

Truett Seminary reaches milestone with 1,000th graduate

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When the 1,000th graduate of Baylor University's [Truett Theological Seminary](#) at Baylor University receives a diploma Dec. 14, it will mark a milestone for an institution that began 18 years ago with small classes that met in an education wing of First Baptist Church of Waco.



David Garland, dean of Truett Theological Seminary, visits with students Tyson Heaton and Monique Criddell. (PHOTO/Baylor University)

Today, Truett Seminary aggressively is striving to meet contemporary challenges faced by pastors in their demanding calling— among them burnout and a demand for pastors to address a growing level of organizational and financial complexity in churches, said David Garland, seminary dean and professor of Christian Scriptures.

In addition, Truett established a new graduate program and emphasis on sports chaplaincy last year to meet a growing need for ministry not only to professional athletes, but also to youth athletic leagues, church recreation programs and missions outreach. And for individuals who feel a call to the ministry but do not have the money or time to attend seminary, Truett offers a certificate of ministry program geared to bivocational pastors and pastors of small churches.

A new Master of Arts in Christian Ministry program will equip students for specialized ministries. And a new joint degree —Master of Divinity and Master of Business Administration—will help pastors not only serve as spiritual guides, but also leaders in the business aspects of ministry.

From its low-profile beginning and an initial class of 51 students, Truett has grown to an enrollment of 356 students housed in a three-story building on Baylor's campus.

"Truett has come a long way," said Brian Brewer, the first student to complete his theological education at Truett, a former pastor of two churches and now an assistant professor at Truett. "It's great to see where we've all gone and spread across the nation and the world. But even though it's much more of an institution, it has maintained the spirit it had, which is the one that attracted me back here.

"The seminary is not comprised of dozens of students who don't know their professors. Professors' offices are directly across from classrooms, and our classrooms are small so we can retain that sense of community."

Students meet weekly in "covenant groups" of six to 10 members who pray together, study together and share each other's joys and struggles. The relationships they forge there become lifetime friendships.

"I'm more excited about the 1,000th graduate than I was to be the first graduate," Brewer said. "This shows the expanding reputation and ministry

that Truett has, and I think we'll spend our time looking forward rather than backward."