

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 of NOBTS had 1,642 undergraduate students taking courses for credit on the main campus, at extension centers, and by Internet, an increase of about 200 students over last year. This does not count about 600 not-for-credit certificate students offered in church and associational settings. The "value added" is that these are typically older, second career people called into ministry later in life, who can fill the many bivocational 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 676 for-credit certificate students. Many of these certificates were for laypersons in churches, from large to small, as well as in National Baptist churches, predominantly African American SBC churches, Haitian churches, and Hispanic churches. Our certificate programs are our most ethnically diverse programs, which addresses the initiatives in this area by the SBC.

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

NOBTS had 1,792 master's level students last year, 1,096 of them being Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree students, which we consider the standard ministry preparation degree. However, many students at NOBTS and other seminaries have transferred to the new shorter M.A. degrees offered online, extension centers, and on campus. The remaining 355 master's level students were in these 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 "value added" 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.

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 369 students enrolled. The D.Min. program continues to be one of the largest and best such programs, with 301 students enrolled. Of that number, 63 are Korean D.Min. students, although enrollment in this program has been hindered by strict

enforcement of immigration rules. The NOBTS D..Ed.Min.is one of just five such programs in the United States, and with 56 students enrolled is the largest such program in the nation. NOBTS also launched a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D) program in Fall 2014, and student response is good. 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.

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

NOBTS added 6 Ph.D. majors which could be taken in "block" formats that are accessible for interested nonresidential students wherever they live, not requiring the students to live at the main campus. This has created a much greater interest in the NOBTS Ph.D. program. Last year, 198 students enrolled in the Th.M., Ed.D., D.M.A., and Ph.D. programs last year. The Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree program enrolled 16 students last year, which was among the most DMA students ever at NOBTS, and the largest such program in the SBC. The "value added" of these programs is to train the next generation of seminary and college teachers, in addition to providing highly trained practitioners in every area of ministry.

Based on each of NOBTS' Convention assigned ministry statements, what opportunities or challenges do you see on the horizon from 2015 and beyond that would necessitate changes, or new directions, in how NOBTS is accomplishing the above Ministry Assignment?

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 these 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.

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

Two main challenges confront masters' level theological education. One challenge is the proliferation of many Master of Arts degrees that are significantly shorter than the M.Div. degree. Obviously, these M.A. degrees do not offer the same level of training as the M.Div., but many students are taking them as a shortcut to ministerial training. The second challenge is the proliferation of new competitors. The six SBC seminaries had little direct competition a decade or so previously, but now there are many competitors. Baptist colleges are offering over 50 master's degrees in theological and ministerial areas. New CBF-connected seminaries have arisen all around the South, most of which offer tuition-free training. Some online seminaries have gobbled up over 10,000 students, many of whom are Southern Baptist. These new competitors create a drain on our potential students make it more difficult to provide theological education as efficiently or cost-effectively as we could have otherwise.

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

Our professional doctorate programs are among the best in the country, so we anticipate no major changes. We will investigate new locations and language groups to serve in the days to come.

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

The key to the success of a Ph.D. program at NOBTS is offering the seminars in a format that nonresidential students can enroll in them. The number of ministers around the New Orleans area is smaller than all the other seminaries (do to the small Baptist population in South Louisiana), but the number of students who would come to our campus for a short term visit is large, as evidenced by our D.Min. program. So the key is finding how to provide training at the Ph.D. level in a nonresidential format that nevertheless maintains the highest academic standards. We are striving to find the answers to how that question can best be answered.