Steady in the Storm:

Understanding and Responding to the Winds of Change in Higher Education

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Introduction

The genesis of theological education in North America can be traced to the founding of Harvard College, whose primary purpose was to train ministers. Much like higher education writ large, the scope of Harvard's mission and curricular offerings expanded beyond the theological in response to social and technological evolution. Consequently, theology finds itself as one academic discipline among many in today's academy.

Yet much more has changed for theological education than just its position relative to other areas of formal study. The very way ministers are educated has undergone a tremendous transformation over the past four centuries. For example, full-time residential status can no longer be assumed, nor the background characteristics of students, the affordability of tuition, the permanency of faculty, the positive perception of the public, or the competencies required for effective leadership.

Current realities challenge the long-term sustainability of seminaries and theological schools. However, many issues presently faced by theological education appeared earlier, and sometimes in a more severe form, within the wider field of higher education. As a result, colleges and universities have already wrestled with most of these challenges, learned lessons, and developed strategies for success.

This resource paper endeavors to broadly describe how seven of these challenges have manifested in higher education writ large and make application to the context of theological education. To illustrate these challenges and demonstrate how they relate to one another, the paper will employ an aviation metaphor—specifically, that of a major airline carrier. The ultimate aim is to provide a global view of the state of the industry to seminary and theological school leaders in order to empower their successful advancement of institutional mission for years to come.

Challenges to Institutional Sustainability

Challenge 1: Worsening Financial Conditions

Before any airplane takes off, attention must be paid to the details of the flight: how to chart the course, which supplies will be needed, and how the cockpit and cabin should be outfitted. The suitability of planning decisions depends on the constancy of the environment; when conditions morph from placid to tumultuous, adjustments must be made to ensure a safe arrival.

Colleges and universities have witnessed a sea change in environmental factors over the past fifteen years. Increased tuition discounting, higher unemployment among recent graduates, mounting student loan debt, and rising college costs have all contributed to a more treacherous financial outlook for most institutions. Old assumptions about student demand no longer hold under current conditions.

For decades, the private sector of American higher education has employed a tuition pricing model that mimics the retail approach to product sales: set a high "sticker price" and then offer substantial discounts to entice prospective students to enroll. In theory, the high-price/high-aid discounting model enables colleges to capture the consumer surplus—the excess demand that would go untapped if the market-clearing price was charged to all students—while using differential pricing to compete for highly desirable students who receive scholarship offers from many different schools. The discounting model of tuition pricing is designed to send three important signals to prospective students (Rine, 2016). First, the high sticker price connotes high educational quality. Second, the tuition discounts packaged as merit scholarships affirm the prospective students' abilities and tangibly express the institution's desire for their matriculation. Third, accepting the scholarship enables the prospective student to realize a significant educational value.

Leading up to the Great Recession, the average discount rate for first-time, full-time undergraduates gradually ticked upward from 37.2 percent in 2000 to 39.9 percent in 2008, or an average annual increase of just above a third of a percentage point (Davis, 2013). In the years following the Great Recession, however, colleges and universities have increased their discount rates at a much faster pace in order to meet enrollment goals. During this period, the discount rate for first-time, full-time undergraduates rose more than 1 percentage point on average each year—an acceleration of three times the previous rate of increase—from 39.9 percent in 2008 (Davis, 2013) to 56.2 percent in 2022 (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2023). Another milestone reached in 2022 was the overall discount rate for all undergraduate students, which crossed the 50 percent threshold for the first time. This means that colleges and universities are now collecting less than half of their advertised tuition sticker price, on average.

A softening of student demand stemmed in part from rising concerns about the value of an undergraduate degree. Three major factors stoked these concerns. The first was the spike in unemployment rates for college graduates in the years following the Great Recession. For example, one report found that the unemployment rate for recent graduates was 8.9 percent in 2009–10, with certain majors exceeding double digits (Carnevale, 2012). The second was ballooning student loan debt. In 2016, total student loan debt stood at $1.2 trillion, ranking it second only to home mortgage debt in the United States (Berman, 2016). Over 70 percent of bachelor's degree recipients took out student loans, and the class of 2015 graduated with an average of $35,051 in school debt (Berman, 2016). The third was the growing perception that college was becoming unaffordable, as families unfamiliar with the discounting model began to reinterpret high sticker prices. Instead of conveying a sense of quality, higher published tuition rates have come to signify to many that a college education is simply beyond the reach of students of modest means (Lapovsky, 2023).

Most recently, a final financial headwind has appeared in the form of overheated inflation. Although human resource costs dominate the operating budget of most colleges and universities, many institutions have controlled their growth through retirement programs, hiring freezes, and modest pay increases. More difficult to control, however, are rising costs for durable goods, physical materials, energy, health care, and food, all of which are required to operate a college campus. After the conclusion of the Great Recession, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) mostly bobbed between 0 and 2 percent, with a high of 3.9 percent and a low of -2.1 percent; following the COVID-19 pandemic, the CPI began to climb, reaching a high of 9.1 percent in June of 2022 and settling at 3.2 percent in October 2023 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). With little budgetary room to maneuver, higher education has struggled to find ways to minimize cost increases, even as families must reckon with lost purchasing power resulting from ongoing inflation.

Challenge 2: Declines in Public Confidence

Airlines operate within a larger professional field that sets norms and shapes public opinion. Business success, while largely dependent upon the performance of individual carriers, can also be significantly affected by perceptions of the industry as a whole. On the one hand, weaker operators can benefit from the halo effect of product that is highly regarded by the public; positive press could sway marginal customers to book their first flight. On the other hand, even the strongest operators can suffer from a negative industry reputation; long-time patrons may engage at a lower rate—or drop out altogether—in response to poor performance or scandal.

Colleges and universities have long enjoyed favorable public opinion. Their positive contributions to the local community, promotion of social mobility, and support for state and national economies historically fostered a sense of appreciation and respect among the general populace. However, a series of financial, technological, and ideological factors have combined to tarnish the reputation of the industry of higher education of late.

The worsening financial conditions outlined above have led to increased public scrutiny of the value of a college degree. Rising college costs, mounting student loan debt, and uncertain employment outcomes have stoked skepticism among the general public. Unlike in previous eras, prospective families are not simply assuming a college education is the ticket to financial security. To wit, one recent public opinion poll found that a majority of Americans (56 percent) do not believe that college is worth the investment (Mayer, 2023). This finding contrasts with public opinion from just over a decade ago, which demonstrated that heightened concerns over affordability and value had not yet softened the public's overall assessment of higher education, with a majority of degree holders (86 percent) saying that college had been a good investment for them personally (Pew Research Center, 2011).

New technologies and approaches to professional credentialing have called into question both the efficiency and the value of traditional residential models for higher education. Distance education, once dominated by for-profit institutions, has reached a status of ubiquity within the nonprofit sector as institutions across the country have developed their own online programs, such that now more than half of all students take at least one online course (*Inside Higher Ed*, 2021). The convenience, flexibility, and cost savings associated with online approaches to higher education have led to larger questions about the essential nature of various components of the residential model. Moreover, widespread adoption of online approaches has legitimated the modality among the general public, such that in-person instruction is no longer assumed to always be the most suitable or highest quality option for a college education.

The proliferation of alternative credentialing mechanisms has exerted another form of downward pressure on the traditional collegiate model. Driven partially by the perception that higher education is not sufficiently preparing students for the job market, and partially by concerns over the rising cost of a bachelor's degree, student interest in shorter-term, industry-aligned, competency-based credentials has skyrocketed. For example, recent data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center revealed a nearly 10 percent enrollment increase for college certificate programs versus less than 1 percent enrollment growth in bachelor's degree programs (Schwartz, 2023). Certificate programs are particularly attractive when they are both standalone and stackable, such that they can immediately signal professional competence as well as be applied toward a future degree program. Also competing against the traditional bachelor's degree are credentials offered outside the academy, such as digital certificates and badges (Iafrate, 2017). As these markers of professionalization are more widely accepted by the employment market, they will become more attractive to students concerned about the length, cost, and quality of a bachelor's degree.

In addition to worries about rising college costs, concerns over the politicization of higher education have also harmed the industry's reputation. For some time, public opinion polls have detected low levels of confidence in societal institutions such as Congress, big business, and television news, yet the academy continued to enjoy a high degree of faith from the general population. Recent years, however, have revealed a significant erosion of public trust in higher education, with confidence levels dropping from 57 percent in 2015 to only 36 percent in 2023 (Saad, 2023). The results varied by partisan affiliation; Democrat confidence declined from 68 percent to 59 percent, Independent confidence dropped from 48 percent to 31 percent, and Republican confidence plummeted from 56 percent to 19 percent. Earlier research found that the reasons for low confidence also varied by party; half of the Republicans cited either a political slant or not allowing students to think for themselves, while half of the Democrats cited expensiveness and poor leadership (Newport & Busteed, 2017).

Challenge 3: Characteristics of Today's Student

An airline exists to provide a certain travel experience to customers. Without passengers, the carrier cannot achieve its purpose, nor can it remain in business. When clientele characteristics such as size, composition, and interests shift significantly, individual providers must adjust to new market realities. Indeed, understanding and adapting to customer needs and preferences are critical to success.

This imperative extends to colleges and universities, whose typical students have changed in three important ways. First, fewer students choose to attend college now than in the period just after the Great Recession. The size of the undergraduate student market has shrunk from a high of 18.1 million in 2010 to less than 15.1 million in 2022 (Clark, Cluver, & Selingo, 2023), and the college enrollment rate for 18–24 year-olds dropped from 41 percent in 2010 to only 38 percent in 2021 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Various reasons have been cited for this decline, from financial to ideological, yet one factor has undoubtedly contributed directly to the current state of play: demographics. Fewer babies were born in the years following 9/11, leading to a trough in the college-aged population two decades later (Grawe, 2018). This so-called "demographic cliff" results in lower demand for higher education among the college-aged population even as educational supply, or the total number of institutions, remains relatively constant. This disequilibrium has resulted in downward pressure on price as seen in the aforementioned acceleration in tuition discounting across the country.

Second, the composition of the typical college student body has shifted along the lines of race, class, and gender, highlighting the difficulty for institutions to secure full enrollment. In the past, anticipated declines were offset when new student populations gained access to higher education. For example, the increase in women matriculants in the 1980s fueled college enrollment gains in spite of the relatively small Generation X cohort (Clark, Cluver, & Selingo, 2023). However, access has been widened to the point that few if any options exist to further such an additive strategy. Instead, the more likely solution is to increase the college-going rates of subpopulations that lag the overall average, such as Black and Hispanic students, whose enrollment rates measure only 37 percent and 33 percent, respectively (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2023). Increasing the participation rates for these subpopulations while maintaining the levels of all other groups would result in a net gain in tuition revenue, yet this approach would also incur other costs, particularly additional support services to ensure the success of underrepresented students who historically have been most likely to drop out of college prior to graduation (Clark, Cluver, & Selingo, 2023).

Third, the preferences and needs of today's college-going population have shifted with generational changes. A recent study by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2018) found that students in Generation Z, the cohort emerging from the Great Recession, tends to focus on educational value, practical application, and support services. More specifically, the study found that Gen Z students were more likely to worry about paying for college than their predecessors and tended to view the purpose of college to be preparation for a specific career rather than cultivation of general life skills. This outlook contrasts with that of the Millennial generation, whose consumerism stoked demand for campus amenities such as suite-style residence halls and high-end recreation centers (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2018). Consequently, many institutions that invested in difficult-to-repurpose physical infrastructure to attract an earlier generation may find that today's student views extravagant amenities as unnecessary expense rather than campus asset.

Challenge 4: Changes to Faculty Roles and Perceptions

A competent and reliable crew is essential to a plane's proper functioning and overall success. The crew's purpose is to maintain the operations of the cabin and ensure that the passenger experience remains consistent across different flights. A long-standing crew with a clear sense of purpose can serve as a kind of organizational stabilizer that keeps the aircraft steady amidst the turbulence of life in the sky. Conversely, employee turnover and differences of opinion regarding crew responsibilities can negatively affect organizational morale and performance.

Like a crew that conducts the activities of a passenger jet, college faculty are responsible for facilitating the phenomenon at the heart of the academy: teaching and learning. The financial difficulties and ideological challenges of the past fifteen years have destabilized the faculty role in university life in two main ways. First, faculty employment has become far more contingent than in the past, such that 70 percent of professors today find themselves in non-tenure-track positions; just two decades ago, the ratio was inverted, with 70 percent of college faculty either tenured or on the tenure track (Flaherty, 2019). Relying on larger percentages of adjunct faculty to teach courses is one strategy for maximizing institutional flexibility and containing long-term financial obligations, yet it often comes at the cost of faculty continuity and commitment. While it could be argued that those attempting to earn a living as adjunct professors have a high degree of devotion to their craft, most must cobble together a full-time teaching load from various sources and thus lead a more transient professional life. Consequently, contingent faculty are less able to invest in campus culture and make deep connections with students year-over-year.

Second, the faculty role has become more hotly contested in the context of an increasingly politicized academic workplace. Generational differences in faculty beliefs about freedom of expression and professional activism have emerged. One study found that younger professors were more likely to favor authoritarian approaches to policing campus speech than their senior colleagues (Honeycutt, Stevens, Kaufmann, 2023). More broadly, that same study reported a palpable sense of fear among faculty of all political persuasions who worried about losing their jobs or professional reputations because of something they said. The fear of cancellation throttles free inquiry, a necessary condition for teaching and learning, and it threatens to lower job satisfaction even among those who have the job security inherent in a tenured or tenure-track position.

Challenge 5: Shifts in Institutional Leadership

As with any complex organization, an airline carrier is led by a chief executive officer who is accountable to a board of directors. While the board casts vision for the enterprise and sets a general strategy, the CEO oversees all operations to ensure successful execution of said strategy.

Colleges and universities operate in a similar, albeit nonprofit, manner. Institutions of higher education are ultimately governed by boards of trustees, which can be appointed by an elected official (public universities) or denominational patron (private universities), or they can be self-perpetuating. College presidents, who typically serve as the only employee of the board of trustees, are hired to provide executive leadership for the institution.

In a rapidly changing environment marked by the external challenges described above, an optimal board composition is critical to institutional success. Moreover, college boards need to include a diverse range of expertise in order to effectively execute their core functions: strategy, governance, fiduciary responsibilities, performance evaluation, risk management, and external relations (Bevins, Law, Sanghvi, & Valentino, 2020). It is therefore not unusual for boards to seek professionals from the fields of business, law, communications, and fundraising to augment and balance academic or religious perspectives. Also of heightened interest has been the demographic composition of college boards of trustees, with recent reports suggesting that while boards are generally becoming more diverse, most do not reflect the composition of the student bodies at the institutions they govern (Palmer, 2023). College boards can improve their execution of core functions in three ways: fostering better cooperation with the institution's administrative leadership by clearly delineating responsibilities and building personal relationships through direct communication; redefining structure by reducing the size of unwieldy boards and streamlining committee responsibilities; and aligning member capabilities with the appropriate institutional and fiduciary responsibilities (Bevins, Law, Sanghvi, and Valentino, 2020).

The years following the Great Recession have ushered in changes to the demographics and expectations of the college presidency. Simply put, the chief executives of America's colleges and universities are becoming more diverse. For example, the proportion of women college presidents has increased 43 percent in the past sixteen years—from 23 percent of all presidents in 2006 to 31.8 percent in 2022—while the proportion of nonwhite presidents increased 65 percent in just the last six years—from 17 percent of all presidents in 2016 to 28 percent in 2022 (Moody, 2023, April 14). In addition, while a slim majority of college presidents still follow the traditional academic pathway to the role, an increasing number are selected from non-faculty backgrounds such as administration, the public sector, business leadership, and nonprofit leadership (Melidona, Cecil, Cassell, & Chessman, 2023).

Expectations for college presidents continue to evolve. One report traced the development of presidential identity from its origin in the faculty to its latest incarnation, the "multidisciplinarian" who must "build and navigate academic disciplines, institutions, and outside partnerships" in order to meet the diverse challenges posed by the present moment (Selingo, Chheng, & Clark, 2017). The authors noted that current pressures have incentivized college presidents to engage in short-term thinking that elevated "quick wins" over long-term planning. In this environment, it is little wonder that the latest survey data shows that the average tenure of college presidents has declined 31 percent since the Great Recession—from 8.5 years in 2006 to only 5.9 years in 2022—and a quarter of all sitting college presidents expect to step down from their position within the next two years (Jesse, 2023).

Challenge 6: Evolving Fundraising Environment

Financially strong institutions tend to cultivate multiple revenue streams rather than relying upon a single funding source. For example, although airlines depend largely on ticket sales, they also draw income from various types of discretionary spending (e.g., bag fees, Wi-Fi access, food upgrades, etc.) as well as sponsorships and advertisements. These additional revenue streams can help offset periodic dips in the business' primary source of funding.

As net tuition revenue has plateaued and at times declined in recent years, additional pressure has been placed on the second major revenue generator in higher education: fundraising. Recent figures from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (Kaplan, 2023) show that voluntary support of U.S. higher education institutions rose 12.5 percent to $59.5 billion in 2022, largely due to the positive performance of the stock market. However, troubling trends appear just below the topline numbers, as donor totals have not rebounded from their pre-pandemic numbers for 72 percent of universities (Daniels, 2023).

Shifts in donor behavior create another obstacle for advancement officers to overcome with regard to the two major approaches to collegiate fundraising—capital campaigns and annual campaigns. Analysts warn that the days of record-breaking capital campaign totals may be nearing their end for two reasons. First, the primary building block of a successful capital campaign is the megadonor who provides significant resources to jumpstart the effort. However, megadonors tend to be "one-time wins" and are unlikely to provide a transformative gift to multiple campaigns (Blackbaud, 2018). Moreover, today's highly polarized higher education landscape presents additional risk to fundraising strategies that rely upon megadonors, as evidenced by those who have recently rescinded their gifts in response to institutional controversies (Berman & Soskis, 2023).

Second, generational differences in giving have resulted in fewer donors to both capital and annual campaigns. One firm found that alumni participation rates for the Baby Boomer cohort averaged 16.1 percent for the first five years after graduation, and eventually climbed to a plateau of 34.1 percent after the 20-year mark (Blackbaud, 2018). The same firm found an inverse pattern to hold for the Generation X and Millennial combined cohort, which averaged 31.2 percent alumni participation for the first five years post-graduation and then steadily dropped to just 17.8 percent during the 11- to 15-year phase. Thus, a large portion of college alumni are dropping out of donor pools even as they enter their prime earning years. As a result, the median age of so-called evergreen donors—alumni who give back to their alma mater every year—has risen from 44.5 years old in 1980 to 62 years old in 2017, a trend that does not augur well for sustained increases in annual giving (Blackbaud, 2018).

Challenge 7: Mergers, Acquisitions, and Closures

After financial challenges reach a certain point, some organizations are no longer able to continue business as usual and still survive. In the airline industry, responses to this set of circumstances could take the form of decommissioning certain models of aircraft to slim down the fleet so that it can become more efficient and profitable again. In the most dire of financial situations, the best decision may be to merge with another carrier, or even close the business altogether.

College closures are far more rare than for-profit corporations going out of business. Since 2016, 104 colleges and universities have either ceased operating or announced a planned closure (Higher Ed Dive, 2023). However, analysts project the closure rate within higher education will accelerate in coming years as colleges and universities attempt to solve pressing financial dilemmas (Moody, 2023, July 5). Although most institutions will survive, additional institutional cost-saving measures, such as consolidation and trimming of operations, are expected (Fitch Ratings, 2023).

Consolidation has come in the form of mergers and acquisitions, which one report found to have increased nearly threefold, from 11 in the five-year period between 2001 and 2005 to 31 between 2016 and 2020 (Bryant, Golder, Hobbet, & Jefferson, 2023). Trimming of operations can involve both avoidance and cutting of costs. One popular cost avoidance strategy has been the use of online course sharing. Often taking the shape of an institutional consortium, this arrangement enables individual colleges to both expand instructional capacity—at a fraction of the cost of hiring a new faculty member—and sell excess capacity from under-enrolled courses that must be taught (D'Agostino, 2022). A popular cost-cutting measure has been to develop shared services models that outsources a particular administrative process or technical function—such as human resources, information technology, marketing, and audit—that is necessary for continued operation but not essential to be performed in-house (Azziz, 2014).

Implications for Theological Education

It may be tempting to assume that seminaries and theological schools constitute a unique form of higher education that will be spared of the most pressing challenges besetting the wider industry. However, while the sector presents institutional distinctives that may mitigate against certain negative trends, it is highly likely that leaders in theological education will confront elements of many of the issues outlined previously. In order to support prudent management decisions and wise institutional leadership, the following observations explore the natural implications of the foregoing for the future of seminaries and theological schools. To thrive in the coming years, it is imperative that governing boards and campus leaders understand the following issues:

- *Beware of the changing demand for graduate theological education*. The student cohorts that are currently working their way through undergraduate education are fundamentally different than previous cohorts. In addition to being smaller than earlier cohorts, the rising generation will be less inclined to take on graduate school debt. Many students will lack the borrowing capacity after loading up on undergraduate student loans, and most will approach theological education with a high degree of anxiety over financial security. For this reason, alternative pathways to ordination and shorter, stackable credentials will increase in attractiveness. For many students, the primary choice will not be where to complete their graduate theological education, but whether to make the investment in a traditional program.
- *Stay sensitive to student expectations*. Rising cohorts will be more attuned to the practical value provided by theological education, particularly as it relates to the cultivation of specific professional competencies. In addition, future students are likely to find support services to be more meaningful than pricey campus amenities. Efforts to streamline staffing should be balanced by consideration of the baseline amount and kinds of support services students will expect. Great care should be paid to any reduction in faculty, lest it signal a downgrade in academic quality that negatively colors prospective students' perception of educational value. Coursework and supervised ministry experiences should clearly connect to competencies necessary for success in the profession.
- *Examine board size, composition, and role*. To thrive in the current environment, seminaries and theological schools will need cross-functionally gifted, appropriately directed, and right-sized boards of trustees. Board members should take an honest look at the range of professional skills and experiences their institution presently needs and make

intentional efforts to address any areas of weakness in collective expertise by recruiting capable new members. Board effectiveness should also be examined along two lines—namely, whether the board is large enough to encompass the competence required for success but not so large that it becomes unwieldy, and whether the board is appropriately calibrated to its proper fiduciary and strategic role by providing appropriate vision and direction without reaching down too far into the day-to-day management of the institution. Finally, the board should be attentive to its chief executive's needs and provide proactive support amidst mounting industry pressures. Such a posture not only increases the likelihood of an extended presidential tenure, but it positions the board to ensure a smooth transition should an unexpected departure occur.

- *Know your constituency and tread lightly in political matters*. The overly politicized higher education landscape has done significant damage to public perception of colleges and universities. While seminaries and theological schools must remain true to their unique denominational identities and institutional missions, their leaders would be wise to weigh the value of overt political actions in light of the diverse perspectives represented within their constituencies. As higher education institutions of all types attempt to reignite previous levels of small giving and enlarge their pool of evergreen donors, serious thought must be given to how certain campus actions could alienate key segments of the institutional constituency. When evaluating a large gift, campus leaders should assess what expectations, if any, might be attached that could put the institution in a difficult position during a future cultural or political flashpoint.
- *Reevaluate what is necessary and what is secondary*. As challenging as the present context can be, it also offers an opportunity to reevaluate which elements of institutional

structure and practice are truly essential and which are merely accidents of time, place, and culture. Campus leaders should engage all levels of the organization in an intentional conversation about how they might reimagine and redesign nonessential aspects that no longer serve the institution well. The result of this process should be a clearer focus on core institutional purposes and alignment of resources to those ends.

- *Maintain a relentless focus on institutional mission*. When unexpected and acute challenges arise, it can be easy to lose sight of the fundamental reasons for the institution's existence even as campus leaders make sincere efforts to ensure its continuance. Activities intended to improve the organization's financial footing, such as rebranding and restructuring, will ultimately become counterproductive if they diminish rather than extend the character that made the school special in the first place. Lest the institution gain the world but lose its soul, it is imperative that boards of trustees continually emphasize mission as a touchstone for all organizational action, regardless of the circumstances, and encourage senior leadership to cultivate a mission-centric campus culture.

Conclusion

Seminaries and theological schools face formidable challenges on the horizon, yet their fundamental commitments and indispensable purposes are cause for optimism. The original form of American higher education may encounter difficult choices in the years ahead, but the knowledge and skills it imparts are absolutely essential to human flourishing and therefore of great intrinsic value. Adjusting to the winds of change may produce some discomfort, yet there is a path to safe harbor for institutions willing to ask the hard questions and adapt to new realities. May all involved in the field of theological education—faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees—be characterized by a spirit of service to and stewardship of the high calling that surpasses any one person, program, or institution.

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