

## **2020 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 pre-baccalaureate and baccalaureate theological education for ministers.**

Leavell College trains God-called men and women without an undergraduate degree for ministry. Last year, Leavell College of NOBTS trained 1,668 undergraduate students through 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 of certificate students enrolled in not-for-credit courses 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. Our highest concentration of ethnic or minority students who can serve in ethnic church settings, particularly African-American, French-speaking Haitian, Hispanic, and Korean students is also in Leavell College. In recent years, Leavell College has seen an increase in traditional students who know that God wants to use them in some manner but are not sure of what that might entail. Last year, Leavell College trained 424 for-credit certificate students. Many of these certificates were for pastors who will not otherwise receive any theological education. In addition, our certificates include laypersons from large and small churches. Our certificate programs are our most ethnically diverse programs and address the initiatives in this area by the SBC.

In 2019, NOBTS developed the Accelerated BA + MDiv program that allows students to earn their bachelor's degree and Master of Divinity degree within five years. This program was made possible through a grant and 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 1,614 master's-level students last year, 833 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 781 master's-level students were in various degree programs that provide focused training for discipleship ministry, music ministry, specific areas in theological and biblical studies, or counseling ministry.

One of our primary assignments from the convention is to train master's-degree students, and we focus a great deal of effort on this task. The seminary master's programs do not require an undergraduate degree in Religion or Christian Studies. Therefore, the training is typically broad. Students receive a solid biblical and theological foundation along with practical training in areas like discipleship, pastoral ministry, and counseling. We measure our health by the churches and ministries our graduates lead, and we strive to prepare them to serve effectively in ministry.

Students who study at NOBTS receive a world-class education from faculty who have built their lives upon the Word of God. The faculty at NOBTS not only teach and publish in their areas, but they are involved in local church ministry and missions. Thus, students have the opportunity to learn from those who are doing ministry.

### **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 331 students enrolled last year. The D.Min. program continues to be one of the largest and best such programs, with 275 students enrolled. Of that number, 46 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 46 students enrolled. 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.

Professional doctoral education provides an opportunity to impact churches immediately since students pursuing the D.Min. and D.Ed.Min. degrees are able to continue to minister in their churches. 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 a variety of 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 Ph.D. major 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, 190 students enrolled in the Th.M., Ed.D., D.M.A., and Ph.D. programs — which was an all-time high in enrollment. NOBTS is consistently evaluating the research doctoral degrees to be sure we are offering the appropriate curriculum. Each degree program was 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 NOBT's Convention assigned ministry statements, what opportunities or challenges do you see on the horizon from 2020 and beyond that would necessitate changes, or new directions, in how NOBTS is accomplishing the listed Ministry Assignments?**

**I. Assist churches by programs of pre-baccalaureate 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 \$1,650 each semester if they can focus on being a full-time student. Partially because of the financial challenges, many students take fewer hours than they should each semester, which extends their time to completion. The end result is that students may not complete their degree at all. NOBTS continues to encourage students to take the appropriate amount of courses to facilitate successful completion of their training.

The new Accelerated BA + 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 that provides the broadest type of training. In addition, we have developed multiple master of arts degrees to meet the specialized needs of students.

While encouraging every student to come to New Orleans and invest in the city as our faculty invests in them, we will also continue to develop 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 NOLA2UFlex classes. These classes let students participate in the class while it is meeting from their own home or office or watch the recording in the next week and follow up through various online activities.

### **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. In addition to constant attention to be sure we are offering the specialization offerings and courses that students need, NOBTS works hard to find ministers who need further training and are willing to invest the time and energy needed to that end. Maintaining excellence with the responsibility of a large student body that requires a great deal of individualized attention remains a consistent challenge. 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. Students who are unable to come to New Orleans for classes are able to use webcasting technology to participate in most of the professional doctoral classes enabling them to focus their energy and time in the local church setting.

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

The Ph.D. program at NOBTS continues to grow, partially because of the quality of the program and its accessibility. 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.