

**PARTNERING FOR KINGDOM IMPACT:**

**Northern Seminary, Sagamore Institute of Policy ResearcH, Ron Blue Institute,**

**InDiANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**

# **Lilly Endowment, INc.**

**Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers**

Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (Northern Seminary) has developed a three-pronged approach to answer the question of how to best ease the economic pressures that face future ministers who graduate with large debt loads and are ill-prepared to manage not only their personal finances but those of their congregations. Our initiative includes three key objectives, which are delineated below.

**Objective One: Research of Education Funding Models**

To address the general inadequacy of existing educational funding and operational models, the research component will examine assumptions undergirding theological education models at schools whose students are *not* graduating with significant amounts of debt or whose costs are significantly lower than their peer institutions. We are identifying data and best practices that may challenge and/or support the assumptions made by theological schools.

Significant Activities to Date – We procured permission to add an additional partner, Sioux Falls Seminary to the Objective One portion of our initiative. We are forming a list of institutions, communicating with COO’s, and gathering examples of operational models from those schools whose students have little to no loan commitments, whose financial model has addressed the issue of affordability, and who have developed quality competency-based educational programs.

**Objective Two: Development and Implementation of a Student Financial Advising and Mentoring Program for Northern Seminary and Indiana Wesleyan University Graduate Students**

The advising and mentoring program will test our theory that students who receive these resources will be better able to manage their finances and more easily able to articulate financial management concepts to those they lead. The financial advising will be provided by members of the Kingdom Advisors network of the Ron Blue Institute. The advising will be provided over the course of three years, and the results will be compared against a control group.

Significant Activities/Resources Produced or Discovered to Date – We are designing a pre- and post- financial advising/mentoring assessment tool to measure grasp of financial management concepts and practices. Gary Hoag, Generosity Monk, and Ron Blue, Ron Blue Institute, consulted with the partners at a joint meeting in February. We are designing guidelines for the Mentoring relationship between graduate students and Kingdom Advisors, as well as developing plans to increase student commitment and compliance. We adjusted our project and are making a spouse component an optional, greatly encouraged, part of the mentoring program.

**Objective Three: Development of Biblical Stewardship Curriculum**

We are writing new curriculum that will cultivate in students the theory and practice of Biblical stewardship, so they might exemplify and teach sound financial management. A holistic integration of the concepts is being built into doctoral, masters and certificate-level curriculum, beginning with the development of a Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Stewardship at Northern Seminary. The curriculum will be available for any seminary, church or institution to use. The goal is to create curriculum that will assist the church as it seeks to address the burdening issue of financial management within congregations.

Significant Activities/Resources Produced or Discovered to Date – We have discovered incredible synergy and like-mindedness among the partners and a deep passion to serve the wider church. We are developing syllabi and online resources that will be free and accessible to ATS institutions and the church. There is excellent video content in the archives of our partners and great potential to rally Christian financial advisors, generosity advisors/consultants, and leading authors to donate their time to create an accessible library of video resources, which are inclusive in language in reference to the gender of pastoral leaders and neutral regarding assumptions about gender roles in family financial decision-making. This will be an excellent contribution to the wider church.

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