A 21st Century Vision for Theological Education and Formation

Presented in May to the Board of Trustees and approved in principle

June 2012
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The General Theological Seminary of The Episcopal Church is the premier learning center for educating and forming transformational leaders for the Church and the world.
BACKGROUND
Facts Requiring Transformative Change:

- The Episcopal Church is in decline.
- Future leaders (ages 18-29) – surveyed – report themselves (72%) to be “spiritual” (non-church going) but not “religious” (church going).
- Church attendance is down among church-goers.
- Ineffective education and inadequate exposure of young people to the meaning and mission of the Church will perpetuate further decline.
- Enrollment in Episcopal seminaries is down 35% over the last five years.
- There are an excessive number of Episcopal seminaries in the U.S.
Facts Requiring Transformative Change:

• There is increased competition from non-Episcopal seminaries offering alternative forms and opportunities for education/formation, as well as cost savings.

• Rising costs and students debt are unsustainable.

• There is no Church-wide funding for Episcopal seminaries.

• An Episcopal Church continuing to be “slow to change” and “risk averse” does not bode well for the future.

• This data is also consistent with much larger trends in education.

THE MANDATE

QUESTION:

What is God calling us to do in the world, in and through the mission and ministries of the Church?

THE MISSION:

The General Theological Seminary of The Episcopal Church is the premier learning center for educating and forming transformational leaders of the Church and the world.
Historical Context

• The beauty and challenge of the Gospel—in its candor, in its moral imperative, in its assurance and vindication of God’s goodness, mercy, wisdom, and power—calls us to the resilient strength of Christian faith in this changing world.

• From our explicit foundation in the Anglican/Episcopal worldview, priests and lay leaders are formed to create the Beloved Community (MLK, Jr.) for all God’s children.

The Beloved Community:

• Personal and social relationships across society and created by love
• The solidarity of the human family
• We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality
• The interrelatedness of human existence means that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere
Historical Context

• General Seminary, established by The General Convention, is a seminary for the whole of Christ’s Church. Ours is a comprehensive vision, and GTS has always sought to provide leadership for the Church.

• The Episcopal Church must continue to respond to the increasing diversity of the American population. For GTS to assist the Church in fulfilling that potential, GTS must require faithful resolve, and innovation.

• The art—and challenge—of being Anglican is in managing the disagreements concerning when to reform, what to conserve, and how to change. In envisioning the future of GTS, we imagine bold and artful innovations through ecumenical partnerships and collaboration across the Church in facing a future of unknowns.
The Comprehensive Vision

RE-ENVISION:

• Mission and Identity
• The Chapel and Worship
• Academic and Non-Degree Programs
• Curriculum
• Technology
• Faculty Leadership
• Governance
• The Bishop Tutu Center and The Close
• The Keller Library
• Sustainability
Indicators of Transformation

We believe the answer lies in:

• Innovation
• Creativity
• New models for delivering theological education and formation
• Outreach to the community and world through our Mission and Vision
• Collaboration
• Sustainability– best-practice programs and green standards
• Building on historical strengths of effective teaching and learning
• Adaptation of new and creative pedagogical models
• Employment of new technologies including online/distance learning
• Clear assessment of real impact and sustainability of current practices
• New Strategic Plan
• Initiation of a Capital Campaign to support the Strategic Plan
THE TIME IS NOW!

THE MISSION, VISION, AND STRATEGIC PLAN are urgent matters for theological education and for the future of the Church in the midst of massive cultural and religious change. The formation and development of broadly trained and skilled LEADERS (clergy and lay) for the Church in a changing world will be essential.
THE VISION
GTS Mission and Identity

GTS will endeavor to spread the Gospel as the Episcopal Church has received it by enabling a multiplicity of ordained and lay ministries.

The Seminary will be known for:

• Unique human resources: entrepreneurial thinkers and change agents

• The most talented and excellent faculty and academic pastoral leadership

• Physical and geographic advantages

• Sound financial stewardship and management, including fundraising support from all constituents

• Collaboration and partnership with other institutions, such as: Trinity Church, the Episcopal Service Corps, Health Care Chaplaincy, Union Theological Seminary, New York Theological Seminary, Drew University, Hebrew Union College, Emory University, and The Jewish Theological Seminary
GTS Mission and Identity

The Seminary will be known for (continued):

• A commitment to formation of leaders for the already-but-not-yet “missional” church, a church in which dynamism and responsiveness to local and diverse spiritual and religious needs takes precedence over methods and practices of “establishment maintenance” models of being church.

• Unparalleled excellence in its courses and programs for:
  ➢ Theological education and formation
  ➢ Ministry and Leadership Development
  ➢ Engagement with and ministry in the City
  ➢ Mission programs/Missiology
  ➢ Utilizing technology in ministry

• Diversity: GTS will attract and form leaders who, along with faculty and staff, will reflect the broad diversity of Christ’s Church and whose backgrounds will represent and serve GTS and the broader world.

• Innovative and bold programmatic vision in courses and in outreach to multiple constituencies of clergy and lay folk.
GTS Mission and Identity

• **Operationally**, GTS will be lean, dynamic, entrepreneurial, innovative and thoroughly embracing the extension of hospitality to all who gather here, including our guests and neighbors.

• Core residents (students, faculty, administration) will model the “Beloved Community” (MLK, Jr.).

• Commuter students will be fully embraced within the community.

• GTS will prepare students for ministry in a variety of settings, including the rural church.

• **To maintain fiscal health**, GTS will:
  - Expand our mission by launching new initiatives and revenue streams
  - Remain debt-free, live within our means
  - Balance its budget
  - Grow its endowment
  - Pursue robust development, marketing, and communications
  - Seek outside audits to ensure accountability
GTS Mission and Identity

Visitors to the City arrive by bus, train, and planeload every day. New York is unique among the great cities of the world, as a center for almost everything that human beings celebrate and value: art, music, food, money, dance, sports, business, medicine, education, and faith traditions.

• GTS will continue to be a PILGRIMAGE destination for study, spiritual growth, leadership development, and ministry in all of the City; to help train and send out transformational change agents for the Church.

• GTS will be an education center for the whole Church, attracting students from across the City, suburbs, 50 states, and provinces overseas. They will engage broadly with the unique city environment that is New York and deeply with the warm and hospitable Anglican environment that is Chelsea Square. Through study, leadership development, spiritual growth, and ministry in the City, clergy and lay leaders will graduate well-trained, inspired, and theologically enriched.

• Distance learning/blended learning (periodic presence on The Close) will allow for a more digital-education pilgrimage experience; such an approach to learning will result in significant cost savings.
The Chapel and Worship

The Chapel will be a key center of formation, common life, and hospitality.

• Liturgy:
  ➢ Creatively and collaboratively developed by faculty and students
  ➢ Within the parameters of the Anglican tradition (stable, flexible, evolving)
  ➢ Using the Book of Common Prayer and other authorized options and practices
  ➢ Fostering sacramental worship and excellent preaching
  ➢ Providing user-friendly printed service materials, with clear guidance
  ➢ Welcoming and inclusive to all visitors

• Chapel (Physical Structure): Maintained, refurbished, and equipped for a stable exterior fabric and acoustical, technological excellence within the interior

• Outreach: Live musical presentations and alternative worship opportunities

• Attendance: Regular community participation
Academic Programs

GTS will foster a collaborative, innovative, challenge-based model of learning, utilizing the power of technology. Students and faculty from other traditions will enrich common life. The bond between faculty and students is the core of education, and all else is at the service of that bond.

• Highly selective M.Div. program:
  ➢ Providing both residential and non-residential programs
  ➢ Increasing non-residential M.Div. enrollment through distance/blended learning, among other ways
  ➢ Making available additional space for other learners
  ➢ Creating time-flexible programs, including summer work and internships
  ➢ Becoming THE “transformational change center” in The Episcopal Church

• Superior-quality, highly subscribed Seminary Masters programs

• Multiple Certificate programs for special study

• Full emersion in Field and Leadership Placement
Academic Programs

GTS will foster:

• **Expertly Supervised Offsite Formation Experiences**, such as CPE and field education, in parishes, schools, hospitals, and urban United Way agencies

• **Collaborative Partnerships** with parishes, seminaries, colleges and universities, community organizations, and neighborhoods

• **Continuing Education** programs for clergy and laity—residential and online

• **GTS “On the Road”** with programmatic and consultative outreach beyond the Close
Academic Programs

GTS will foster:

• **Generous scholarship support** to attract highly selective students (from a broadly diverse spectrum) and to minimize student debt

• **Other key features:**
  - High school, college students, and other summer programs (residential)
  - Education for bi-lingual and multi-cultural competency (emphasis on Spanish)
  - Professional wellness and educational programs and year-round programming
  - Year-round programming and use of facilities

_GTS leadership in theological education will offer premier, experience-based programs capitalizing on the unique position of GTS within the City._
Curriculum

Curriculum will be comprehensive, innovative, designed to capitalize on our unique position in New York City, and will form leaders for the Church and society.

- **Key Curriculum Components** will continue to include Scriptural Studies, Theology, Church History, Liturgics & Church Music, Preaching, Pastoral Care & Counseling, Ascetical Theology, and Moral Theology & Social Ethics to meet the needs of our various degree programs at all levels.

- **The Church and all of the City:** Curriculum will be developed to engage with New York’s racially diverse urban population, K-12 educational system, financial sector, contemporary culture (arts, media and technology), local and international public affairs, religious diversity, health and wellness systems, and environmental sustainability initiatives around the campus and City.

*GTS will distinguish itself with a curriculum that takes advantage of the unique opportunities afforded GTS to learn in, serve, and engage the City.*
Curriculum

Curriculum will be comprehensive, innovative, designed to capitalize on our unique position in New York City, and will form leaders for the Church and society.

- **Leadership Studies** will focus on Organizational and Congregational Development, Management & Mentoring Courses, Budget & Finance, Conflict Management, and Systems Theory.

- **Hospital and School Chaplaincy** and other specialized ministries will have curricular focus.

- **Interfaith Study**, dialogue, and leadership will be essential.

*GTS will distinguish itself with a curriculum that takes advantage of the unique opportunities afforded GTS to learn in, serve, and engage the City.*
Technology

GTS will use appropriate technological initiatives to enhance learning and formation on our campus, in the City, and across the broader Episcopal community and Anglican Communion.

- **Through technology and collaborative partnerships**, GTS will become a world-wide resource for the Church.
- **21st Century infrastructure** consisting of fiber-optic bandwidth and redundancy, and backup storage.
- **Key initiatives** will embrace advanced technology (hardware and software):
  - Video conference capabilities to enhance education and formation through distance and collaborative learning beyond the Close
  - Social media applications to enhance pedagogical and curricular needs
  - Acceptable Use & Policy Safeguards
  - Electronic resource and digital partnerships with other institutions
  - Robust training in digital citizenship and usage

*Collaboration, communication, and opening the “classroom of the world” will energize, broaden, and enrich the curriculum and our common life in the worldwide Church.*
Faculty Leadership

GTS faculty will continue to be excellent teachers and scholars, open and adaptive to new material, technology, and pedagogical approaches.

• Faculty composition:
  - Full-time faculty
  - Adjunct faculty (clergy and lay) for specialized courses
  - Visiting lecturers from around the world
  - Diverse

• Faculty characteristics:
  - Available and attentive to students for their formation and committed to life in community
  - Dedicated to being excellent teachers in the classroom and in other contexts
  - Trained in online and distance learning
  - Offer courses in new formats and schedules
  - Actively engaged in modern scholarship, publishing, and service to the Church
  - Embraces interfaith leadership
  - Faculty reside on the Close (or nearby) and are invested in the common life of GTS
Faculty Leadership

GTS faculty will continue to be excellent teachers and scholars, open and adaptive to new material, technology, and pedagogical approaches.

• Faculty compensation and benefits:
  - Receive top comparative compensation and benefits (including housing)
  - Tenure (with clear “rights” and “responsibilities”)
  - Sabbatical program
  - Competitive stipends for adjuncts

GTS faculty will be committed to achieve The Vision for the 21st Century.
Governance

The Board will replace Commissions with a Committee structure reporting to an active and engaged Executive Committee.

- **Board Characteristics** will include:
  - Smaller number of Trustees
  - Executive Committee consisting of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Chancellor, and the Chairs of each Standing Committee
  - Diverse in all respects

- **Key Committees** will include trustees and non-trustees with expertise in the following areas:
  - Education, Formation, and Community Life (including Diversity)
  - Finance and Investment
  - Audit
  - Development, Marketing, and Communications (supported by IT)
  - Building, Grounds, and Operations
  - Trustee Development

- **Advisory Groups** to include Bishops, Alumni, and Community Leaders.

*Most of the work of governing GTS will be done in the committees and reported through the Executive Committee to a streamlined Board.*
The Bishop Tutu Center and The Close will be a magnet for people leading transformation in the Church, scholarly pursuit, contemplation, and spiritual development.

- **The Bishop Tutu Center** will include the Center for Peace and Reconciliation, the Center for Christian Spirituality, the Center for Jewish-Christian Studies and Relations, the Conference Center, Chaplaincy, Theological Field Education and Continuing Education programs.

- **Key characteristics** will include residential capacity featuring shared meals in harmony with the surrounding campus.

- **The Close** will be recognized as a haven for students, faculty, alumni, and for those in the City and visiting our community, seeking transformative experiences in spirituality and life journey.

The Bishop Tutu Center and The Close will be a sanctuary and launching platform for the GTS mission to lead and serve in a changing world.
The Keller Library

The Keller Library will provide an environment and collections to educate and form leaders for The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion in a changing world.

• Provide hospitality for students and scholars as a comfortable place for study and research

• Enhance education for all with an informed staff, broad resources, and the latest technology

• Provide access to book and digital resources for theological study to Seminary students on The Close and beyond (e.g., Pitts Library at Emory University)
The Keller Library

The Keller Library will provide an environment and collections to educate and form leaders for The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion in a changing world.

• Reinforce the role of GTS as a place for scholarship and fellowship through:
  ➢ Premier “Special Collections” with emphasis on Anglican and Episcopal documents
  ➢ Preservation of archival papers and significant, unique records (GTS Archives)
  ➢ Cooperative arrangements with other leading theological libraries for broader scholarship
  ➢ Use of technology to enhance and broaden utility of scholarly texts

In the Keller Library, GTS will attract scholars and students to a modern, comfortable teaching library with outstanding resources for primary research, including the premier collection of Anglican materials in North America.
Sustainability

- Financial (cost reduction with a limited timetable)
- Financial Aid
- Growing Endowment
- Health & Wellness
- Nutrition
- “Green” buildings
- Reduction of Carbon Footprint
Conclusion

• Our Committee has developed this framework so that GTS can provide leadership for the Church in a changing world through innovative and creative approaches to theological education and formation.

• We welcome and invite your comments and observations.
Key Constituents

Bishop Sisk appointed an Ad Hoc committee, consisting of the members listed below, to study this question and create a framework for our community to process and improve, as we seek to offer transformational theological education in the 21st Century.

Our Ad Hoc committee consists of:

The Rev. Dr. William Clarkson IV (Trustee, Alumnus)
F. T. “Tread” Davis, Jr. (Trustee)
The Rev. Canon Elizabeth R. Geitz (Trustee, Alumna)
Dr. Michael F. Gilligan (Trustee)
The Rev. Hopie Jernagan (Trustee, Alumna)
The Rev. Dr. Amy B. Lamborn (Faculty)
The Rev. Dr. Patrick Malloy (Faculty, Associate Dean)
The Rev. Dr. James H. Reho (Chaplain, Alumnus)
Constance L. White (Trustee)

After months of hard work, we now seek to involve key constituents in our work as we collaboratively position GTS to thrive in the 21st Century.
Tentative Timeline


February—March  Document presented to various key constituencies:
• Trustees (February 4)
• Faculty
• Staff
• Students
• Alumni Board
• Key Outside Observers

April 2012  Executive Committee to receive Report/Proposals from webinar feedback


July 2012  Launch the Strategic Vision for GTS at The General Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana
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