Cooperative Program

1. Please give a description of your entity’s efforts to promote the Cooperative Program and the expected outcome of these efforts.

The Cooperative Program is vital to the success of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS), and the promotion of the Cooperative Program is regularly a part of the work of SEBTS. The promotion effort of the Cooperative Program by SEBTS is broken down into three areas:

- **SEBTS Students** – Students at SEBTS are required to take a course on the history and impact of the Cooperative Program. This is not limited to only students sent to us from SBC churches, but also students that come from other denominations. Therefore, a familiarity with the Cooperative Program is extending beyond just Southern Baptist life. In addition to the required Cooperative Program class, each student that graduates from SEBTS takes a Baptist History course. A major part of this course covers the history of the Southern Baptist Convention and the development of Cooperative Program.

- **SEBTS Faculty/Staff** – The Faculty and Staff at SEBTS are reminded that the Cooperative Program provides close to half of their annual compensation. In addition, they are reminded to thank SBC churches for their support of the Cooperative Program as opportunities arise to speak to these congregations.

- **External Contacts** – SEBTS frequently interacts with individuals and groups outside of our Faculty, Staff and Students. In some of the interactions, SEBTS is able to communicate the benefits of the Cooperative Program.

Some recent examples of these opportunities are:

- An advertisement on the Cooperative Program in each of our Outlook magazines published twice a year.
- Materials are available in some public places around campus advertising the Cooperative Program.
- A statement on our website and most public materials that we are a Cooperative Program ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention. The website statements include a link to the Cooperative Program website.

The expected outcome of these efforts are that our students are intimately aware of the Cooperative Program with its benefit to their education and that the students will remember the impact of the Cooperative Program when working in Southern Baptist life in the future causing them to promote participation in the Cooperative Program. When SEBTS Faculty/Staff interact with external contacts, our goal is that those external contacts will be aware of the Cooperative Program and our appreciation for their participation.

Ethnic Participation

2. Please give a descriptive report of participation of ethnic leaders, ethnic churches and other ethnic church leaders in the life and ministry of your entity.

Southeastern Seminary has witnessed an increase in the participation of underrepresented groups in the life of our institution. The following efforts, apart from God’s grace, account for the increase in involvement of multicultural churches and leaders:
• The launch of Southeastern’s ‘Kingdom Diversity Initiative’

As a Great Commission seminary, Southeastern affirms that racial reconciliation is hardwired into the Great Commission. To that end, the fall of 2013 marks the beginning of Southeastern’s seminary-wide strategic initiative called, ‘Kingdom Diversity.’ Our desire is to recruit and equip students from every corner of the Kingdom, to serve in every context of the Kingdom.

To that end, the following benchmarks have been established because they are indicative of a campus that seeks to equip the people of God to cleanse our culture from the residue of racial brokenness.

1. We will strive to foster a campus environment that encourages God-honoring interaction across racial and cultural lines.

2. Increase the recruitment and retention of qualified ethnic minorities, women, and other underrepresented groups among students, faculty and staff. By 2022 SEBTS aims to be comprised of 20% non-white students, 15-20% non-white faculty, 15-20% non-white staff, and 35% female (institution wide).

3. Conduct faculty development and curriculum reform to assist students to minister to people who do not share the same ethnic and cultural background.

4. Build and strengthen partnerships with diverse churches, church networks and educational institutions.

5. Emerge as a servant to SBC churches (and beyond) as a resource to help foster diversity within the church and the broader denominational environment.

• The ‘Kingdom Celebration’

On August 20, 2013 Southeastern Seminary took a monumental step toward fulfilling our mission of “Glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by equipping students to serve the Church and fulfill the Great Commission” with the official kickoff of our Kingdom Diversity initiative.

The following is the outline of the three-part Celebration:

First, Southern Baptist Convention president Fred Luter addressed the seminary in chapel for Convocation.

Second, immediately following chapel a luncheon was held with 85 local multi-cultural pastors and community leaders. The luncheon highlighted a panel discussion entitled “The State of Diversifying the SBC and Southeastern Seminary” that featured President Luter, and Southeastern president Danny Akin. The discussion was moderated by Walter R. Strickland II, Special Advisor to the President for Diversity of Southeastern Seminary.

Lastly, that evening several hundred people from the Southeastern family, and local church members gathered to celebrate the unity in the midst of diversity that is made possible through the cross of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit with a night of worship and discussion.

This event also featured a panel that was geared toward making Kingdom Diversity a reality in the local church.

The panel featured:

- Dr. Norman Peart, founding and teaching pastor of Grace Bible Fellowship in Cary, NC, and author of Separate No More.
- Rev. James White, Senior Pastor of Christ our King Community Church in Raleigh, NC. He also serves as Senior Vice President of Leadership Development at the Triangle YMCA.
- Dr. Danny Akin, President of Southeastern Seminary.
- Edgar Aponte, Director of Hispanic Leadership Development at Southeastern Seminary.
Over the past 12 months, (2012 – 2013) has SEBTS increased or decreased the number of ethnic leaders among faculty and within the student body?

Southeastern has increased, primarily in strategic leadership positions. In the spring of 2013, President Akin created two positions and hired two non-white scholars to fill those positions.

First, the position of Special Advisor to the President for Diversity was formed. This position was filled by Walter R. Strickland II, he also serves as Instructor of Theology.

Secondly, President Akin developed a position called Director of Hispanic Leadership Development. This position assists with the institution’s Global Theological Initiative, this position was filled by Edgar Aponte. Edgar also serves as Instructor of Theology.

Furthermore, despite the modest numbers, Southeastern has doubled the number of Latino and African-American part-time faculty from 2011-12 to 2012-13.

Seminary Specific Questions

4. What level of priority does your seminary have for educating, elevating and promoting SBC missions and ministries, fueled by the Cooperative Program? Please rate as not our assignment, somewhat a priority, a priority, or essential.

Essential

5. Please describe how your seminary fulfills the level of priority for promoting SBC missions and ministries.

SEBTS prepares students for the primary purpose of serving in the churches that cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention or serve with the mission agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention. SEBTS has hosted events on campus this past year that have highlighted the work of the International Mission Board, the North American Mission Board, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and Lifeway. Our students are also taught the importance of supporting the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board through offerings that we collect in chapel for the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong Offerings. SEBTS is in continual communication with the other agencies and institutions of the Southern Baptist Convention to explore ways that we can work together and that we can serve them better.

6. What is distinctive about the baccalaureate experience at your seminary that distinguishes it from other Baptist colleges?

The College at Southeastern is an undergraduate program of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Though we offer a wide variety of degree programs, each one is designed to fulfill the institution’s purpose of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ by equipping students to serve the Church and fulfill the Great Commission. Like the seminary, in our college every classroom is a Great Commission classroom. This comes out in everything that we do and everything that we teach. Every administrator, faculty member, and staff member is devoted to equipping students for Kingdom work. This vision brings unity and makes Southeastern a truly incredible place to prepare for life and service. In our undergraduate
program all students go through a rigorous curriculum that establishes a strong foundation for ministry and Christian life and is designed to equip students for ministry of various forms.

The college continues to offer all the programs that make it distinctive. For example, we continue to require all students to take at least 24 hours in Christian Studies. Here, students take Hermeneutics, Christian Theology 1-3, New Testament Survey, Old Testament Survey, Church History & Personal Evangelism. In addition to this, all students read the Great Books of the Western tradition from a Christian perspective. After these core requirements, students choose from a variety of exciting degree programs like Theology, History, English, Pastoral Ministries, Global Studies and Humanities. Each of these degree programs is designed to equip students for ministry and prepare them for further studies. Overall, this well-rounded curriculum enables students to articulate and defend the Christian faith wherever God may place them.

Southeastern has always had a great college. But recent changes and additions have positioned the college to do much more than ever before. We have given fresh attention to our curriculum and found ways to make it better. Within the past year, we have made some significant changes to our curriculum. For example, while we have kept the History of Ideas program, we have rebuilt it to give it greater clarity and focus. Finally, we’ve recently added several new undergraduate degree programs that will help us place students in churches, the mission field, or in some other vocational setting for kingdom influence. Our new undergraduate Philosophy degree (BACS and Philosophy) is designed for those who want to do apologetics, theology, or anything else that requires intellectual rigor. The new Biblical Studies degree (BACS and Biblical Studies) provides 18 hours our biblical languages and an additional 18 hours in biblical theology and book study. This degree is ideal for those that want to pastor or teach the Bible. Our new Worship Ministry degree (BACS and Worship Ministry) is for those that want lead worship in the local church, but want something beyond basic training in music. This program’s primary focus is on theology, the Bible and ministry preparation.

In short, the College at Southeastern continues be the wonderful place it has always been. But recent changes have given it a greater ability to train students for Gospel ministry and send them to strategic places. These changes and additions open new doors for our students and make the College at Southeastern an exciting place to prepare for ministry.

7. Understanding the seminary ministry assignment(s) to “… assist churches by programs of master’s level, professional doctoral and research doctoral education for ministers and theological educators”, how does your seminary counsel students to pursue these different and separate tracks?

Southeastern Seminary recognizes its responsibility to assist potential and current students as they consider plans for theological education. Our approach is multifaceted, as applicants and students are often at different stages of their considerations.

The Office of Admissions is typically the first point of contact with potential students. That office has a number of academic counselors who assist potential applicants as they determine what course of study to follow. Applicants are invited to attend two Preview Days per semester to meet SEBTS leadership, attend classes, and spend time with admissions counselors. The SEBTS website also gives significant guidance in helping applicants find answers to their basic questions.

After they are accepted, new students are required to attend New Student Orientation. During those events, they do the following:

- receive pertinent information for starting school
- hear about policies and procedures
- make student ID’s
- meet for academic advisement
- register for classes
- make all payments for the semester
- meet the faculty and staff.

While these components are designed to help students get started, academic counselors are available to assist students as they continue to understand their callings and the most appropriate courses to complete. In addition, the SEBTS Field Ministry Office assists students in finding ministry placements and internships that help them to gain practical experience; this experiential learning also helps them to evaluate their calling.
At the doctoral level, each of our doctoral programs has a separate office and director who oversee the program. Each has developed an effective recruiting and advising system to shepherd students through the degree.

The work of the Doctor of Education office perhaps best illustrates how we guide potential students toward the appropriate degrees. When helping prospective students consider the different doctoral programs, the first question that office asks is “What are your long-term goals?” By starting with a prospective student’s future goals, they are able to work backwards from those goals to help the prospect find the program that most closely aligns with his or her aspirations.

For example, if a prospective student wants to advance in administration at a Christian school or university, the Ed.D. program will prepare him for this route. Perhaps another prospective student loves Hebrew and wants to be a Hebrew scholar; the Ph.D. program would be the optimal fit for his goals. If a prospective student is the pastor of a growing congregation and wants additional training to better serve his congregants, the D.Min. program is a good option for his needs. We work with prospective students on an individual basis to help them find the program that will best facilitate their future plans and calling.

The Doctor of Ministry department personnel follow the same process, though they ultimately focus on graduates who have served in full-time professional ministry for at least three years after graduating with the Master of Divinity. This focus involves recruiting students at conferences, meetings, and conventions. Recruiting also occurs through notices in emails, state Baptist papers, and periodicals.

The D.Min. director’s process of interviewing a prospective student involves discovering the person’s desire, GPA, and goals for ministry. A desire for a professional academic career dictates counsel to pursue a Ph.D. or Ed.D. instead of the D.Min. Those interested in a practitioner ministry orientation receive encouragement to pursue the D.Min. An accepted applicant is connected with a Major Professor who guides the student through his program.

Likewise, the Doctor of Philosophy office works with individual applicants to help them determine their sense of direction regarding specific doctoral work. Each accepted student also has a Major Professor who guides him/her through the degree program. Students and professors complete two joint evaluation reports each academic year the student is in the program, thus helping lead the student throughout his or her degree.

8. In what way do you see your role in helping equip and train lay people for service through the churches?

Southeastern helps to train and equip lay people for service through the church in a variety of ways. These opportunities for training include both on campus and distance learning options.

The Distance Learning Office broke ground in Southern Baptist theological education by offering the first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). Over 2700 students enrolled for this first offering. MOOC courses are self-paced, free and completely online. The admissions and enrollment processes are very simple and designed for the first time participant. These courses are ideal for lay leader training. MOOC students receive the same information, resources and content as the fully accredited, academic version of the course, but do not pay tuition or receive academic transcript credit. After completing the MOOC, students do have the option to enroll as a regular SEBTS student, complete additional assignments and pay tuition, in order to seek to receive undergraduate or graduate level course credit for the class.

In addition to the individual self-paced study option, SEBTS developed a curriculum guide to be used with the first MOOC, Hermeneutics, that was utilized for training groups of local church Bible teachers. This guide was very well received by local churches participating in the MOOC. Additional MOOCs with such guides are being developed and will be offered in the future in both English and Spanish.

Southeastern has also developed a new certificate program that will be perfect for providing further lay leadership training in several specific areas. Online certificates in worship leadership, biblical counseling, business as missions, church planting, Christian studies and ministry leadership as well as other areas have been and are being developed. These certificates require seven courses featuring the same information, resources and content as the fully accredited, undergraduate or graduate level version of the course while requiring a reduced workload and cost. In other words
the certificate level student receives the benefit of all the material from the professor while being required to test, read and write less than the regular three hour course. In addition, they pay a reduced rate. Certificates are ideal for the busy lay person in the church seeking additional training but not necessarily desiring a degree. The full content but reduced work load and cost fits in well with their needs and opportunities. Certificates are also very useful for the seminary graduate seeking continuing education. Certificate students will have the option to level the course credit by completing additional assignments and paying tuition, to seek to receive full undergraduate or graduate level course credit for the class.

Lay people in the church are also being equipped at SEBTS through the many special conferences and events being held on the Wake Forest campus. Lay people are welcome and encouraged to attend and be blessed by world class scholars, pastors, speakers and teachers. In addition, SEBTS has developed academic credit level modular courses that meet around several of the annual conferences held on campus. Students attend the conference and also meet with professors and complete appropriate levels of assignments relating to the conference theme. These hybrid courses feature additional work to be accomplished away from campus as well.

These conference courses allow lay people to participate both on the academic credit level or an auditing level. Finally SEBTS continues to offer the Master of Arts in Christian Studies which has been and will continue to be a great degree in general theological and biblical studies for the lay person actually seeking a master’s degree. With permission granted some years ago by accreditation, this degree is offered at our Tampa, Florida extension center as well as through the main campus and has proven to be an attractive and helpful degree option for degree seeking lay leadership.