



Southeastern
Baptist Theological Seminary

Hello, my name is Danny Akin and I have the joy of serving at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary seeks to equip students to serve the church and fulfill the Great Commission. We believe that with our whole heart, and it is our desire that every classroom be a Great Commission classroom, with all of our students, faculty and staff ready to GO—beginning with their current context and reaching all the way to the ends of the earth.

Our overall student count is up 123 students from last year, making this the sixth year of record enrollment for Southeastern. Concerning academics, this year we started receiving students into our newly designed Master of Divinity program. Our faculty and administration spent months asking the question, “What curriculum would best prepare our students to take the gospel to our neighbors and the nations?” The answer came in the form of an M.Div. with a larger and even stronger core that better equips our students biblically, theologically, and practically for their current and future ministries. Our total hours decreased to 81-84 hours, depending on the track, but the core actually increased to 69 hours, so that we could make sure that our students have everything they need and are fully prepared to enter the world of vocational ministry.

In addition, we revised our vocational Master of Arts degrees, launched new research Master of Arts degrees, and continued building our robust doctoral programs, both on the Ed.D., D.Min., and Ph.D. levels. These changes give us even more occasions to equip students for multiple ministry opportunities.

One of our best kept secrets at Southeastern is The College at Southeastern. We like to say that “The College at Southeastern is more than a college—it’s a calling”. Whether our undergraduate students become lawyers, business professionals, English teachers, missionaries, or pastors, we believe God has a plan for them to be involved in His mission. The College at Southeastern is a place where someone can be trained both theologically and vocationally. With 14 majors, 19 minors, and one Great Commission, we can equip students to live out the gospel in any career path.

We are also excited about our GO Certificate Program. We looked at how we could do more to equip students at every level and every stage, for every ministry opportunity. Along with members of our world-class faculty, we have designed a program that brings sound teaching with practical application in an easy format for busy schedules, with students receiving academic credit and valuable training specifically geared for laity. Our GO certificates can prepare all church members, staff, and lay leaders—anywhere in the

world—to grow in the knowledge of Scripture and to live out the Great Commission wherever they are. All certificate programs are completed entirely online. We've launched our first GO Certificate this year, the Certificate in Biblical Studies and Theology, and we have more on the way in areas such as apologetics, student ministry, biblical counseling, and teaching English as a second language. It's our desire to train Great Commission Christians who will reach the world for King Jesus wherever they happen to be and at whatever level of education they would like to pursue.

We have continued with our Global Theological Initiative, which is primarily an international leadership development process. We engage select cohorts of proven, positioned leaders with training on both the masters and certificate levels. We are equipping faculty members, denominational leaders, and key church pastors to train the next generations within their context and countries. Hundreds of students on five continents take part in this program including over 50 biblical counseling students in Hong Kong and 23 recent masters level graduates who serve on the leadership teams of the national and international mission boards of Brazil. One of my greatest joys this year, along with my wife Charlotte, was to go to Rio de Janeiro to confer the degrees on those 23 men and women in Brazil—our very first of what we hope will be many graduations. This wonderful Great Commission partnership saw its first fruits with this cohort, and I was honored to celebrate with those leaders as they received their Master of Theological Studies degrees. There are many groups like the Brazilian Baptists, and our vision and passion for theological education, personal evangelism, and missions is one. We want to stand with them in building God's kingdom all around the world.

One of our major areas of focus for the past few years has been what we call the Kingdom Diversity Initiative. We want to build an institution that reflects the body of Christ in heaven—every tribe, tongue, and nation worshiping Christ together. To that end, we believe that ethnic diversity is hardwired into the Great Commission. So, if we were to truly call ourselves a Great Commission school, we had to move in this direction. We decided that it's never too late to start doing the right thing, and to set some goals to change our campus was clearly the right thing to do. I'm happy to share an update with you:

- We now have fully functioning teams for both Kingdom Diversity and Hispanic Leadership Development.
- We are actively hosting discussions and developing resources, both for our students and for churches, to equip God's people from every corner of the kingdom to serve in every context of the kingdom.
- This past year, over \$675,000 has been given specifically for student aid to minority students.
- The overall student population of non-white students at Southeastern has grown from 8.3% in 2011 to 15.6% in 2016. That represents a 137% increase in the actual number of non-white students.

We are excited for the future of Southeastern and the Kingdom Diversity Initiative.

This year, it was our great honor to announce to our campus community that we have a new official hymn for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and The College at Southeastern, written by Keith and Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townsend, and titled "For the Cause." We want to stand with our students and sing words that truly capture our heart for the nations. The second verse and chorus of that song say this:

For the cause of Christ we go
With joy to reap, with faith to sow
As many see
And many put their trust
In the Son

Christ we proclaim,
The Name above every name:
For all creation,
Ev'ry nation,
God's salvation
Through the Son!

This is my prayer for Southeastern, and it is my prayer for the Southern Baptist Convention. Thank you for letting us be a part of what the Southern Baptist Convention is doing. It is an honor to serve you, training men and women to take the gospel across North America and around the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danny Akin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Danny Akin, President