

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
2023 to 2027**

The Ecumenical Theological Seminary was reaccredited in 2022 for ten years. This plan is an extension from the previous five-year award. Plans can be mission-driven or cost-driven. As with the previous plan, ours is a combination of both, with the primary focus on mission. The vision statement consists of three key platforms that lay out how the seminary will fulfill its mission. The goals and objectives included in the plan will provide the road map needed to move forward into our new future.

The Identity Statement

Ecumenical Theological Seminary provides a multi-confessional and multi-cultural Christian theological education within an urban context, while initiating interfaith engagement. Our approach creates spiritual leadership through personal transformation, social responsibility, critical reflection and academic rigor. ETS graduates are prepared to lead communities of faith while sharing the fullness of God's love in relation to various ecumenical, interfaith, political, social, economic and cultural contexts.

The Mission Statement

Ecumenical Theological Seminary (ETS) provides a multi-confessional, multi-cultural Christian theological education that prepares individuals to participate and lead while sharing the fullness of God's love and concern for justice in the communities they serve.

The Vision Statement (SEE)

We fulfill mission through the following platforms:

Sustainability

We will fulfill our mission by developing and maintaining long-term financial viability that allows ETS to accomplish its mission and vision through a strong financial and facilities management plan.

Education

We fulfill our mission by developing and maintaining a variety of educational programs including, MDIV, MAPM, MA, MATS and DMIN. In addition to these degree programs, ETS offers the non-degree Urban Ministry Diploma and a variety of conferences, workshops and certificate programs like the Minster Dr. Malaney L. Brown Institute for Ministry Initiatives.

Engagement

We fulfill our mission through relationships that are established throughout the Metro Detroit community and beyond. These relationships assist the seminary in the identification of social, economic, community, civic, and cultural concerns and in the formation of partnerships with students, churches, the media, donors and other organized entities.

INITIATIVES ASSOCIATED WITH EACH VISION PLATFORM

SUSTAINABILITY PLATFORM

The Present: The Finance Committee of the Board is currently involved in bi-monthly reviews with the ETS leadership. In addition, the president and seminary accountant meet monthly to review matters such as cash flow and budget matters. An Investment

Committee of the Board has been formed and activated to manage seminary investments. The committee includes Board members, the portfolio managers and the ETS Leadership Team. The committee meets regularly. The portfolio's performance has been unpredictable post-pandemic, and it is hoped that the future will look more favorably on performance and earnings. The seminary faces a challenge dealing with salaries vs. enrollment growth.

The Future. We will work to accomplish this platform by developing and maintaining long-term financial viability that allows ETS to accomplish its mission and vision through a strong financial and facilities management plan. Our landlord, the University of Michigan Credit Union (UMCU) is nearing the groundbreaking on a new facility. Discussions are ongoing regarding ETS's proposed occupancy of the new space.

Strategic Actions:

- **Work towards a balanced budget.**
- **The Board will work with the president to develop specific fundraising goals and timelines.**
- **Financial Details of ETS's proposed occupancy of the new UMCU mid-town facility require discussion and resolution.**
- **ATS Matters**
 - Work on continued compliance of our status of accreditation.
 - A report on progress with Board Development is due September 1, 2023, along with Draft of new Board Manual
 - A report is due September 1, 2024, on library and information systems.
 - A report is due April 1, 2026, regarding financial sustainability and planning.
- **Continually review and refocus Recruitment strategies and goals**
 - Strengthen recruitment staff and strategies. Our recruitment work has suffered some setbacks in 2023, but a plan to recruit a new full-time Recruitment Director and Enrollment Manager is under way.
 - Renew efforts to move towards 100 active students.
- **Adhere to the ETS Financial Management Policy and the ongoing reassessing of this policy.**
- **Continue Board Development Activities**
 - Continue working with Board Development Committee to recruit new board members.
 - The Committee has presented the results of a board survey to assess the talent pool of current board members and target future board members.
 - Recommendations from a board consultant has recommended the following actions moving forward.
 - Remove faculty members from the board to avoid potential conflict of interest issues. They can be asked to participate in discussions as needed.
 - Consider the appointment of an auxiliary board.
 - Reaffirm the commitment of current board members.
 - MOVE FORWARD WITH INVITING NEW BOARD MEMBERS. The board consultant suggests:
 - *"Regarding the board, we're all set. You now have a board with committed members and no staff. I'm recommending that the next step is to identify 2 to 4 individuals from the list I submitted and ask those*

individuals to accept membership. We would then take them through an orientation/on boarding process.

- The consultant will assist in writing the ATS report due September 1, 2023.
- **Maximize the use of People Resources**
 - Seek to develop and strengthen our People resources
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Alums – A new Alumni President is in place
 - Events are planned for 2023 to reintroduce the Alumni Association.
- **Strengthen and Develop adequate revenue streams through:**
 - Donors
 - Gifts
 - Expand use of electronic payment platforms
 - Scholarships
 - Advancement & Fund Development
 - Need for Advancement Director / Coordinator
 - Grant Writer an ongoing target
- **Social Media: Marketing, Branding, and Recruitment**
 - ETS will be strategically intentional about expanding our use of social media platforms. We must endeavor to optimize their use for recruitment, marketing, and promotion of the ETS brand and people. Of particular focus is Facebook, Youtube and an expanded website footprint.
 - ETS Branding. ETS will continue utilizing materials from a marketing effort to develop branding, marketing, and promotional materials.
 - An updated and refreshed website has been launched.
- **Senior Leadership**
 - Prior to the ATS Comprehensive Visit in 2022 that resulted in a ten-year reaccreditation, the President advised the Board Chair the time of discussing leadership transition had come. After five years as president, most of it responding to ATS accreditation concerns, it was time to discuss post-pandemic leadership with fresh leadership perspectives. This conversation will be expanded.

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EDUCATION PLATFORM

The Present: ETS currently offers a variety of traditional accredited graduate degree programs that target those who seek professional and academic ministry training. We also offer the Urban Ministry Diploma (UMD) program that targets clergy and laypersons who lack any previous formal educational credentials. ETS continues to compete with other theological schools for a shrinking pool of traditional students nationally. ETS will continue to market the UMD as an ATS approved path to ETS will creatively expand its offerings to offer programs for non-traditional students in addition to current offerings. Master's-level work.

The Future: We will accomplish this platform by developing, strengthening and maintaining a variety of educational programs including MDIV, MAPM, MA, MATS and DMIN. In addition to these degree programs, ETS will continue to offer the non-degree Urban Ministry Diploma and expand offerings with a variety of conferences, workshops and certificate programs. All MA programs are designed to be completed in two years of full-time study. We will seek to recruit, equip, and maintain a qualified, competent faculty.

Strategic Actions:

- **Ensure program offerings conform to the ETS “Components of Student Learning and Formation as detailed in Standard 3 - Student Learning and Formation (New 2020 Standards)**
- 3. Student Learning and Formation: Theological schools are communities of faith and learning centered on student learning and formation. Consistent with their missions and religious identities, theological schools give appropriate attention to the intellectual, human, spiritual, and vocational dimensions of student learning and formation. Schools pursue those dimensions with attention to academic rigor, intercultural competency, global awareness and engagement, and lifelong learning. Schools support student learning and formation through appropriate educational modalities and policies.
 - 3.1 The school gives attention to the intellectual, human, spiritual, and vocational dimensions of student learning and formation in its institutional goals and its curricular and co-curricular offerings in ways that are consistent with the school’s mission and religious identity.
 - 3.2 The school demonstrates academic rigor in student learning and formation, with qualified instructors, scholarly research and resources, and graduate-level expectations appropriate to each degree it offers.
 - 3.3 The school demonstrates intercultural competency in student learning and formation by helping students understand, respect, engage, and learn from diverse communities and multicultural perspectives, inside and outside the classroom.
 - 3.4 The school demonstrates global awareness and engagement in student learning and formation by helping students respect, engage, and learn from global perspectives and sources, understand the global connectedness and mutuality of theological education, and increase their capacities for service and learning in globally interconnected contexts.
 - 3.5 The school demonstrates an understanding of learning and formation as lifetime pursuits by helping students develop motivations, skills, and practices for lifelong learning.
 - Update Model Syllabus to reflect the same as appropriate.
- **Strengthen our existing Degree and Diploma Programs**
 - Doctor of Ministry
 - Work to make continued improvements in the DMin process.
 - Increase enrollment through media promotion and student endorsements in their circles of influence.
 - UMD – Add an ATS-approved version that leads to acceptance to master’s-level programs. An exception petition filed with ATS was approved.
- New for 2023 is our newest two-year master’s program, the **Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS) program**. The program offers training to those who seek to serve in various areas of the church and society, and offers more flexibility and choice for students.
- We continue to promote our Urban Ministry Diploma which is approved as a path to master’s level studies without the need for an undergraduate program.
- **A new full-time dean is in place.**
- **Kizzy Busch-Boyd**
 - In partnership with Vanderbilt University and the Lilly Foundation, Kizzy Busch-Boyd will be in residence at ETS for the 2023-24 AY. Kizzy is a Ph.D. candidate who requested ETS to host her in her final year of study. Lilly is providing the financial support, and ETS is sponsoring her academic activity.

Kizzy is a **Theology and Practice Fellow** at Vanderbilt and will be assigned teaching and other duties during the next year. Kizzy is a native Detroit, and it is our hope we can offer her a position after her final year at Vanderbilt to in our quest to build a future faculty of qualified scholars.

- **Expand curriculum offerings:**
 - For example, ETS is hosting the **Minister Dr. Malaney L. Brown Institute for Ministry Initiatives**. The Institute proposes the following:
 - Phase 1 is a series of three workshops helping ministries deal with “The Faithful Deployment of Technology” to assist ministries in using technology as a friend and not as foe. The Brown family has provided a \$50,000 grant. The first workshop was held in Academic Year 2022-23. The remaining workshops will take place in AY 2023-24.
 - The Brown family is also proposing the establishment of a \$50,000 grant to sponsor a new \$5000 scholarship for the next 10 years beginning with the Fall of 2023.
 - Finally, a grant is proposed to fund student mission-oriented activities. Details are still being worked out.
 - We are considering the establishment of a **Certificate in Church Music** led by Professor Nora Duncan, Chair of the music department at WSU
 - Explore a proposed School of the Holy Spirit – Bishop Corletta Vaughn
- **Strengthen Assessment program activities and Increase Online offerings in all programs**
 - Annual Assessment Day each May
 - Provide online training opportunities for all faculty members

ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

The Present: ETS desires to be better connected with various key community organizations. The seminary has established some meaningful relationships, but has not established itself as a strong presence in many key areas our influence should be felt and appreciated.

Strategic Actions

- **Work to form and deepen relationships with Congregations by offering opportunities for:**
 - Congregations to support the seminary through volunteerism, etc.
 - Recruit and Volunteer Coordinator.
 - Offer on-site classes, lectures, and preaching by faculty members
- **Work with Alumni Association leadership to engage alums:**
 - Feature prominent alums on the website and social media postings.
 - Engage alums in all areas of ETS life through volunteer opportunities.
 - Ask alums to provide answers to the following:
 - Why ETS?
 - What has been the impact of ETS in alum’s life?
 - Why does ETS matter?
- **Work with UMCU to develop a partnership that promotes community programs that educate residents in the area of economic empowerment**
- **Reach out to Business and Political leaders**
 - Plan forums that connect business leaders with the community to discuss important issues

- Seek ways to increase the ETS presence and participation in Detroit political activities
- Seek placement of ETS persons on key community boards:
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Downtown Detroit Partnership
 - New Detroit
 - Midtown, Inc.
 - Religious Leader's Forum
 - Metropolitan Affairs Coalition – Regional
 - DRIVE
 - Brush Park Association
- **Encourage our friends to help facilitate meetings with new friends in small group gatherings in homes and churches**
- **Increase participation in Interfaith community activities**
- **Facilitate**
 - Community partnerships by offering ETS as a safe place for dialogue around important issues
- **Understanding the nature of EDS AND MEDS districts to leverage our influence as a faith-based institution.**
 - Hospitals – Sinai Grace
 - Educational Institutions
 - WSU, WCCCD, UDM, Marygrove
 - Cultural Districts
- **Continue to increase the efficient use of Media**
 - Social media
 - Public relations
 - Marketing