



## Summary of Educational Effectiveness

BSK Theological Seminary's purpose is to prepare women and men sensing God's leadership for life and ministry in faithful witness to Jesus Christ in the church and the world.

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### Educational Objectives

BSK Theological Seminary offers the Master of Divinity degree program and has structured this degree in order to prepare "people for religious leadership or service in congregations and other settings" (S 4.1). The mission statement clearly describes the purpose of the M.Div. degree program, "to prepare men and women sensing God's leadership for life and ministry in faithful witness to Jesus Christ in the church and the world."

Out of the purpose statement, BSK has adopted four over-arching program goals to reinforce the program’s intention to form and equip students to be qualified ministerial leaders.

<b>Informed Witness</b>	<b>Imagining Witness</b>	<b>Lived Witness</b>	<b>Inquiring Witness</b>
Contextual and experiential knowledge of Christian scripture, history, theology, and practice relevant to ministerial vocations.	Theologically reflective ministerial identity, discernment, and vision.	Cultivation and embodiment of habits, practices, and competencies for leading and directing persons in faithful Christian living.	Development of reflective, self-aware critique of ministry understanding and practice, and habits of disciplined research supporting growth.

The BSK faculty developed four goals to measure the effectiveness of the theological curriculum:

- a reception of informed witness through gaining a knowledge and understanding of Christian scripture, history, theology, and practice that is substantial and relevant to ministerial vocations.
- a cultivation of imagined witness through evidence of sustained theological reflection on ministerial identity and vocation given the variety of cultural realities and contextual issues bearing upon ministerial practice.
- an embodiment of lived witness through the cultivation of habits, practices, and competencies for leading and directing persons in faithful Christian living.
- the development of reflective, self-aware critique of ministry understanding and practice, and habits of disciplined research supporting growth.

The four Witness goals of the MDiv academic program assume holistic learning and integration of academic discipline instruction with student skill development. The Case Study Assessment has been the longest running and dependable direct assessment measure of student success with the academic program witness goals. It is administrated at the end of the student's MDiv career and provides a summative and holistic view of student competency across the Witness goals.

Learning levels in the rubric below are distributed to reinforce years of praxis and continual learning are instrumental to personal and professional growth.

		Aspiring	Novice	Competent	Proficient	Sage
Increasing Complexity, Holism	<b>Informed Witness:</b> Contextual and experiential knowledge of Christian scripture, history, theology, and practice relevant to ministerial vocations.	received knowledge; grounded in basic, common, popular knowledge	emerging understanding of terminology, concepts, principles, issues in their contexts	developing discernment of most important, relevant information for a situation; making connections across concepts	internalization of knowledge, appropriate critical analysis, and extensive experience	mastery and production of knowledge
	<b>Imagining Witness:</b> Theologically reflective ministerial identity, discernment, and vision.	reliance on convention; difficulty interpreting events	developing personal authority; trying on theories, methods, role of minister	deepening awareness of God's presence and work in multi-dimensional ministry contexts	creative and self-aware ability to engage God's presence and work across cultural realities; confidence in ministerial identity	integration of complex layers of knowing; abiding perception of situations as spaces of God's presence and work
	<b>Lived Witness:</b> Cultivation and embodiment of habits, practices, and competencies for leading and directing persons in faithful Christian living.	lack of comfortable, efficient routines; rigid reliance on basic rules and external authority for practices	developing skill and efficiency in some areas of practice; observing and mimicking good practice; questioning conventional practice	conscious, deliberate planning; minimal need for supervision; developing sense of timing; sense of importance of community	acting out of familiarity and experience; adapting routines for natural, easy flow to communal practices; evaluating self and authorities	appropriate actions, timing, and manner with little deliberation; culturally aware and sensitive manner; critical dialogue with authorities
	<b>Inquiring Witness:</b> Development of reflective, self-aware critique of ministry understanding and practice, and habits of disciplined research supporting growth.	realization of need to know more and keep learning; misapplication of learning	identification of strengths and limits of knowledge, understanding, and practice; learning from experience and some other sources	critical appreciation of one's own performance; intentional engagement in professional development, research	increasing ability for disciplined, reflective research and its application to one's own practice of ministry	advanced ability for independent research informing and informed by ministry practice and theological reflection

(adopted February 2018)

BSK aims for students to score in the "Competent" range upon graduation. With this annual assessment, the faculty want to ensure that the MDiv program, as a whole, offers training and growth in key areas so that by the time a student graduates, they can perform at competent or proficient levels.

Graduating Class Average	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Informed Witness	3.7	3.176	3.36	3.14	3.778
Imagined Witness	3.667	3.353	3.5	2.995	3.833
Lived Witness	3.567	3.24	3.58	3.06	3.75
Inquiring Witness	3.533	3.281	3.54	2.995	3.611

Scoring Scale:

N/A	Aspiring	Novice	*Competent	Proficient	Sage
0	1	2	3	4	5

One key qualitative instrument BSK uses to measure educational effectiveness is the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ).

Student responses to several questions in the GSQ from 2020-2025 demonstrate considerable student satisfaction with the effectiveness of seminary education in the development in personal growth. For example, Table 14 summarizes responses to the question, "How effective was your degree program in facilitating the following areas of personal growth?"

Table 14

## Measure of Educational Effectiveness and Personal Growth

	2020- 2021 n=6	2021- 2022 n=3	2022- 2023 n=2	2023- 2024 n=7	2024- 2025 n=10	Average n=28
Empathy for the poor and oppressed	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.7	4.9	4.81
Concerns about social justice	4.8	5.0	4.5	5.0	4.7	4.81
Enthusiasm for Learning	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.7	5.0	4.85
Insights into trouble of others	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.78
Respect for other religious traditions	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.7	4.8	4.68
Clarity of Vocational Goals	4.5	4.7	5.0	4.3	4.5	4.51
Self-Knowledge	4.7	5.0	5.0	4.7	4.7	4.75
Strength of spiritual life	4.5	5.0	5.0	4.4	4.7	4.64
Ability to live my faith in daily life	4.7	5.0	5.0	4.1	4.8	4.64

1=not at all effective 2=not very effective 3=somewhat effective 4=effective 5=very effective

Table 15 shows considerable student satisfaction in response to the question, "How effective was your seminary education in facilitating the following skill areas?"

Table 15 Educational Effectiveness in Facilitating Skill Areas

	2020-2021 n=6	2021-2022 n=3	2022-2023 n=2	2023-2024 n=6	2024-2025 n=11	Average n=29
Ability to use and interpret Scripture	5.0	4.7	5.0	4.7	4.9	4.86
Knowledge of church doctrine & history	4.7	4.0	5.0	4.7	4.6	4.61
Knowledge of Christian ethics	4.8	5.0	4.5	4.4	4.9	4.75
Ability to think theologically	4.8	5.0	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.81
Ability to interact effectively with those of religious traditions other than my own	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.7	4.5	4.66
Ability to work effectively within my own religious tradition	4.7	4.7	5.0	4.3	4.9	4.71
Ability to interact effectively with those from cultural and racial/ethnic contexts other than my own	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.79
Ability to work effectively with both women & men	4.8	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.86
Awareness & appreciation of the globalized context in which ministry is practiced	4.7	4.7	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.76

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In the core curriculum, there are several practical theology courses. These include preaching, worship, communications, mission, pastoral care, church leadership, and church administration. In recent graduate surveys, the students reported satisfaction with the level of instruction and learning in these areas:

	2020-2021 n=6	2021-2022 n=3	2022-2023 n=2	2023-2024 n=7	2024-2025 n=11	Average n=29
Ability to preach well	4.0	4.0	5.0	3.7	4.6	4.22
Ability to give spiritual direction	4.8	4.3	5.0	3.9	4.8	4.54
Ability to teach well	4.8	4.3	5.0	4.4	4.8	4.67
Ability to lead others	4.8	3.7	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.61
Ability to conduct worship/liturgy	4.7	4.7	5.0	4.5	4.6	4.63
Ability to relate social issues to faith	4.8	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.86
Ability in pastoral counseling	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.3	4.6	4.61
Ability to administer a parish/congregation	4.8	4.3	5.0	4.1	4.5	4.48

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BSK Theological Seminary emphasizes the “placedness” or contextuality of ministerial formation. A vital element of contextual ministerial formation is field education. In response to questions about educational effectiveness of field education at the Seminary, students reported satisfaction with the level of learning and formation in Contextual Ministry:

Table 19

## Effectiveness of Field Education in Developing Capacities

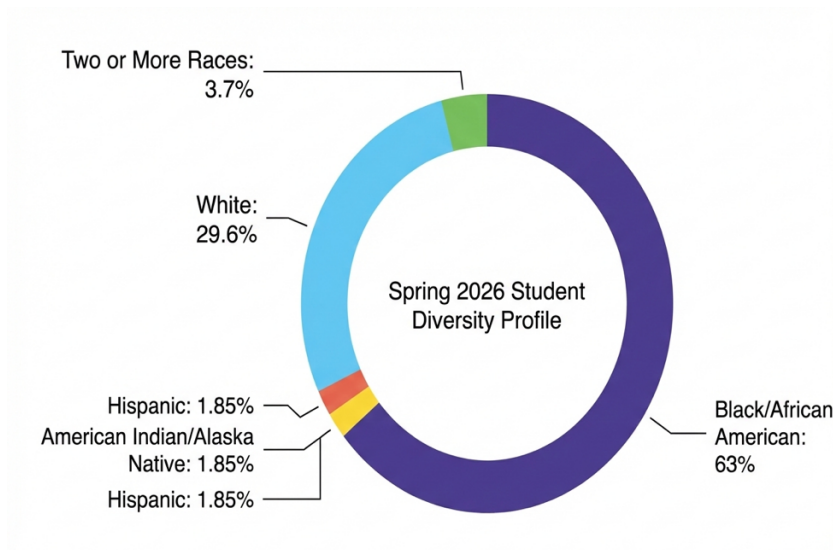
	2020- 2021 n=6	2021- 2022 n=2	2022- 2023 n=2	2023- 2024 n=6	2024- 2025 n=10	Average n=28
Greater vocational clarity	4.5	4.0	4.0	4.7	4.7	4.55
Improved pastoral skills	5.0	4.0	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.70
Greater interest in future ministry	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.7	4.7	4.51
More self-confidence	4.8	4.5	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.75
Greater sense of people's needs	4.5	4.0	5.0	4.8	5.0	4.76
Better idea of my strengths and weaknesses	4.8	4.0	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.72
Greater self-understanding	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.65
Improved administrative skills	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.5	4.2	4.15

1=not at all effective 2=not very effective 3=somewhat effective 4=effective. 5=very effective

BSK Theological Seminary also offers a Master of Arts in Ministry Studies degree. This degree is designed for students to engage in theological reflection and study in a self-selected area, or specialization, of Christian ministry or theological studies. To date, the Seminary has graduated 3 students with the MAMS degree, and we do not have sufficient data to assess this degree program currently.

## Diversity

Figure 1: Enrollment Diversity



A marker of effectiveness is growth in diversity. As of the Fall 2020 semester, 52% of the student body was African American. That was up from the 4% African American portion of enrollment from 2016. That trend continues to accelerate, with the 63% of the student body in Spring 2026 being African American. In the Spring 2026 semester, the student body was 66.7% male and 33.7% female.

In 2018 BSK established the Kevin and Barnetta Cosby Seminary Scholarship for American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS) in 2019, providing full scholarship for up to 10 students per year. This is an act of reparations by the Seminary as BSK participates in repair for the legacy of slavery and racial oppression that has benefited institutions of theological education.

Related to BSK's presence at Simmons College of Kentucky, a relationship with the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. (NBCA) has been formed, with BSK to be named the official seminary of the NBCA in 2020. Part of the relationship will be the inclusion of at least



two persons from the NBCA on the BSK Board of Trustees.

The faculty approved a “Statement on Diversity” in September 2014 to be used as a guide for establishing the broader program of assessment of diversity. This statement defines in theological terms exactly what the diversity is that we value and why it is important.

*We commit ourselves without end to attend to and embrace the wondrous diversity of God’s creation in faithful witness to Jesus Christ. We believe that the Triune God creates people in the image of God and calls all people good. Through the manifold presence and work of the Spirit, people are created with different bodies and abilities, fill lands and communities around the world, and carry various traditions and stories as they live with one another. Failure to recognize the dignity and worth of diversity among persons and people groups is a sin that distorts self-understanding and limits our regard for the goodwill of all humanity and for the communion of the whole body of Christ, God’s church. Confessing our formation and current propensity to such sin, we at BSK acknowledge that as we seek to embody God’s truth, the understandings we gain from our own bodies, abilities, traditions, and stories need to be tested and supplemented by the understandings gained by others.*

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## Affordability

Through a combination of reasonable tuition costs, strong scholarship resources and work-friendly block scheduling, the majority of BSK students graduate with little to no additional student debt.

**88%** Graduate with no additional educational debt

Graduate with less than \$10,000 in additional debt **12%**