



NORTHEASTERN SEMINARY

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

To be faithfully responsive, to serve the church and world and to provide theological education are in our DNA. These characteristics prompted the launch of the Seminary in 1998 and the creation of a distinct core curriculum—they are the bedrock of our vision:

To be a vibrant source for Christian theological formation whose students are formed in a biblical vision of gracious Christianity and impart wholeness to the world in an expansive array of vocations and contexts.

The vision now inspires us to offer fully online master's degree programs in addition to our face-to-face programs.

As one of the small but growing number of seminaries approved by the Association of Theological Schools to offer fully online degrees, Northeastern is extending its impact by transforming existing master's degrees for online delivery. In addition, we are creating a new Master of Arts degree that expands the way we resource ministry. Now in development is the Master of Arts in Transformational Leadership degree, scheduled to start in fall 2017, pending program registration approval by New York State. Using the solid base of individual online courses that were already part of the degree, all coursework will be designed for online delivery, enabling students who cannot come to campus to earn their degree. Our other degrees will also be offered in the online format in the near future.

Course content and structure for the online programs will retain the hallmark features of Northeastern Seminary, including rootedness in historic Christianity, the centrality of Scripture and holistic spiritual formation in a diverse and respect-filled community.

Our anticipated new online programs will be a welcome addition to our already robust face-to-face programs offered in Rochester and in Buffalo through synchronous interactive video. This expansion of the Seminary's educational offerings through online delivery will break the geographical barrier and allow Northeastern to more effectively serve the needs of ministry leaders wherever they are.

We are grateful to share in God's work with you.

In Christ's grace,

Dr. Douglas R. Cullum, Vice President and Dean

ENROLLMENT—STUDENT PROFILE

- Master of Divinity 45%
- Master of Arts 25%
- Doctor of Ministry 25%
- Non-degree 5%
- White, non-Hispanic 56%
- Black, non-Hispanic 32%
- Hispanic 4%
- Asian, Pacific Islander 1%
- International 5%
- Male 57%
- Female 43%
- Average age 45
- Age range 23-73

ACADEMICS THAT SERVE THE CHURCH

Ministry leaders and theology scholars gleaned insight from the research of Doctor of Ministry program students at a colloquium featuring selected dissertations. In the spirit of immediate application to the work of the church, the research is a deep look at issues that challenge the faith community and includes recommendations that serve as spiritual leaven and outline adoptable actions.

Co-author of the book, *Understanding Our Story*, Rebecca Letterman, associate professor of spiritual formation, culls the ideas and vocabulary of a holistic and comprehensive explanation of Christian formation and its relationship to the human spirituality of all persons. The book distills the extensive work of transformative thinker Adrian van Kaam, providing access to his insightful thinking to more fully understand the ways in which God reforms and transforms lives into the image of Christ.

A study tour to the Holy Land contributed to the rich academic experience for current students and resourced graduates and community members in their understanding and personal spiritual formation.

As part of a bi-annual project students design a symposium for community members to be informed about and learn how to respond to a social justice issue from a theological perspective. This year the focus is on the everyday injustices of childhood poverty.

An ecumenical conference exploring Christian character in a post-Christian culture featured Doug Cullum as speaker addressing an evangelical perspective on understanding God's call to holiness and Gospel themes that foster true community.

This year faculty continued to serve beyond the classroom as seminar presenters, retreat directors, forum moderators, expert panelists, and keynote speakers for conferences and spiritual emphasis weeks. Stateside and abroad they partnered with local churches for community outreach, mentored chaplains to address ministry fatigue, and engaged theologians and biblical scholars in research and discovery.

LEGACY 150 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Support for Northeastern Seminary has exceeded goals with current balances at \$1.6M for the Northeastern Seminary Annual Fund and \$4.3M for Northeastern Endowment. We continue to focus on growing gifts through the final day of the campaign on June 30, 2017.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Progress continues on our 2016-2021 Strategy Map that focuses on our missional commitment to *Embody Diversity, Accentuate Relevance* and *Extend Impact*. By God's grace, the mission of the Seminary will reach an increasing number of students and our graduates will have even greater impact on the world for Christ.

The Seminary community is coming alongside Roberts Wesleyan College faculty and staff in "conversations that matter" around "God-honoring diversity and Institutional Identity," remaining anchored in our faith yet engaged in the world.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

A steady rhythm of retreats offer time and space that fosters reflection and transformation. This year's retreats included the All Seminary Retreat featuring Kathleen Smith, author and associate director at the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship on the topic *Nurturing the Soul of Ministry—Intimacy with Others*, the Doctor of Ministry Program *Calling and Vocation* Retreat, the Women's Retreat with author and graduate Marlena Graves (M.Div. '07), and the New Student Retreats that introduce them to the spiritual formation curriculum.

Beyond the written word, artwork in exhibits at the Rochester campus engages the spiritual imagination of students. Visual interpretations of scripture and responses to the sometimes elusive events and issues within our faith are part of the transformative experience.