

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS UPDATE OVERVIEW

ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Harris, President

03.24.2022

NEW BEGINNINGS: TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

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.

(NOTE: THE MOST RECENT CHANGES ARE INDICATED BY BOLD, ITALICIZED FONT)

Vision: "S.E.E."

SUSTAINABILITY

Imperative 1- *ETS will address its sustainability by clearly articulating its role and responsibility in the changing theological landscape.*

1. Clarify vision, mission- President Harris has articulated vision in written statements to faculty, staff and on the ETS website.
2. Evaluate our future in competitive market of theological education. Even though all theological schools and seminaries are challenged by COVID 19, diminishing number of members in mainline denominations, and the lack of marketability of theological education, ETS has a promising future. ETS future is determined by its willingness to:
 - constantly collect data and research about its evolving marketplace and review and revamp its curriculum, degree programs according to the needs of the community
 - dramatically increase its online classes
 - engage the community with forums and service opportunities
 - develop practical theology classes
 - hire an experienced, effective Grant Writer, engage the Board to assist in fund raising events

STILL ON WISH LIST OF THINGS TO DO

- establish relationships with local pastors and denominational leaders
- DPTV/ETS HISTORY OF THE BLACK CHURCH IN DETROIT PROJECT. PRESIDENT HARRIS CHAIRS THE MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE. DRS. HARRIS, HENDERSON AND SIMON HAVE BEEN FEATURED. DR. HENDERSON FEATURED ON RECENT SESSION.
- DR. SIMON WAS FEATURED ON LAST SEGMENT – WOMANIST THEOLOGY**
- develop a creative Marketing Strategy that will advertise the seminary and help recruit students.

- **LOOKING FOR NEW MARKETING PARTNER TO SHIFT FOCUS TO NEW MARKETING AND BRANDING STRATEGY. REVIEWING PROPOSAL FROM LAMBERT MARKETING AS OF MARCH 2022.**
- create How-to Workshops, Masters Certificates and Continuing Education Units that will meet the contemporary needs of the students and the community.
 - **GRADUATE CERTIFICATES OFFERED**
 - **FAMILY MINISTRTY – 2021-22**
 - **AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES – 2022-23**

Imperative 2 – *Restructure the Office of President to focus on the matters of Strategic Directions, Community Engagement, Board Governance, and Resource Development.*

- a. Strategic directions. THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT – ACADEMICS AND PROGRAM DIRECTORS ARE ENGAGED IN STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS THAT ARE IN LINE WITH OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS.
- b. Community Engagement- We have produced several online community forums that address social, racial, political, and spiritual issues.

TAKE YOUR SOULS TO THE POLLS WAS A TIMELY SUCCESS! MORE RECENTLY OUR FORUM ON COVID-19 WAS WELL RECEIVED.

- c. **SEE GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION NARRATIVE FOR STD. 9 OF 2022 SELF-STUDY REGARDING BOD.**
- d. Resource Development/ fundraising and donor development.
- e. **LOOKING TO REENGAGE FUND RAISING EVENTS FOR 2022: GALA, THANKSGIVING, GOLF OUTING POSSIBLE EVENTS**

Imperative 3 – *Align ETS in a marketplace that will inspire students to choose our seminary.*

1. **AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2022, ETS IS SEEKING THE SERVICES OF A NEW MARKETING CONSULTANT TO FOCUS MORE ACUTELY ON MARKETING STRATEGIES THAT COORDINATE MULTIPLE ASPECTS OF MARKETING MEDIA PLATFORMS, BRANDING AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT. WE HOPE TO HAVE A NEW MARKETING PARTNER IN PLACE BY THE NEXT BOARD MEETING. NEW PROPOSAL BY LAMBERT MARKETING UNDER REVIEW.**
2. Recruitment Strategies
 - a. Targets - second-career, inter-denominational, middle-aged clergy and laity from Michigan Ohio, Indiana, and Georgia. Other targets are students that attend colleges and universities who have a religious department but do not offer religious degrees. (Michigan State, Wayne)
 - b. Faculty Participation and Accountability- FACULTY ADVISORS, PROGRAM DIRECTORS, RECRUITMENT AND CATHY NEDD ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO EVALUATE AND FOLLOW UP ON LEADS AND ADMISSION.
 - c. ETS Open House- we produced online Open House forums which advertised our seminary by featuring presentations from the President, Academic Dean, Directors, Student Recruiter, and faculty. Coordinate Marketing and Branding – Cathy Nedd and Associates met with executive team and developed advertisements for Master’s Certificates, Continuing Education, Doctor of Ministry, MAPM and Urban Ministry Diploma. Moreover, we made the

MAPM a marketable, competitive degree for denominations that no longer require M.Div. to be certified in ministry.

- d. *CONTINUE TO MONITOR ATS AND INTRUST DATA AS APPROPRIATE* – The theological trend is to offer more online classes that emphasize practical ministry and employability. All ETS classes are offered online and we offer Masters Certificates and Continuing Education Units in chaplaincy, grief counseling, Urban Transformation, Interracial relationships and African American religion. We have set a goal of 100 headcount and corresponding FTEs by the end of the last academic year. We have 75 students this Fall despite graduating 22 students in June. We are still targeting a 100 student headcount. Covid challenges have hurt those efforts nationwide. We continue to conduct a media blitz and student recruitment drive before every quarter. Finally, we will create student enrollment goals and strategies to fulfill them. **(UNDER ONGOING REVIEW)** *Establish Pricing that is in line with seminaries of similar characteristics.* – . The faculty suggests that we establish a minimum of 6 students per course, except for core courses to enable students to continue through their programs. ETS could adjust faculty salary with classes with less than 3 students.
- e. *BY SPRING QUARTER 2022 WE HAVE NOT REACHED A GOAL OF 100 STUDENTS. THAT REMAINS OUR OBJECTIVE, HOWEVER. WE DO HAVE 83 STUDENTS FOR WINTER 2022 WHICH MOVES US IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TOWARDS OUR 100 STUDENT TARGET.*

3. *RECRUITMENT/ENROLLMENT DIRECTOR SUBMITTED A NEW RECRUITMENT PLAN THAT DOVETAILS WITH A RESTRUCTURED MARKETING COMMITTEE STRUCTURE: MARKETING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC) AND MARKETING TEAM (MT). FALL 2021. **NEW MARKETING BRANDING PROPOSAL UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR 2022-23.***

Imperative 4- *Establish scholarships and funding opportunities to support students (Covid Funding Application Pending). RECEIVED \$474,000 CARES ACT FUNDING.*

1. Established scholarships called Biersdorf, DeGraw, Ruthie May Harris, and Grosse Pte Memorial.
2. Establish fund-raising goals and strategy. **(IN PROCESS)**

Imperative 5 - Revenue and Fund Raising (IN PROCESS)

CONSIDERING EVENTS FOR 2022-PROPOSED DATES

- Golf Outing July 14, 21 or 28
- Gala September 15, 22 or 29
- Thanksgiving November 24

THE FOLLOWING REMAIN UNDER OUR “THINGS TO DO”

- Revive Student Association
- Restructure Alumni Association
- F.G. Sampson Symposium (work with Freda Sampson)

Imperative 6 – Board Authority and Governance (NEED TO DO)

- Board Chair and President will collaborate with board.

- Recruit new essential board members. *VINCENT KIRKWOOD HAS JOINED OUR BOARD WITH NEEDED EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE.*
- **RESTRUCTURE BOARD COMMITTEES: FINANCE, FUND RAISING AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT.**

EDUCATION

Advance a culture of excellence in communication, teaching and learning moving from personality dependence to competency-based performance with an intentional transformative education supported by data trends and market analysis.

Imperative 1- Engage In Trust to review operations, academic programs and faculty performance

1. ETS developed a Curriculum Committee that reviewed, renewed, and repackaged our academic programs, curriculum, and courses. Consequently, we created a Masters Certificates, Continuing Education Units and courses that emphasize practical ministry. In Trust reviewed and approved our new academic programs.
2. All our courses are offered online. WE HAVE REPLACED BLACKBOARD WITH A FULL-SERVICE ZOOM ACCOUNT TO HANDLE ALL OF OUR NEEDS.

Imperative 2 – Assign project leaders to lead changes in Operations and Academic areas.

1. WITH RESIGNATION OF VP OPERATIONS AND DEAN, APPOINTED EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT – OPERATIONS AND EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT – ACADEMICS. **WE CONTINUE TO TRACK ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES AND PREPARE A FORMAL UPDATE FOR THE BOARD FOR EACH MEETING.**

Imperative 3 – Establish the Charles G. Adams Center for Community Engagement, Theological Reflection and Ethical Inquiry. (IN PROCESS)

1. Practical Theology Workshops- ETS offered practical theology workshops on Grief Ministry, Care of Souls, Ministry of the Aging and the Dying and Clergy Self-Care during the epidemic
2. Community Forums- ETS website offered a panel discussion on the *Church and Black Lives Matter*. The panel consisted of a cross-section of clergy and laity who shared their opinions on current issues. ETS website will produce community forums on *Getting Out the Vote* and *Coping with COVID 19*. REFERENCE RECENT “TAKE YOUR SOULS TO THE POLLS” AND “COVID-19 PANEL.”

ENGAGEMENT

Creatively engage our community in the life of the Seminary

Imperative 1 – Reestablish relationship with local denominational leaders to improve the image of ETS.

(PLANS STILL IMPACTED BY COVID RESTRICTIONS)

1. We distributed *Survey Monkey* to local pastors, alumni, and students and discovered their academic needs. The survey indicated an overwhelming interest in courses and workshops that emphasized practical theology. We used the information in the survey to re-evaluate, reform and rebrand our entire curriculum, classes, workshops, and degree programs.
2. Schedule breakfast or lunch meetings – canceled because of COVID 19.

3. Attend denominational meetings- ETS is in the process of developing an educational relationship with President Dr. Floyd Davis and the Metropolitan District Baptist Educational Ministry. Our hope is to offer online classes to members.

(THIS SECTION IS PRESENTLY ON HOLD).

Imperative 2 – Reestablish relationship with local pastors and congregations to determine both congregational and personal needs.

Lilly “Pathways for Tomorrow” grant proposal. Phase 1 of \$50,000 awarded for planning and visioning to compete for Phases 2 and 3. In process. It lines up nicely with our SEE Vision.

(WE APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED A \$50,000 “PATHWAYS TO TOMORROW” LILLY PLANNING GRANT TO PARTNER WITH LOCAL CHURCHES AND LEADERS TO ENVISION MINISTRY FOR THE FUTURE. LOCAL PASTORS/CHURCHES WERE SURVEYED, AND THE RESULTS WERE SHARED AND DISCUSSED. THE RESULTS OF THAT DISCUSSION WERE THE BASIS OF A FINAL PASTOR’S SESSION WHOSE RESULTS WERE TO BE USED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE II. UNFORTUNATELY WERE NOT AWARDED A PHASE II GRANT.)

1. Attend local pastoral gatherings when possible
2. Offer opportunities to gather to discuss issues- ETS had several online panel discussions with local pastors of different races, denominations, and theological/political perspectives.
3. Offer Continuing Education- ETS offers Continuing education Units in chaplaincy, grief counseling and Urban Transformation.
4. Annual Pastors Breakfast- delayed because of COVID 19
5. The partnership between the seminary and the Church has enormous potential for recruitment of students into our Master’s degree programs and fulfill the educational needs of the local church.
6. The Presbytery of Detroit has expressed interest in partnering with us on a number of projects. *NEW TRANSITIONAL IS IN PLACE. INTEREST IN A PARTNERSHIP HAS BEEN EXPRESSED.*
7. David Swink is sending information about a possible project with the American Baptists. **THIS POTENTIAL PROJECT HAS BEEN TABLED PENDING OTHER DEVELOPMENTS.**

(WE CONTINUE TO MONITOR THIS SECTION DUE TO ONGOING COVID RESTRICTIONS)

Imperative 3- Reestablish relationship with local churches and faith-based service organizations for mutual service and ministry opportunities. (Dependent upon Covid developments).

1. DPTV/ETS COLLABORATION – THE HISTORY OF THE BLACK CHURCH IN DETROIT. We continue to work with DPTV to produce monthly presentations that have included ETS professors. President Harris continues to preside at the monthly Clergy Advisory Committee meetings.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT THAT UNDERGOES CONTINUAL CHANGE, REVISION AND FOCUS AS OUR WORK DICTATES.