

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 2015, The College at Southeastern implemented several programs that it had been working on in previous years that added value to the work of the Cooperative Program. All these programs provide training to Southern Baptist students to serve Christ around the globe. Moreover, the College began its 5 year program that trains future pastors. This program allows 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. In addition, the College continued to establish new partnerships with missionaries in North America and around the world. These partnerships help facilitate our Global Studies degree program by giving students a semester on the field doing real missionary work. All of these initiatives add significant value to the work of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

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 sought to listen to our constituents as we prepare young ministers. We completed a survey of 1000 evangelical pastors, conducted interviews with several pastors in the area surrounding the seminary, and have revised our graduate level curriculum with this input in mind.

Second, we have launched a five-year combined BA/MDiv degree with a heavy focus on practical pastoral training. We have enlisted a faculty director for this program, and the first students are already enrolled in it.

Third, we have revised our graduate level core curriculum to place more emphasis on practical training. Beginning in the fall of 2016, our Master of Divinity degree will require more courses in biblical counseling, preaching, and leadership.

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

Southeastern's Doctor of Ministry program has made numerous changes to match the needs of our Southern Baptist churches. Under the leadership of Dr. Chuck Lawless, the new Church Revitalization specialization offers the very best training for pastors leading churches to recapture their mission and vision. The Expository Preaching specialization features some new and outstanding pastors to an already strong faculty team of Drs. Akin, Shaddix, and Merida. Dr. Matt Carter, pastor of Austin Stone Church

and a SEBTS D.Min graduate, is one of the guest teaching additions providing outstanding insights into effective preaching in the local church. Top next generation pastors from across the convention are joining the SEBTS D.Min program as guest teachers in the new Next Generations Specialization, a specialization designed to train leaders to provide a more effective approach to guiding our next generation children and youth into more authentic faith. This specialization complements the Intentional Disciple-making Specialization established to provide a more intentional approach to growing disciples.

A special offering has been introduced to the many IMB missionaries taking early retirement to receive two years of free tuition in our doctoral programs at SEBTS to help them in re-engaging with churches upon returning home. These committed folks have much to offer to our SBC churches in the United States. Southeastern wanted to be there for them as they enter a new phase of ministry.

Finally, great effort has been made not only to offer the most biblical, up-to-date, and practical curriculum for our doctoral students, but to offer a kind of Ministry Project experience, D.Min's version of a doctoral dissertation, to train students to realistically, biblically, and creatively solve critical problems in local churches. All of these changes and offerings give evidence of SEBTS's commitment to providing experienced ministers with the kind of post-master-level work to impact their ministries for the glory of God.

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

The Ed.D. program at Southeastern has graduated 78 Doctors of Education, as of December 11, 2015. We want to encourage those in our program to set their sights high and also to provide our graduates with avenues through which to be heard. Our office acts as a catalyst for connecting the many institutions and churches who contact us with ministers and educators appropriate for the positions they need filled. The Ed.D. program supports the local church at every level by training graduates who will go on to lead in local churches in positions that include children and youth ministry; administrative, Bible teaching, and pastoral positions; and discipleship and missions leadership. Current students and graduates also lead parachurch organizations, such as camp ministry, publishing, and Christian school administration. Approximately twenty percent of our Ed.D. graduates serve in higher education in positions including a college president, two deans of faculty, two vice presidents of administration, and numerous full-time faculty. Our graduates also support the Cooperative Program through curriculum development and various publications offering uniquely Southern Baptist perspectives.

SEBTS has expanded its areas of concentration for the PhD to include New Testament, Old Testament (which were previously combined under the Biblical Studies concentration), and Public Theology. The first two concentrations will equip theological educators to teach Biblical Studies courses in colleges and seminaries and will aid pastors in the local church as they seek to correctly handle the word of truth by reverent and faithful exposition of the Holy Scriptures. The Public Theology concentration will seek to train spokesmen who can articulate the truths of the Christian faith boldly and winsomely in a culture that is increasingly hostile to the gospel and biblical values. This concentration is part of a strategic partnership with the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. SEBTS

continues to refine key seminars such as “Introduction to Research and Integration” to ensure that study at the research doctoral level is characterized by loving God with all the mind and with all the heart, devoting both one’s intellect and affections to Christ, in order to avoid the dry and passionless scholarship that has repeatedly proven to be detrimental to the church.

Based on each of SEBTS’ 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 SEBTS is accomplishing the above Ministry Assignment?

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

There are two significant priorities that The College at Southeastern has for the coming year. First, the College will be exploring different ways to expand our curriculum so that students are better equipped to work bi-vocationally in ministry. All indications from the IMB, NAMB, and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina suggest that this will be vital for the future of Gospel ministry around the world. In addition to this, the College is currently exploring ways to develop its student life program to enhance ministry preparation and allow students to complete their degrees in a reasonable amount of time.

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

Southeastern Seminary, like most educational institutions, continues to face several challenges. For example, students are taking fewer hours per year, often due to increased work, family, and church commitments. While a challenge, this change also affords us an opportunity to review our course scheduling, course workload, etc., to make certain we are meeting student needs.

Increasing numbers of online students are also requiring us to evaluate how we best connect with them and shepherd them through a degree program. The challenge is to make ministry education as personal as possible while using a delivery system that complicates that task at times. At the same time, online education opens the door for us to educate greater numbers of students, thus widening our influence for the gospel. Further, the desire of churches to provide local-church based training for their own students is growing; thus, Southeastern is seeking ways to center education in the local church without sacrificing our role as an educational institution. Again, though, this change provides opportunity as we strengthen partnerships with the very churches that make our work possible.

As we move into 2016, we continually face the challenge of providing training for the non-traditional student. Students who work full-time, raise a family, and live away from campus are still seeking a strong education, and Southeastern is working to provide that training. As noted above, we are revamping our course scheduling process to make sure that we meet these needs as well as the needs of the traditional on-campus student.

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

A need for effective leadership in church revitalization to match the need for revitalized churches in the SBC will impact the program offerings of the Doctor of Ministry program at SEBTS. As older churches face the stress fractures created by changing neighborhoods, pastors need advanced training in leading dying congregations to new life within the changing community contexts. New expertise in strategic planning, conflict resolution, and gospel advance is needed to lead in such change efforts. Southeastern's professional doctoral program will be required to offer the right combination of expertise and experience to provide the right teaching environment for leadership development.

The trend of coaching for pastors and church staff will require the professional doctoral program to reassess the present teaching experience. This coaching emphasis seems antithetical to the increase in the online student population, but more pastors want the on-the-job type of learning from experienced practitioners. The present classroom type of learning environment will need to be complemented by a more diverse teaching approach including the coaching element.

The trend toward less segregated churches will require pastors to exhibit greater skills in working within multi-cultural settings. Southeastern's professional doctoral program will need to provide the sensitive training needed to be a catalytic leader in this new environment and experience for the American Church. This type of re-tooling in the classroom will require a more representative faculty of the multi-cultural environment.

The coming changes in our society with a more hostile attitude toward Christianity will challenge our pastoral leadership to act more purposefully and creatively in the local church experience. This challenge will require a better understanding of the disciple-making process and the accompanying small group experience. Southeastern's professional doctoral program will need to help pastors to rethink how church is done, how to fulfill the Great Commission in today's world, and how to build the Kingdom of God in this changing culture.

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

Availability of distance education continues to rise as a need among student populations. As academic institutions and churches embrace the call to meet the 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 toward godliness. In addition to supplying students with, the best practices for virtual instruction, Ed.D. professors and course assignments challenge students to utilize social media, PowerPoint, and the world-wide-web for the glory of God the Father, by integrating their use into their teaching, leading, and discipling. 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. 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.

Scholarly influence is greatly needed in all ministry contexts today. Graduates need to be able to carry-out research, draw conclusions, and publish sound theologically based works to participate in the discussion of ideas within our culture. Toward this end, the Ed.D. program emphasizes two much-needed skills: problem solving through social science approaches and scholarly writing techniques that lead to publication. Those Ed.D. students in the dissertation stage are carrying out research in all facets of adult, youth, children's, and cross-cultural ministry-the findings of which will be published in their dissertations. Dr. Coley and Ed.D. alumnus, Dr. Bryce Hantla, are modeling proper research procedures for students, while gaining data on the effectiveness of the cohort model from students at various stages of their Ed.D. program experience. They plan to publish their findings and improve the Ed.D. program accordingly.

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.

The PhD program also has many new opportunities on the horizon. The Association of Theological Schools has significantly reduced the minimum number of hours necessary for the Master of Divinity degree, the normal prerequisite to seminary research doctoral study. As seminaries reduce the hours required for their Master of Divinity in order to remain competitive, applicants will likely lack some of the knowledge and skills previously assumed for research doctoral candidates. SEBTS must develop a strategy for filling in the gaps in the candidate's training without diminishing the standards of the program as a whole. This is no small challenge. Although changes in the Masters of Divinity pose significant challenges to a quality PhD program, these also present great opportunities. Graduates from Masters of Divinity programs are likely to sense more keenly the need for further training for effective service to the church and to consider more seriously the need for study at the doctoral level. The doctorate may increasingly be viewed as essential training, not only by theological educators but by ministers to the local church as well. SEBTS must continue to develop strategies (like the current Modified Residency format) for making theological education at the doctoral level accessible to those who are already engaged in local church ministry.