

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 Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary receives.

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

In 2018, The College at Southeastern established the following initiatives to further the mission of the SBC. First, we established a partnership with Vance Granville Community College to allow our students the opportunity to receive vocational training in various disciplines. Second, The College also continued work on expanding its 5 year BA/MDiv programs to allow for additional areas of specialization including Student Ministry and Missiology. These programs allow students to earn a bachelor's degree and an MDiv in 5 years, significantly shortening the time and financial restraints that prevent young men from training for pastoral ministry. Third, the College developed partnerships with North Carolina State University so that students can earn a teaching license in various disciplines. All of these initiatives add significant value to the work of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program. Fourth, the College enrolled its second class of students into our North Carolina Field Minister program at the extension center at Nash County Correctional facility.

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

In the past year, Southeastern Seminary has focused on several areas to strengthen our work in "assisting churches by programs of master's level theological education for ministers." First, we have established strategic partnerships with national and international ministries: Student Leadership University, Colson Center, Crosslands, and Third Millennium. These ministry partnerships allow us to expand the equipping opportunities and reach of Southeastern Seminary, as we remain focused on equipping students to serve the church and fulfill the Great Commission. These partnerships allow us to influence more students as well as introduce our students to ministry leaders to enrich their training.

Second, we have created our Master of Arts in Student Ministry and revised our Master of Arts in Ministry to Women. These programs have been revised and designed to be offered as a modified cohort. This model affords the opportunity to build learning community around the degree programs and reach non-traditional students.

Third, we have revised our graduate advising for first semester students. This service is designed to help students determine the best pathway for degree completion and prepare them to succeed in their academic and ministry preparation.

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

The Doctor of Ministry program leaders continue to strive for academic excellence, quality professional development, and outstanding personal service in the program. The desire is for students to acquire new ideas, tools, strategies, and techniques to increase effectiveness in professional ministry. Recently, upgrades occurred in the area of program offerings, which included the addition of a new specialization, redesigned or new courses, and new faculty to provide the best in ministry practitioner education. The changes were designed to equip students to excel in leading churches and missions.

A new specialization in faith and culture was added to prepare students, as church leaders, to lead in engaging culture with biblical truth and gospel clarity. The seminars will consist of: The Church in its Cultural Context, Gender and Sexuality, Cultural Apologetics, and Human Dignity. These seminars will be taught by Drs. Ashford, Liederbach, Dew, and Keathley. In addition, outstanding guest lecturers will participate in the seminar presentations.

Under the leadership of Chuck Lawless, two new classes were added to make the church revitalization specialization even stronger. One exciting and needed new course was Spiritual Warfare in Church Growth and Revitalization. Dr. Lawless has added new guest lecturers and one new faculty member, Dr. Thom Rainer, to the specialization team. These additions and the already present offerings make this specialization one of the best programs in church revitalization and growth.

Under the leadership of Dr. Scott Hildreth, the Great Commission Mobilization specialization has changed to Missions and Evangelism to become more focused in helping church leaders and missionaries. The new courses match the needs in Great Commission work within our convention. They are: Developing a Missional Church Culture, Engaging World Cultures and Religions in Contemporary America with the Gospel, Leading a Sending Church, and Strategies in Disciple-making and Evangelism. These courses will prepare pastors in our SBC churches to optimize their involvement in evangelism and missions. In addition, Dr. Hildreth will be offering special courses within the specialization to missionaries and personnel in the NAMB and IMB to increase their effectiveness in service.

Work has begun in the development of two new specializations to be introduced in 2019. Dr. Tate Cockrell has been working toward a new specialization in Pastoral Care. The courses being presented are: Effective Pastoral Care; Crisis, Trauma, and Emotional Disorder; Care and Guidance for Marriage and the Family; and Life Issues and Ministry Practice. These seminars will help pastors in dealing with some of the difficult, tragic, challenging, painful, and life-threatening issues faced by people. The desire is to equip pastors with biblical guidance and the very best tools and approaches for confronting the many personal and family issues experienced in the church. The seminars will provide excellent help for all pastors, but especially for pastors in medium to small churches.

Meetings are occurring to develop a new specialization in Women's Ministry. Recognition of the growing field of women's ministry and the addition of staff to guide programs in women's ministry led to an interest in the specialization. Under the leadership of Dr. Julia Bickley, seminars will be designed to equip women to lead with excellence in this ministry.

Revamped existing seminars and workshops with the addition of new faculty with academic and professional expertise were initiated this past year. A new workshop came on line for all DMin students to address the minister's life from a personal and professional perspective. Other workshops and processes were revised to assist students in the development of the Ministry Project. At least a third of the seminars received some type of revision to maintain the relevancy of content for ministry training, a known characteristic of the program. Program leaders will continue on an annual basis to add outstanding practitioners to the faculty team and revise course content to provide the very best in Doctor of Ministry training.

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

In 2018, seventeen students graduated from the Doctor of Philosophy program at Southeastern and began or continued strategic ministries such as Dean of Online Studies and Professor at Carolina College of Biblical Studies, Assistant Professor at Charleston Southern University, Missionaries with the International Mission Board, Directors of parachurch ministries such as Equipped for Life, Missional Outreach, and With Open Eyes, as well as pastors of established Southern Baptist churches and church plants. Looking forward, we have crafted a new recruiting strategy, which will allow us to seek out gifted students, including those of historically underrepresented groups. Our goal is to help equip a diverse group of scholars, pastors, and pastor-theologians to better serve the church and fulfill the Great Commission.

In addition, we have implemented our redesigned core curriculum to prepare graduates better for outstanding service in the academy, church, and mission field. Along with these changes, we have implemented suggestions from some of our graduates who currently serve in theological institutions and recently served as consultants for our program. These suggestions included an increased focus on the ethical implications in the various disciplines of theological scholarship. All of these changes have been overseen by the new Interim Director, Dr. Jacob Pratt.

The Ed.D. program at Southeastern graduated 15 Doctors of Education in 2018 for a total of 109 graduates since its inception in 2006. The Ed.D. office acts as a catalyst for connecting the many institutions, denominational offices, and local churches who contact us seeking highly trained ministers and educators. The Ed.D. program supports the local church by training graduates who possess Christ like character and ministry skill sets for positions that include children and youth ministry; administration, Bible teaching, and pastoral positions; and discipleship and missions leadership. Current students and graduates also lead parachurch organizations, such as camp ministry, publishing companies, and Christian school administration. Several current students and graduates have major leadership positions in denominational offices and at Lifeway Resources. Approximately twenty percent of our Ed.D. graduates serve in higher education in positions including a college president, four deans of faculty, five vice presidents of administration, and numerous full-time and adjunct faculty. Our graduates also support the Cooperative Program through curriculum development and various publications offering uniquely Southern Baptist perspectives. In addition, the Ed.D. program assisted students and graduates in publishing materials that would help further spread the gospel message of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Among current students and Ed.D. graduates there are numerous leaders serving in other countries, including Canada, Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria, and Vietnam. These students have come to Southeastern to prepare themselves to have a far-reaching impact on theological education in their home country. Other residential students have obtained a visa to live, work, and study in the U.S. with plans to return to their native country. These include India, South Korea, China, and the Dominican Republic. Fueled by their passion for the Gospel, many Ed.D. graduates use their teaching skills and ministry insights to teach in both formal and informal international settings. These destinations include Kenya, Ethiopia, Philippines, Peru, Ghana, Burundi, Tanzania, Belarus, and Ireland. In these locations, our graduates are serving in a variety of ways including: evangelism rallies, pastoral training, and church construction. In addition, our graduates teach in colleges and seminaries, providing these schools with much needed academic instruction. Dr. Coley was in L'viv, Ukraine, teaching a master's course at Ukraine Baptist Seminary, and in Jinja, Uganda, teaching a master's course at Uganda Baptist Seminary.

Based on each of SEBTS' 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 SEBTS is accomplishing the listed Ministry Assignments?

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

The College at Southeastern has a great opportunity in the state of North Carolina. The College is uniquely positioned in the state of North Carolina to provide theological education to undergraduate students. With no other conservative evangelical colleges or universities in the state, the College at Southeastern fills a massive need for Southern Baptists in North Carolina.

One major challenge for the College in coming years is the need for additional tuition resources for our students. We work hard to keep our cost affordable without the assistance of federal scholarships.

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

Southeastern Seminary, like most educational institutions, face the challenge of educating a class of students who are approaching their education differently. For example, our students are increasingly busy with families, jobs, church, and school responsibilities. Often, they choose to take fewer credit to save both cost and time – and the result is a longer time to complete a degree. They are also willing to interrupt their education with intermittent time away from school. We are making changes to our course scheduling plans, increasing the course delivery options, and leading our student in new ways to address these changes. We are now monitoring how these changes may address some of these issues. Second, with the above challenge, we also have new opportunities to train a new class of students who are open to pursue their divine calling for ministry through new ministry pathways. The students enrolled in our degree programs are mission-minded, evangelistically-focused, and local-church-committed. They are eager to use their gifts to “serve the church to fulfill the Great Commission” however the Lord may lead them. Our students are not always certain of the ministry they are preparing for. This provides the seminary the opportunity to help them explore ministry options and to discover what types of ministries God has gifted and prepared them for. This requires us to continue evaluating and improving curriculum offerings and classroom presentations to equip these students. Also, partnerships with local churches are vital to our work; thus, we must connect with, listen to, and work alongside the congregations that will send us students and employ our graduates.

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

Multiple ethnic groups offer great opportunities for expanded reach of the Doctor of Ministry program. More concentrated efforts need to occur to connect with ministers in these groups. A desire to increase enrollment of these ministers reflects SEBTS' commitment to a diverse student population, reflecting the heart of the SBC.

The increased number of students seeking Master of Arts degrees represents a challenge to recruitment into the DMin program. Potential students with MA degrees need additional credit hours in specific areas to meet the Master of Divinity degree equivalency for the program. The additional credit hours create a barrier for some MA students due to the amount of credit hours and time needed to qualify for entry into the program.

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

The ministry assignment entails research doctoral education for both ministers who will serve the local church and theological educators who will serve in the academy. We recognize that rigors of a Ph.D. program can be especially taxing for students. As a result, we are looking for opportunities to better foster community among the students in our program by hosting social meetings, and facilitating academic conversations. Further, we recognize success in theological education requires professional skills as well. Toward that end, we plan to begin facilitating professional development opportunities focused on the craft of research, writing, non-traditional avenues to use a Ph.D. to serve the church and fulfill the Great Commission. Finally, we recognize the strategic value of students studying toward a Ph.D. while still serving in their own ministry contexts. At the same time, we understand the importance of personal engagement for learning and formation. As a result, we are exploring opportunities to begin using synchronous video teaching formats in Ph.D. seminars.

The demand for high quality distance education remains at the forefront among populations worldwide. As academic institutions and churches respond to this need, the Ed.D. program at Southeastern seeks to equip every student with the tools necessary to utilize an online platform for gospel proclamation and theological training. In addition to modeling for students the best practices in virtual classroom instruction, Ed.D. professors and course assignments challenge students to utilize social media and the most up-to-date technologies in their teaching, leading, and discipling. The Ed.D. program focuses on training graduates to teach both traditional classroom instruction and online methodologies. Valuing the time that students have with their local church ministries, current employers, and family, Southeastern provides an ideal means for continued education through the quarter-system-modified-residency model of the Ed.D. program. This allows students to complete their work from a distance and only travel to campus four times per year for seminar intensives. As the Ed.D. program continues to gain popularity among universities in other countries, cross-cultural training continues to be a component of each missional classroom.

In a time when so many ministry leaders fall away due to moral failure, poor administrative management, or just plain discouragement, ministers need a support structure of colleagues and friends who can be available for advice and support. The Ed.D. program recognizes the need to place graduates in a team of other theological educators through the use of the cohort model. The goal is that these connections will serve to strengthen the resolve of these educators as sources of encouragement and accountability. In addition, these networks of communication will help to strengthen fellowship and effectiveness in our churches and denomination.

At the request of SEBTS counseling professors, the Ed.D. committee explored the feasibility of developing a concentration in Biblical Counseling as a subset of the Doctor of Education program. Good news, this special emphasis has become a reality, and is now filling an important need for those students interested in biblical counseling who are seeking a terminal research degree. The first students of the new counseling cohort began in the Spring of 2018. Praise Jesus!