

# Grand Canyon University Theological Seminary

## STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSE

Grand Canyon Theological Seminary (GCTS) is a broadly evangelical, interdenominational seminary that strives to form students academically, spiritually, and professionally and equips them to minister effectively within a challenging cultural context. Embedded within Grand Canyon University, GCTS is the university's graduate theological school, taking up the mantle of training pastors, Christian leaders, missionaries, and other ministers for a lifetime of faithful, gospel ministry. The seminary serves churches and other ministries by grounding leaders in sound doctrine, cultivating Christian character, and fostering unity in Christ.

As an evangelical institution, GCTS's mission and identity center on the biblical gospel which is at the heart of the Christian faith. The conviction that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, true, and authoritative Word of God provides the seminary with a firm foundation for theological discussion and ministerial preparation. In the spirit of Titus 1, we are committed to preparing men and women to hold firmly to the trustworthy Word of God so that they are able to give instruction in sound doctrine as they serve others with compassion and godly wisdom.

As an interdenominational seminary, GCTS welcomes all students of like mind and faith and cultivates denominational, theological, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity within its faculty and student body. The seminary's interdenominational position enables it to serve a wide array of churches and denominations that hold a high view of Scripture and embrace the central tenets of the Christian faith. Furthermore, due to the value that Grand Canyon places on ensuring that theological education is accessible and affordable, the seminary is also uniquely positioned to meet the needs of underserved groups including bi-vocational ministers, ethnic churches, denominations that do not have a seminary, and ministers who cannot easily relocate to complete their seminary education.

### Mission of the Seminary

GCTS develops leaders, ministers, and scholars who rightly handle God's Word, teach what accords with sound doctrine, and equip the people of God for missional service within a rapidly changing world.

### Confessional Basis of the Seminary

As an interdenominational school, GCTS deeply values Christian unity, which is a unity rooted in the fact that all Christ-followers participate in "one body and one Spirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:4–6). The body of Christ is diverse, but its mission is clear and its doctrine is by no means confused. Since GCTS prepares ministers and Christian leaders, it is vital that all seminary faculty and students are united in their affirmation of the essential doctrines of the faith and committed by covenant to a lifestyle consistent with that doctrine. As a result, the seminary is a covenantal community in which all members of the community affirm a shared confessional basis.

Three key documents bring GCTS's mission and identity into clear focus: GCU's Doctrinal Statement, GCU's Ethical Positions Statement, and the College of Theology Covenant. GCU's Doctrinal Statement, inspired by the Nicene Creed, outlines the essential tenets of the Christian faith and provides clarity about the university's identity and mission. GCU's Ethical Positions Statement outlines beliefs on moral truth, creation, human life, salvation, and more. The overarching goal of these documents is to provide clarity, unity, and alignment across the university on matters of doctrine, ethics, and morality. The College of Theology Covenant describes a lifestyle consistent with these doctrinal and ethical commitments. This Covenant underscores the vital connection between the Christian faith and the Christian life. Together, the Doctrinal Statement, Ethical Positions Statement, and Covenant highlight and celebrate biblical, theological, and moral bases for cooperation in accord with the biblical mandate to live life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:27).

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## Values of the Seminary

The core values of the seminary are consistent with those of GCU and with the College of Theology in which it is embedded. While these values ultimately derive from theological commitments, they may be grouped according to the relationship they bear to three key aspects of the seminary's mission, and purpose.

### Theological Values

The overarching vision of GCTS rests on three doctrinal pillars that constitute the seminary's core theological values and serve to shape its unique identity and mission. GCTS is gospel centered, church focused, and missions oriented. As theological values, each of these pillars derives directly from the value GCTS places on the Bible as God's Word.

These theological values are closely related and interdependent, forming a substantial basis for the seminary as it seeks to realize its vision and fulfill its mission to develop godly leaders, ministers, and scholars. GCTS grounds students in biblical truth and sound theology. This includes exhorting students to make vital connections between the gospel and the church. A gospel-centered ministry yields a gospel-centered church, and the church remains the primary means by which Jesus has chosen to engage the world with hope and love. We believe that when the gospel is central and the church is properly ordered, the people of God are in the best position to commend the hope of Jesus Christ to the world in which they live.

### Community Values

As a gospel-centered, covenantal community, GCTS's community values foster authenticity, vitality, and corporate health as we grow together in Christ. GCTS values diversity and is concerned to ensure that its faculty and student body is diverse with respect to gender, race, and ethnicity. The seminary intentionally fosters diversity in these vital areas by raising awareness of the need to attain to the sort of Kingdom diversity described throughout the New Testament. In the midst of this rich diversity, the seminary has consistently focused on evangelical unity rooted in the core doctrines and common practices of the Christian faith.

Additionally, the seminary places significant value on a depth of character and style of life that has been deeply shaped by the gospel and is worthy of imitation by others. While all Christians are called to live in a manner that accords with the gospel of Jesus Christ, ministers are specially called to live as exemplars of this lifestyle. All who enter into GCTS's covenant community do so freely but with full understanding that the community strives to cultivate the character of Christ daily.

### Educational Values

The core educational values of the seminary guide and shape the educational experience of each seminary student. Consequently, GCTS places great emphasis on academic quality, affordability, and accessibility. The seminary strives to ensure that its programs are academically rigorous, of high value to the student, and professionally relevant. This begins with a commitment to hire highly qualified faculty with relevant practical and pastoral experience. Rigor is reflected in the stress placed on writing skills, critical thinking, substantial interaction with the faculty inside and outside the classroom, whether online or on campus, and in the seminary's insistence on biblical language training for all MDiv students.

Seminary students are direct beneficiaries of GCU's commitment to make quality education affordable. Moreover, this value shapes the educational culture of the seminary and guides its strategic planning and development. As a result, significant emphasis is placed on sharing services to reduce costs, excellent student service, increasing retention, financial transparency, decreasing debt, and reducing time to completion.

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Finally, due to the value that GCTS places on ensuring that theological education is accessible, the seminary is well positioned to meet the needs of student populations that are non-traditional or otherwise underserved. GCTS seeks to bridge the gap between gaining an education and continuing in ministry by offering convenient online theology programs and evening cohort classes. The seminary also intentionally fosters a culture of openness and support for students of various ecclesial traditions, ethnicities, genders, and backgrounds. This is a means of promoting Kingdom diversity within a context marked by evangelical unity in order to serve the needs of the church more broadly. In this way, GCTS intentionally serves ministers and their congregations by equipping Christian leaders without separating them from congregations and communities that have come to depend on their leadership and ministry.

## Purpose of the Seminary

In light of its fundamental identity, mission, and core values, the faculty and administration of GCTS have adopted the following institutional purposes for the seminary:

1. Equip students to rightly handle God's Word.
2. Train students to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3) with kindness and patience (2 Timothy 2:24).
3. Form students academically, spiritually, and professionally as they develop the character of Christ.
4. Instill a sincere concern for all individuals and groups who do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord, and a resolve to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).
5. Cultivate Kingdom diversity and evangelical unity.
6. Prepare graduates to serve faithfully within a challenging and rapidly changing world.
7. Serve the church and other ministries by preparing faithful leaders, ministers, and scholars.
8. Provide high quality education that is affordable and accessible in order to meet the educational needs of traditional and non-traditional students.
9. Transform the community in which the seminary is situated by the power of the gospel proclaimed and lived.



*“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen”*

*(Ephesians 3:20–21).*