Capstone Requirements
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A common concern among new TUMI satellites is the perceived gap between TUMI's academic requirements and the students' abilities to do the Capstone work. Therefore, it is important to understand TUMI's leadership development philosophy. In the busyness of keeping up with details, it is easy to forget the overall principles that guide those details.

Principles:

1.   TUMI training seeks to equip leaders who can both represent and reproduce the historic orthodox faith once for all delivered to the Church, i.e., that core of Christian theology and practice which Bible-believing churches have embraced always, everywhere, and at all times. In other words, *we seek to reproduce a spiritual identity*. Mentors do more than present information and grade papers. They pass on the apostolic faith that was passed down to us through the Church. Capstone is not simply a set of doctrines to be passed along. It represents an wholistic effort to help leaders enter into this apostolic, orthodox identity. Leaders are not properly trained just because they know the material in their head, but because they identify themselves as representatives of the King and His Church, and are able to carry out their representation in the context of their local church.

2.   For TUMI, the local church is the nexus of Christian leadership development, and we exist to empower church traditions and congregations to equip their leaders for the upbuilding and edification of the urban church. Our core business is leadership development. *We are in the leadership development business, not the education business*. Therefore, the academic requirements are tools to help mentors develop church leaders into more effective church leaders. TUMI students have already been identified as leaders, so our training does not make leaders, it only sharpens their effectiveness.

3.   "You simply can't put in what the Holy Spirit has left out." Once we are certain that the Holy Spirit has in fact called the student to be trained and equipped, our task is to do everything humanly possible to outfit that person to fulfill their ministry call. In other words, *mentors need to make students successful*. Dr. Davis likes to say that "teachers teach and students learn." Where students are struggling, mentors need to provide advice or options to help them become successful. As long as students are showing initiative and willingness to put forth the effort, mentors should be creative in suggesting ways to help them rise to meet the standards. I will list some ideas below--ideas that have come from you, our site coordinators, who are creatively living out this principle.

4.   We exist to be available to those called leaders who otherwise would neither qualify for nor matriculate through traditional seminary training programs. Therefore, we will never place an unbiblical obstacle in the path of any God-called leader as a requisite for training. As a result, *we strategically chose to ignore external accreditation* so we could accept church leaders regardless of educational level. Therefore, we are not beholden to any outside accreditation standards. This frees up mentors to do their jobs of developing leaders without the stifling limitations of traditional education.

5.   We unashamedly operate with a penchant to identify and equip urban church leaders to grapple with and master the Great Tradition, the historical orthodox Christian faith, and therefore strive to *communicate in ways sensitive and conducive to culture*. The core content of Capstone is not written in a traditional systematic theology textbook, but is communicated orally via DVD. Therefore, every student should be able to pass each module if he/she comes to class, participates, and listens to the DVD sessions. The content is

geared to oral cultures, and reading is not required for a person to pass each module. Granted, the higher the rate of literacy, the easier it will be for a student to excel, but literacy is not required in order to pass (and graduate). If a student is hungry and dedicated, and his/her mentor is willing to help him/her be successful, there is no reason the student should not graduate and receive a certificate.

6. Our teaching philosophy assumes that leaders must interact in a multi-faceted environment for their spiritual formation (i.e., our "three-legged stool"): a called, diligent student; a strong mentor-facilitated learning environment; and a local assembly where the truths are both understood and applied. This philosophy seeks to *avoid two errors: patronizing and wooden-application*. Leadership development means walking between two cliffs. The cliff on one side is patronizing students, not really believing they can step up to the challenge, and lowering the standards so they can be successful. On the other side is wooden application of traditional education principles that assume leaders are made through information transfer (i.e. hearing lectures, memorizing facts, and reporting the facts back to a test-taker); where successful completion of the requirements is equated to preparation for church leadership. TUMI mentors should believe in the student's ability to rise to the challenge rather than jettisoning the requirements when they seem too challenging. On the other hand, mentors should not apply the requirements woodenly, but help guide the student to rise up to the standards that TUMI has established.

7. The pedagogy of TUMI is rooted in sound missiology and tested academic theory. The class requirements are neither arbitrary nor optional, but have been designed to help learners develop habits of studying, thinking, dialoguing, and applying the biblical truths they gather over the course of their studies. *Each requirement has a purpose.* Each of the six required Capstone elements (see below) is designed to help a student grow in their leadership capacity. They are for the purpose of church leadership, not academic or accreditation standards.

With these principles in mind, these are the elements required for Capstone:
A. Attendance and class participation
B. Quizzes and final exam
C. Memory verses
D. Exegetical project
E. Ministry project
F. Reading Required Texts

A. Attendance and class participation: There is not too much a mentor can do for a student if he/she does not attend and participate. This is a matter of desire, not academics.
B. Quizzes and final exam: Students with reading difficulties will have more of a challenge studying their student workbook to prepare for quizzes or exams. However, they are free to record each session so they can listen to the material in order to come prepared for the exam (but remember you may not make copies of the DVDs or allow students to take the DVD home to review outside of class). Also, exams can be given orally. Mentors can also offer opportunities for students to come to the TUMI site to listen to the DVD again, or mentors can offer office hours were students can discuss where they may be struggling.
C. Memory verses: Those with reading difficulties can have a friend or family member record the verses in order to practice. Memory verses can then be recited verbally to receive credit.
D. Exegetical project: Helping students write can be a daunting task, academically and emotionally. However, many of you have come up with wonderful ideas on how to handle

this challenge: giving students a sample paper to guide them; offering separate sessions on organizing ideas; allowing students to present their ideas verbally instead of in writing (but still requiring their thoughts to be organized and well-prepared). Finally, it is important to remember that grammar and punctuation are not part of the standard: the goal is for leaders to learn how to exegete the Scriptures and then communicate those thoughts to others in a coherent way. Church leaders must be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2), but they don't necessarily need to have perfect grammar or spelling. Please refer to the mentor's manual (*For the Next Generation*) for more guidance.

E.   Ministry project: This element is important because it ensures that students are not simply building up head knowledge, but actually learning how to do practical ministry, applying what they have been learning in the module. None of the ministry projects need be limited by a student's academic capacity. In many of the modules, a student can combine their work by preparing their exegetical project and then teach it in a public setting as their ministry project. As has been said before, the mentor may need to be creative in the design of the ministry project, but there is no reason a student cannot be successful in their ministry project, even if they lack the ability to read and write well.

F.   Reading assignments.
   1.   This is clearly the most misunderstood element of Capstone requirements, which is why Dr. Davis wrote a document entitled "Holding Fast the Good" (attached). This document should be standard fare for all mentors and students, making sure they understand the leadership development principles behind the readings. It is absolutely imperative that every student has this paper explained to them (do not simply hand it out for them to read—go over it in class with all the students).
   2.   For those students lacking literacy skills, mentors can find a number of ways to make them successful including splitting up the readings among the students who then meet for group discussion; asking family members to read to the student; getting an audio version of the book so the student can listen instead of read (we are working on making many of the books available as mp3 versions). The student does not have to physically read each book as much as they need to understand the themes and summarize them back in a fair-minded way. This can be done without ever reading a word in the books. Again, the summary can be oral.
   3.   Each site must use our official list of Required Texts (which can be found at our website). You may not substitute any of our Required Texts. These texts are selected according to our pedagogical design. If you substitute textbooks, your students will not receive credit toward a TUMI-authorized certificate.

As you can see, there are many creative ways to bridge the gap between student capacity and Capstone requirements. May God give you grace and wisdom as you equip leaders for His Church.

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