

## **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 New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary receives.**

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

Leavell College trains God-called men and women without an undergraduate degree for ministry. Leavell College of NOBTS had 1,644 undergraduate students taking courses for credit on the main campus, at extension centers, and by Internet — a slight increase over the previous year. This total does not count a large number not-for-credit certificate students offered in church and associational settings.

Many of our students are older, second-career people called into ministry later in life, who can fill the many bi-vocational and small church ministry positions in the SBC. Many of them are also ethnic or minority students who can serve in ethnic church settings, particularly African-American, French-speaking Haitian, Hispanic, and Korean students. These older students do not fit well in a typical Baptist college setting, but Leavell College is designed specifically for them. Leavell College also had 711 for-credit certificate students. Many of these certificates were for pastors who will not otherwise get any theological education. In addition, our certificates include laypersons from large and small churches. Our certificate programs are our most ethnically diverse programs, which addresses the initiatives in this area by the SBC.

In 2018, NOBTS developed the Accelerated MDiv program which allows students to earn their bachelor's degree and Master of Divinity degree within five years. This program allows students to enter into full-time ministry more quickly while saving both money and time. NOBTS is excited about the possibilities of this new opportunity for students.

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

NOBTS had 1,578 master's-level students last year, 881 of those were Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree students, which we consider the standard ministry preparation degree. Many students at NOBTS and other seminaries have transferred to shorter M.A. degrees offered online, at extension centers, and on campus. The remaining 697 master's-level students were in various degree programs providing focused training for music ministry, discipleship ministry, counseling ministry, or for specific areas in theological and biblical studies.

We consider the training of master's-degree students to be our primary assignment from the convention, and it is the focus of our efforts. We believe that the benefit of these degrees from NOBTS is particularly in their practical focus -- with courses such as Interpersonal Skills, Church Revitalization, Discipleship Strategies, and Church Leadership and Administration, along with the standard biblical, theological, and ministry courses offered in most seminary degrees. We strive to prepare each of our graduate students (particularly M.Div. students) in seven crucial areas of ministerial competency – Biblical exposition, Christian theological heritage, disciple making, interpersonal skills, servant leadership, worship leadership, and spiritual and character formation.

In 2018, NOBTS instituted a tuition cap which allows qualified students to save money if they are able to take more than twelve hours in a semester. Many students struggle to complete the longer degree, and we are hopeful that incentivizing students to take more hours will provide an opportunity for them to maximize their time with NOBTS.

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

The D.Min. (Doctor of Ministry) and D.Ed.Min. (Doctor of Educational Ministry) at NOBTS continue to be among the strongest such programs in the nation, with 336 students enrolled. The D.Min. program continues to be one of the largest and best such programs, with 288 students enrolled. Of that number, 61 are Korean D.Min. students.

The NOBTS D.Ed.Min. is one of just a handful of such programs in the United States. The D.Ed.Min. has 48 students enrolled. The "value added" of these professional doctoral programs is that as Southern Baptists are upwardly mobile and better educated, they desire a better educated clergy. In many churches, the D.Min. has become the required degree for consideration of prospective pastors. This program provides students with that credentialing, and does so with excellence. Since the D.Min. and D.Ed.Min. programs only accept ministers with three or more years of experience, these degrees probably do more than any academic degree to help ministers make mid-career adjustments in their own ministry that positively impact the churches and ministries in which they serve.

Students pursuing the D.Min. and D.Ed.Min. degrees are able to continue to minister in their churches since NOBTS provides training in a workshop format designed to allow students to continue in their place of service. Students unable to travel to New Orleans are also able to participate in most seminars through web conferencing software or at a nearby extension site. Thus, NOBTS is providing opportunities for this training in more and more ways.

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

NOBTS has worked hard to make the research doctoral degrees accessible for students wherever they might live. Each of the PhD majors is available through web conferencing technology or in

person. Many students pursue a Ph.D. who would otherwise not be able to attain the degree because they are called to a church at some distance from New Orleans. Students make limited trips to New Orleans while the majority of their seminars are available through live-stream offerings.

In part because of the availability of the degree, NOBTS has seen continued growth in the research doctoral programs in recent years. Last year, 176 students enrolled in the Th.M., Ed.D., D.M.A., and Ph.D. programs — which was an all-time high in enrollment. In recent years, NOBTS created the Ph.D. in Christian Leadership and Apologetics. Each of these programs were created to meet a need in Southern Baptist Life. NOBTS is training the next generation of seminary and college teachers and providing highly trained practitioners in every area of ministry.

**Based on each of NOBTS's Convention assigned ministry statements, what opportunities or challenges do you see on the horizon from 2019 and beyond that would necessitate changes, or new directions, in how NOBTS is accomplishing the listed Ministry Assignments?**

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

The greatest challenge confronting most undergraduate students is the problem of affordability and student debt. Many of our older students have children, and it is very difficult for them to juggle several jobs (ministry and secular) in order to get by while earning their theological education. NOBTS has sought to address this by instituting the tuition cap. Qualified students who take between twelve and eighteen hours pay the same tuition. Thus, students are able to save approximately \$1,500 each semester if they can focus on being a full-time student.

The new Accelerated MDiv program at NOBTS represents a great opportunity for Leavell College students. This program allows students from a Baptist College to save significant time and money while earning their master of divinity degree. Leavell College students could earn their bachelor's degree and the master of divinity degree in as little as five years while saving thousands of dollars. The rising costs associated with education remains a significant threat to Southern Baptist education particularly for places focused on training ministers.

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

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary remains committed to providing quality education for the current and future leaders of the SBC. We will continue to emphasize the master of divinity degree through various programs like the Accelerated MDiv. We will also continue to expand and improve our offerings to those students who are unable to move to

New Orleans. The mentoring program of NOBTS allows students to gain practical experience while gaining their theological education. We are convinced that partnering with churches to equip students for ministry is a great opportunity for students. In addition, NOBTS offers online training that allows students to participate in live classes through NOLA2U and NOLA2UFlex classes. These classes let students participate in the class much like they were sitting in New Orleans from their own home or office.

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

Our professional doctorate programs are among the best in the country. We are continually striving for excellence. We have recently revised our specialization offerings to be sure we are providing what students need. The challenge here is to maintain excellence with the increased responsibility of a growing student body. NOBTS continues to utilize every means available to make professional doctoral training available to those who are interested as well as to equip students to succeed.

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

NOBTS is experiencing a great deal of success in the Ph.D. program largely because of the quality of the program and its accessibility. Now that every degree major is available to students who do not live in New Orleans through web conferencing technology, we expect to continue to see growth. Students have appreciated the ability to participate in the class as if they were there in person while remaining on the field of ministry. We will continue to seek to expand our offerings while maintaining the most efficient program possible.