TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: John L. D'Agati

SUBJECT: Application for Regents Permission to Operate for
                     Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary

DATE: July 6, 2017

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents grant Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary permission to operate programs in Theology and Christian Education leading to the degree of Master of Arts?

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 Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary (the Seminary) exists in, and was incorporated by, the state of Tennessee in 1975. The primary mission of the Seminary is to provide undergraduate and graduate theological training for effective service in church-related and missions vocations through its main campus and designated branch campuses.

On April 18, 1986, the New York State Board of Regents authorized the Seminary to operate a branch campus in Schenectady, New York. The Seminary currently holds Regents Permission to Operate programs leading to the Master of Divinity degree, and the Associate in Occupational Studies (A.O.S.) degree in Pastoral Ministries.

The Seminary has applied for Regents permission to operate two additional programs at its Schenectady, New York location; a program in Christian Education and a program in Theology, each leading to the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.).

The M.A. in Theology is a professional graduate degree beyond the Bachelor of Arts degree, designed to equip students for service in a local church as a minister to adults, youth, children, or senior adults. It is also designed to equip students to labor as a church planter, church administrator, or to engage in discipleship ministry. This program is primarily related to specialized ministry in the local church and requires 60 semester hours of academic credit for graduation. The Seminary anticipates a five-year enrollment of under 15 students for this program.

The M.A. in Christian Education is a professional graduate degree beyond the Bachelor of Arts degree, designed to guide students to develop the ability to understand and interpret Christian faith in light of its biblical, theological, and historical dimensions and to utilize insights gained from these disciplines for the effective practice of Christian education in the church, the community, and the world. Like the M.A. in Theology, this program requires 60 semester hours of academic credit for graduation, and the Seminary anticipates a five-year enrollment of under 15 students for this program.

The Department completed its review of the Seminary's academic program proposals and has determined that the proposed programs demonstrate evidence of educational quality equivalent to those set forth in Part 52 of this Title.

Related Regents Items

http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1016hea1.pdf

Recommendation

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

VOTED: That the Board of Regents grant permission to Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary to offer programs in Theology and Christian Education leading to the degree of Master of Arts at its Schenectady, New York location. This approval will be effective beginning July 17, 2017 and ending on April 30, 2021.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board of Regents grants Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary permission to operate at the July 17, 2017 meeting, the Seminary will be able to offer its programs immediately following the determination. If the Seminary seeks to renew its permission to operate, it must notify the Department no later than April 30, 2020. Renewal of this permission to operate, if sought, will be subject to the terms of Section 3.56 of the Rules of the Board of Regents.