

Truett plans extension campus in San Antonio in 2021

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Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary plans to launch an extension campus for the San Antonio region in 2021, seeking to reach students who cannot pursue traditional, in-residence theological education.

The proposed extension campus will offer Master of Arts in Christian Ministry and Master of Theological Studies degrees beginning in the summer of 2021, with occasional courses beginning in spring of that year, said John K. Burk, Truett's assistant dean for strategic initiatives and director of Truett's extension campus in Houston.

The new campus will be housed at Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio.

Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon Seminary began offering classes at Trinity Baptist Church in 2011, and it dedicated a 3,500 square-foot designated area for the seminary in April 2018. In February, HSU trustees voted to close Logsdon Seminary.

The opening of Truett's San Antonio extension is contingent upon external review and approval from two accrediting agencies—the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

The degrees will focus on—but not be limited to—three groups of potential candidates: recent college graduates; practitioners of Christian ministry who do not yet have formal theological training or are unable to leave their ministry to pursue in-residence theological training at Truett's main campus in Waco; and laity with theological and ministerial interests.

‘Both informative and transformative’



Todd Still

Dean Todd Still said Truett particularly is grateful to partner with Pastor Les Hollon and others at Trinity Baptist Church “to provide a rigorous, relevant theological education that is both informative and transformative.”

“Furthermore, we are eager to join hearts and hands with other Christian congregations and organizations in San Antonio and South Texas to provide the knowledge and skills as well as to model the attitudes and habits necessary to flourish in ministry in both the short and long term,” he said.

“We are buoyed by the strong support that we have already received from so many friends and supporters regarding this proposed collaborative endeavor and are hopefully looking toward and leaning forward into God’s good future.”

Strategic opportunities in San Antonio area

Coupled with the offering of classical theological education to students, due to the city’s location, heritage and demographics, Truett’s extension in San Antonio also will be able to offer a rich variety of field education opportunities. In addition to ministry in local churches, opportunities for field placement might also include ministry among the homeless and among

refugees seeking asylum status from politically unstable countries.

Because San Antonio is home to seven major military installations, another possibility for field education might be military chaplaincy. Mentoring opportunities might also be available for students who are interested in hospital and sports chaplaincy.

While there are a number of other seminaries in the San Antonio area, most are in the Catholic tradition. As of June 2021, the city will have no seminary embedded into a major research university offering extension graduate theological education in the Baptist tradition, although San Antonio is home to scores of Baptist and other evangelical congregations.

“Additionally, given Baylor’s emphasis on meaningful research, scholarship and service in Latin America in its Illuminate strategic plan, San Antonio is an especially attractive location for Truett’s next extension,” Burk said.

‘Investing in contextual, theological education’

Elizabeth Le’anani Coffee, South Texas regional coordinator for Texas Baptists and a member of the seminary’s board of advocates, praised the effort.

“As Baylor University and Truett Seminary look to the future, stretching their imaginations regarding higher education and our own, I am excited that Latin America and our country’s relationship to it remain a central value as well as a strategic initiative,” she said.

“As a native to San Antonio and South Texas, I believe the realities faced by communities in this region will continue to be the norm for urban areas in our country and certainly our state. Knowing that Truett is investing in contextual, theological education here thrills me, especially for those who

will learn in and from San Antonio.”

Hollon, senior pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, said the congregation is honored to partner with Truett.

“God is calling men and women—from various ages, stages and backgrounds—to vocational ministry,” he said. “This opportunity in seminary education also will benefit lay leaders in their growth as servant leaders. Through this endeavor, we commit to honor God by helping to shape gospel leaders for local and global ministry.”

With additional reporting by Managing Editor Ken Camp.

Editor’s Note: Wayland Baptist University in San Antonio, a Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated school, offers several graduate Christian ministry degrees: the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, the Master of Arts in Theological Studies, the Master of Divinity and the Master of Divinity/Master of Business Administration.