



The Robert E. Webber

Institute for Worship Studies

# 2024 Institutional Research Report

As of October 31, 2024

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# I. INTRODUCTION

This 2024 research report documents a number of key indicators and evaluations related to the institutional effectiveness and student learning of the Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies (IWS). The Institute publishes an annual institutional research report each Fall, with this 2024 edition being the 10th year of its publication. This annual research report provides the results of some of the most essential assessments and evaluations, which are organized around the general areas of institutional effectiveness and student learning.

## II. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institutional effectiveness information will primarily focus on the assessments of the Strategic Plan Evaluation and the On-campus Intensive Session Evaluation. The Strategic Plan Evaluation is conducted on an annual basis, while the other two evaluations are done twice per year during the on-campus intensive sessions. Additional assessments are also included, such as some of the results of the Summer 2024 stakeholder survey.

### A. Strategic Plan Evaluation

The strategic plan information identified herein is based on evaluating the 2020-2025 Strategic Roadmap. This plan is based on a connectedness among the Institute's mission, vision, goals, and objectives, with the institutional goals and objectives derived from the Institute's mission. While progress reports on the Institute's strategic plan are provided twice per year to the Board of Trustees and the Strategic Planning Committee, a more formal and comprehensive survey-based strategic plan evaluation is provided on an annual basis, known as the Stakeholder Survey, which was most recently done in Summer 2024. The Summer 2024 stakeholder survey consisted of 21 questions, including 1 question asking the respondent's primary role at IWS, 16 questions with a Likert Scale format and 4 open-ended items based on an analysis of the Institute's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Survey respondents included students, alumni, faculty, staff, and board members.

Among the survey's Likert Scale questions were 15 items (Questions 2 through 16) that assessed the perceived fulfillment of the Institute's mission and goals. Based on a Likert Scale of 1-5, indicating low to high agreement with the statement, overall, respondents indicated a 4.63/5.00 perceived agreement with the Institute fulfilling its mission (Question 2). Also, survey results on the items addressing the 14 institutional goals (Questions 3 through 16) averaged a 4.48/5.00 response.

## **SWOT Analysis**

The Summer 2024 stakeholder survey also revealed the following ranked top items among institutional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). This was collected by gathering open-ended responses from the stakeholder survey on each SWOT area and coding the qualitative data according to common themes:

### **Strengths**

1. Community
2. Faculty
  - includes staff/leadership
3. Curriculum
  - includes teaching, practicums, practical/contextualized, balanced, relevant, academic excellence

### **Weaknesses**

1. IWS Board and Jim Hart's Departure
  - includes weak Board communication & structure, disagreement w/ Board's decision, lack of transparency, general confusion
2. Financial Concerns
  - includes concerns for financial aid & institute finances overall
3. Curriculum
  - includes timing of courses & assignments, no change in course offerings, inconsistency between courses, low academic rigor

### **Opportunities**

1. Recruitment
  - expand student recruitment efforts in general
2. Continue IWS values
  - Keep doing what IWS does best, continue on-campus component, remember/advance the mission + vision
3. Publicity
  - Includes more marketing, social media, boost profile/name recognition, update IWS logo

### **Threats**

1. Finances
  - Long-term financial sustainability
2. IWS Board and Jim Hart's Departure
  - includes weak Board communication & structure, disagreement w/ Board's decision, lack of transparency, general confusion
3. Issues related to curriculum and campus
  - includes too music focused, issues with intensives and classes, international student needs and travel

**SWOT Summary Statement:** As a result of conducting this 2024 comprehensive evaluation of the institution's strategic plan, it was determined that, as a whole, based on Likert Scale items, the institution is fulfilling its strategic intentions.

## B. On-Campus Intensive Session Evaluation

The data in Table 1 derives from the End of On-campus Intensive Session Evaluation survey that all students complete at the end of each on-campus intensive session week. The question directly asked in each survey was “How would you rank the community gatherings this session?” The last four sessions are shown for reference and comparison.

Table 1 - Average survey item response rating per session with 1-5 Likert Scale.

Survey Item Focus Area	June 2024	January 2024	June 2023	January 2023	June 2022	January 2022	June 2021
Community Gatherings Question	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.7	4.4	4.3

Summary of On-campus Intensive Session Evaluations: Due to the pandemic, the June 2021 session moved to a partially-online, partially-in-person format. During the January 2022 and June 2022 intensives, the majority of students attended in person with a question about community gatherings. The data is included here for reference. Community gatherings appear to have generally improved and have stabilized since the pandemic according to the data shown above.

## III. STUDENT LEARNING

The Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies utilizes a variety of assessments to measure student learning, including the measurement of the degree to which courses fulfill program learning outcomes, as well as retention rates, graduation rates and spiritual formation. The measurement of fulfilling program learning outcomes is conducted at the completion of each course in the Course Evaluations in Populi, while the other assessments are determined on an annual basis. IWS has launched an Academic Assessment Plan in 2020. The plan continues to assess program objectives through the use of student evaluations, which are indirect measurements. In order to provide direct measures, faculty have provided grading rubrics for specific assignments. These will be evaluated for effectiveness in meeting program objectives for both degree programs. The intended result is a more thorough and consistent program review that will lead to continuous improvement in academics.

### A. Academic Assessments

At the conclusion of each course students complete a 1-5 (low to high) Likert Scale Academic Assessment instrument, known as Course Evaluations in Populi, to measure student perception of the degree to which specific courses fulfilled designated program learning outcomes. The current program learning outcomes were first assessed in the June 2016 session. The DWS and MWS programs each have seven learning outcomes, as listed below, with the average responses for the June 2022 session also identified. June 2023 is the most recent term for which complete student data is available, since, at the time of this writing, extended schedule students have not yet completed coursework (and thus have not submitted course evaluations) for either the January 2024 or June 2024 terms.

## **Doctorate of Worship Studies Program Learning Outcomes & Data**

### DWS Program Learning Outcomes

1. (LO 1) Biblical foundation of Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate, worship rooted in and declaring the story of the triune God as expressed in the Scriptures.
2. (LO 2) Historical development of Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate, major trajectories in the practice of Christian worship through culture and time for use in assessing current expressions of Christian worship.
3. (LO 3) Theological reflection on Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate, a scripturally rooted, historically informed Christian theology of worship to guide the planning and evaluation of Christian worship.
4. (LO 4) Cultural reflection on Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate, ways in which culture informs and shapes expressions of Christian worship, past and present.
5. (LO 5) Missiological reflection on Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate, the centrality of God's mission, with respect to the Church's worship, founded on the scriptural revelation of the Triune God.
6. (LO 6) Methodological skills for studies in Christian worship: The student will demonstrate the ability to research, evaluate and articulate concepts related to Christian worship, using scholarly materials (primary and secondary) and the theological action-research methodology.
7. (LO 7) Ministerial skills in Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate, implement and evaluate, key concepts related to Christian worship in a particular setting.



Table 2 – DWS Average rating responses per session compared to last 5 sessions.

<b>DWS Program Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Average responses for June 2023</b>	<b>Average responses for past 5 sessions (Jan 2021 through Jan 2023)</b>	<b>Percentage Change (%)<sup>1</sup></b>
LO 1	4.74	4.7	+0.85%
LO 2	4.64	4.6	0.87%
LO 3	4.74	4.7	0.85%
LO 4	4.5	4.4	2.27%
LO 5	4.63	4.7	-1.49%
LO 6	4.58	4.6	-0.43%
LO 7	4.68	4.6	1.74%

Summary of DWS academic assessment changes:

When comparing the June 2023 responses with the average responses for the past 5 sessions, 7 out of 7 DWS Learning Outcomes had minimal changes of less than 5 percent.

In the 2023 IRR, following 3 out of 7 Learning Outcomes reflected changes greater than 5 percent: DWS LO 1 (-5.7%), DWS LO 4 (-5.7%), DWS LO 6 (+5.3%). It was recommended these changes should be monitored in comparison to the 2024 IRR. DWS LO 1 had a slight positive change this year (+0.85%). With this positive change, DWS LO 1 has returned to an area where it has a minimal change of less than 5% when comparing the two years. DWS LO 4 has made a positive change this year (+2.27%). With this positive change, DWS LO 4 has returned to an area where it has a minimal change of less than 5% when comparing the two years. DWS LO 6 saw a slight negative change (-

<sup>1</sup> Note that the following percentages were determined by first subtracting the most recent year (Average responses for June 2023) from the Average responses for past 5 sessions. Then dividing that difference by the Average responses for past 5 sessions, and finally multiplying the result by 100.

0.43%) and thus is in an area where it has a minimal change of less than 5% when comparing the two years.

## **Master of Worship Studies Program Learning Outcomes & Data**

### Masters of Worship Studies Program Learning Outcomes

1. (LO 1) Biblical foundation of Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate, Biblical evidence for worship as participation in the story of the Triune God.
2. (LO 2) Historical development of Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate, the historical development of Christian worship practices and theology.
3. (LO 3) Theological reflection on Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate the role of theology, philosophy and epistemology in Christian formation.
4. (LO 4) Cultural reflection on Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate, the role of contextualization in engaging God's people in the dialogue of worship.
5. (LO 5) Missiological reflection on Christian worship: The student will understand, as well as demonstrate the ability to articulate and evaluate, the centrality of God's mission with respect to the Church's worship, including its global dimensions.
6. (LO 6) Methodological skills for studies in Christian worship: The student will demonstrate the ability to research, evaluate and articulate concepts related to Christian worship, using scholarly materials, as well as apply them to the spiritual life of the believer, with an emphasis upon the planning of corporate worship.
7. (LO 7) Ministerial skills in Christian worship: The student will demonstrate the ability to integrate and evaluate MWS course objectives within a local ministry context through specific, intentional and strategically supervised efforts.

Table 3 - MWS Average rating responses per session compared to last 5 sessions.<sup>2</sup>

<b>MWS Program Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Average responses for June 2023</b>	<b>Average responses for past 5 sessions (Jan 2021 through Jan 2023)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Percentage Change (%)<sup>4</sup></b>
LO 1	4.7	4.8	-2.08%
LO 2	4.5	4.4	2.27%
LO 3	4.82	4.4	9.55%
LO 4	4.7	4.6	2.17%
LO 5	4.7	4.4	6.82%
LO 6	4.5	4.5	0%
LO 7	5	4.7	6.38%

Summary of MWS academic assessment changes:

When comparing the June 2023 responses with the average responses for the past 5 sessions, 4 out of 7 MWS Learning Outcomes had minimal changes of less than 5 percent. The following 3 out of 7 Learning Outcomes reflected changes greater than 5 percent: MWS LO 3 (+9.55%), MWS LO 5 (+6.82%), MWS LO 7 (+6.38%).<sup>5</sup> All changes greater than 5% were positive.

In the 2023 IRR, the following 3 out of 7 Learning Outcomes reflected changes greater than 5 percent: MWS LO 3 (+5.7%), MWS LO 4 (-9.4%), MWS LO 5 (-6.5%). It was recommended these

<sup>2</sup> Note: Average responses for June 2023 include courses WR501, BIB501A and BIB 501B. These responses were added in June 2022 for the first time since recording and calculating this data.

<sup>3</sup> The MWS 501 Jan 2023 evaluation had no data due to students not completing class, so those responses are not included, affecting LO1, LO2, and LO6.

<sup>4</sup> Note that the following percentages were determined by first subtracting the most recent year (Average responses for June 2023) from the Average responses for past 5 sessions. Then dividing that difference by the Average responses for past 5 sessions, and finally multiplying the result by 100.

changes should be monitored in comparison to the 2024 IRR, especially MWS LO 4. MWS LO 3 continues to see positive change. While not a change of greater than 5%, MWS LO 4 has still made a positive change this year (+2.17%). MWS LO 4 should continue to be monitored to see if positive changes will continue. MWS LO 5 has made a significant positive change this year (+6.82%). With this positive change, MWS LO 5 has returned to an area where it has a minimal change of less than 5% when comparing the two years.

## Summary of DWS & MWS Academic Assessment Changes

When comparing the June 2023 responses with the average responses for the past 5 sessions, 11 of the 14 Learning Outcomes had minimal changes of less than 5 percent. The following 3 Learning Outcomes reflected changes greater than 5%:

- **Negative changes:**
  - None greater than 5%
- **Positive changes:**
  - MWS LO 3 (+9.55%)
  - MWS LO 5 (+6.82%)
  - MWS LO 7 (+6.38%)

There were more positive changes than negatives changes. The highest change overall was MWS LO 3 (+9.55%).

In addition, in 2023, MWS LO 4 had a negative change greater than 5% (-9.4%). While not a change of greater than 5%, MWS LO 4 made a positive change this year (+2.17%). MWS LO 4 should continue to be monitored in next year's IRR to see if positive changes will continue.

## **B. Retention Rates**

The Institute's retention rate is defined as the percentage of new, non-visiting students who successfully complete MWS 501 or DWS 701 and return within two sessions for MWS 502 or DWS 702. For new students that started between January 2011 to June 2022, the MWS retention rate is 86% and the DWS retention rate is 76%. The total retention rate for both programs combined since January 2011 to June 2022 is 79%.

## C. Graduation Rates

Since June 1999, 621 students enrolled in the DWS program. 74% of these students graduated with the full degree (DWS) or certificate (AGCWS). (How this is calculated: new students who graduated on or before June 2024.)

Since June 2002, 264 students enrolled in the DWS program. 84% of these students graduated with the full degree (MWS) or certificate (GCWS). (How this is calculated: new students who graduated on or before June 2024.)



## D. Spiritual Formation

In addition to measuring student learning in the traditional areas of academic discipline knowledge and understanding, retention rate and graduation rate, the extent to which the Institute supports the spiritual development and formation of students has also been assessed. Specifically, the Summer 2024 stakeholder survey assessed key spiritually related areas including the extent to which the Institute cultivates Christ-like leaders for the global church and offers a semi-monastic on-campus experience. These factors were assessed by the following two questions on the Summer 2024 Stakeholder Survey:

1. Cultivation of Christ-like servant leaders for global church. Survey item (Question 6): IWS cultivates Christ-like servant leaders for the global church, shaped by the Divine Narrative rather than the cultural narrative.

<i>Alumni response:</i>	4.72
<i>Board response:</i>	5
<i>Faculty response:</i>	4.59
<i>Staff response:</i>	4.75
<i>Student response:</i>	4.63
<b><i>Overall response (weighted):</i></b>	<b><u>4.68</u></b>

2. On-campus experience: Survey item (Question 15): IWS offers an on-campus experience that is semi-monastic, designed to create a strong sense of community among the students, faculty, staff and alumni of IWS that can be continued and enhanced in the online environment.

<i>Alumni response:</i>	4.69
<i>Board response:</i>	5
<i>Faculty response:</i>	4.65
<i>Staff response:</i>	4.75
<i>Student response:</i>	4.56
<b><i>Overall response (weighted):</i></b>	<b><u>4.65</u></b>

Table 4 – Stakeholder Survey Question 6 response rating with 1-5 Likert Scale.

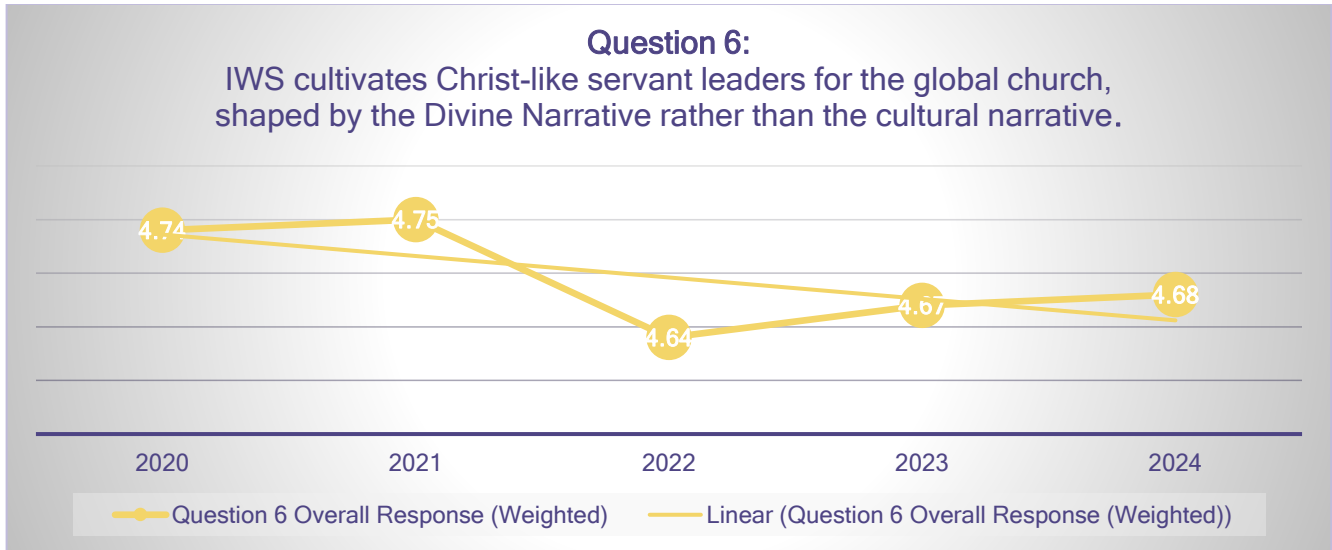
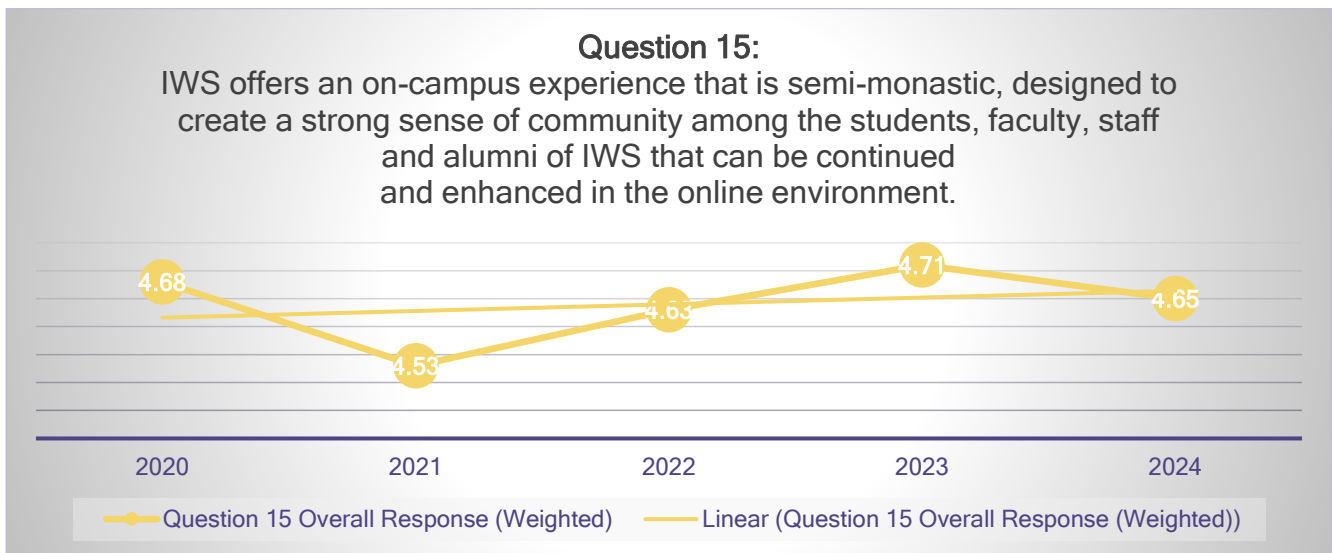


Table 5 – Stakeholder Survey Question 15 response rating with 1-5 Likert Scale.



Summary of spiritual formation assessment: When comparing the survey results from Summer 2024 with the responses to the previous four years’ surveys, the two areas identified in the questions showed minimal changes of less than 5 percent.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This report provides the Institute's stakeholders with important information primarily related to institutional effectiveness and student learning. The results will be forwarded to key administrators for their use in reviewing programs and services under their direction, with potential changes made based on their applicability and relevance. Also, the Board and the Strategic Planning Committee will receive this report.