

Institutional Relations Committee
05/19/25

Theological Education Council
05/19/25

Item of Consideration: Recommendation for re-endorsement of Dallas Baptist University's (DBU) graduate ministry degrees for Ministerial Financial Assistance (MFA)

Highest Authority for this item: Institutional Relations

Originating Source: Director of Theological Education & Institutional Engagement

Background:

Dallas Baptist University offers nine graduate and two post-graduate ministry-related degree programs eligible for Texas Baptists MFA program. Since the 2020 Theological Education Council's (TEC) review DBU's Graduate School of Ministry (GSOM) and Cook School of Leadership (CSL) continues their respective commitments to equip ministry leaders in their calling through improved course offerings, development of new degrees, additional university accreditation, creation of Ministry Fellowship Program, and practical workshops/conference. TEC reviews institutions on a five-year cycle to assess and reaffirm graduate and post-graduate programs. Ten DBU programs were slated for TEC review in 2025:

Graduate School of Ministry (GSOM):

- M.A. in Children's Ministry
- M.A. in Christian Counseling
- M.A. in Christian Ministry
- M.A. in Education Ministry Leadership
- M.A. in Family Ministry
- M.A. in Global Leadership
- M.A. in Theological Studies
- M.A. in Worship Studies

Cook School of Leadership (CSL)

- Ph.D. in Leadership Studies
- Ed.D. in Educational Leadership

DBU's GSOM gained TEC approval for the new M.A. in Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care (MACPC) in 2024. The MACPC, as a new program, will be reviewed following its third year in 2027.

DBU Re-Endorsement Visit:

On May 6, 2025, a visiting team consisting of Dr. Gene Wilkes (Dean, B.H. Carroll Theological Seminary), Dr. Jason Atchley (TEC member), Flor Soto (Executive Board & TEC/IRC member), Dr. Gabriel Cortés (Director, Hispanic Education, BGCT), and Dr.

Stephen Stookey (Director, Theological Education & Institutional Engagement, BGCT) visited DBU to review ten graduate/post-graduate ministry programs.

Visiting Team's Report:

The visiting team was warmly welcomed by Deans Dr. Brent Thomason (GSOM) and Dr. Blake Killingsworth (CSL). Meetings were held through the day with the following:

- Dr. Adam Wright, President
- GSOM Program Directors/Faculty: Drs. Brent Thomason, Tom Vann, Mark Alexander, Jon Choi, Dana Wicker, Jim Lemons, & Blanton Feaster
- CSL Program Directors/Faculty: Drs. Blake Killingsworth & Mary Nelson
- Ministry Students: Hope Cole, Will Hood, Braden Stemley, Mikha Volhov, Michael Dyson, & Keith Warren (lunch meeting)
- DBU Administration/Faculty/Staff: Drs. Norma Hedin, Jan Daehnert, Wayne Davis, , & Wendell Wright

The visiting team observed the following related to DBU's graduate ministry programs:

- accomplishes institutional core goal to develop lifelong ministry scholars and practitioners;
- offers a variety degrees, with dual degree options, that allow a student to tailor ministry education to specific calling;
- currently offers two programs solely online at a value price-point;
- offering workshops, conferences, & webinars (e.g., Nexus & Christian Leadership Summit) as an extension of ministry programs and the Ph.D. in Leadership program broadens the institution's influence and equips church leaders beyond degree programs;
- experiential learning opportunities add value to ministry programs—e.g., Dr. Choi's leadership in the worship program to take students to Nashville adds depth to the program;
- the graduate certificate program offered through the Ministry Fellowship program is an innovative and effective means to train ministers in their place of service and to enhance quality ministry for the church
- creates understanding of and appreciation for Texas Baptists with students receiving MFA;
- institution maintains a clear missional identity and programmatic focus;
- noted regular evaluation and requisite changes to graduate/post-graduate ministry programs, and;
- meets MFA academic objectives.

The visiting team offered the following suggestions:

- encourages continued development and promotion of the Ministry Fellowship Program;
- encourages the university in its regular evaluation of programs to consider number of similar degree programs, and;
- encouraged DBU to consider possibility of taking advantage of seminary branding, including possible creation of a Master of Divinity (M.Div.). The

university has all it needs for seminary branding, including a 72-hour degree (MACPC) that could be transitioned to the M.Div.

Suggestions come with no required action. They represent the observations of the site visit team. The team was impressed with DBU's ongoing assessment of ministry programs

Background Attachments: None

Recommendation: Re-endorsement of the following graduate/post-graduate ministry programs at DBU for Ministerial Financial Assistance is recommended:

Graduate School of Ministry (GSOM):

- M.A. in Children's Ministry
- M.A. in Christian Counseling
- M.A. in Christian Ministry
- M.A. in Education Ministry Leadership
- M.A. in Family Ministry
- M.A. in Global Leadership
- M.A. in Theological Studies
- M.A. in Worship Studies

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