academic year, then shifting to an improved registration process. One benefit of the implementation of the new curriculum will be the elimination of the PowerCampus problems that currently prevent fully automated registration processes.

Q: How will current students using the affected courses set up their new academic plans?

We are committed to ensuring that all students achieve timely graduation, whatever their program. The academic administration will develop an individualized graduation plan for each student based on his or her current intended graduation date, mapped to the new curriculum.