



GARDNER-WEBB  
UNIVERSITY

School of Divinity  
Strategic Plan 2020-2025

**I. ENROLLMENT, RETENTION, AND STUDENT SUCCESS**

**Commitment 1.** We will make our University a destination of first choice for an increasing number of students from around the state, from across the region, and beyond.

**Objective 1.** The School of Divinity will launch Doctor of Intercultural Studies (DIS / PhD) degrees.

**Metric 1.1.** Begin the process with anticipated launch following or prior to the 2024 Self-Study. Welcome doctoral cohort of 10 students (DIS and PhD is a two-tiered approach) for those with practitioner/ministerial and academic interests respectively.

**Objective 2.** The School of Divinity will launch a Master of Biblical and Theological Studies degree (36 hours, non-thesis degree, for those without a baccalaureate degree in religious studies).

**Metric 2.1.** Fall 2022 welcome MBTS with 10 new students (for an annual group of 10).

**Objective 3.** The School of Divinity will create, fill, and supervise an additional and separate position of admission recruiter for the SOD focused on visits to local churches and church-based colleges and universities.

**Metric 3.1.** Increased enrollment from 91 (fall 2020) to 110 (fall 2021).

**Metric 3.2.** Increased enrollment from 110 (fall 2021) to 130 (fall 2022).

**Metric 3.2.** Increased enrollment from 130 (fall 2022) to 150 (fall 2023).

**Objective 4.** The School of Divinity will offer non-traditional course delivery methods to growing non-traditional student base.

**Metrics 4.1.** Deliver 25% of classes via non-traditional means. By Fall 2021 deliver 25% of courses through combination of online, Zoom, hybrid, and weekend face-to-face methods.

**Objective 5.** The School of Divinity will provide a \$100 Campus Book Store gift card to current students who recruit new students.

**Metric 5.1.** Create new student recruiting pool utilizing current SOD students to provide 10 new students to each fall and spring entering fall class.

## **II. STRENGTHENING GWU'S FINANCIAL BASE**

**Commitment 2.** We will increase and diversify the sources of revenue needed to sustain the growth and strengthening of our vibrant, comprehensive University.

**Objective 6.** The School of Divinity will provide additional courses in non-traditional means (use Thursday evenings for hybrid courses with face-to-face courses being offered on alternative Thursdays—see above I.2.4.).

**Metric 6.1.** Retain student enrollment with increase in hours from 891 (fall 2020) to 980 (fall 2021).

**Objective 7.** The School of Divinity will strengthen student connection to the SOD community for retention purposes.

**Metric 7.1.** School of Divinity Student Association (SDSA) will host special events for non-traditional students (evening and hybrid classes at the Charlotte campus) and track the correlation between student participation in those events with each student's eventual graduation or attrition.

**Objective 8.** The School of Divinity will invite to campus speakers/lecturers who spotlight GWU positively.

**Metric 8.1.** Receive evaluations of speakers from participants and faculty that reflect positive assessment of the events (no more than 10% negative reviews).

**Objective 9.** The School of Divinity will evaluate curricular offerings (including class sizes and reduction of adjuncts) based on the new 78 hour MDiv.

**Metric 9.1.** Increase of 10 students each of next two years.

**Metric 9.2.** Reduce adjuncts to 1 per semester.

### III. BECOME AND INDISPENSABLE PARTNER TO THE TOWN, COUNTY, AND REGION

**Commitment 3.** Gardner-Webb University is a private university with a very public mission. We will increase our positive impact in the broader community and in the region by partnering with those who share our interest in improving the quality of life in Cleveland County and beyond.

**Objective 10.** The School of Divinity will build a labyrinth located strategically on campus (behind Dover Chapel on front lawn near Noel Hall) where persons come to practice personal and corporate prayer experiences led by students in SOD Spiritual Formation classes. SOD spiritual formation classes will use the labyrinth each semester with 40-45 students using it each semester.

**Metric 10.1.** Track number of visits to labyrinth including students sharing the experience with fellow church members/friends/ministers (expect 100 additional, non-student visitors per year).

**Objective 11.** The School of Divinity will create/collaborate in Dover Library a “Ministers Corner” for reading spiritual classics that would be appealing to students and community people.

**Metric 11.1.** Track number of visits to library by issuing visitor’s (VIP?) ID’s with a 5% use increase each year with end goal of 100 visitors.

**Objective 12.** The School of Divinity will expand the Pittman Center for Congregational Enrichment Certificate Program to include ministerial preparation for underserved and underrepresented demographic groups.

**Metric 12.1.** Increase enrollment in certificate program of Latino and other underserved groups from 15 to 25 (with an annual enrollment of 25).

**Objective 13.** The School of Divinity will collaborate with area African American pastors for the potential launch of the “Center for Black Church Life” securing an African American faculty member/administrator to launch the center who will serve in a liaison role with students and churches.

**Metric 13.1.** Increase the MDiv enrollment of African American students from 48 (fall 2020) to 58 (by fall 2023).

**Metric 13.2.** Increase the enrollment of Pittman Center for Congregational Enrichment (for non-degree seeking students) classes to 25 (for an ongoing annual enrollment of 25).

#### **IV. RESPECT OUR HERITAGE, EXTEND OUR BRAND, AND SHARPEN OUR IDENTITY**

**Commitment 4.** We will achieve and sustain a reputation as North Carolina's leader in Christian higher education.

**Objective 14.** The School of Divinity will collaborate with university administration to have intentional racial reconciliation events utilizing the Washburn Lectures (fall) and Greene Lectures (spring) that feature high profile speakers with broader university and community participation.

**Metric 14.1.** Increase Washburn Lecture enrollment from 120 (Zoom attendees fall 2020) to 140 (face-to-face and zoom attendees combined).

**Metric 14.2.** Increase Greene Lecture enrollment from 78 (spring 2020) to 100 (spring 2021) with a goal of 5% increase year-to-year until arriving at ticketed event status.