

2019 Goals and Accomplishments

Please describe accomplishments, relative to each of your convention assigned Ministry Assignments, in the past year that create "value added" to the Cooperative Program dollars that Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary receives.

I. Assist churches by programs of prebaccalaureate and baccalaureate theological education for ministers.

In 2018, Midwestern Seminary's trustees voted to rename Midwestern Baptist College as Spurgeon College. While operationally the transition was seamless, philosophically our undergraduate arm has changed significantly. Midwestern Seminary is home to the Charles Spurgeon Library, and as such institutional leaders looked at the renaming as more than the books and the artifacts held within the library. More significantly, we share his passions, his convictions, his commitment to ministry, to serving the local church, and to reaching the community and the world with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The mission of Spurgeon College will be to educate the next generation of leaders to impact the world in the workforce. Through our college, we will maintain a Bible-based, ministry-focused curriculum, but also alongside of that will be degree options for those who are not only called to serve the local church, but to also be prepared to make 1,000 different touch-points of light for the cause of Christ stateside and around the world. Just like Midwestern Seminary is known emphatically as being *for the Church*, Spurgeon College will be known emphatically as, *for the Kingdom*. It speaks to the breadth of the ministry, and it also speaks to our hopefulness that from this place, indeed, the Kingdom will be shaped and expanded.

Spurgeon College will maintain its focus on biblically-based degrees as well as providing students with disciplines that can train them to work in the marketplace. Through its residential and online degree programs, Spurgeon College will offer students a rigorous academic environment designed to prepare them for their ministry calling.

This past year, Spurgeon College experienced continued growth of its Accelerate program, which is designed to enable students to earn a bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies and a Master of Divinity degree within five years. This program focuses on providing students the opportunity to engage more quickly in full-time ministry, while keeping their educational debt to a minimum.

Additionally, to complement its BA degrees in Christian Ministry, Biblical Studies, Business Leadership, Intercultural Studies and Student Ministry, Spurgeon College added new Teaching and Communications degree options.

Spurgeon College also continued development of its FUSION program as well. This unique missions training track, which partners with the International Mission Board, offers students highly-specialized equipping for students' serving local churches and evangelizing the lost around the globe. During the school year's initial semester, students undergo rigorous academic and physical training, which prepares them for their second semester, where they are deployed into some of the most austere locations in the

mission field. Upon returning, Spurgeon College looks to retain these students, many of whom continue over the next three years to obtain a BA in Christian Ministry with a Missions Focus.

II. Assist churches by programs of master's level theological education for ministers.

In the world of theological education, the Master of Divinity degree has long been the gold-standard for ministry preparation. The M.Div. is the complete ministry toolkit, equipping one for a ministry of the Word (preaching, teaching, counseling,). It contains the linguistic and exegetical tools necessary to properly interpret and teach the text—the minister's essential responsibility. As such, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary is committed to emphasizing the Master of Divinity degree as its primary track for ministry preparation. Additionally, our residential Master of Arts degree offerings train students theologically for multiple roles within ministry and serve those seeking more specialized training. Midwestern Seminary also offers multiple fully-online degrees for students needing a more flexible approach to theological education or are not in position to relocate to our Kansas City campus.

In 2018, one of the avenues Midwestern Seminary offered to encourage residential Master of Divinity degree growth was through our Timothy Track program. Timothy Track enables residential students to earn their degree and obtain invaluable ministry experience at the same time. By partnering with numerous local churches, Midwestern Seminary provides students leadership experience within the context of the local church while concurrently studying to earn their M.Div. degree. The program also offers students a significant cost savings in tuition through scholarships during their first year of study.

Midwestern Seminary expanded its online course offerings and degree programs in 2018 as well, while providing more opportunities for online students to practically apply their knowledge within a ministry context. Through practicum-based coursework, students worked with ministry leaders in the field for hands-on ministry training. This education format further enabled students to earn their degree via a program that is custom fit to their educational needs. Midwestern believes its quality online programs have many strengths for ministry training and seeks to provide further training through regular on campus interaction and with ministry leaders in their local areas.

III. Assist churches by programs of professional doctoral education for ministers.

Explosive growth over the past six years has enabled Midwestern Seminary to become one of the largest providers of doctoral studies in the evangelical world. Offering a modular format where students can maintain their current ministry work, students come to our Kansas City campus for a one-week seminar and then complete other pre- and post-course research and writing through an online format. Our largest doctoral degree programs, also known as professional doctoral degrees, are the D.Min. and D.Ed.Min. These tracks are designed for persons seeking high-level competence in the practice of pastoral and other ministry leadership roles within the local church. Students who typically take two-to-three seminars annually can continue ministering in their places of full-time ministry service while pursuing professional doctoral education.

IV. Assist churches by programs of research doctoral education for ministers and theological educators.

The primary focus of the Doctor of Philosophy in Biblical Studies degree is to prepare students to serve local churches as teachers, pastors, and leaders on the highest academic, professional, and spiritual level. The modular Ph.D. seminars involve five-day intensives held on Midwestern Seminary's campus and require significant pre-seminar and post-seminar research and writing. Similarly to our professional doctoral seminars, students taking two-to-three seminars yearly can remain in their places of full-time ministry service while pursuing research doctoral education.

In 2018, under the supervision of Dr. Owen Strachan, Midwestern Seminary nearly doubled enrollment in its "Residency" cohort, which directly benefits Ph.D. students by merging independent advanced theological research with mentorship and oversight—adding regular, intensive engagement with faculty and other theological leaders within the regular rhythm of the unique on-campus ministry culture of Midwestern. In this community context, The Residency continues to provide students with a unique avenue for following their calling to serve churches through the academy.

Based on each of MBTS' Convention assigned ministry statements, what opportunities or challenges do you see on the horizon from 2018 and beyond that would necessitate changes, or new directions, in how MBTS is accomplishing the above Ministry Assignment?

I. Assist churches by programs of prebaccalaureate and baccalaureate theological education for ministers.

In early 2018, Sam Bierig, was named dean of Spurgeon College, and he will lead the college through this season of transition. The main emphasis of the college will be to maintain its focus on biblically-based degrees as well as providing students with disciplines that can train them to work in the marketplace. Spurgeon College continues to explore and expand degree offerings in the fields of Bible, business, education, communications, and other programs which will benefit students ministering in the marketplace.

Spurgeon College is also committed to fulfilling its ministry assignment of providing affordable pre-baccalaureate and baccalaureate theological education. Much of this is afforded to Spurgeon College through the generosity of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program. A key to success toward achieving these goals is also to continually assess and steward the institution's programs and assets for efficiency and effectiveness.

In 2019, Midwestern will continue to grow its Accelerate program, which enables students to get into their ministry context more quickly and affordably. Additionally, continued focus will be upon the Fusion program, which provides first-hand missions training and experience like no other opportunities. New partnerships are being explored which potentially will grow the Fusion program. Overall, both of these programs present opportunities for Spurgeon College graduates and students to serve the church, both locally and across the globe, in ways that glorify God and interact positively with an ever-declining spiritual culture.

Spurgeon College also plans to implement fresh Contextualized Leadership Development Program ideologies to position itself to better serve local churches and those who desire further theological training in those settings.

II. Assist churches by programs of master's level theological education for ministers.

Midwestern Seminary is well-positioned to continue preparing students to engage a rapidly-changing global environment with the end goal of preparing men and women for kingdom service *for the church*. Regardless of the many challenges facing higher education, cultural shift, or economics at home or abroad, Midwestern is committed to fulfilling its ministry assignment of providing affordable master's level theological education. A key to this is regular innovation and adaptation built upon Midwestern's core degree programs.

In 2019, Midwestern will place primary emphasis on the Master of Divinity degree, particularly its in-residence M.Div., as the gold standard degree for those seeking to serve local churches as pastors and ministry leaders. Through the Timothy Track, more residential students will be afforded the opportunity to obtain valuable, hands-on ministry experience while at the same time earning their degrees.

There will also be increased focus upon women's ministry concentrations. Students studying at Midwestern Seminary for a Master of Divinity degree can earn a concentration in women's ministry, and those working toward degrees through the Midwestern Training Network can obtain a Master of Theological Studies with an emphasis in women's ministry. The main impetus for Midwestern Seminary in offering these degree concentrations is to more fully serve the local church, specifically in the area of women's ministry. Within the context of the seminary's mission of developing and maintaining strong local churches, then that means we must properly educate and train members for service in each distinctive ministry within the church. Women have long-served vital areas within the local church and played key roles in spreading the gospel. These concentrations will afford them the opportunity to develop their God-given spiritual gifts and abilities to an even fuller extent.

Midwestern will further continue to strengthen partnerships with local churches through the Midwestern Training Network and extension campuses offered at key partner churches in Ames, Iowa and St. Louis, Missouri.

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In 2019, Midwestern will continue to refine the format of modular doctoral seminars in its professional degrees – D.Min., D.Ed.Min.—as well as offer such in conjunction with other ministry partners to further equip ministers desiring professional doctoral education.

IV. Assist churches by programs of research doctoral education for ministers and theological educators.

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In 2019, Midwestern will continue to refine the format of modular doctoral seminars as well as offer such in conjunction with other ministry partners to further equip ministers desiring research doctoral education. We will also offer two new Ph.D. emphases, in Biblical Counseling and Biblical Theology, to broaden the scope of ministry training available to Ph.D. candidates. Additionally, we will fully apply training through "The Residency," which will offer unique opportunities on campus for those able to relocate to our Kansas City campus.