

## **Cooperative Program:**

1. *SBC entities, especially those which receive Cooperative Program funding, share an equal responsibility in promoting and advancing the Cooperative Program, in compliance with the Business and Financial Plan, Section VI, Part C (Cooperative Program Promotion – Each Convention entity shall report on its efforts during the year in promoting Cooperative Program missions giving). Providing examples, please describe Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary’s (MBTS’s) commitment to promote the Cooperative Program.*

Midwestern Seminary strives to promote and advance the Cooperative Program in all facets. This institution possesses a campus-wide atmosphere which fosters an awareness of the Cooperative Program and support for its continued vitality. Lessons on the benefits of the CP are normative in classes and at various seminary events. In the process, we trust undergraduate to doctoral students become more deeply committed to the Cooperative Program and to the ministries funded by it, especially with the knowledge of the extent to which the CP funds their studies. To that end, the faculty and staff make much of the Cooperative Program in contexts such as lectures, preaching engagements, and other venues.

Formally, in the classroom Midwestern requires a core course in Baptist History, one-third of which is devoted to the Southern Baptist Convention, and thus, by natural extension, the Cooperative Program. Requirements for students along these lines include: reading One Sacred Effort, working through the One Sacred Effort Workbook, writing a paper on the Cooperative Program, and watching the DVD on this topic produced by the Executive Committee.

Additionally, Midwestern is determined to only hire full-time faculty members and members of its core administrative staff who demonstrate an awareness of the Cooperative Program and have a commitment to the missions and entity efforts funded by it. In fact, recently two professors collaborated to author, *Better Together: You, Your Church, and the Cooperative Program*, which is a simple introduction to the CP designed for pastors, lay people within the church and students in the classroom. Professors regularly emphasize the privileges that Southern Baptist students have through the CP to experience a clear sense of partnership between local, autonomous churches and the larger goals that they can accomplish.

Further, Midwestern’s President, Jason K. Allen, consistently writes about and speaks to the importance of and Midwestern’s appreciation of the Cooperative Program in settings such as the SBC Annual Meeting, For the Church Conference and regional FTC conferences, as well as when he preaches in various settings on campus and around the country.

Midwestern regularly invites leaders in the SBC to visit campus in order to promote the work of the SBC, specifically in regard to the CP. This year, Dr. Paul Chitwood, president of the IMB, and Dr. J.D. Greear, president of the SBC, addressed the Midwestern community in

chapel speaking directly to the CP, its work and the vitality it brings to seminaries, mission efforts, and churches.

Midwestern trusts that these measures will cause each class of graduates, as well as onlookers throughout the evangelical world and beyond, to see the decisive advantages of Baptist identity, cooperation, and mission.

2. *How effective is MBTS in creating an awareness and appreciation for the Southern Baptist Convention and its model for cooperative missions and cooperative funding among the student body? What level of confidence does MBTS have that its graduates will continue to engage in SBC missions and ministries and support funding these ministries through the Cooperative Program?*

We at Midwestern Seminary understand and stand by the following statement: The Southern Baptist Convention agencies and our state convention partners serve the churches, not the other way around. As we faithfully serve our churches, they will support us. In fact, God's faithfulness is obviously seen through the Southern Baptists' persistent generosity through the Cooperative Program. In denominational circles, it is a modern miracle to witness the success of Southern Baptists in serving the Kingdom of God. Through the missions and ministries of the SBC provided by the CP, we have together impacted the world. We would do well to continue celebrating and strengthening our collective work.

To this end, Midwestern regularly creates an awareness and expresses appreciation – to the seminary community, to local and regional churches, and to the greater evangelical world – of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Program through many avenues. This can occur through faculty interaction with students in the classroom; it does so during messages and interactions in numerous chapel services, major lectureships, and campus events – which reach both students, local ministry leaders, and seminary friends alike. Midwestern is intentional to promote the CP through its branding, recruiting and community relations. Through writing in mediums such as books, blogs, websites, and articles in Baptist Press and other media outlets, faculty, staff and students praise the CP for its effective missional work both locally and globally. Through such regular emphasis and exposure to the value of cooperative missions and cooperative funding, we are very confident that MBTS graduates will hold even more to their deeply-held convictions for and support of churches working together through the CP. Midwestern sees itself playing a vital role in ensuring the next generation of pastors, ministry leaders, and missionaries embrace and understand the opportunity for Great Commission advance available through the Cooperative Program.

3. *Please articulate for Southern Baptists how MBTS perceives the role of the Cooperative Program in funding theological education. What value does MBTS place upon its partnership with Southern Baptist churches through the Cooperative Program?*

There is no question that Midwestern Seminary benefits daily from the Cooperative Program. Without it, we would be forced to double tuition on our students. Such a move would decimate the seminary, plunge the enrollment, and bring immediate and long-term financial hardship on our students. In the world of theological education, the six SBC seminaries stand as grand anomalies in size, support, and overall strength. The Cooperative Program is essential to this vitality. On a personal and institutional level, Midwestern Seminary is beyond grateful to SBC churches for their generosity and support of our mission to equip leaders for the church through the CP.

Midwestern Seminary's admissions and recruiting teams are committed to explaining the impact of the CP to potential students at events both locally and nationwide. Tuition benefits for SBC students are presented on the institution's website for SBC and non-SBC students alike to read and understand. Additionally, when non-SBC students enroll at Midwestern Seminary and discover the difference in tuition costs versus SBC students, a perfect opportunity is presented for Admissions advisors to educate these students on the benefits of the CP. By providing an understanding of the benefits that the CP affords Southern Baptist students, scores of potential and matriculating enrollees more fully understand and value the CP.

Though the Cooperative Program has been proving itself since 1925, we cannot take it for granted. We neglect it or minimize it to our own peril. Without a robust CP, our work as a whole will suffer. With a robust CP, our collective ministry and mission can more flourish. That is why we must work in our generation to strengthen the Cooperative Program.

4. *Please give examples of how MBTS operates within the guidelines of the SBC Business and Financial Plan as described in Section VI, Part D (No Financial Appeals to Churches – In no case shall any Convention entity approach a church for inclusion in its church budget or appeal for financial contributions).*

Midwestern Seminary works diligently to operate within the guidelines of the SBC Business and Financial Plan. Specifically, Midwestern fulfills its commitment to Section VI, Part D of the SBC Business and Financial Plan by managing a comprehensive development and advancement communications plan. The communication plan is aimed at recruiting and retaining donors and friends of the seminary, primarily by regularly inviting individuals to pray for the institution, tell others about our vision, and to give as financial support.

The Midwestern Seminary development and advancement communications plan strictly follows the guidelines of the SBC Business and Financial Plan (as described in Section VI, Part D) by only contacting individuals for donations or fundraising campaigns. There are four primary ways in which the communications plan contacts individuals: personal contacts (phone call/email), personal visits, email newsletters, and social media. Each of those

channels is specifically crafted to invite donors and friends of the seminary to individually support the institution.

## **Ethnic Participation**

5. *This past year a motion was made by Leroy Fountain asking the Executive Committee to give a progress update to ten recommendations adopted by the SBC in 2011 with respect to ethnic church and ethnic church leader participation in Southern Baptist life. The 2011 recommendation that specifically refers to our SBC entities is as follows:*

*“The Executive Committee to request from the Southern Baptist Convention entities to submit as part of its annual ‘data call’ [as described in Bylaw 18. E [12] a descriptive report of participation of ethnic churches and church leaders in the life and ministry of the respective SBC entity.”*

*Given this context, and using previous years’ submissions to this question as a model, please give a robust descriptive report of ethnic participation, including active involvement of ethnic churches and church leaders, across all levels and aspects of MBTS’s ministry—such things as senior administrative staff, other professional staff, faculty, student body, support staff, other customer facing representatives, and written and spoken language resources—demonstrating progress, if any, in ethnic participation over the past eight years, 2011–2019.*

Since 2011, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has added certificate and degree programs in the Spanish, Korean, Mandarin and Romanian. The Spanish program includes the Certificate in Church Planting, the Master of Theological Studies, the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees. The Korean program offers multiple certificates, the Master of Arts in Christian Education, the Master of Theological Studies, the Master of Divinity, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Educational Ministry and PhD degrees. The Mandarin Studies program offers the Master of Theological Studies and Master of Divinity. The Romanian Program offers the Doctor of Ministry. These programs are supported by 12 core ethnic faculty members, including one dean and three directors, and twenty-seven adjunct faculty. Supporting these programs are a team of ethnic staff serving in admissions, communications, financial aid and other ancillary positions.

Based on the reports submitted to the Association of Theological Schools, ethnic and black enrollment has increased from 20.2% in 2010-11 to 37.2% in 2018-19, a gain that reflects institutional resolve and intentionality. At Midwestern, being For the Church means biblically educating leaders from every ethnicity, and creating a culture of ethnic inclusiveness through our academic programs, faculty and staff appointments, and extracurricular activities such as athletics and chapel.

## **Caring Well Response**

6. *How is MBTS making an effort to protect against sexual abuse? How will MBTS integrate aspects of Caring Well in its policies and practices, and engage across MBTS's broad constituency?*

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Spurgeon College are charged with the sacred trust of preparing God-called men and women for Gospel ministry in and through the local church. The scourge of sexual abuse has long been a critical issue in the local church and we have taken aims to equip ministers to recognize sexual abuse, to accurately report such abuse in the unfortunate circumstances when it happens, and to train pastors, teachers, and leaders with the intent of preventing sexual abuse insofar as they are able within the congregations where they serve.

To this end, MBTS and SC contracted with MinistrySafe in 2018 and built their training into the onboarding of all students, faculty, and staff. Our mandated reporters receive training at various points of the year, and our Title IX Coordinators receive specialized training relating to sexual abuse under the direction of the Dean of Students annually. Through the Dean of Students office, our institution coordinates with local churches and counseling ministries to provide care and healing for those experiencing the results of trauma caused by sexual abuse. Additionally, as part of our requirements related to federal guidelines published in the Clery Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, we regularly report to our constituencies our ongoing progress, training, and even incidents should they arise. Our policies can easily be found in our annual academic catalogs in the Student Handbook section as well as in our reports located on our website at: <https://www.mbts.edu/about/consumer-information/>

## **Metrics**

7. *What has proven to be MBTS's most reliable metric for indicating future accomplishments or challenges across all MBTS's ministry assignments? Why is that metric the most important to watch relative to specific ministry assignments?*

Midwestern Seminary finds that the most reliable metric for indicating the future institutional accomplishments or challenges is the state and health of the Cooperative Program.

Throughout its history, Midwestern has strived to be and still is an institution of and for the churches and people of the Southern Baptist Convention. With an unbending stance toward the confessional and doctrinal statements that define the Southern Baptist Convention, such as the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, the *Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, the *Nashville Statement*, and the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, Midwestern Seminary serves its constituency. Regardless of total financial amount given, healthy support of the Cooperative Program across the denomination puts on display, for the rest of the evangelical world, churches working together, bound by a common confessional

agreement, seeking to fulfill the Great Commission. This is the shared purpose and desire of Midwestern Seminary and, thus, the Cooperative Program is the most important metric to watch. This is the methodology we understand best that places Midwestern Seminary in a position to exist For the Church.