STRATEGIC VISION, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES
2011-2015
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Purpose Statement

The purpose of Episcopal Divinity School is to educate lay and ordained leaders for Christ’s Church and for the world who serve and advance God’s mission of justice, compassion, and reconciliation.

A seminary for the Episcopal Church, USA, Episcopal Divinity School is grounded in the Anglican tradition and committed to growing in relationship with other Christian and faith traditions.

Episcopal Divinity School is an academic community of biblical, historical, and theological inquiry that

- respects students as responsible learners with valuable experience,
- supports spiritual and ministerial formation, and
- provides tools for the lifelong work of social and personal transformation.

The School’s dedication to God’s transforming mission challenges us to become an antiracist and multicultural community, embodying diversity and seeking constructive change.

These commitments lead to educational programs enlivened by theologies of liberation, especially the many voices of feminist, congregational, ecumenical, and global studies.

In our educational life we value critical intellectual engagement, prophetic spirituality, and social action.

Sustained by contemplation, worship, and prayer, Episcopal Divinity School forms leaders of hope, courage, and vision to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Introduction

In July of 2009, The Very Rev. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, DMin ’97 was appointed President and Dean of Episcopal Divinity School. Part of her mission was to envision where the school can grow in the next decade. Development of the strategic goals began in the winter of 2009 when the Long Range Planning Task Force was assembled to gather input on goals of greatest importance to the community.

In the spring of 2010, the task force chose The Wayland Group of Sudbury, Massachusetts—a consulting firm that specializes in leadership planning and fundraising strategy for nonprofit organizations—to provide overall guidance, coordination, and analysis. The Wayland Group coordinated the creation of three key Working Groups (People, Programs, and Resources), the membership of which included trustees, faculty, staff, administrators, students, and alumni/ae.

Episcopal Divinity School is pleased to present this summary of its Strategic Vision, Goals, and Objectives 2011–2015.

This plan provides a foundation for new initiatives to strengthen EDS as it continues to develop and refine a program that is already widely acknowledged as the forerunner in using technology, pedagogy, and a commitment to justice to confront the struggle for bringing compassion and reconciliation, in the Church and the world, to all people. This plan also delineates what is needed to ensure the School’s long-term growth.

Episcopal Divinity School is a vibrant institution requiring entrepreneurial responses to changing priorities, demands, and conditions, and as such this is a dynamic document—one that will have ongoing review and adjustment in terms of content and timetable. EDS has never been stronger as we seek to take advantage of the many opportunities before us in our efforts to live out the Gospel and change the world.

This document is an abridged version of the full plan. We have presented selected, representative goals as well as some recommendations for implementation steps for each section. The plan does not speak to every aspect of School operations; rather it addresses the areas of greatest need and promise at this time. The full plan is available by contacting the Office of the President and Dean.

We are already at work on reaching these goals and we invite you to visit us online at www.eds.edu/progress2015 for a report on our progress.
Platform

THE FUTURE WILL BE SHAPED BY MANY CHALLENGES TO THE institutions of the Church and to the Gospel mission we serve. These challenges include:

• A Church and society that have embraced the issues of inclusion across race, gender, and sexuality, yet still have far to go in achieving the goal of justice and full inclusion. At the same time, few, if any, institutions have grappled adequately with the complex and threatening problems of classism in our churches and our society or the emerging urgent need to foster inter-religious understanding and cooperation.

• A culture within which basic religious literacy is no longer a given and even the people in our pews cannot be assumed to know the stories of our traditions or share our vocabulary of faith.

• A society which, while rejecting religion, shows a thirst for spiritual grounding and a growing awareness of its own moral bankruptcy and the devastating effects of institutional systems built only on values of individualism and personal gratification, fear, and greed.

• A Church, housed in a society marked by declining religious affiliation (and, therefore, church membership) and a ravished economy, that finds itself in greater need of a clergy whom it’s ever less able to afford to prepare and support.
EDS approaches this uncertain future with a firm foundation built on a long history and an aspiration to grow. As a leader in the struggles for justice and inclusion—in the Church and the world—EDS has much to offer a fractured world. As a leader in utilizing new technology with a deep respect for pedagogy and commitment to social justice, EDS provides a new model for seminary education.

Our students must be prepared to lead their communities in the face of a changing and unpredictable future. We know that fewer people feel constrained by denominational loyalties; more people will never enter any church just from force of childhood habit; knowledge of the Good News of God in Christ is no longer a cultural given; and neither the responsibilities nor the comforts of religious community and Christian discipleship are necessarily known by the people our churches encounter, serve, and seek to include in membership.

Yet even as the world around us is changing, we know that the riches of Anglican history and traditions, as well as the pastoral offices and competencies of various communities of the faithful, remain treasures that sustained our forebears, sustain us and our neighbors, and will sustain our children (even if they’ve not yet had occasion to discover the need).

The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion need EDS. There are many legitimate, and rich, ways of being an Anglican. Among the Episcopal seminaries, EDS is the exemplar of a long inclusive, progressive heritage—founding defining commitments to “work for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being” on theological understandings both ancient and evolving. EDS’s long-standing commitment to preparation for lay ministries, as well as ordained, and to welcoming persons from other traditions to our faculty, staff, and student body also distinguish us among the Episcopal seminaries. Similarly, while there are other socially and theologically progressive theological schools, EDS is unique among them in our grounding in the history, liturgy, and traditions of Anglicanism. The balancing act this requires of us involves determining how to be at once adequately Anglican, preparing Episcopal students for various ministries in or of their own churches, and simultaneously, adequately hospitable, fluid, and eclectic to fully include all members of our community so that we all may learn our own traditions better by having been exposed to others.
Major Goals and Objectives

The Strategic Goals will move Episcopal Divinity School forward with renewed vision. While acknowledging EDS’s many accomplishments to date, we fully expect and anticipate that we will continue to face significant challenges over the coming decade. We are committed to meeting these pressures and realize the importance of 1) sustained focus on EDS’s mission, strategic vision, goals, and our unique role among Episcopal seminaries and in the world; 2) effective governance and executive leadership; and 3) continuous long-term thinking.

As the Episcopal Divinity School community set about identifying and articulating the School’s priorities and delineating a plan of action, five overarching goals emerged. Episcopal Divinity School must continuously expand its efforts to

• Prepare students for bi-vocational ministries and ensure that graduates are fluently “multi-lingual” in the scholarship and practice of ministry—both lay and ordained;

• Take our rich educational resource base to a broader audience and embrace new constituencies;

• Add new foci such as interfaith education, classism, ableism, and environmental justice to the theological and social issues about which we teach and which we seek to redress;

• Be a place where people concerned with progressive theological education want to come to study, work, pray, and be part of our spiritual, academic, and professional community; and

• Achieve financial equilibrium and long-term sustainability.
Ministry Preparation

Going forward EDS must prepare students for diverse ministries and careers, lay and ordained, across denomination and faith communities.

We envision an EDS whose graduates are all fluently “multi-lingual” in the scholarship and practice of ministry. We intend to make worship a central element of our common life and to assure that those of every tradition find opportunity to feel at home in worship some of the time even as we are stretched beyond our experience and comfort at other times.

We believe that this “multi-lingual” fluency will not only prepare our students to serve in the various traditions and communities to which they may be called but will also make them more flexible and able to function in the inter-religious, areligious, or even antireligious settings which are becoming more normative in our society.

Such a culture needs still the riches of our religious traditions yet is increasingly ill-equipped and unwilling to support the traditional models of ministry. EDS, through partnerships with Lesley University and others, will prepare our students for the possibility of bi-vocational ministries. We will encourage our students to learn auxiliary skills, to recognize opportunities for ministry outside the walls (and payrolls) of the Church, and even to value the creative and sustaining gifts that multiple ministries can offer.

**Goals**

» EDS will continue to offer an academic and practical education in the canonical areas of study identified by the Episcopal Church as well as emerging areas identified by the Episcopal Church and other constituent communities.

» EDS will prepare students for the opportunities of bi-vocational ministries.

» EDS will insure that our students have access to the most current relevant discoveries and thinking in theology, the social and hard sciences, and social issues.

» EDS will provide opportunities for worship and faith formation which reflect our progressive values, our Episcopal identity, and our diverse community.
» EDS will be the place within the Boston Theological Institute where students can be steeped in the Anglican traditions and will collaborate with other schools and denominations to assure that students from other traditions have ample opportunities to learn those traditions as well.

» EDS will facilitate mentoring, guidance, and support for newly ordained clergy.

**KEY STEPS TO ADVANCE GOALS**

» Clearly articulate to the outside world that EDS offers educational resources that cover the content of the seven canonical areas of the Episcopal Church.

» Expand access to current areas of study through its lifelong learning programs.

» Devise a faculty composition plan that will guide us for the next twenty years in terms of forecasting retirements and recruitment and hiring of faculty.

» Increase number of field education placements that expose students to non-parish-related settings.

» Expand the number of students involved in the EDS/Lesley chaplaincy option for MDiv students.

» Establish program partnership with Lesley for MDiv/MS in Counseling Psychology dual degree and Lesley undergraduate religion minor.

» Leverage three-year grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to provide further training for faculty in comparative religion.

» Continue to evaluate and explore implications of new neuroscience findings on mind, body, and spirit as they relate to spirituality and congregational development.

» Continue to explore creative expressions of worship that reflect the ethos of the Episcopal Church, as well as the other faith traditions represented in the student body and faculty.
Flexibility and Sustainability

Going forward EDS must provide for the long-term financial sustainability of the School.

EDS is poised to continue and expand its unique role among and within the Episcopal seminaries, the broader Anglican community, and the world at large.

GOALS

» EDS will build a communications and marketing program that will raise and maintain EDS’s visibility in the Episcopal Church, the broader progressive community, and the world.

» EDS will cultivate relationships with individual and institutional leaders who have the interest, influence, and resources to ensure the future of EDS and to provide a caliber of leadership that will allow the School to realize the dream God has for us.

» EDS will develop and maintain the physical resources necessary to building educational and formational community.

» EDS will be a vigorous, relevant, and sustainable institution—a place where people want to come to study, work, pray, and be.

KEY STEPS TO ADVANCE GOALS

» Establish a brand for EDS that will identify the School, reflect our priorities, and be easily recognizable.

» Communicate EDS news as widely as possible so that the world will know we are making a difference.

» Ensure that all Trustees give at capacity and are well informed about development efforts.

» Work with Committee on Trustees and other groups as appropriate to identify and cultivate new individual and institutional leaders.

» Create and grow Leadership Council to act as financial supporters, ambassadors, and advisors to EDS and serve as a pipeline to Board of Trustee membership as well as active engagement of former Trustees.
» Secure leadership gifts that will help endow long-term priorities of the School.
» Seek annual financial support to sustain ongoing academic and outreach programs.
» Communicate school news to alumni so that they understand what their support helps make possible.
» Be a presence at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in July 2012.
» Continue to cultivate relationships in the Episcopal Church gatherings nationally and internationally.
» Identify and forecast remaining deferred maintenance, utilization/needs, and programming options.
» Continue our commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in outreach efforts to attract and retain the broadest range of professional talent.
» Foster a supportive, respectful, encouraging, and collaborative learning, worship, and work environment.
Issues

Going forward EDS must expand and enhance its teaching on issues of classism, ableism, inter-religious tolerance, and the environment.

We envision an EDS that deliberately, strategically, and publicly adds classism, ableism, religious intolerance, and environmental injustice to the ranks of oppressions we teach about and fight, that we prepare our faculty to add these lenses (substantively, not just by title) to the perspective they bring to everything they teach, and that we offer opportunities within our degree programs, through continuing education (on campus, online, and in other locations), and through special programs and partnerships to train religious leaders to build communities that reach across class and faith differences to build a fully just and inclusive society—grounded in our theological convictions as well as our social commitments.

GOALS

» EDS will explore and respond to changes in the nature of the Church, ecumenism, interfaith work, and education with particular attention to balancing the needs of the School and community regarding accessibility of education and formation.

» EDS will address issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, physical ability, and environmental impact in our own community and will provide opportunities for EDS faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae, and trustees to address these issues on campus and in the larger communities to which we belong.

» EDS will strive for greater diversity in our own community, welcoming people of color, those who are LGBT or straight, those who are differently abled, and those of any denomination or faith tradition.

» EDS will explore, and seek to eradicate, barriers to participation in the life and work of the EDS community through recruitment, partnerships, use of technology, and targeted financial assistance.
KEY STEPS TO ADVANCE GOALS

» Encourage students to be engaged in cross-cultural and interfaith education.

» Explore how issues of classism, ableism, inter-religious intolerance, and other issues can be brought into the methods of antiracism training using inter-target-group facilitation.

» Recruit more people of color with a targeted strategy for faculty, students, and administration and staff.
Partnerships

Going forward EDS must build a progressive Christian movement, both domestically and abroad.

We envision an EDS that takes our riches into the streets—to share with, and be enriched by, communities and individuals who have not heretofore been our partners. We see EDS faculty taking their courses into the city across the river as well as into communities where un-churched students live and play: using local churches and community centers to offer the education for which so many hunger—enhancing scriptural and theological literacy, teaching community organizing and social change skills built with theological and ethical underpinnings, and serving as a laboratory for leadership development within a framework of moral commitment. We hope for an EDS with partners in dioceses, congregations, and community centers across the nation and the world who can host our programs, live or online, for, and in the midst of, the communities that need them, and who will, in so doing, change the face of this place in ways we cannot yet imagine.
GOALS

» EDS will work with dioceses and structures within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion to identify and meet the evolving needs of the Church.

» EDS will build relationships across faith and denominational traditions in order to discover, and meet, the particular needs of students within those groups; recruit effectively from within various communities; and enhance EDS’s own interfaith and cross-cultural awareness and competence.

» EDS will create satellite learning opportunities through partnerships with existing institutions, off-site workshops or mini-courses, and/or the establishment of branch/satellite campus sites.

» EDS will create international partnerships, both within the Anglican Communion and the broader Christian and faith communities, to provide enrichment opportunities for our students and to welcome international students.

» EDS will continue to work with Lesley University and other compatible institutions and organizations to provide diverse educational opportunities to our current constituents and to developing markets.

KEY STEPS TO ADVANCE GOALS

» In partnership with Diocese of Massachusetts and the Episcopal City Mission, EDS will collaborate to develop a learning environment focused on creating vital parishes and educating all Christians for ministry in the world.

» Continue to attract students and other important contacts through participation in the Living Stones Partnership where EDS connects with 22 Dioceses mainly in the West and Midwest regions of the United States.

» Expand on established Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry (EAM) connections to increase the number of Asian and Asian American students who enroll in EDS.

» Through Bloy House partnership, increase the number of students who spend two years at Bloy House before enrolling in EDS.
Going forward, EDS must invest in the necessary upgrade of administrative systems, online services, data lines, webcasting, and new pedagogies arising from educational technologies.

We envision an EDS that takes advantage of, and builds on, our technological resources to offer ongoing education and lifelong learning. In addition to our hybrid learning option (making it possible to obtain a full degree without uprooting a family, leaving a home and job, and incurring unreasonable debt) and our current lifelong learning modules (designed to assist dioceses unable to support full degree programs and looking for abbreviated ways to locally train clergy and lay leadership), we envision an EDS that develops continuing education programs, in cooperation with those who wish to use them, which address the real, evolving needs of ministers and communities, and which can be taken live or online into every part of the country and the world.

**GOALS**

» EDS will take advantage of its technological “head start” to develop programming for, and provide it to, rural dioceses, lifelong learners, and lay and ordained leadership seeking continuing education or need-specific certification.

» EDS will use its technology and the expertise of its personnel to make remote meeting and educational opportunities available to various groups, thereby raising EDS’s visibility, meeting community needs, and infusing the values for which EDS is known into those communities.

» EDS will strengthen its resources in educational technologies and build on its successful programs in lifelong learning through EDS Connect and degree-granting programs in Distributive Learning.
KEY STEPS TO ADVANCE GOALS

» Continue to make and leverage IT investments and integrate systems and infrastructure to support administrative, instructional, collaborative, and external needs of the organization.

» Explore development of a non-degree deacons education program and extend and market a successful program to all dioceses.

» Explore creating Certificate study programs for various church leadership training programs.

» Seek to continue providing remote meeting organization and services to Committees and Commissions of General Convention.
Conclusion

The Strategic Vision, Goals, and Objectives of Episcopal Divinity School is an exciting, complex, and bold plan, building on the School’s strong tradition, engaging its challenges, and seeking to take full advantage of the opportunities before EDS at this time in its history. These goals are designed to be broad and far-reaching enough to guide our planning and our work.

Building upon EDS’s Purpose Statement and the strategic vision, these goals will move us to the realization of our vision to educate lay and ordained leaders for Christ’s Church and for the world, who serve and advance God’s mission of justice, compassion, and reconciliation.

EDS offers a bold and expansive vision of inclusion and social justice in the service of preparing students to lead their communities in the face of a changing and unpredictable future. Students at EDS learn flexibility, leadership, cooperation, and creativity—in conversation with the most pressing issues of the day—in order to prepare them to help build a more just society. They are our here and now as well as our future, and we owe them easy access to the best educational resources in the world.

This operational plan is a living document—updated frequently to meet the changing needs and circumstances of the School, but always supporting these strategic goals and objectives, and our vision for EDS. Measurable goals, objectives, and plans will be constantly evolving as our work, our financing, and the changing nature of the world around us provide new insights and new opportunities. All the work of the School, in its various departments and constituencies, should be demonstrably applicable to these goals and our vision.

We look forward to sharing the School’s progress as we go forward and to seeking assistance in making this plan a reality.

» Visit the EDS website to learn more about our progress in reaching these goals at www.eds.edu/progress2015
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