




TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: John L. D'Agati 

SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment; Application for Authority to Operate as a Degree-Granting Institution in New York State: City Seminary of New York Graduate Center

DATE: July 6, 2017

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment and authorize City Seminary of New York Graduate Center to offer programs within the discipline of the humanities, leading to the Master of Arts (M.A.) degree?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute and State regulation.

Proposed Handling

The question will come before the full Board at its July 2017 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken.

Background Information

The City Seminary of New York (City Seminary), located at 302 West 119th Street, New York, NY is an urban theological learning community with over ten years of experience serving the New York City region through theological education. City Seminary was founded out of the experience of Christian growth in New York City from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean immigrant populations. Its mission is to seek the peace of the city through theological education.

In July 2014, City Seminary submitted to the Department a proposal to become a degree-granting institution in New York, and is seeking Regents authorization to offer a program in Ministry in the Global City, leading to the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.). Authorization to offer a program leading to an M.A. degree requires a master plan

amendment and the issuance of a provisional charter. City Seminary has submitted with its proposal, an application to be provisionally chartered as City Seminary of New York Graduate Center. This item deals specifically with the authorization to offer programs leading to the M.A. degree and the master plan amendment. A recommendation regarding the provisional charter appears separately on the Board's July 2017 agenda.

The research and professional experiences of City Seminary's leadership team has shown them that pastors and ministry leaders in growth areas (immigrant areas) of the church in New York City are at the forefront of mediating a vision of faith to their congregations and worlds of influence, yet they frequently have not had access to formal and sustained theological education. In addition, they have found that traditional formal theological education has not adequately prepared individuals with the practical knowledge and skills necessary to operate within the context of a global urban setting.

City Seminary's newly proposed master's degree program in Ministry in the Global City was developed in response to those needs. The program is a two-year, part-time program for ministry leadership in the global city. Each course and module works together to prepare students in spiritual formation, inter-cultural ministry, applied theology, vocation, and discernment. The program evolved out of their 10 years of experience working primarily with immigrant ministry leaders who have established churches in the past 20-30 years, as well as research conducted over the last 15 years. Rather than starting with a traditional seminary program and making modifications, City Seminary leaders have created a curriculum from the ground-up, in which every single course is based on the needs and experiences of those living in and ministering in the city in the context of the global church.

City Seminary has 5 full-time faculty associated with the Master of Arts degree program, along with a part-time librarian. The full-time faculty will be supported by 17 part-time or visiting faculty, each of whom has strong ties to City Seminary, who will guest lecture as well as co-teach classes, and two additional faculty hires: one full-time youth ministry faculty and one part-time arts and media faculty.

City Seminary's Hope Campus is located in a block-long space in Harlem. It has four classrooms and additional meeting spaces, along with office space, a kitchen and a kitchenette. The Library area is fully furnished and equipped with a world-class niche collection in the areas of Global Christianity, Urban Ministry and Mission Studies, Biblical Studies, and Applied Theological Studies. The Hope Campus Lobby houses a small gallery used to display research and engagement with the arts and the local community. Its Walls-Ortiz Gallery and Center, a storefront space located across the street from Hope Campus, is the primary space for public interactions, research and support of the arts. Total facilities equal 13,020 square feet. In addition, City Seminary is a Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO) member, which gives its students access to research libraries around the city. The curriculum includes use of the many cultural institutions around the city, including museums and theaters.

City Seminary projects that its students will be drawn from graduates of its non-degree Ministry Fellows Program who have already indicated their interest in enrolling (60% of graduates, as identified by survey), as well as through other City Seminary church and ministry networks. In the first year of operation, City Seminary anticipates a cohort of

20-22 students. In its third year, it plans to add more students, with a new 20-22 student cohort added every year. Thus, City Seminary anticipates in the fifth year having approximately 60-66 Master of Arts students enrolled at one time (a total of 80-88 over the first five years).

The Department completed its review of City Seminary's academic program proposal and has determined that the proposed program meets the standards for program registration. City Seminary's proposed program has also received positive reviews from separate external experts. Additionally, in May 2017, the Department conducted an on-site review of City Seminary. Data observed and analyzed from this on-site review further confirm that City Seminary has the organizational capacity to operate a degree-level program, faculty that possess the competence to meet the learning objectives of the curriculum, and a facility that is conducive to learning.

The Department has conducted a canvass of existing degree-granting institutions in New York State to obtain their input on the need for a new institution and its impact on their operations. The Department received no objections concerning City Seminary from existing degree-granting institutions in New York State.

Related Regents Items

N/A

Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment and grant the City Seminary of New York provisional authorization to offer programs that lead to a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree. The provisional period will be for five years from the date of approval by the Board of Regents.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment, grants City Seminary provisional authorization to offer programs leading to the M.A., and issues a provisional charter, the Department will register City Seminary's program in Ministry in the Global City. City Seminary would not have the authority to confer degrees during the provisional period and the Board of Regents would confer degrees to students who complete the registered program at City Seminary.

City Seminary must apply to the Department for an absolute charter and authority to confer degrees at least 18-months prior to the expiration of the provisional period. At that point, the Board of Regents will make a determination on whether to grant City Seminary an absolute charter and authorize City Seminary to confer degrees or extend the provisional charter, or deny City Seminary any charter authority past the term of provisional authorization. If City Seminary does not apply for an absolute charter with the authority to confer degrees at least 18-months prior to the expiration of the provisional period, its provisional authorization will expire at the end of its provisional period.