



WESLEY BIBLICAL SEMINARY

Strategic Plan 2021–2031

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Table of Contents

The Mission 4

1.0 WBS Strategic Leadership 4

 1.1 *Board of Trustees*..... 4

 1.2 *President’s Cabinet* 4

2.0 The Opportunity..... 4

3.0 The State of the School..... 5

 3.1 *Strengths*..... 5

 3.2 *Weaknesses* 5

 3.3 *Opportunities*..... 5

4.0 The Vision 5

 4.1 *Academically Vibrant* 5

 4.2 *Spiritually Vital*..... 6

 4.3 *Strategically Resourced*..... 6

 4.4 *Innovative and Accessible*..... 6

 4.5 *Well-Known and Respected*..... 5

5.0 Priorities and Strategies..... 6

 5.1 *Priority 1: Excellence in Scholarship* 6

 Priority 1 Strategies, Initiatives, and Projects 7

 5.2 *Priority 2: Brand Recognition* 6

 Priority 2 Strategies, Initiatives, and Projects 6

 5.3 *Priority 3: Building a Sustainable Foundation*..... 8

 Priority 3 Strategies, Initiatives, and Projects 8

Priority 4: Excellence in Administrative Effectiveness and Operational Efficiency 8

 Priority Strategies, Projects, and Initiatives..... 8

6.0 Indicators and Metrics..... 9

 6.1 *Indicators and Metrics for Excellence in Scholarship* 9

 6.2 *Indicators and Metrics for Brand Recognition*..... 9

 6.3 *Indicators and Metrics for Building a Sustainable Foundation* 9

 6.4 *Indicators and Metrics for Administrative Effectiveness and Operational Efficiency* Error! Bookmark not defined.

The Mission

Wesley Biblical Seminary exists to educate and train men and women who, in fulfillment of the Church's mission, will live and proclaim Trinitarian faith, promote the Spirit-filled life, and in full commitment to the absolute authority of the Bible, actively make disciples of Jesus Christ.

1.0 WBS Leadership

1.1 Board of Trustees

- David Chandler, *Chairman*
- James Renfroe, *Vice-Chairman*
- Scot King, *Secretary*
- Tim Barber, *Treasurer*
- Susie Brabec
- Stuart Kellogg
- Tim Philpot
- John Oswalt
- Marshall Daigre
- Melvin Pace
- Bob McElroy
- Buddy Smith
- Mary Tyes-Williams
- James Howard
- Hamp Dye
- Joseph Campbell
- Melissa Clayton
- Morgan Roberts
- Roberto Stevenson
- Patty Christie

1.2 President's Cabinet

- Matt Ayars, *President*
- Chris Lohrstorfer, *Vice President for Academic Affairs incumbent*
- Elijah Friedeman, *Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success*
- Ethan Kelly, *Vice President for Business Affairs*

2.0 The Opportunity

Evangelical theological higher education faces new challenges daily and is changing at a rate unlike ever before. These changes are in large part due to the culture war being waged in the public sphere as well as in the church. The assault on the Christian orthodoxy and worldview today—while mild compared to other times in church history—is having a tremendous impact not only on individuals and families, but also churches and institutions serving the church. The shift in thinking and values is reshaping the very landscape of the thought-world we inhabit.

These challenges are not a threat, but an opportunity. They are an opportunity for Wesley Biblical Seminary to become more nimble, innovative, entrepreneurial, creative, and ultimately more effective in fulfilling our institutional mission and expanding our influence. Furthermore, these challenges amplify the urgency of transformative theological education that is uncompromisingly committed to full biblical authority and the message of holiness.

More than ever the church needs seminaries they can trust. Because the culture war is one of ideas, the front lines of battle are not on social media platforms, but in institutions of higher learning. The church needs seminaries who are uncompromising in their commitment to Christian orthodoxy.

Finally, the church needs a seminary whose curriculum makes its point of departure the risenness of Christ rather than the fallenness of man. The Gospel changes lives. There is hope for real transformation, regeneration, and rebirth in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus's atoning work was efficacious to the point of activating and supplying power for a new reality today. This is the message and Person that the world needs, and the church needs a seminary that will develop leaders who embody that very truth through redeemed living and leading.

This strategic plan is a forecast of what WBS shall become considering this context.

3.0 The State of the School

3.1 Strengths

- 10-year accreditation
- Entrepreneurial
- Innovative leadership team, staff and faculty
- Experienced in innovative teaching delivery methods
- Relational
- No debt
- Lean campus facilities
- Sustainable cost/tuition model
- Racially diverse student body
- Core of academically qualified and experienced residential leaders
- Location (racial diversity and strong evangelical population)
- International inclusiveness (particularly Africa and Mexico)
- Robust programming for non-degree seeking students

3.2 Weaknesses/Limitations

- Limited campus space
- Inadequate systems and execution
- Lacking strong brand-recognition
- Small endowment
- Lack of diversity among full-time faculty
- Alumni involvement
- Lack of large denominational accreditation
- Inadequate donor base

3.3 Opportunities

- Access to global network
- Developing partnerships (Global Methodist Church, NBC, Salvation Army, AIM, etc.)
- Partnership with Salvation Army for Officer training programming.
- Bible College
- Non-accredited program offerings (Wesley Institute, Seminary Unboxed, audit, etc.)

4.0 The Vision

In ten years WBS will be known by these qualities:

4.1 Well-Known and Respected

WBS is a Christian formation institution that is widely known as a leader among accredited seminaries, Bible colleges, Christian universities, and mainstream Evangelical denominations. Likewise, WBS is a household name in the Jackson Metro area. WBS will be known as an institution

that is a bastion for orthodoxy in its theological convictions, multi-denominational, yet distinctively Wesleyan-Arminian with an uncompromising commitment to the authority of the Scriptures and the message of holiness. The WBS brand is recognized, understood, remembered, and thought of positively among its target demographics. The WBS brand is likewise correctly associated with its services of higher education. The WBS brand has loyalty, credibility, gives confidence, is consistent and attracts talent.

4.2 Academically Vibrant

A learning community of academic excellence offering strategically designed programs for ministry training at the undergraduate and graduate level. Scholarly research, writing, and excellence in teaching and course management are high priorities for Faculty as leading scholars contributing to their fields and to the formation of students.

4.3 Spiritually Vital

A learning community characterized by the heart and mind of Christ, embodying biblical holiness as the full love of God and neighbor, and committed to a life of loving obedience and holy fellowship. Proclamation of the gospel is at the center and periphery of all institutional life and activity.

4.4 Strategically Resourced

A learning community with accessible tuition models, multiple revenue streams, expansive donor development, good budgetary management practices, and effective and efficient operational infrastructure which allow the mission of the Seminary to move freely forward its vision/mission and enables the future generations of leaders to expand the vision and work of the Seminary.

4.5 Innovative and Accessible

WBS provides instruction in a multitude of different delivery formats and structures including polysynchronous learning and research-based tutor models that support and accommodate a wide range of learners and learner needs. Tuition models are financially accessible by students in the developing world, scaled to local economies and contexts.

5.0 *Priorities and Strategies*

5.1 Priority 1: Brand Recognition and Awareness

WBS is a household name in the Jackson Metro area and well-known among its peers and like-minded denominations as an institution that is a bastion for orthodox Christianity, multi-denominational, yet distinctively Wesleyan-Arminian with an unwavering commitment to the authority of the Scriptures and the message of holiness. WBS is recognized, understood, remembered, and thought of positively among our target demographics. The WBS brand and correctly associated with our services of higher education. The WBS brand has loyalty, credibility, gives confidence, is consistent and attracts talent.

Priority 2 Strategies, Initiatives, and Projects

- **Saturation Campaign.** Over the next ten years WBS will strategically saturate its target areas, groups, and prospective students and donors with the WBS brand. This means hiring a marketing firm within the Jackson metro area to develop and implement a minimum 2-year strategic marketing program. That program will include but not be limited to:

- Increase the quantity and quality of wbs.edu web traffic through robust search engine optimization.
- Robust participation in highly visible local events and activities.
- Partnership development with influencers in local churches, denominations, para-church organizations, Christian non-profits, and like-minded Christian formation institutions.
- Targeted social media saturation.
- Run display ads online and in the Jackson metro area.
- Robust promotion of Seminary Unboxed.
- Pay-per-click advertising campaigns.
- Developing a voice for the WBS brand through faculty speaking and teaching engagements making them and the WBS brand strategically visible.
- ***New Flagship Location.*** The size and location of Wesley Biblical Seminary’s current learning facility are the primary contributing factors in restricting our overall educational and financial capacities. Relocating to an appropriately sized, highly visible flagship learning and ministry resource center that is strategically and intelligently designed to accommodate our sustained enrollment growth trends, institutional vision, mission, and culture is essential in enabling WBS to optimally fulfill its institutional calling to train ecclesial leaders. With this, should WBS be awarded the full amount of the Lilly Foundation’s Pathways initiative, we will use those funds to construct and relocate to a new facility.
- ***Faculty Publication.*** Brands of institutions of higher learning are strengthened by faculty publication. Faculty name-recognition and regular contribution to knowledge attract attention to universities and seminaries and is a powerful recruitment tool for high performing students. Strong faculty publication records also attract further faculty talent. To increase faculty publication WBS will incentivize publication through several strategies including but not limited to: (1) monetary and resource support, (2) professional recognition, (3) academic promotion, and (3) capacity enhancement.

5.1 Priority 2: Excellence in Scholarship

WBS pursues an institutional culture of excellence in scholarship, in our learning, worship in our lives, and service in our communities.

Priority 1 Strategies, Initiatives, and Projects

- ***Build a world-class faculty and leadership team*** by developing existing and recruiting highly qualified individuals who demonstrate excellence in teaching and scholarship as evidenced by a robust publication record, professional activities, participation in academic societies, and service to the community and local churches.
- ***Prioritize creativity, scholarly writing, and research*** by increasing opportunities for faculty scholarship and collaborative research; by publicly encouraging and recognizing student creative and academic work, by increasing library holdings; and by conducting annual lecture series with notable scholars as part of the academic and spiritual programming of the Seminary.

- ***Pursue engagement in the classroom and course management*** by implementing a faculty professional development program aimed at high-impact learning strategies and effective instruction; by promoting and rewarding high-impact teaching strategies and best practices; and by increasing the quality and capacity of pedagogical and technical support.
- ***Foster collaborative learning, intellectual curiosity, and community dialogue*** by providing research activities, and community interaction; and by offering support services such as writing labs, research training, and tutoring.

5.3 Priority 3: Building a Sustainable Foundation

WBS carefully but boldly manages our resources to ensure long-term financial and institutional sustainability for future generations.

Priority 3 Strategies, Initiatives, and Projects

- ***Increase Seminary endowment funds*** through focused development strategies such as a capital campaign focused on endowment giving, planned estate giving, grants, and restricted gifts.
- ***Expand our donor base and giving levels*** by growing our network of advocates, partners, and champions for the Seminary; by finding new networks and relational connection to share the Seminary vision to gain new donors; and by communicating effectively with external stakeholders and involving them meaningfully in the life of the Seminary.
- ***Increase student enrollment and retention*** by recruiting a prepared, spiritually strong, and intellectually curious student body; by ensuring Seminary staff, processes, and financial aid resources are sufficiently available and structured to support enrollment goals; by achieving clear, substantial, and realistic enrollment goals related to marketing and lead generation, networking, recruiting, enrollment, and retention across all programs; and by maintaining competitive retention and completion rates for similar schools of international caliber.
- ***Increase alumni support and involvement*** by maintaining a dynamic Seminary alumni affairs office; by implementing a plan for regular alumni relations and interaction; by offering ongoing continuing education and professional development opportunities specifically for alumni; and by regionally targeting and asking alumni for financial support.
- ***Improve capacity and efficiency of Seminary business operations*** by ensuring the quality and efficiency in all Seminary operations; by using more intelligent data analytics to drive budget planning related to strategic initiatives; by providing regular departmental reports to budget managers; and by implementing a better performance review system.

Priority 4: Excellence in Administrative Effectiveness and Operational Efficiency

Priority Strategies, Projects, and Initiatives

WBS's gets a high return on its administrative investment with a healthy input-output ratio due to administrative and operational systems being engineered to serve the needs of the Seminary in carrying out its institutional mission with maximum productivity and with minimal wasted effort.

- ***Improve capacity and efficiency of Seminary administrative operations across all departments*** by implementing training and development programs for department supervisors.

- *Expand capabilities, realize potential and eliminate wasted time* by leveraging technology to automate repeatable work, removing barriers in the data flow and analysis, and maximize workflow.
- *Inspire productivity* by clearly communicating institutional objectives across the Seminary and fostering a work environment that is collegial, yet highly productive.

6.0 Indicators and Metrics

The following indicators and metrics will be used to evaluate the success of our work and performance toward our strategic priorities and goals. Each department will develop operational plans, objectives, and key results around these metrics toward the overall strategic plan. Specific quantitative metrics will be concretely defined within the various operational plans, objectives, and key results. Institutional dashboards will be developed using these defined, targeted metrics.

6.1 Indicators and Metrics for Excellence in Scholarship

- Diverse Faculty representing the diversity of the student body
- Annual Academic Seminar
- Faculty are leaders in professional and academic societies
- Faculty are regularly publishing scholarly articles in academic journals and volumes by widely recognized, peer edited publishing houses

6.2 Indicators and Metrics for Brand Recognition

- \$20,000 annual marketing/recruitment budget
- \$100,000 annual budget for institutional advancement

6.3 Indicators and Metrics for Building a Sustainable Foundation

- \$15,000,000 Endowment
- Enrollment Figures
- 60:40 Tuition: Endowment ratio for operations revenue

7.0 Initiatives & Projected Financials

7.1 Phase 1	\$1,000,000
1. Land Acquisition for Relocation (Pathways Phase 2 Award)	\$850,000
2. Two-Year Strategic Marketing Program	\$50,000
3. Increasing Scholarship (Pathways Phase 2 Award)	\$100,000
• Hire Instructional Technologist	
• Incentivize faculty scholarship and research	
7.2 Phase 2	\$5,200,000
1. Building Project (Pathways Phase 3 Award)	\$5,000,000
2. Endowment	\$100,000
• Implement targeted development strategies	
• Assess percentage of building project	
3. Marketing and Enrollment	\$100,000
• Add qualified recruiting and support staff	
• Expand alumni relations and marketing resources	
Total Financial Cost Projection	\$6,200,000

Appendix A: 2021–2025 Financial Projection

Ethan Kelly, *Vice President of Business Affairs*

For Fiscal Year End 2021-25 the finances for Wesley Biblical Seminary will gradually but substantially improve. The improvement can be broken down into three categories: selling real estate, tuition growth, and endowment growth. That improvement will be translated over the coming five years into three areas of strength: a strong cash reserve, competitive tuition rates, and quality staff retention and selection.

Wesley Biblical Seminary's long history of selling real estate is about to close. The Floral Drive campus is under contract to sell in June 2021, one payment remains from the Hood Foundation for the Northside Drive campus parking lot, and WBS's property in Lubbock, Texas is has sold for \$53,000. The Lubbock property sale is not included in the strategic plan since the proceeds will be used to assist WBS finish the 2021 FY with enough cash left over to add to its reserve fund.

Tuition growth will largely be driven by the establishment of an undergraduate program, although growth is expected on the masters and doctoral levels as well. Providing an affordable, flexible, Christian education to anyone with a high school or associate degree will take our market access to unprecedented levels. A student body a fraction of the size of the typical Christian college would transform the school in many ways, including financially.

Thanks to growing tuition income and reducing the school's real estate portfolio, WBS over the next five years should be able to start making contributions to its endowment out of cash flow. We have been successful in fundraising to the endowment over the past three years and will build on that success as the school's reliance on unrestricted donations for cash flow recedes.

The increased cash flow from the above three factors will enable WBS to build on its cash reserve. The purpose of the reserve fund is to enable the school to survive a downturn in either donations, tuition, or both. Our goal is to keep three months of expenses in reserve. Therefore, the cash reserve will grow as our budget grows.

A growing student body reduces the need to raise tuition rates, which will enable WBS to gain an edge over peer institutions as they raise their rates with necessity and inflation. Furthermore, a growing endowment will allow more students to receive scholarships, eliminating tuition for the best and brightest of our student body. The only area where WBS anticipates raising tuition is for the undergraduate program after it gains ABHE accreditation. Even after a tuition raise, WBS will be highly competitive with other undergraduate programs, public and private, in cost.

Quality staff and faculty retention and selection will set the tone for the school at large. While the total number of WBS employees will grow as the school grows, the focus will be on building quality not quantity. First, paying one employee a higher salary is cheaper than paying two employees an average salary. Second, competitive compensation attracts and keeps top faculty and staff, who attract top students and donors. Over the next five years WBS will develop and implement a compensation policy for faculty and staff. The policy will be based on ATS-designated peer school compensation but will provide leadership the flexibility it needs in the retention and selection process.

In summary, the future is bright for Wesley Biblical Seminary through the next five years. Increased cash flow through real estate liquidation, tuition growth, and endowment growth will allow the school to build a strong balance sheet, larger student body, and top notch faculty and staff. Wesley Biblical Seminary will become known as a good steward in God’s kingdom, of both finances and the next generation of church leaders.

2020–2021		\$1.42M BUDGET		\$300K INITIAL RESERVE	
<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Line Total</i>		
Masters	1636 hours	\$545	\$891,620		
D.Min.	260 hours	\$595	\$154,700		
Wesley Institute	90 seats	\$500	\$45,000		
Audit	100 seats	\$350	\$25,000		
End. Ex-Scholarship	\$1 million	5%	\$40,000		
Tuition write-off	423 hours	\$545	(\$230,535)		
Floral Drive Rental	\$400K to endowment upon sale		\$30,000		
Northside Drive Sale			\$15,000		
Student Fees			\$30,000		
Unrestricted Giving			\$519,215		
			Subtotal	\$1,520,000	
			Less Budget	\$1,420,000	
			Remainder added to Reserve Fund	\$100,000	

2021–2022		\$1.6M BUDGET		\$400K INITIAL RESERVE	
<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Line Total</i>		
Masters	1902	\$545	\$1,036,590		
D.Min.	275	\$595	\$163,625		
Wesley Institute	100 Seats	\$500	\$50,000		
Audit	125 Seats	\$250	\$31,250		
End. Ex-Scholarship	\$1.8 million	4%	\$72,000		
Tuition write-off	459 hours	\$545	(\$250,155)		
Northside Drive Sale			\$15,000		

Student Fees			\$35,000
Undergraduate	450 hours	\$200	\$90,000
Subscription Income			\$10,000
Unrestricted Giving			\$371,690
			Subtotal \$1,625,000
			Less Budget \$1,600,000
Remainder added to Reserve Fund			\$25,000

2022–2023	\$1.7M BUDGET	\$425K INITIAL RESERVE	
<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Line Total</i>
Masters	2002 hours	\$545	\$1,091,090
D.Min.	300 hours	\$595	\$178,500
Wesley Institute	100 seats	\$500	\$50,000
Audit	125 seats	\$250	\$31,250
End. Ex-Scholarship	\$1.9 million	4%	\$76,000
Tuition write-off	459 hours	\$545	(\$250,155)
Student Fees			\$40,000
Undergraduate	900 hours	\$200	\$180,000
Subscription Income			\$10,000
Unrestricted Giving			\$318,315
			Subtotal \$1,725,000
			Less Budget \$1,700,000
Remainder added to Reserve Fund			\$25,000

2023–2024	\$1.8M BUDGET	\$450K INITIAL RESERVE	
<i>Programs</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Line Total</i>
Masters	2002 hours	\$545	\$1,091,090
D.Min.	300 hours	\$595	\$178,500

Wesley Institute	100 seats	\$500	\$50,000
Audit	125 seats	\$250	\$31,250
End. Ex-Scholarship	\$2 million	4%	\$80,000
Tuition write-off	459 hours	\$545	(\$250,155)
Student Fees			\$45,000
Undergraduate	1500 hours	\$300	\$450,000
Subscription Income			\$10,000
Unrestricted Giving			\$139,315
			Subtotal \$1,825,000
			Less Budget \$1,800,000
Remainder added to Reserve Fund			\$25,000

2024–2025		\$1.9M BUDGET		\$475 INITIAL RESERVE	
<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Line Total</i>		
Masters	2002 hours	\$545	\$1,091,090		
D.Min.	300 hours	\$595	\$178,500		
Wesley Institute	100 seats	\$500	\$50,000		
Audit	125 seats	\$250	\$31,250		
End. Ex-Scholarship	\$2.1 million	4%	\$84,000		
Tuition write-off	459 hours	\$545	(\$250,155)		
Student Fees			\$45,000		
Undergraduate	2250 hours	\$300	\$675,000		
Subscription Income			\$10,000		
Unrestricted Giving			\$0		
			Subtotal \$1,914,685		
			Less budget \$1,900,000		
Remainder added to reserve fund			\$14,685		