Howard University School of Divinity
Mission Statement:
Howard University School of Divinity, a graduate theological and professional school, educates and forms academic and religious leaders to serve the Church and society, and to celebrate the religious and cultural heritage of African Americans, the African Diaspora, and Africa.

May 7, 2015

147th COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Saturday, May 9, 2015, 10am
Upper Quadrangle, Main Campus
The Howard University’s 147th graduation ceremony will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2015. Ursula M. Burns, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Xerox Corporation, will deliver the Commencement address. Four individuals will receive honorary degrees during the ceremony: Morgan Freeman, Academy Award-winning actor and director, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, President, Spelman College, and Eddie C. & C. Sylvia Brown, philanthropists. The Commencement exercise will be broadcast live over WHUR-FM Radio 96.3 MHz and WHUT-TV, Channel 32.

For Additional News and Events at Howard University, please see the What’s New @ Howard email or www.howard.edu.

STUDENT ELECTION RESULTS:
The following students were elected in the 2015-2016 elections:
Terence Mayo,
HUSD SGA President
Faith Bynoe,
HUSD SGA Executive Vice President
Brandon Beasley,
HUSD SGA VP of Communications
Loria McLeod,
HUSD SGA VP of Finance
Vincent Van,
HUSD SGA VP of Outreach
Christopher Cross,
HU Graduate Trustee

PLEASE CONGRATULATE YOUR NEW HUSD SGA EXECUTIVE BOARD AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATE TRUSTEE!
Reflections at the Close of a Year


The day is almost here. The time draws nigh. The hard work has paid off. Let families and friends rejoice. The hour has come when you will hear your name called, receive your diploma, heed to your higher calling, and fulfill your ministry. For some of you who are graduating this will mean a return to pulpits and ministries to which you are already charged. For others, now is the time of new ministerial beginnings with license, ordination, credentials, confirmation and perhaps a congregational call. For still others, this is the momentary pause that refreshes before the next round of intellectual endeavor begins, whether your graduate studies take you more deeply into the academic study of religion or other cognate fields. For yet others, now begins the integration of your current career with the sacred calling to bear manifold witness. For select others this is a moment of studied introspection, of pregnant pause, of interregnum earned before the next step, of how best to integrate what you have learned with the life you now live. No matter the case, the journey awaits.

Graduating seniors and returning students of HUSD, your next step ever looms large, to know what God purposes for you in ministry and life. My prayer is that the life of the mind, the spirit and the body are fully met in you, that head, heart and hand have been enjoined in your graduate theological education at Howard University School of Divinity. From Carnegie Hall on the Main Campus to 1240 Randolph Street, NE, 1400 Shepherd Street, NE, and Holy Cross Hall on the West Campus, the School of Divinity has known different homes and experienced name changes through the years. No matter our physical location, with the opportunities and challenges that await our core commitment to you the students of HUSD is unwaveringly the same: Intellectual rigor. A passion for justice and freedom. A relentless search for truth. Excellence in ministry and scholarship. Leadership for the pulpit and Public Square. “Great is Thy Faithfulness!”

In the Presence
To the HUSD Community:

As we close out this academic year, I am pleased to have this opportunity to share a few reflections on what we have accomplished and point us toward what God has in store for us.

This year faculty worked together to refine our degree programs, search for a new colleague in Hebrew Bible, explore new possibilities for on-line courses, review and update our advising practices, mentor students, enhance our assessment practices, and share our research and scholarship locally and throughout the nation.

This year staff and administrators remained steadfast in supporting academic programs, raising money for the school, recruiting new students, navigating the sometimes unwieldy infrastructure of our beloved university, and spearheading new initiatives in the face of limited resources.

This year students participated in academic conferences and community events; led chapel services; organized protests, town hall forums, Harambee, and other critical dialogues; offered their artistic gifts in “God’s Trombones Revisited”; participated in Howard’s Alternative Spring Break and Research Week; all while taking divinity school courses and working full and part-time jobs.

And so as this academic year comes to an end, I want to commend all of you for the great work that has been accomplished. Yet, as we all know this has been a challenging year encompassed by the protests of Ferguson and the rebuilding of Baltimore – with all of the other cities and people, in between, affected by smoldering injustices. This confirms that now more than ever we at HUSD must embrace our vision of being “a global leader in theological education in a community driven by intellectual rigor, a passion for justice and freedom, and a relentless search for truth.”

May we be reminded of the words of the apostle Paul who faced many trials and tribulations throughout his ministry, especially as he dealt with questions and crises that impacted the people of Corinth. Paul advocated for unity among his followers and though there were many leaders and many who thought they had special knowledge or special gifts, Paul had the challenge of pointing his followers to the one who had all power to transform their conditions and resolve their struggles and concerns. And so Paul carefully offered the following words: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God gives the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6).

God is still making things grow and providing the increase among us despite how our circumstances may appear. We are indeed surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who have poured their best into HUSD, and so the time has come for us to do the same. Therefore, I count it a privilege to carry forth my ministry among you during this season of great transition and tremendous possibility.

Congratulations, Graduates!
Finish what you started, Returning Students!
Keep your eyes on the prize, Faculty and Staff Colleagues!

Through it all, it is God who gives the increase.

With head and heart
Dear HUSD Seminarians,

As the 2015-2016 academic year closes, I encourage you to reflect on the lessons learned through your shared experiences of this year. During our Fall 2014 Pinning Ceremony, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, told us that “God Still Needs Somebody to Stand.” He encouraged you to “speak the inconvenient truth” while remembering that you “are called to high standards in civic life.” Our HUSD Student Government President, Hazel Cherry’s message during the SGA chapel service asked the question, “Do You Have the Audacity?” She asked if you had the audacity to “be a leader who is not desensitized to the negative things that happen to people of color.” Within a few weeks, our community came together to discuss ways to address the unjust killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, Eric Garner in New York, NY, and others followed by the refusal to indict those responsible. Joining our voices with others in declaring that “Black Lives Matter,” we discussed ways to act for social justice beyond protests. This was just during the fall semester!

During our Spring 2015 Faculty-Student Colloquium, our Associate Professor of Homiletics, Dr. Kenyatta Gilbert, presented his lecture on the topic, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop: Prophetic Preaching and King’s Death Instinct.” Dr. Gilbert and respondents, Calisa Hawkes, MDiv graduating student, Verdell Wright, MDiv Alumnus and Ph.D. student, and Dr. Adam Bond, Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Associate Professor of Historical Studies, helped you to understand the importance of the prophetic voice in African American preaching, and the need to take care of self in order to effectively care for others. Our 2015 Seminarians’ Day of Preaching, Part I, was an opportunity for eleven women preachers, Melissa McQueen, Hazel Cherry, Shandell Taylor, Tarra Taylor, Kinwana McGrigg, Julie Bringman, Ieisha Hawley-Marion, Sheena Hutchinson, Crystal West, and Venita George, to use their prophetic voices to preach “Sermons Seldom Heard on Sundays.” These women preachers spoke “the inconvenient truth” while demonstrating that they had the audacity to “be a leader who is not desensitized to the negative things that happen to people of color.” Benjamin Crump, Esq., attorney for the families of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice, passionately told us how these incidents caused him to transition “From the Moment Into the Movement” and reminded you of something that you have studied in your classes and learned through these shared experiences. At the core of everything that you say and do, you are an instrument of social justice.

As this academic year ends with the protests and unrest over the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody in our neighboring city of Baltimore, celebrate your accomplishments of this year, congratulate the Class of 2015, express gratitude to your classmates, faculty, staff, and deans for the challenge, encouragement, and support you have received, and remember that God needs someone with the audacity to use their prophetic voice to speak the inconvenient truth with sermons seldom heard on Sundays, while leading others from the moment into the movement.

Be Blessed!
Why is it important for the preacher to honor the whole counsel of Scripture in proclaiming the gospel? Because listeners get biblically and theologically shortchanged when preachers run to the same texts Sunday after Sunday.

What can and must the preacher say at a funeral after a person has died or during a wedding before the words “I do” are spoken?

*Preaching the Lectionary and Special Occasions*, scheduled for Summer Session II (June 29 - July 31), explores the socio-functional role and identity of the preacher as the community’s priest in the context of liturgical worship and places specific emphasis on developing sermons for special services.

See the HUSD website for information about other new courses for the upcoming academic year.

**Congratulations Class of 2015!**
2015 SCHOOL OF DIVINITY CLOSING CONVOCATION FOR THE RECOGNITION OF HONORS & DEGREES
Friday, May 8, 2015, 3pm
HUSD PROMENADE
On Friday, May 8, 2015, 3pm, the Howard University School of Divinity will hold the Closing Convocation for the Recognition of Honors and Degrees. This year’s Closing Convocation speaker is The Rev. Dr. Frederick Haynes, Senior Pastor, Friendship West Baptist Church, Dallas, TX. Join us as we celebrate the accomplishment of the Class of 2015!

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LOCAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
WITH HEARTS WIDE OPEN: A SEMINAR ON CONTEMPLATIVE LEADERSHIP
April 30 – May 14, 2015
The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation invites you to participate in an online seminar to support your leadership. Select any six days and time of your choosing between April 30 – May 14, 2015. There will be six, two-hour modules and a live chat discussion on May 12th at 12 noon. Through content videos and audios, Leah Rampy, Ph.D., Shalem’s Executive Director, who has a background in corporate management and leadership consulting as well as a deep interest in practicing contemplative leadership, will led the course. For registration details, visit www.shalem.org.

GETTING TO THE TRUTH: WRITING IN THE FIRST PERSON
Friday, May 29 - Sunday, May 31, 2015
Washington National Cathedral
Creative writers at every level are invited to this three-day conference led by Nora Gallagher, author, Editor-in-Charge of Environmental Responsibility and Special Projects at Patagonia, Inc. and Barbara Brown Taylor, New York Times best-selling author, professor, and Episcopal priest. The workshop emphasizes both the process and the discovery of writing. Explore how the search for the right word can become a spiritual practice, how to avoid cliché, and how to find the story. A flyer is attached. Please see the website for more information.

BPFNA ~ BAUTISTAS por la PAZ SUMMER CONFERENCE
Monday, July 6 – Saturday, July 11, 2015
Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA
BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz will hold its annual gathering of peacemakers from throughout North America on Monday, July 6 – Saturday, July 11, 2015 at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, VA. The gathering will offer worship, music, workshops, small groups and more to nurture and sustain a life of peace rooted in justice. With the theme “No Longer Strangers: Crossing Borders for Peacemaking,” they will address the need to cross borders of all types including language, culture, race, religion, nationality, generation, class, and sexual orientation. This year’s gathering will bring together seminarians from Canada, the United States, Mexico, Puerto
Rico, and Cuba to explore current issues in context. Conference information and registration is available at http://www.bpfna.org/gather/summer-conference. A donor is providing the option of free registration and campus use fee for people of color (self-defined, but including people identifying their racial/ethnic identity as Black, Asian & Pacific Islander, Native American, Latina/o). This offer is good for the first 100 attendees who request it. Select the box in the “additional information” section to choose this option.

SCHOLARSHIP/FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES/CALL FOR PAPERS

MERCERSBURG SOCIETY ROTH PRIZE
The Mercersburg Society invites students to participate in the Roth Prize competition. The award of $750 is given for the best student paper on any topic, historical or contemporary, pertaining to Mercersburg Theology. Mercersburg Theology developed in the German Reformed Church in the mid-19th century, under the leadership of John Williamson Nevin and Philip Schaff. Students taking courses in Theology, History of Christianity, and Church Music & Worship might find the Mercersburg tradition a fruitful topic for in-depth study. Papers submitted for the prize may be written in a regular seminary course or arise from independent study. It is expected that papers will be approximately 15-20 pages in length, complete with appropriate documentation. The recipient of the prize will be invited to present the winning essay at an upcoming Mercersburg Society Convocation (held annually in June). At the decision of the editors, the paper may then be published in the New Mercersburg Review. Submissions should be sent to Dr. Anne T. Thayer, Diefenderfer Professor of Mercersburg and Ecumenical Theology and Church History, Lancaster Theological Seminary, 555 West James Street, Lancaster, PA 17603. Submission deadline is Friday, May 15, 2015. Email inquiries may be sent to Dr. Thayer at athayer@lancasterseminary.edu.

THE GOODWIN PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN THEOLOGICAL WRITING
The Richard and Louise Goodwin Prizes in for Excellence in Theological Writing is a Theological Horizons competition that recognizes the finest theology graduate students from around the world. There are three chances to win: $2,500, $1,000, $500. A $500 prize goes to the professor of the winning student. Eligibility Requirement: The writer must be a masters or pre-dissertation doctoral student. The submission must be an original, unpublished essay. Submissions must be submitted June 1, 2015 via email (goodwinprize@theologicalhorizons.org) or mail (1841 University Circle, Charlottesville, VA 22903). For more information, see the attached document or contact goodwinprize@theologicalhorizons.org.

FORUM FOR THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION FUND FINDER
The Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) Fund Finder (http://fteleaders.org/funds) provides information about financial resources beyond those offered by FTE and by individual theological institutions. Sources of financial assistance in Fund Finder can be searched by keyword and by specific categories. Fund Finder is a full listing of financial aid available for undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and postdoctoral studies in theology and religion. Here you can find support offered by churches, denominations, individuals and organizations. These resources have been verified with the organizations or individuals offering aid. However, details change continuously, and persons seeking financial aid should confirm availability, requirements and benefits when contacting any of these sources. FTE is not responsible for errors or changes in funding information and in procedures made by funding sources.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

SALT PROGRAM HELPS STUDENTS MANAGE DEBT.
Howard University has partnered with the nonprofit organization American Student Assistance (ASA) to provide access to SALT, a program that offers education debt management and financial literacy to current students and alumni. SALT provides interactive money management tools and resources, personalized tracking of all federal and private student loans, advice from counselors, assistance with resolving complex student loan-related problems, and access to thousands of jobs and internships. American Student Assistance, a 56-year-old nonprofit, launched SALT in December 2011. Previous ASA programs have demonstrated that students provided with proactive, customized and targeted communication are far less likely to fail in loan repayment. Please visit www.saltmoney.org/howard to join SALT.