Our Mission

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is a graduate theological school that prepares skilled, bold, and articulate leaders who share the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Related to The United Methodist Church, with an ecumenical and international reach, we prepare leaders who are equipped to live and proclaim the Gospel and to teach in diverse congregations and educational settings. Our teaching and learning settings will be places of hospitality where we pursue respect and reconciliation in all encounters.
THE Vision

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is a servant seminary dedicated to preparing spiritually grounded and prophetic leaders for the church, the world, and the academy who are well equipped to:

1. Proclaim the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world;
2. Guide others in a life of deep spiritual formation and commitment;
3. Serve with culturally sensitive competence;
4. Collaborate as public theologians for the well-being of all persons and creation; and
5. Lead transformative change for the sake of community and the global world.

OUR Dedication

Garrett-Evangelical is a servant seminary dedicated to partnership with the global church.

Garrett-Evangelical is a servant seminary dedicated to benefitting its surrounding community.

Garrett-Evangelical is a servant seminary dedicated to hospitality and inclusive welcome.

Garrett-Evangelical is a servant seminary dedicated to embodying care for the future through generational stewardship.
The Process

In the spirit of Jesus the Christ, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary seeks to be a servant seminary responsive to the needs of the church and the world. I am pleased to present our 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. The vision for this plan grew during my first year as president as I held listening sessions with each faculty member, each administrator and staff person, each trustee, and with students as a whole, in smaller groups, and individually. I had many opportunities to speak with alums through Town Hall meetings, at Annual Conferences, and other events. Since we are one of 13 United Methodist seminaries, I met with the North Central Jurisdiction bishops, with AME Zion leaders, and I accepted opportunities to serve on committees and boards for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. I have also reached out to the greater Evanston community and have established relationships with its leaders, including Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl.

Beyond my listening sessions, the seven Leadership Team members listened to these same key constituencies through events, meetings, and one-to-one opportunities. The information we gathered, provided the core of the Strategic Plan—generational stewardship—ensuring a vibrant future through:

- Being a servant seminary dedicated to preparing spiritually grounded and prophetic leaders for the church, the world, and the academy;
- Ensuring a robust and diverse student enrollment;
- Delivering a relevant curriculum, competent faculty, and transformative religious leaders;
- Creating a dynamic student life program that nurtures authentic Christian community;
- Valuing the administration and staff;
- Cultivating creative partnerships with clergy, laity, churches, colleges, and seminaries; and
- Building a strong endowment and a sustainable business model.

Based on these seven areas, we created teams of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and trustees for each area. More than sixty participants worked on this plan over the past six months. I am grateful for their tireless effort and appreciate their new, innovative ideas.

We are sensitive to the changing landscape of theological education. These are exciting and challenging times that are truly historic in terms of the innovation necessary to respond to the shifting needs of the church and the world. Our educational task has both eternal and contemporary dimensions and we must always seek a balance between these two realities. There are no questions about the need to teach theology, Bible, history, ethics, and the theory and practice of ministry. Today, we are challenged to balance these eternal truths with the contemporary needs of the church and world.

We face a radically shifting landscape in theological education and in our world: religious pluralism, heightened degrees of religious violence, the decline of mainline denominational membership and a shrinking master of divinity (MDiv) pool, the receding of Christianity as an assumed partner and voice in public affairs, advances in technology and media communication, growing racial/ethnic/cultural diversity, the exploding growth of the Hispanic and Latino(a) population with needs for theological education, the impact of global Christianity, and the increase of lay interest in theological education. There is a growing number of people seeking theological education for non-traditional forms of ministry and creative new expressions of response to God’s call upon their lives.

To remain relevant, we must also be nimble in answering future challenges and opportunities. This includes sustained attention to and analysis of race, nonviolence, white normativity and privilege, and competence in cultural diversity and interfaith dialogues. We are seriously considering some reduction in the number of hours required for the MDiv program and
increasing the percentage of electives. We need to pursue all opportunities to reduce student debt including accelerating the completion of undergraduate and MDiv education with programs enabling three years of undergraduate study and three years of seminary study.

Garrett-Evangelical will offer more online opportunities for both degree coursework and lifelong learning. We will develop new and innovative professional master of arts degrees that provide specific skills with embedded certificate options. We will give greater attention to leadership assessment and development both within our degrees and post-graduation. We will offer more off-campus delivery of educational programs, and we will seek creative partnerships with non-church communities and corporate organizations.

All of our strategies require sustained attention to embody our call as a servant seminary to the church, the world, and the academy, to attract students, and to provide relevant and robust theological education in this century. We are ready to go!

Lallene J. Rector, President

Team Meetings for the Seven Focus Areas
The seven teams met to create the strategies, objectives, and measurements for their area of focus.
Ongoing since March 31, 2015

Community Meetings
Update meetings for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees.
Held on March 31, July 7, and September 10 of 2015

Steering Committee Meetings
Meetings of the Leadership Team and the Chairs of the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Finance Committees to review the work of the seven focus areas.
Held on June 19, July 31, August 28, and September 28 of 2015

Focus Area Meetings
Separate meetings with faculty, staff and administrators, and students for their collective feedback on the Strategic Plan.

- Staff/Administrator Retreat: August 24, 2015
- Faculty Meeting: September 14, 2015
- Student Meeting: September 29, 2015

Board of Trustees Meeting
Pending revisions and approval.
Held on October 22, 2015
SERVANT SEMINARY

Servant seminary dedicated to preparing spiritually grounded and prophetic leaders for the church, the world, and the academy.

STRATEGIES

1. Strengthen the seminary’s commitment to racial equity and diversity inclusion inside and outside its walls.
2. Respond to the educational and professional development needs of prospective and current students, alums, clergy, and laity through further solidifying our identity, providing relevant theological education, and offering a variety of lifelong and leadership learning programs.
3. Assess and strengthen existing partnerships, and cultivate new potential partnerships.

ROBUST AND DIVERSE STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Recruit a student body who strives to embody the mission of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

STRATEGIES

1. Increase scope and effectiveness of our influencers.
2. Increase the visibility, networking, and partnerships.
3. Strengthen scholarship and financial aid practices and policies to meet enrollment goals and address student indebtedness.

RELEVANT CURRICULUM, COMPETENT FACULTY, TRANSFORMATIVE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Deliver a relevant MDiv curriculum taught by a competent and diverse faculty that forms religious leaders to work faithfully and boldly for spiritual and social transformation in congregations, communities, and the academy.

STRATEGIES

1. Offer a new MDiv curriculum that is relevant, contextual, and innovative in ways that are responsive to the needs of today’s church and world.
2. Develop a diverse faculty recognized by its scholarly contributions, competent to teach in multicultural classrooms, equipped to increase distributive/distance learning offerings, and sufficient to support degree and non-degree programs that are mission grounded and financially viable.
3. Educate a qualified and diverse student body who exhibits qualities of spiritually grounded, intellectually formed, culturally competent, and prophetically engaged leaders who develop transformative ministries in the church, the world, and the academy for the well-being and common good of all persons and creation.

3. Strengthen the seminary’s commitment to racial equity and diversity inclusion inside and outside its walls.

2. Respond to the educational and professional development needs of prospective and current students, alums, clergy, and laity through further solidifying our identity, providing relevant theological education, and offering a variety of lifelong and leadership learning programs.

3. Assess and strengthen existing partnerships, and cultivate new potential partnerships.
DIVERSE STUDENT LIFE PROGRAM NURTURING AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Re-affirm and strengthen the historic commitment of developing evangelical, prophetic Christian leaders for a culturally and globally diverse church and world.

VALUED EMPLOYEES

Value employees through improved communication, engagement, and fellowship to further support the goal of Garrett-Evangelical as a servant seminary.

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Creative partnerships with clergy, laity, churches, colleges, and seminaries.

STRONG ENDOWMENT AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL

Community-wide commitment to prudent management of resources and generational stewardship.

STRATEGIES

1. Develop a student life culture that enhances student experience by fostering student health and wellness, nurturing spiritual growth, and cultivating an ethic of care committed to the uplift of Christian community (koinonia).

2. Build effective support systems and programs that undergird professional development and outplacement while being responsive to contemporary and emerging issues of justice, marginalization, and transformation.

3. Cultivate an ethic of care that intentionally attends to cultural competence, effective communication and collaboration, and that is sensitive to difference and values diversity.

STRATEGIES

1. Provide new and improve existing tools, methods, and channels for equitable and inclusive seminary-wide communications.

2. Engage employees as valued participants with the seminary and its mission.

3. Create an environment that encourages fellowship to further the seminary’s goals.

STRATEGIES

1. Develop a process and place for Creative Partnerships/External Initiatives/Lifelong Learning within the seminary’s ongoing organization.

2. Utilize quality research and consultation to identify and address the challenges and opportunities of partnerships.

3. Create/reinforce partnerships and programs with clergy, laity, churches, colleges, and seminaries.

STRATEGIES

1. Implement a sustainable business plan by 2018/19 where expenses are supported by new, additional revenue streams.

2. Complete deferred maintenance projects.

3. Complete the $100mm endowment campaign, Forging Our Future, on or before December 2017.

4. Assess the potential impact of a strategic partnership with one or more other seminaries.
NEW Initiatives

1. Black Sacred Music program
2. New MA in public ministry/theology (certificate option embedded)
3. New MA in basic theological education for laity (certificate option embedded)
4. Hispanic/Latino(a) theological education program
5. Consider an “operating entity” under which Garrett-Evangelical gathers and serves professionals in the field
6. New program for the corporate sector (e.g., ethics and values consultation)
7. New leadership program for students, alums, and others
8. Environmental Sustainability Midwest Initiative
9. Freedom School sponsorship with Evanston community leaders
10. Expanded delivery formats for MDiv curriculum
11. Expanded Lifelong Learning opportunities beyond the campus

Our Priorities

1. Appoint “think tank” to support initiatives and develop others
2. Appoint a “project manager” to oversee the initiatives
3. Review and revise current core purpose statement to reflect new directions
4. Develop a three year communication plan including identification of five to six publications for aggressive marketing and expanded use of digital advertising
5. Three to five year plan to include prioritization, revenue projection, timelines, and responsible personnel
OUR Committees

STEERING COMMITTEE
Lallene J. Rector, President
Anne Driscoll, Trustee
Becky J. Eberhart, Leadership Team
David L. Heetland, Leadership Team
James W. Lumberg, Trustee
Dale R. McClain, Leadership Team
James A. Noseworthy, Leadership Team
Luis R. Rivera, Leadership Team
John E. Sampson, Trustee
Cynthia A. Wilson, Leadership Team

RELEVANT CURRICULUM, COMPETENT FACULTY, TRANSFORMATIVE RELIGIOUS LEADERS
Luis R. Rivera, Leadership Team and Chair
E. Byron Anderson, Faculty
Timothy R. Eberhart, Faculty
Cora E. Glass, Student
Marianne Inman, Trustee
James W. Lumberg, Trustee
W. Vincent McGlothlin-Eller, Staff
Benjamin Reynolds, Staff
Kimberly D. Russaw, Staff
Terrance L. Thomas, Student

DIVERSE STUDENT LIFE PROGRAM THAT NURTURES AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
Cynthia A. Wilson, Leadership Team and Chair
Jaeyeon Lucy Chung, Faculty
Michelle A. Cobb, Trustee
Anne Driscoll, Trustee
Débora B. Junker, Staff
Tércio B. Junker, Staff
Krista J. McNeil, Staff
Carla M. Mitchell, Student
Whanhee Joy Oh, Student

VALUED EMPLOYEES
Erin B. Moore, Leadership Team and Chair
Katherine L. Fahey, Student
Wendy H. Kneer, Staff
Virginia A. Lee, Faculty
Kyle MacKenzie Nowell, Trustee
J. Lauren Mondala, Staff
Dillon M. Shipman, Student
Robert H. Sutton, Staff
Andrew J. Vorbrich, Trustee

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS
James A. Noseworthy, Leadership Team and Chair
Angela R. Cowser, Faculty
Charlotte Hoffman, Student
Robert E. Fuquay, Trustee
W. Vincent McGlothlin-Eller, Staff
Michael P. Moser, Staff
Tasha N. Sargent, Staff

STRONG ENDOWMENT AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL
Dale R. McClain, Leadership Team and Chair
Jacqueline Azpeitia, Staff
James B. Blue, Trustee
Jason M. Gill, Staff
David L. Heetland, Leadership Team
Robert D. Merriees, Trustee
Jennifer Moe, Student
John E. Sampson, Trustee
Thomas C. Scott, Trustee
Brent P. Waters, Faculty

Thank you to those who participated on a committee and those who provided feedback throughout the process!