When Bob registered as a new student for the Fall 2011 semester, he was pleasantly surprised with what he found. Bob had attended HGST several years ago and commented during the first week of classes, “HGST is different—HGST is better.” Changes have surfaced in many areas of campus life due to personnel changes and additions, educational program upgrades, and building improvements.

**Personnel**

When former CFO Martin Ray resigned last spring, the seminary was blessed to have his new CFO already on staff. Janell Ray (no relation to Martin) moved from her position as Director of Advancement to take a new position as CFO and Director of Operations. She brings a “can-do” attitude and a wealth of experience for the job. New Director of Advancement John Hooker joined the seminary September 1. Students no longer find Dr. Chuck Pitts in the faculty wing since he accepted the position of Acting Academic Dean.

HGST added a new resident faculty member this summer—Dr. Nicole Cross. A counseling educator, Dr. Cross brings a joyful, caring attitude along with extensive, practical knowledge and insight in the field of counseling.

New scholars joining the adjunct corps are Dr. Nyle Sexton (worship), Dr. Randall Gauthier (biblical languages), and Dr. Rukeia Draw-Hood (teaching History of the Black Church in America in the Spring).

Jocelyn Hudson, long-time HGST employee, has a new position. After serving as receptionist/office manager for several years, Jocelyn’s title is now Campus Events and Volunteer Coordinator. She actively engages volunteers—students and alumni—to help with any and all events on and off campus.

**Educational Programs**

HGST has branched out, offering a larger variety of course offerings. In addition to day and evening courses, which meet weekly, the seminary now offers weekend intensives and online hybrid courses.

Spiritual direction certification is a fast-growing element of the HGST curriculum. Now, DMin, MDiv, and MTS students may apply for certification in spiritual direction in addition to their degree programs. The Academic Office is experimenting with a prototype for counseling students as well.

Missional ministry course offerings are increasing, as faculty members anticipate the addition of prospective students for the...
Faculty members not only work in the classroom

HGST resident, adjunct, and emeritus faculty members are available to the wider church community in a variety of ways. Take a look below to learn about recent accomplishments.

**Peter Davids, PhD: Visiting Professor of Bible and Applied Theology**

Dr. Davids adds a new publication to his repertoire: *A Greek Handbook on 2 Peter and Jude* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011).

**Herbert Fain, JD, DMin: Professor of Legal and Social Ethics**

Dr. Fain presented a speech entitled “Empowering and Protecting the Church” on April 29 to the National Bar Association conference at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center in Atlanta. A second presentation was offered to the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion at Gardner-Webb University on May 25. The speech was entitled “Sexual Abuse and the Church.”

**David Gustafson, DMin, PhD: Associate Professor of Practical Ministries**


**Doug Kennard, ThD: Professor of New Testament**

Dr. Kennard continues his work on two new books. *A Critical Realist Theological Method* is in the final editing process. The second book on the subject of biblical covenantalism is in rough draft and being reviewed by a specialist hired by Peter Lang.

**Jan Kennard, MLS: Director of Library Services**

As a member of the Association of Christian Librarians, Jan Kennard continues her involvement as an indexer for the Christian Periodicals Index, an EBSCO resource. She currently indexes the quarterly *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*.

**Nyle Sexton, DWS: Adjunct Assistant Professor of Worship Arts**

“Music Essentials for Church Musicians” - This basic, online training course, created by Dr. Sexton and designed specifically with church musicians in mind, was intended to help musicians gain a greater understanding of music notation and basic skills specific to the church music environment. The course provides practical knowledge worship team members need to be confident and successful. Recommended for contemporary praise team members, anyone who simply wants to learn to read music or learn the basics of music theory will benefit. Follow this link: http://www.udemy.com/music-essentials-for-church-musicians.

**Jerry Terrill, DMin: Associate Professor of Counseling**

Dr. Terrill presented a paper at the International Conference of Logotherapy, June 22–26, entitled “Implementing the Principles and Techniques of Viktor Frankl’s Noetic Meaning-centered Therapy to Help Returning Veterans Recover from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.” He was asked by the journal editor to submit it to the *Logotherapy Journal*.

**Barbara Worden, PhD: Emeritus Professor of Spirituality and Gender Studies**

In a recent presentation to HER Call Ministries on the topic “It Came From a Theological Seminary,” Dr. Worden noted how the Bible is falsely used to bar women from leadership. In addition, she taught three sessions covering the History of Christianity and Theology for a local Friends leadership course.

**President’s Insights—**

My first year at HGST was characterized by challenges and opportunities. I deeply appreciate the expressions of encouragement from the seminary community. Four observations come to mind.

HGST students are faithful disciples of Christ. They represent much diversity in terms of denominational traditions, cultural heritage, family composition, work experience, and vocational settings. A common theme is their desire to become well-equipped for service in God’s redemptive mission as they pursue callings as pastors, counselors, educators, chaplains, and more. Their passion inspires our best teaching and support.

The past year has been challenging as we’ve experienced personnel changes and achieved financial stability. In countless ways, faculty and staff have gone the second mile to accomplish their roles with excellence, often embracing extra projects to accomplish our mission.

The opportunities for a seminary in this city are extraordinary. A comprehensive study of the metropolitan area a few years ago identified more than 4,000 congregations and ministries in Harris County alone, suggesting that thousands of local Christian leaders would benefit from graduate-level theological education and support. In a metropolitan area of more than six million and overwhelming spiritual and social challenges, the need for training and encouragement will surely continue to increase in the days ahead.

God’s call to a new and higher level of ministry evolves daily. We are the only Protestant seminary based in Houston offering 4 accredited degrees and approximately 40 courses every semester. We are intent on the practice of discernment to learn exactly where the Lord wants us to participate in God’s movement among us. What a privilege to serve in such a time and place as this.

Thank you for your prayers and support. We welcome you as a partner in the exciting journey ahead!
Degree Program Highlights—

Doctor of Ministry program goes missional

Doctoral seminars are held during January and July. Fall semester’s theme was The Missional Church.

In mid-July, doctoral students gathered from around the city and across the country to attend HGST’s Doctor of Ministry program. For returning students, the week’s main focus was a new course, PL 832 The Missional Church, team taught by Dr. James Furr and Dr. David Gustafson. HGST has emphasized missional ministry in two Master’s programs—MDiv and MTS. This was the first semester to offer a doctoral level course in missional ministry understanding and implications.

Missional ministry involves participating with God in God’s work in the world. This simple statement carries with it serious and thoughtful implications regarding how to position oneself and one’s congregation with this mindset. Though not a new idea, the need for awareness and application to life settings is imperative for ministry within US cultures and beyond.

Responses from course evaluations were encouraging:

“Thank you for this course! Drs. Furr and Gustafson were so at ease and welcoming of discussion. The Bosch book could be an entire course!” “This course was integrating in ways where I was unaware that I needed it. Thanks.” “The instruction from PL 832 will help me confidently articulate a missional heart before my congregation and hopefully help them to desire the same.”

In addition to the missional course, students receive coursework in Christian spirituality each semester. This semester’s work in the area of biblical community has already produced dramatic work in local church ministry. One student writes, “I am applying this material in my ministry now.”

Each doctoral student applies to one of three offered specializations—receiving 10 credit hours of course work in the specialization prior to graduation. Students in the Spiritual Direction and Formation Specialization, guided by a certified spiritual director from the Houston area, Dr. Mike Luedde, will graduate with a Certificate in Spiritual Direction in addition to the DMin degree.

Those enrolled in Pastoral Care integrate principles learned from resident faculty—Dr. Jerry Terrill, Director of the Counseling Program, and Dr. David Gustafson, Practical Ministries—for chaplaincy and pastoral counseling roles.

Pastoral Leadership, directed by Dr. Ken Shuman, stimulates application of family systems thinking for pastoral ministry and exposes students to emerging and missional ministry principles as well as ideas about dealing with change within the congregation.

Entering students apply family systems thinking to self and to pastoral ministry as an undercurrent of the program as a whole. Applications for Spring Semester—November 15 to April 15—are now being processed. It’s not too late to take part in this cutting edge program. Contact Dr. Becky Towne (btowne@hgst.edu), Program Director, or Sharon Gustafson (sgustafson@hgst.edu), Admissions Counselor, for more information.

HGST is different—HGST is better

MTS—Missional Ministry concentration and for the Missional Leadership certificate.

Building Improvements

Staff and students stayed cool during Houston’s hot summer with the addition of three new air conditioning units. Fresh coats of paint, artwork, and IT upgrades throughout the building have helped to kick off the new semester. Director of Library Services Jan Kennard continues to improve library holdings with additional Ebook collections and online resources.

HGST is definitely different—and better. If you haven’t stopped by campus in a while, take a few minutes to tour the facility and meet faculty, staff, and students. You’ll see what we mean!

I recently interacted with DMin seminarians from around the US and UK. And, I must say, I know all they know and more! So, I have a special gratitude in my heart for the Doctor of Ministry classes. We were and are taught well!

—Patricia Greenleaf, The Household of Faith, Houston
Twenty-one graduate during the May 2011 Commencement Ceremony in Bellaire, Texas, with plenty of reason to celebrate

Bellaire United Methodist Church in Bellaire, Texas, was the site for the Houston Graduate School of Theology Spring Commencement Ceremony on May 9, 2011. Graduates, faculty, board members, family members, and friends gathered to participate in the Saturday morning event.

A bustle of activities—from the robing rooms to the photo site—provided volunteer students and alumni plenty to do to stay busy with details until the long-awaited moment arrived and the “pomp and circumstance” of the occasion began at 10 AM. Faculty Marshal Doug Kennard led the procession and the celebration was underway.

HGST was honored to hear Dr. Marcus Cosby’s commencement address on the theme “Can I Get a Witness?” Dr. Cosby is pastor to Lynda Gittens, May 2011 graduate, and a number of current students at HGST.

Faculty awards were presented to two students. The Counseling Award was presented by Dr. Jerry Terrill to Brandy Williams. The Ethics Award, presented by Dr. Herb Fain, went to Lynda Gittens. These awards were voted on by the faculty according to specific criteria. Honors awards were granted including the designation of *Summa Cum Laude* to Debbie Foe and *Magna Cum Laude* to Michelle Ramsay.

HGST’s first August graduate—Zan Campbell, also a member of the Wheeler Avenue congregation—was offered his degree following completion of all requirements during the summer term. Zan plans to join his classmates for Fall graduation, December 10, 2011, to be held at Garden Oaks Baptist Church, 3206 N. Shepherd Drive in Houston. Fall Commencement will begin at 10:30 AM.

HGST students find many reasons to celebrate—the satisfactory ending of a semester, achievements of classmates, Christmas and Spring Breaks—but graduation is a highly anticipated event. Now with three graduation dates and two commencement ceremonies, graduation preparation has become a year-round event for on-campus planners.

If you want to get in on the celebration, contact Sharon Gustafson, Admissions Counselor (sgustafson@hgst.edu). She will get you started on the journey toward the graduation goal.