

Cluster Assembly Evaluation – St. Louis, MO - Feb. 18-20, 2005

	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
1.	To continue to become acquainted with members from our Sister congregations	0	0	2	5	14	22	33	69	52	70
2.	To affirm our “Cluster Statement on Dominican Life and Mission”	2	7	14	9	22	21	29	60	37	56
3.	To review statistical data that has relevance for the options	0	2	6	7	11	10	30	58	70	74
4.	To evaluate the options for reconfiguration, offer suggestions, request additional information	0	1	4	4	14	19	33	72	57	62
5.	To consider the implications of each option from the perspective of a ministry group and an age cohort	1	2	8	12	14	15	43	66	60	48
6.	To do all in a spirit of faith, respect, openness, and good humor	0	0	2	2	4	1	14	35	57	151

Comments from above

1. **Getting Acquainted with members**

- Would liked to have met more
- Great
- Always wonderful to gather
- A great way to get acquainted
- An opportunity to reconnect and to widen our tents
- Working with other Dominicans is a special privilege and opportunity
- We need more of this
- Could have been more “fun:” time
- Might help to build into the process several one-on-one sharing
- The variety of table groups was excellent
- Keeping the names tags on the entire time helped
- Meals were great times to do this as well
- This is challenging but encouraging
- Feeling more and more related to the other congregations
- A positive experience
- Glad to return to original group on Sunday morning
- Having a roster of those attending and from what congregation would have been helpful
- Helped me know how many similarities we have as Dominicans
- Need to continue this especially for the introverts
- Relationality is the key to the future! No matter what decisions are made
- Table assignments were well done and were non-threatening
- I would like to visit the other congregations

2. **“Cluster Statement on Dominican Life and Mission”**

- It was never affirmed but only read
- Each congregation do this more formally
- Needs to be shorter, sharper, more focused
- Needs to be discussed
- There seems to be some resistance
- Well done, beautiful
- The phrase essential to our response to God’s call is saying so much to me.
- Not too clear
- Did not help me personally too much
- Much on mission, not much on spirituality
- Contemplative stance not only contemplative prayer
- Carried out throughout, worked into all aspects
- Maybe too early – we are so used to lovely prayers that we miss the meaning & impact.
- Absolutely
- It doesn’t inform what we are doing enough
- Need to continually clarify from whence/whom it came
- Needs more experience to reflect and share from the “spiritual” dimension

- It was the backdrop but wasn't really discussed
- Need to establish this deeper with whatever structures are considered
- Do we have a mission statement? Mixed information!
- Words did not seem to have the power they had when they were written in Sept.
- Good inclusion in prayer

3. **Statistical data**

- A monumental task
- Need for more financial information and legal ramifications
- Great help in hearing explanation
- Resource subcommittee did an unbelievable task
- More discussion beyond trends needs to be done
- Providing it ahead of time was very helpful
- Great work on graphs and charts
- The overall impact of ages and vocation needs colored all my thoughts
- It is ever changing
- Excellent presentation
- Surely is a good motivator to continue the process
- Too much time spent on explaining what was obvious
- Good, clear, good to follow with video
- Need more on new members
- Only a piece of the pie
- Discrepancies need to be looked at
- Feel that we need to reflect on an increase in membership if we expect to live in hope.
- It was a review of the same materials
- The implications leave nothing for the imagination
- Such complex multi-faceted groupings were a challenge to understand
- We did a disservice to younger members to show no new members and hope
- Some statistics sobering
- Too quickly done

4. **Options for configuration**

- Not enough time for real exchange and creativity
- End result is unclear
- Where is the passion
- Options are a beginning
- Thanks to the facilitator and compilers
- Important sharing and appreciated freedom of groups to move in direction most help to each
- Needs to be different than those offered
- Need to look deeper into the options
- It was helpful in discussions with various groups
- Looking forward to feedback for these sessions in future discussions
- Little time for additional options

- Request of the issue of vowed membership by Cathy Colby was trivialized as just understood, and not a category of concern.
- Evaluation is difficult when models are broad but reactions were possible
- Criteria for new models was not given earlier in process to implement
- Cannot get into the options with passion until we truly & authentically talk about what it means to be women of contemplation/proclamation
- Questions did not cause us to search the in-depth ramifications
- Glad some groups began with “A” and others with “D”
- Exciting and energizing
- Time to dream with others who want to do that
- It was creatively handled and can’t believe we did it five times
- It was more difficult in ministry
- Table process seemed controlled at first but better later on
- Needed more than the bare bones of the four options; Diagram for A was misunderstood by many; Option B was unclear to many if not most.
- It was helpful to go back to the first table on Sunday morning
- Did we muddy the waters more
- Not finished but extremely valuable to do in context of other congregations’ viewpoints and realities, not left to “experts”
- Need more refined data for Option A & B
- Intense, frustrating at times but very worthwhile
- Sisters were cooperative with the process and with the facilitator
- Some discomfort with the options but the spirit of all present helped support the trust level for the Spirit’s work
- Better explanations for each option
- Need more large group understanding of the options
- Good process to discuss several times with different people
- They flowed well, openly and sometimes heated – good for ‘perceptions’
- Need the next level of details
- The conversation was a good start, we need to continue
- It was tedious but good
- OK but not the major thing the weekend accomplished
- Unfortunately new models not explained
- Need more flushing out of each

5. **Consider the implications of each option in ministry and age cohort**

- Ministry cohort very difficult
- Good to be in such groups
- Drew us to dream the future into the 21st century
- We need a broader vision, not focusing on structure/government first
- Not sure age or ministry are an element
- This part was most telling
- Not energized by these two groups
- Realization that age brings about more diversity than imagined

- Age cohort did not seem to be of much benefit
- No unifying thread came forth to provide advantages to clustering for the sake of the mission
- We need to speak of Dominican life and mission and what THAT looks like
- Very open conversations and to meet age cohorts
- Ministry group did not feel the options effected their ministry
- These were not helpful especially to ministry group
- Age cohort group was not a positive experience; was a disaster
- Did we get ‘stuck’ on A or is it just the most popular?
- Found there was not cohesion or sameness of thought
- Felt rushed; did not finish
- Creative configuring tables
- Very comfortable sharing with ministry group
- I would rather hear what a mixed age group and hear what the younger members are saying
- This is a very critical piece; hope more time is spent on this in November
- This was the least informative group
- Ministry group had great energy and passion; age cohort was least valuable
- Difficult to repeat the options with ministry and age
- Need to enhance these implications
- Thought ministry session could have happened after stats and before models/options structures
- I most enjoyed the age group
- A positive experience for me
- Structure yes; function not so clear
- Too much to go over three times
- Would like the reconfiguration subcommittee to give more specific canonical particulars, especially on A & C
- This was a difficult experience especially with those who were younger members, 60 and under

6. **To do all in a spirit of faith, respect, openness and good humor**

- My enthusiasm lessened as we went along
- Some still have a difficult time, need prayers/sense of humor
- Appreciated prayers and services
- I only met one grumpy person in the entire place
- Excellent
- More than adequate
- The spirit was pure gift
- For the most part very good; faith and fear intermingled – real people in dialogue
- Some found the process overwhelming this weekend while others have been involved previously
- Everyone seem to commit to the process
- Most of us operate in this mode wherever we go

- I felt this
- Food, spirits, liturgies, flow were excellent
- Excellent, especially the group from Kentucky on Saturday afternoon-a real rallying cry!
- Our facilitator was outstanding; her expertise truly set the tone and kept us motivated
- Great meeting
- Well done
- Loved the gift part
- “The Spirit is a moving.”
- Grateful to all who shared so openly
- More human would be helpful; we seem to take this very seriously
- The spirit prevailed at tables, meals, and breaks
- I was embarrassed by my own community members’ negativity
- I felt I could speak my truth with confidence
- We were on holy ground
- Surely needed
- I felt this was accomplished
- Our groups did this
- Very good over all. there are always a few
- Good people to work with
- The process and program were very well organized
- Good but focusing on structure along is not energizing
- Liked the moving of the table groupings
- Outstanding worship preparations, meaningful and on target
- Not all at this point
- It was been an inspiration for me
- Not easy to measure for the entire group but there was evidence of such a spirit
- Most seemed positive in process
- Lots of good will – humor especially the “Happy Wanderers” Thanks, Kentucky
- The CCC leadership and the leadership of each congregation are to be congratulated on a job well done
- Need more time for contemplation

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1. What was most helpful to you personally?

- Sunday morning table conversations – a number calling us to vision
- The best was the last ½ hour when the Dominican sisters spoke so honestly, compassionately and lovingly
- The final open forum where individuals spoke from their hearts and dreams
- The Sunday morning sharing was the crux of the whole meeting
- Symbol of “being pregnant” and “fire in the belly”
- Each step we take in the process
- Mixing with others in the groupings to hear from more people to get a broader feel for opinions

- Prayer, liturgy and rituals
- Positive energy level
- Just to be present and participate in the exploration of our future
- The theme, table conversations, sit down dinners a very nice surprise
- Listening to pros and cons
- Cross-fertilization of people and ideas
- Meeting other Sisters; broadening my views of the four options
- The inviting beds in our rooms helped me personally to re-charge
- DeWitt Jones video; homily
- Gathering more data on options; hearing more perspectives
- Work done by the CCC and its organization
- An understanding of the task ahead for us
- Realizing a giant spiritual dimension seems to be missing and to meet a significant number of others who feel/think the same
- Days long enough, no night gatherings were great
- Open, honest conversation with Sisters from other congregations
- Hearing others' needs – those who want to with passion – “get this show on the road”
- Discovering that participants are at such different places in their thinking
- To listen to others fears, ideas, and energies
- Attitude of most to be open and respectful
- The prayerful liturgies, honest and open conversation, and good preaching
- Discussing the options, the feeling of “Dominican”
- The variety of people at table groups; viewing “What’s Right with the World”
- Being ‘forced’ to look at the options, not exciting work to me, with the face of other congregations’ reality. Result: greater empathy and sense of oneness
- The exceptional organization; the ‘fun’ elements which set the tone; good leadership
- I felt that we listened to one another even when there were differences. I learned much from it
- Meeting and having the opportunity to talk with others about our hopes and expectations
- Schedule was good
- Hearing from smaller congregations – to ‘feel’ their reality
- Discussing within my age cohort, groups seemed within a five year range rather than 10 to 15
- Hearing others opinions
- Very good facilitation; a meeting that kept moving and stayed on the topic; wonderful people to work with as a compiler
- Individual sharing by larger group; although smaller groups were dynamic
- The statistics and the video
- The video touched the soul of the group in my opinion
- The communal, spiritual atmosphere
- I don’t think anything by itself was most significant but all together, a great package!
- Going through each option with its strengths and limitations
- Everything flowed so smoothly
- Being challenged to look deeply at each option

- The round robin type of speaking
- Meeting old friends and making new ones
- Good pacing, adequate breaks, more limited snacks
- Assigned tables
- We need to hear from the greater group from the floor
- To hear persons deeply concerned with the Dominican mission in the world – today’s world. What will light the fire?
- Continue the process
- The food was delicious and more than adequate. Wonderful accommodations
- The sharing reality of where we are (& aren’t) as a group of the whole
- Group categories were novel
- Liked beginning and ending with the same table
- The ministry session and last fired ‘table group’
- Hearing the truth from many
- Looking at mission and vision
- Lorene’s homily
- The sharing at table was very comfortable for me. I learned that I could share with the different congregations some things that were very important to me and I felt like I was among my own sisters.
- Becoming more familiar with the group and the options and where people were in relation to them
- Seven congregations praying and working together as Dominicans despite differences
- Listening to the wisdom of others helped open my mind more
- We are more alike than different and we feel the same way about many things
- Need time to reflect
- Room temperature was very comfortable
- The amount of material from which we worked was awesome- thank you
- To have appointed table facilitators
- The openness of everyone
- Participating in my own age group
- Just being present and meeting so many sisters
- A positive experience

2. How might we improve our future gatherings?

- Invent some way to bring those who have not participated into the process
- Small groups not so structured so there would be more time to get acquainted
- Putting flesh on the bones that have caused fears and anxieties. More clarification
- Have our next meeting here in St. Louis
- Have time for individual congregation to review material
- Everything went so well
- Review configuration
- Less rushing of explanation for facilitators
- Get those who are opposed to come

- Invite more members from the congregations who have not been in any of these Cluster meetings
- Some topics were too long before a break was called
- Go from the question: What will help us fulfill the prophetic Dominican mission and vision of the 21st century.
- More focus on who it is we want to be as Dominican women of the 21st century
- How can we combine the good from each option to form another option.
- Some people in service professions are introverts and need more time to process
- More break time
- Go ahead! We are on the right track
- Sessions seemed long. After a while difficult to think
- Keep it up. You really do a remarkable job
- Just continue opportunities to come together and get to know one another
- Some have a hearing problem; speakers talked too fast
- More social to get better acquainted
- Keep us informed as the work continues
- Simplify the facilitator's job and who should do the writing.
- Build in more fun such as the Kentucky sisters provided
- You have done a great job – a wonderful gift for me to be here. I understand we return in November. Yeah!
- Open the first hour of the gathering by surfacing expectations from the floor to bring the passion and vision forward in the beginning
- Although the two evening banquets were lovely, I think we could have done with something more simple. (Perhaps you had no choice)
- Have names and addresses of all in attendance so we can continue conversations and get to know one another outside of the meeting
- Would be difficult to improve on this weekend
- Provide opportunity for each congregation to meet and give feedback
- Provide time for working on a new option or for submitted new options prior to the meeting
- When will Associate members be able to share their wisdom; not in a decision-making role
- Food service could reduce portion size
- Not discussing all options on Saturday afternoon; include more vision/dreaming
- Build in more time for sharing/conversation with contemplation time; send questions ahead of time to reflect and prepare to discuss; more fruitful
- Meet later in the p.m. for first meeting so rooms will be available to us upon arrival
- The elements of Dominican life needs to be included in each conversation
- Keep up the good work; you did a great job
- We need to discuss charisma, mission, identity, not so much structure
- Perhaps a facilitator for the age group should not be of the same age as the group
- Include some leisure place in the evening for wine, music, dancing, skits, storytelling. Have future agendas include this; added incentive to come
- Include some open space time; sometimes the processes feel too controlling

- More comments from the large group
- It was excellent; so well planned; difficult to improve
- Continue the intermingling
- Still need to talk, talk, talk
- Coffee during afternoon break
- The conch sound for prayer was too loud
- Facilitators needed more preparation; they should not monopolize
- More expression of vision; review Margaret Ormond's letters
- Need time to be creative; missed opportunity by starting with structures; need to dream about the prophetic heart
- What are our gifts and dreams; we need to en flesh our mission, prayer/contemplation, community our communal life
- Keep the 'weaving' and 'Basic Building Blocks' before us as we dream and design and dialogue together
- Keep the noon departure time as stated on the Agenda
- Communication to the congregations on the Cluster is important to keep members abreast of what is happening. This alleviates fear and anxiety.
- Use lighted pointer when explaining graphs and charts
- Friday session was long, especially for those who rode for hours; attention span at hourly levels
- To re-visit the history each time we meet.
- Less sugar at breakfast
- When grouping ministry think it through
- How does this effect the grass roots
- Need to continually review definitions and distinctions of Federation, Alliance, Cluster
- Would like to have a copy of individual responses rather than a compiled report. It is hard to recognize what was really said from a mashed together report
- Have a conversation around vision and values
- Eucharist each day
- Provide bagels, cream cheese, yogurt, and protein at the continental breakfast for those who have diabetes or hypoglycemia
- More concentrated dialogue time – may address fewer items, issues, options, etc. but do it more satisfactorily
- No mention of the congregations on the name tags and no wearing of individual congregation's logo of pins
- Some way to lessen the tremendous amount of response needed at each table discussion
- The important to have the same meaning for mission, common life
- Brief preaching with opening prayer
- For facilitators to facilitate at all sessions was difficult
- More discussion with ministry cohorts
- Encourage saying the Cluster prayer and praying to the Holy Spirit

3. Other

- Ruby seemed more at ease and gentle in facilitating; great facilitation

- Setting of the conference was excellent; everything was under one roof
- Door prize idea was creative and fun.
- Thank you CCC for a job well done; many expressed their thanks
- Thank you for all the work of putting this together
- Thanks for the great liturgy and prayer services
- Spend less time thanking one another
- We need to gauge realistically what work is necessary to make whatever “dream/model” come true
- Need for serious discussion around Dominican life and mission
- Many thanks to the various subcommittees
- Disappointment of not moving forward more prophetically – fear and comfort still reign
- Great accommodations
- Keep us connected to the WORD and Dominican values
- The liturgy and prayers were very moving and set a reverent tone
- Marielein Agenberger(?) did a super facilitation with the group
- Special thanks to Barbara Rapp for all the organization
- A wonderful weekend
- I felt a fire released with “dreaming” Could a time or vehicle be constructed to further gathering of these dreams and ideas before the next gathering? How does this happen within the timeline?
- Not impressed with A, B, or D some interest in C or “dynamic cluster”
- A good meeting but not sure we needed this level of grandeur, it should have been more modest financially
- Needed time to discuss the model presented by Cathy Galaskiewicz(?)
- Let hotel personnel know how helpful and appreciated they were
- I didn’t feel great energy about our future
- Perhaps we could connect around visionary issues by regions (Columbus & Kentucky) meaningful issues such as trafficking
- To have hearing aid devices for those that need them
- What would regional meetings be like
- Discouragement is always part of moving on; let God lead us through the darkness and let us continue the journey
- People get nervous when it goes overtime
- More calls to envision the mission of the 21st century to search the “frontiers” where forgotten areas await our OP charism
- As a facilitator I found many sisters did not understand the options. Hopefully, in our congregations, leadership can help our sisters to understand
- Gather the ‘resisters’, the negatives – or invite them to talk to each other. They were ‘lost’ in our midst – or somewhat ‘unheard’ or some other plan.
- Are we learning models from other groups – such as Sisters of St. Joseph or Mercy Sisters?
- Sunday morning session was great
- Monumental task that was masterfully executed and organized. Needs to be translated to our own congregations more effectively – challenge to our Cluster leadership

- Are we ready to let go of the fear and risk?
- Cheers to the Reconfiguration Subcommittee and the compilers
- From all my tables the movement was toward Model A; let us not postpone the inevitable. Dominic and Catherine wants us to act; we have contemplated long enough
- Why at age 60 are people so cautious?
- We need to reflect more on the “heart of the matter” vision and mission that is common as Dominicans
- To restudy, review Margaret Ormond’s letters
- I want to acknowledge and celebrate the gifts of individuals and congregations, especially the collective wisdom and goodness of “us” I understand the frustration of many of the groups. We need movement.
- Fun: take pictures of “look a likes” from various congregations; share stories of funny things that happen during the gathering
- Rather than going through the four options numerous times, do basic large group discussions over all four, then divide into small groups according to option of choice, and put flesh on it; get practical; imagine living it. Then share with religious group
- Concern: minority input was lost because of table consensus
- Need time to study the implications of any model beyond the structure. It is what would lived experience look like
- Have the Cluster prayer prayed daily
- Feeling ‘pushed’ yet as this is a first time discussion of changes and models. Much more needed at home with all implications spelled out.
- Felt rushed at tables to draw conversation to a close
- Please ask the Kentucky entertainers to return. Other groups may have some hidden talent. Call them forward.
- Communicators felt miffed when we hauled our electronic equipment and then were dismissed. Don’t dismiss us again!
- Concerned about the cost
- Why Eucharist was not celebrated each day. It is central to all we are trying to do.
- Need to involve those who don’t attend/can’t attend. Need to share our experience with them
- Refer to paper from table 24 for suggestions especially for “pool of dreams” for ministry needs
- We don’t all need to be Cluster Dominicans to be Dominicans for the future
- I would like to receive an evaluation of the Alliance from what have we learned from this experience that can inform our discussions on Cluster. We have spent time and resources on the Alliance which is a structure in place. Are there ways we can use this structure in new ways? I feel it is time for an evaluation and a report to the membership.
- Each congregation have a number of meetings with facilitation but with leaders telling the members honestly what they are thinking at this time would be a good first step and then allow open mike dialogue so that everyone will have her say whether it is considered ‘off the wall’ or ‘a pearl of wisdom.’ Assure all members that nothing that transpired here is cast in stone. Too many back home have to have a say in the reconfiguration.
- We are caught between two things – reality of immediate needs but desperately needing a vision and fire in a Dominican heart. I do think we did achieve motivating people to

articulate/begin to articulate what we don't want and do want, what we desire or want to desire.

- Develop a process to have one look at their own Dominican life and our Dominican life together and dreaming/envisioning this for the future. I don't think it would help the whole clustering conversation to leave it to those interested in such conversations.