

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

Eastern University was founded in 1932 as a department of the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, which began in Philadelphia, PA, in 1925. This college division was organized for the purpose of supplementing the professional preparation of ministers. In 1938, the Department of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania approved the granting of the A.B. and the Th.B. degrees upon the completion of a six-year course of study. In 1948, a third year was added, making a seven-year course leading to the A.B. and B.D. degrees.

After almost twenty years of growth and progress, the Board of Trustees voted on April 17, 1951, to secure a charter and organize Eastern Baptist College as a separate institution. The Charles S. Walton estate was purchased for the college at St. Davids, PA. The purpose of the college was to prepare students not only for the ministry, but for all walks of life. The curriculum was enlarged, the faculty was strengthened, and a co-educational liberal arts college was opened. Classes began in September, 1952, and the college received accreditation in 1954.

Early in 1972, the legal name of the school was changed to Eastern College: A Baptist Institution. The purpose of this change was to increase its appeal to all evangelical Christians, though the school retains its relationship to the American Baptist Churches in the USA. Eastern continued to grow in size and complexity, and was granted university status in December, 2001. Eastern University reunited with Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2003. Honoring the legacy of its longest-serving President, Gordon Palmer, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary was renamed Palmer Theological Seminary on July 1, 2005.

Today, Eastern University comprises Palmer Theological Seminary and College, the College of Arts and Humanities, the College of Business and Leadership, the College of Education, the College of Health and Sciences, Templeton Honors College, and Esperanza College. Eastern University enrolls over 3,000 students in these undergraduate, graduate, urban, professional, international, and Seminary programs.

Historically, the trustees, administration, faculty, and staff have sought to shape Eastern University to reflect the following characteristics. These aspects are captured in the University's mission, goals, and vision statements, and they have characterized Eastern throughout its rich history.

Academic and co-curricular programs at Eastern University are planned and carried out in the hope that all members of the University community will:

- Appreciate that all truth is from God and that Jesus Christ should be acknowledged as the Lord of the intellect;
- Display a knowledge of biblical teachings and their application to life situations;
- Seriously consider the claims of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
- Develop a Christian worldview;
- Be committed to excellence in their academic work and to life-long learning;
- Be determined to apply their knowledge in service to others;
- Be equipped with the communication and problem-solving skills which will enable them to participate creatively in society;
- Be aware of their own worth and potential;
- Increasingly develop self-awareness and sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others;

- Be aware of their historical and aesthetic heritage;
- Have a grasp of the wonder of the created universe;
- Develop an appreciation of diversity among individuals and among cultures;
- Be prepared to live in an interdependent world, aware of global problems and dedicated to bringing God's justice and peace to all individuals and societies;
- Exercise Christian stewardship of their time, possessions, and bodies.

To these ends, the residential college has sought to:

Attract persons who are:

- Committed to the achievement of these outcomes;
- Capable of participating fully in the life of the University as a community of Christian learners.

Develop a curriculum which includes:

- An emphasis on basic skills in writing, speaking, logic, mathematics and a foreign language,
- A liberal arts core which provides exposure to the major disciplines of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences,
- An emphasis on biblical and theological understanding,
- In-depth study in one field,
- Pre-professional and professional opportunities for those students desiring them,
- Intentional integration of a Christian worldview with the academic disciplines.

Design an environment which fosters:

- Students' management of intellectual and psychological maturation processes in themselves and others,
- Open-minded inquiry and expression of differences of opinion, stimulating all members of the University community to explore new areas of knowledge and patterns of thought,
- A sense of personal integrity and recognition of the rights and responsibilities of each individual,
- The assumption by students of increasing responsibility for their own lives,
- The development of policies and procedures that enable all persons associated with the University to know that they are respected and that their opinions are heard.

Develop resources which will ensure:

- Maintenance of the physical facilities necessary for the academic and co-curricular programs in a manner that demonstrates a sense of stewardship,
- The fiscal health of the institution through a broadening base of support and effective management of human and financial resources.

Further, the University has been committed to:

- Effective communication of the purposes and goals of the institution both internally and externally;
- Constructive relations with graduates designed to benefit both the University and the alumni;

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- Vigorous pursuit of these goals by all members of the University community;
- Continuous study of goal achievement.