

## Abstracted Summary of Final Actions: December 2020-February 2021

Pursuant to §602.26 of Title 34 of U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, this report abstracts from all final actions taken recently by The Commission on Accrediting of The Association of Theological Schools (COAATS) concerning substantive changes only for schools in the US (Canadian schools are not included in this report). The membership of COAATS has adopted new [Standards of Accreditation](#) and [Policies and Procedures](#), effective July 1, 2020. Any older references would correspond to the [pre-2020 accrediting documents](#) and are currently subject to the Board-approved implementation procedures [posted here](#). Information on individual schools can be found by accessing our [member school list](#). Past abstracts can be found [here](#).

At its semiannual meeting February 1-2, 2021, conducted via videoconference due to public health concerns, the Board of Commissioners of COAATS voted on the below actions with an effective date of **February 2, 2021**, unless otherwise noted.

### SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RELATED TO PERIOD OF ACCREDITATION

#### **Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary - Jacksonville, TX**

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts (Pastoral Theology)
    - Master of Arts (Religion)
    - Master of Arts in Church Ministries
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): None

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

#### **Central Baptist Theological Seminary - Shawnee, KS**

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts in Counseling
    - Master of Arts in Missional Church Studies
    - Master of Arts in Theological Studies
    - Doctor of Ministry
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree):

##### Ann Arbor, MI

4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 [First Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Ann Arbor building]

##### Austin, TX

12311 Natures Bend Rd, Austin TX 78753 [Austin Korean Presbyterian Church building]

##### Carrollton, TX

1017 Erie St, Carrollton, TX 75006 [Disciples Baptist Church building]

##### Elm Grove, WI

15330 Watertown Plank Rd, Elm Grove, WI 53122 [American Baptist Churches of  
Wisconsin headquarters building]

Houston, TX

14311 Park Row, Houston, TX 77084 [Korean Central Presbyterian Church building]

Lawrenceville, GA

1000 University Center Ln, Lawrenceville, GA 30043 [Georgia Gwinnett College buildings]

Nashville, TN

1008 19th Ave S, Nashville, TN 37212 [Scarritt-Bennett Center of the United Methodist Church buildings]

Park Ridge, IL

1266 N Northwest Hwy, Park Ridge, IL 60068 [First Baptist Church, Park Ridge building]

Seattle, WA

2400 S 240th St, Des Moines, WA 98198 [Highline College buildings]

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

**Christ the King Seminary - East Aurora, NY**

1. To acknowledge the school's voluntary *withdrawal* from accredited membership, effective June 1, 2021.
2. To approve the school's teach-out plan and teach-out agreement since they meet the criteria for evaluating teach-out plans and teach-out agreements described in *Policies and Procedures*, III.L.2-3.
3. To *rescind* the school's comprehensive visit in spring 2021.

**Concordia Theological Seminary - Fort Wayne, IN**

February 2021 VOTED:

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts in Deaconess Studies
    - Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies
    - Master of Arts
    - Master of Sacred Theology
    - Doctor of Ministry
    - Doctor of Philosophy (Missiology)
    - Doctor of Philosophy (Theological Studies)
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): None domestic

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

**Eastern Mennonite Seminary of Eastern Mennonite University - Harrisonburg, VA**

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts in Christian Leadership
    - Master of Arts (Religion)
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): *see next*
3. To take the following actions:
  - a. To approve the reduction in scope of the school's additional location at 1846 Charter Ln, Lancaster, PA, 17601, where the complete Master of Divinity had been offered. This site is now approved to offer less than half of any approved degree.

- b. To approve the school's teach-out plan for the full-degree additional location, since it meets the criteria for evaluating teach-out plans described in *Policies and Procedures*, III.L.2.

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

#### **Houston Graduate School of Theology - Houston, TX**

1. To acknowledge the school's voluntary *withdrawal* from accredited membership, effective June 30, 2023.
2. To approve the school's teach-out plan since it meets the criteria for evaluating teach-out plans described in *Policies and Procedures*, III.L.2.
3. To *rescind* the school's comprehensive visit in spring 2022, and to extend the period of accreditation to expire on June 30, 2023.

#### **Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University - Columbia, SC**

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
    - Master of Theological Studies
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): None

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

#### **Nazarene Theological Seminary - Kansas City, MO**

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of 10 years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts in Transformational Leadership
    - Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies
    - Master of Arts (Theological Studies)
    - Doctor of Ministry
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): *see next*
3. To take the following additional actions:
  - a. To approve the closing of the school's additional locations, as listed below:
    - Bethany, OK  
Southern Nazarene University, 6729 NW 39th Expressway, Bethany, OK, 73008, where the complete Master of Divinity had been offered.
    - Mount Vernon, OH  
Mount Vernon Nazarene University, 800 Martinsburg Road, Mount Vernon, OH, 43050, where the complete Master of Divinity had been offered.
    - San Diego, CA  
Point Loma Nazarene University, 3900 Lomaland Drive, San Diego, CA, 92106, where the complete Master of Divinity had been offered.
    - Quincy, MA  
Eastern Nazarene University, 23 East Elm Avenue, Quincy, MA, 02170, where the complete Master of Divinity had been offered.
  - b. To approve the school's teach-out plan for all of the full-degree additional locations listed above, since it meets the criteria for evaluating teach-out plans described in *Policies and Procedures*, III.L.2.

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

#### **Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies - Jacksonville, FL**

1. To grant initial accreditation for a period of seven years, until March 31, 2028, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall of 2027.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Worship Studies
    - Doctor of Worship Studies
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): None

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

#### **Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry - Seattle, WA**

1. To acknowledge the school's voluntary *withdrawal* from accredited membership, effective June 30, 2023.
2. To approve the school's teach-out plan since it meets the criteria for evaluating teach-out plans described in *Policies and Procedures*, III.L.2.
3. To *rescind* the comprehensive visit in fall 2021, and to extend the period of accreditation to expire on June 30, 2023.

#### **St. John's Seminary - Camarillo, CA**

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: No
  - c. Additional locations [offering at least half a degree]: None

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

#### **St. Mary's Seminary and University - Baltimore, MD**

To approve a *delay* of the school's comprehensive visit (*to* spring 2022) and to adjust the school's period of accreditation accordingly [i.e., to expire July 31, 2022].

#### **St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary - Boynton Beach, FL**

1. To receive the report of the onsite focused visit committee conducted in fall 2020.
2. To affirm the findings of the comprehensive evaluation committee, conducted virtually on March 24–26, 2020, due to health concerns related to COVID-19, including that the school's facility resources meet the Commission Standards. This follow-up visit was done in-person when it was safe and reasonable to do so in order to satisfy Commission and federal regulations regarding visits done virtually during the pandemic.

*NOTE: In June 2020, the Board voted to reaffirm the accreditation of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary for a period of ten years with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in spring of 2030, one term before the period of accreditation expires in July 31, 2030.*

#### **The King's Seminary at The King's University [sic] - Southlake, TX**

1. To grant initial accreditation for a period of seven years, until March 31, 2028, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall of 2027.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Practical Theology

Master of Organizational Leadership

Doctor of Ministry

- b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
- c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): None

#### **The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology [sic] - Seattle, WA**

- 1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
- 2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology
    - Master of Arts in Theology and Culture
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: No
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): None

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

#### **Wesley Biblical Seminary - Ridgeland, MS**

- 1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
- 2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts
    - Doctor of Ministry
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): None

#### **Wesley Theological Seminary - Washington, DC**

- 1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of ten years, until 31 March 2031, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in fall 2030.
- 2. To approve the following educational offerings:
  - a. Degree programs:
    - Master of Divinity
    - Master of Arts
    - Master of Theological Studies
    - Doctor of Ministry
  - b. Comprehensive distance education: Yes
  - c. Additional locations (offering at least half a degree): None

NOTE: The Board also authorized a follow-up, onsite focused visit when it is safe and reasonable to do so, per Board-approved guidelines, in order to meet normal requirements for an on-site evaluation that could not be met through this virtual visit.

### **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RELATED TO NEW DEGREE PROGRAM LEVEL**

#### **Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University - Berkeley, CA**

To grant approval to offer the Master of Arts in Spirituality and Social Change degree program (Standards 4.6-9).

#### **Reformed Episcopal Seminary - Blue Bell, PA**

To approve the Master of Arts degree program (Standards 4.6-9).

#### **Sioux Falls Seminary - Sioux Falls, SD**

To approve the school's request to modify its *educational experiment* to offer a ThD degree program through a combination of onsite and online courses, allowing some students to participate in onsite courses through interactive videoconferencing. In its final report on this experiment (due April 1,

2022), the school should document how well this modification has achieved the student learning outcomes for this degree.

### **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RELATED TO DISTANCE (ONLINE) EDUCATION**

#### **Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School - Rochester, NY**

To grant approval for comprehensive distance education.

#### **Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary - Louisville, KY**

To grant approval for comprehensive distance education.

#### **St. Mary's Seminary and University - Baltimore, MD**

To grant approval for comprehensive distance education.

### **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RELATED TO ADDITIONAL LOCATION**

#### **Claremont School of Theology - Salem, OR (Claremont, CA)**

*[See below, under SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE: MAIN LOCATION]*

#### **Eastern Mennonite Seminary of Eastern Mennonite University - Harrisonburg, VA**

*[See above, under SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE: PERIOD OF ACCREDITATION]*

#### **Ersrine Theological Seminary - Due West, SC**

1. To grant approval to expand the school's additional location at Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church (207 Mitchell Road, Greenville, SC 29615) to offer half or more of any master's degree.
2. To authorize a focused visit within six months of this substantive change to verify that the location at Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church (207 Mitchell Road, Greenville, SC 29615) has the resources, facilities, and personnel described in the school's petition. (Visit anticipated: spring 2021, depending on what is possible due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.)

#### **George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University - Waco, TX**

1. To grant approval for a new additional location at 319 E Mulberry Ave, San Antonio, TX 78212, opening by August 23, 2021, to offer the complete MA in Christian Ministry and MTS.
2. To authorize a focused evaluation visit within six months of this substantive change to verify that the location at 319 E Mulberry Ave, San Antonio, TX 78212 has the resources, facilities, and personnel described in the school's petition. (Visit anticipated: fall 2021).

#### **Nazarene Theological Seminary - Kansas City, MO**

*[See above, under SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE: PERIOD OF ACCREDITATION]*

#### **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary - New Orleans, LA**

To acknowledge that the following partial-degree sites closed by December 2020:

- 233 Church Avenue, Rainsville, AL 35986 (Northeast Extension Center)
- 6850 Belfort Oaks Pl, Jacksonville, FL 32216 (Florida Baptist Convention)
- 1836 Olive Road, Pensacola, FL 32514 (Olive Baptist Church)
- 1120 Lake Joy Road, Warner Robins, GA 31088 (Central Baptist Church)

*[Notification acknowledged by Commission staff on 6/03/2020]*

#### **Perkins School of Theology Southern Methodist University - Dallas, TX**

1. To grant approval to expand the school's additional location at Houston Methodist Hospital, 6565 Fannin St., Houston, TX 77030 to also offer the Doctor of Ministry degree, effective summer 2021.
2. To authorize a focused visit within six months of this substantive change to verify that the location at Houston Methodist Hospital, 6565 Fannin St., Houston, TX 77030 has the resources, facilities, and personnel described in the school's petition. (Visit anticipated: fall 2021)

#### **Trinity Evangelical Divinity School of Trinity International University - Deerfield, IL**

To *defer* approval of the closure of the school's additional location at 14243 Dante Ave, Dolton, IL 60419, *pending* submission of a teach-out plan (per *Policies and Procedures*, III.L.2) by April 1, 2021, that also addresses the needs of students in the MA in Urban Ministry program, as well as clarification of how this location closure impacts the school's mission and planning relative to its long-standing commitment to the urban community of Chicago (Standards 1.1, 1.4, 2.2, and 2.4).



## **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RELATED TO MISSION, LEGAL STATUS, NAME, OR MAIN LOCATION**

### **Claremont School of Theology - Salem, OR (Claremont, CA)**

1. To *rescind* the following three Board decisions from January 2020: (a) to approve the relocation of the school's main campus from its current site (1325 N College Ave, Claremont, CA 91711) to Willamette University (with a teaching location at 680 State St. SE, Salem, OR 97301), effective July 1, 2020, and approve the continued use of its current campus as an ongoing course-offering site; (b) to authorize a focused evaluation visit to the new campus location in Salem (OR) within six months of the relocation; and (c) to approve the school's teach-out plan.
2. To approve the school's request to consider its Claremont site (1325 N College Ave, Claremont, CA 91711) to be its main campus.
3. To approve the school's request to consider the Salem site (at Willamette University, 680 State St. SE, Salem, OR 97301) to be an additional location offering at least half a degree.
4. To authorize a focused evaluation visit within six months of this substantive change to verify that the location at Willamette University (680 State St. SE, Salem, OR 97301) has the resources, facilities, and personnel to offer at least half of any approved degree. (Visit anticipated: fall 2021)
5. To require a report by July 1, 2021 (or sooner if feasible) regarding the school's financial status and business plan in light of the recent court decision that appears to make the sale of its Claremont campus and its merger with Willamette University no longer financially feasible.

## **ACTION TAKEN RELATED TO PUBLIC SANCTION (WARNING, PROBATION, OR SHOW CAUSE)**

*Previous versions of the Standards of Accreditation and the Policies and Procedures used the term "notation" to refer to instances where a member school was not meeting or not fully meeting one or more standards. In June 2020, the membership and Board adopted a new set of Policies and Procedures that replace the term "notation" with "warning," describing the new term as follows (III.G): "Issuing a warning is a public action (the lowest level of three public sanctions; see III.H-I for the other two) that is taken when the Board determines that an accredited school substantially meets the standards but is at risk of not meeting one or more standards." Per the Board-approved [Implementation Procedures](#), any school that received a notation prior to June 2020 must address that notation in light of the newer Standards of Accreditation (effective July 1, 2020).*

### **Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology - Brookline, MA**

1. To receive the report required in February 2019 regarding Notations N1.b, "*The institution's planning processes are insufficient or ineffective,*" and N7.a, "*The institution does not adequately or appropriately define, exercise, or implement the roles, responsibilities, and structures of authority and governance,*" and N8.b, "*The institution's financial resources are not adequate for long-term institutional vitality and there is no credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.*"
2. To *extend* for good cause the **warning on finances** (Standard 10.3) for an additional year. While the School of Theology has made substantial progress in addressing its financial challenges, it remains financially fragile in the context of the College's declaration of financial exigency.
3. To require a report by November 1, 2021, demonstrating evidence for removal of the warning on finance showing the School of Theology's continued progress in achieving economic equilibrium. The report should include the FY2021 audit, management's analysis of the FY2021 operating revenues and expenditures, budget projections for FY2022 and FY2023, and its plan for coming out of financial exigency. The School of Theology is reminded of the importance of seeking long-term economic equilibrium, and it will be necessary to demonstrate this as part of the comprehensive visit scheduled for fall 2023.
4. To *extend* for good cause the **warning on institutional planning** for an additional year. While the School of Theology demonstrates notable improvements in re-invigorating its institutional planning structures and processes, the effects of its recent restructuring both of its administrative and teaching personnel, the still-to-be completed strategic plan and process, and its financial fragility, remain (Standards 2.3-4; Standard 10.3).
5. To require a report by November 1, 2021, providing evidence for removal of the warning on institutional planning, in light of the development of the School of Theology's strategic plan that focuses its core mission on key priorities linked to specific strategies for how the institution's major challenges will be addressed, including benchmarks as to how, when, and at what cost each strategy will be accomplished. The plan submitted must demonstrate an educational and financial model that

is sustainable in the long term (Standards 2.1-4), in addition to demonstrating progress made in the strategic plan's implementation.

6. To remove Notation N7.a, *"The institution does not adequately or appropriately define, exercise, or implement the roles, responsibilities, and structures of authority and governance."*

#### **United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities - St. Paul, MN**

1. To receive the report required at the January 2020 meeting regarding progress toward financial equilibrium.
2. Based upon the seminary's operating challenges and aggressive endowment draws, to issue the following warning(s) because the school, while substantially meeting the Commission Standards of Accreditation as a whole, is at risk of not meeting Standards 10.3 and 10.5. The school has two years to address this warning adequately, or the Board will take appropriate action as described in the *Policies and Procedures*, III.G-J, which usually means imposing probation.
3. The school is at risk of (1) not having "sufficient and stable financial resources to achieve its mission with educational quality and financial sustainability," (Standard 10.3) and (2) not protecting and preserving its "endowed funds, including utilizing prudent endowment draws" (Standard 10.5; cf. Standard 1.6). The school must submit a report by the 1st of November 2022, documenting progress toward financial sustainability, including a financial plan that is "realistic, holistic, and sustainable" (see Self-Study Ideas for Standard 10.3 and 10.5 for additional guidance). The school's most recent audit, along with any management letter, must be appended to the report.

NOTE: action #2 (above) is effective February 22, 2021, per *Policies and Procedures*, VI.A.5 (Board Procedure on Effective Date of Accreditation Decisions); cf. VII.A.4-5 and VIII.A.(1-3).

*Report prepared: February 26, 2021*

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