

# South Texas School prepared for HSU action

October 29, 2018

CORPUS CHRISTI—Although Hardin-Simmons University is closing its Logsdon Seminary extension in Corpus Christi, the South Texas School of Christian Studies will continue to offer courses designed to prepare students for ministry, the school's president said.

The Corpus Christi-based school was saddened but not surprised by the [HSU announcement](#) it will seek to improve its financial security by closing four seminary extension campuses and making a series of programmatic and personnel cuts in other areas, said Tony Celelli, president of South Texas School of Christian Studies.

## 'Disheartening' news, but not unexpected

Celelli wrote in an Oct. 24 letter his school received "with a heavy heart" the news about HSU's decision to close Logsdon Seminary extensions in Corpus Christi, Coppel, Lubbock and McAllen.

"While this news was disheartening, we were prepared. This change was anticipated two years ago, and a plan was put in motion," Celelli said.

The South Texas School already established its own undergraduate program "due to previous concerns," he explained.

The school "will continue to provide theological training for all students who wish to pursue a bachelor's degree, diploma, and certificate in ministry preparation," he wrote.

While HSU will not accept any new students into its seminary satellite programs, Celelli assured students already enrolled that they will be able to complete their degrees.

## **Different financial situation at South Texas School**

In an Oct. 15 email to the “HSU family” announcing the cuts the university’s trustees made at the recommendation of the Abilene school’s administration, Hardin-Simmons President Eric Bruntmyer noted the decisions were necessary because “some external revenue sources are evaporating.”

He pointed particularly to Cooperative Program assistance from the Baptist General Convention of Texas and funds made available from the Texas Equalization Grant, a state program that provides eligible students financial assistance to help them attend private nonprofit universities.

The South Texas School does not rely on either funding source, Celelli emphasized, adding, “The financial issues of HSU should not be confused with SCS’s financial position.”

The Corpus Christi-based school “has a diversified financial position that combines tuition, endowment revenue, and contributions from generous supporters,” and it has no institutional debt, he wrote.

Texas Baptists founded the University of Corpus Christi in 1945. The campus sustained considerable damage due to Hurricane Celia in 1970, and the school closed two years later.

However, Texas Baptist maintained interest in providing Christian education in the region, particularly for students who were preparing for ministry. In 1977, Howard Payne University began offering undergraduate

classes in Corpus Christi, and the first buildings of the South Texas School of Christian Studies opened in 1980.

HSU's Logsdon School of Theology began offering graduate-level classes at the Corpus Christi campus in 1997. In 2005, the Association of Theological Schools approved the Corpus Christi school status as a degree-granting extension site, eliminating the need for students to fulfill residency requirements at the HSU Abilene campus.

Hardin-Simmons began offering undergraduate courses for South Texas students in 2011. A year later, the South Texas School of Christian Studies purchased another campus site in McAllen and expanded its partnership with HSU by offering classes there.

"Throughout this time, SCS has always been an independently operated theological education institution, rather than a subsidiary of HSU," a spokesperson for the school explained in an email.