

**PROPOSED FOCI AND GOALS
FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL**

NOTE: The Strategic Planning Committee, drawing on initial input from various constituencies, has identified a number of goals that we believe should be prioritized for attention over the next five years at Duke Divinity School. These goals are grouped under four foci. While the first focus is the most embracing, we understand all four to be important and intertwined. In the list that follows, a succinct statement of each focus is accompanied by a descriptive paragraph. This is followed by a list of *suggested* specific goals. These goals are provided to stimulate conversation--they are open to revision, addition, &/or deletion, based on further input from our constituencies. Just as importantly, as working areas consider these goals, we invite them to offer specific strategies for addressing the goals. (For example, suggest a specific way to communicate our continuing commitments to various constituencies.)

FOCUS 1: Affirming, deepening, and maintaining the resonance of our commitments to church and academy, as mutually reinforcing dimensions of our identity as a Divinity School in a premiere research university.

Duke Divinity School has built the reputation of holding together commitment to excellence in scholarship; commitment to churches at the local, national and international levels; and commitment to preparing well-grounded, creative, and faithful leaders for the church and the academy – as a vital locus of God’s ongoing reconciling and transforming mission in the world.

Suggested Goals under Consideration:

- It is a key priority to *communicate* to our various constituencies our continuing commitment to church and academy as central to the identity of the Divinity School.
- Building on this foundation, and honoring the influx of new faculty members, we should nurture a broader shared sense of our mission through a series of sustained conversations.
- In efforts to nurture excellence in scholarship in a R1 setting, we will reevaluate the mentoring structures in place for junior faculty and seek to clarify and strengthen their goals and processes and set aside sufficient funding toward these goals.
- Recognizing the important contribution to our identity and mission of cooperative links with the larger university – such as the Keenan Institute for Ethics, Sanford School of Public Policy, Nicholas School of the Environment, and the Trent Center for Bioethics, Humanities, and History of Medicine – we will seek more formal and informal connections and partnerships with the larger university. The university has much to gain from an increased Divinity School presence, as does theological work have much to gain from cross-disciplinary engagement.
- Equally vital to our identity and mission are our Centers and Initiatives coming alongside the church in the world. We will seek to align these more closely with the goals of the strategic plan, while also attending to new settings where we can share our distinctive resources and gain valuable insights.
- In the context of financial challenges, we reaffirm our commitment to maintaining robust training both for leaders in the church (through our M.Div., MACP, Th.M. and D.Min.) and leaders in the academy (through our MTS, Th.D., and participation in the Ph.D. program).

FOCUS 2: Robustly cultivating a diverse and inclusive educational and missional community.

Duke Divinity School has long aimed to foster a diverse and inclusive learning and missional community, as seen in its Office of Black Church Studies, Houses of Study, centers, certificates, and initiatives. We are convinced that diversity among our faculty, staff, and students is integral to excellence in scholarship and effectiveness in ministry. We also recognize that we have fallen short of embodying this diversity of persons and gifts to which we are called in Jesus Christ, at a number of personal and structural levels. Renewed commitment to cultivating a community that more fully welcomes, includes, and supports the diverse members in its midst is imperative to the faithful expression and embodiment of the Divinity School's mission and identity.

Suggested Goals under Consideration:

- We will continue to cultivate a rich ecumenical culture and spaces for ecumenical dialogue. We will aim to broaden the conversation by seeking to support and nurture the growing non-denominational and Pentecostal communities in our midst.
- We will encourage and give full attention to applications from minority candidates for faculty and staff hires, both in current searches, and in the future.
- We will seek to address the stated concerns about overall climate and culture of the Divinity School from a number of our members (student, staff, and faculty alike), particularly around questions of diversity, in constructive and concrete ways.
- We will provide concrete institutional support for the Office of Black Church Studies, the Hispanic House of Studies, and the Center for Reconciliation, seeking to bring their work more into the center of our mission.
- We will redouble our commitment to recruiting and supporting a diverse student body.
- We will explore ways to increase the number of international students in our midst and providing them with appropriate support.
- We will review our international exchange programs, identifying and strengthening those that are most vital, while considering possible new agreements.

FOCUS 3: Fostering and equipping students for Christian vocations in a rapidly changing world.

Duke Divinity School is known for grounding students in Scripture, Christian tradition, and theological-ethical reflection, all in service to effective Christian mission. The major and rapid changes in cultures around the world, including the impact of these changes on churches, call for even more focused attention across the curriculum to undergirding spiritual formation, fostering pastoral wisdom, and cultivating creative missional engagement. Drawing upon the resources of the larger university, and in partnership with our constituent denominations and others, we will strengthen our resources to prepare leaders for the academy, churches, and other settings who can draw upon the wisdom of the church through the ages to engage their shifting settings in creative and nimble ways.

Suggested Goals under Consideration:

- We will consider expanding curricular programs focused specifically on these needs, like the Certificate programs in Theology, Medicine and Culture; Prison Studies; and Missional Innovation.
- We will continue to expand opportunities for field education placements with Christian non-profit organizations and other forms of alternative ministry settings.
- We will enter a season of curriculum review in which we will ask what skill sets and knowledge are needed for Christian leaders in the 21st century and how the curriculum might best embody and implement these skills and content.
- We will consider this commitment in prioritizing future faculty hires and chairs.
- We will continue to build upon the innovative work in educational outreach beyond our degree programs geared to the church and beyond.

FOCUS 4: Providing an Affordable Education.

Duke Divinity School has done well in recent decades in raising funds to support our educational and missional programs. Yet with a younger and smaller endowment than our peer institutions and current dependence upon tuition, we are acutely aware that this constitutes a financial and missional challenge. More than half of our students average nearly \$50,000 per student in total additional debt (beyond any for their bachelor's program) by graduation, which makes it difficult for them to embrace the lives of ministry and service to which they are called. The Divinity School is committed to exploring creative and innovative ways to improve affordability.

Suggested Goals under Consideration:

- We will seek to reduce our dependence upon tuition by endowing chairs in the core disciplines of our curriculum.
- We will conduct a systematic review of all current degree programs, with considerations of their costs and centrality to the school's core mission.
- We will prioritize fund-raising for student scholarships, with a particular focus on scholarships for underrepresented students.
- We will reevaluate our tuition structure, including a cost effective analysis of returning to a pay-by-course structure that allows for part-time students and/or exploring other options that enable greater flexibility.
- We will begin conversations about alternative educational platforms – e.g., increased move to flipped classrooms, hybrid programs, and the offering of night and/or weekend classes. These conversations will include attention to the long-term process for evaluating these options and preparing for them (e.g., more training for online teaching to strengthen online pedagogies), should that be the direction deemed appropriate.

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