

## BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

**Lourdes College**  
Master of Arts in Theology

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

**Lourdes College meets Ohio Board of Regents' minimum standards for graduate degree programs. Authorization is recommended for the Master of Arts in Theology degree program through December 31, 2012, with annual progress reports to be submitted by December 31, 2009, 2010, and 2011. A follow-up review will be performed prior to December 31, 2012 to determine continued authorization.**

**Profile:** Beginning in 1943 as an extension campus of the College of St. Teresa, Winona, Minnesota, Lourdes Junior College was founded in 1958. Originally established to educate sisters of the Franciscan community, Lourdes College began to admit laywomen in 1969 and laymen in 1975. Today, the college enrolls nearly two thousand students and offers undergraduate and graduate programs.

The mission of the institution is as follows:

Lourdes College, a Catholic liberal arts institution of higher education in the Franciscan tradition, serves men and women by providing continuing opportunities for intellectual discovery, accentuating both liberal learning and integrated professional education. It is the mission of the College to stimulate the growth of integrated persons; to engage them in an honest and dynamic search for truth; to encourage them to incorporate sound religious and philosophical values in their learning and in their interpersonal relationships; to challenge them to develop and deepen personal and social responsibility; to inspire in them a commitment to community service; and to provide an atmosphere that nurtures an holistic approach to learning within a caring, supportive, faith community.

**Accreditation/Authorization:** Lourdes College is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC) and has been continuously authorized by the Ohio Board of Regents since 1975. The college is concurrently developing a request for institutional reauthorization, which would align with the college's next HLC review in 2017.

**Program Information:** The mission of the proposed program, steeped in the Catholic and Franciscan tradition, serves students by helping them to think critically about the Christian tradition and its meaning and application in daily life. Pursued ecumenically, this study opens individuals not only to their own traditions, but to religious truth as it is expressed in various persons, times, and places.

The Master of Arts in Theology is a thirty-six semester credit program (consisting of

eleven courses and a capstone seminar) designed as a degree to provide students with a solid theological grounding for future ministry or as a building block for doctoral work. The curriculum aims to supply students with a breadth of theological knowledge and research skills. Students will study biblical, historical, moral, and systematic theology, focusing on the sources of theology and learning the research skills necessary to engage in continued study throughout their lives.

**Review Results:** The review team noted numerous strengths during the review with respect to the college's pre-program development activities, program structure, and number of resources committed to the program.

Among the weaknesses identified, the team requested that the college restate the program mission statement to clarify the academic nature of the degree; develop a curriculum matrix to demonstrate how course objectives are met in each course; examine faculty overload policies and scholarship expectations; and develop a plan to assess and evaluate the program. The college appropriately responded to the suggestions and recommendations of the consultants' report by clarifying the academic nature of the degree, addressing faculty load and scholarship issues, and providing the curriculum matrix and assessment plan.

**Recommendation to the Chancellor:** Lourdes College meets Ohio Board of Regents' minimum standards for graduate degree programs. Authorization is recommended for the Master of Arts in Theology degree program through December 31, 2012, with annual progress reports to be submitted by December 31, 2009, 2010, and 2011. A follow-up review will be performed prior to December 31, 2012 to determine continued authorization.