



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SEMINARY ATTENDANCE AMONG UMC ORDINANDS – 2015 REPORT

As part of their yearly “Business of the Annual Conference” reporting, each annual conference of The United Methodist Church reports (1) the names of the individuals ordained as a Deacon or Elder in their conference that year and (2) the seminary that awarded the degree for each of those individuals. The General Board of Higher Education & Ministry (GBHEM) has been collecting this information over the past several years to better understand where ordinands in The UMC are receiving their seminary education.

This report summarizes findings from the 2015 “Business of the Annual Conference” reports from all of The UMC’s annual conferences and offers an examination of trends in this information over the past seven years. As we issue this report, GBHEM acknowledges that there are many different contributions UM-affiliated institutions make to the mission of The UMC, and here we provide an examination of just one type of contribution. In this report, in other words, GBHEM does not intend to suggest the value of some institutions over others, and indeed this single metric would never allow us to do so.

2015 ORDINAND SEMINARIES

Looking first at ordinand seminary information from the 2015 BAC’s, summarized in Table 1, several items are worth noting. First, nearly two-thirds (62%) of the Deacon and Elder ordinands for The UMC in 2015 received their seminary degree from a UM-affiliated institution. This is the highest concentration of ordinands from UM institutions in recent years, as will be shown in the section below.

Table 1. 2015 Distribution of Ordinands by Seminary.

School	Ordinands	% of Total
Duke	52	11.87%
Candler	38	8.68%
Wesley	29	6.62%
Perkins	28	6.39%
Garrett	28	6.39%
MTSO	21	4.79%
Saint Paul	19	4.34%
United	15	3.42%
Iliff	13	2.97%
Drew	10	2.28%
Claremont	9	2.05%
Boston	6	1.37%
Gammon	5	1.14%
UM Total	273	62.33%
Asbury	57	13.01%
All other schools	108	24.66%
Grand Total	438	100.00%

Second, Asbury Theological Seminary remains the most predominant institution with 57 (or 13%) of the 2015 ordinands. Closely following Asbury, Duke Divinity School is the single most predominant UM-affiliated institution with 52 (or 12%) of the 2015 ordinands. Candler School of Theology is the second most predominant UM institution with 38 (or 9%) of the 2015 ordinands, and Wesley Theological Seminary, Perkins School of Theology, and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary round out the top five UM institutions each with around 6% of the 2015 ordinands.

108 (or 25%) of the 2015 ordinands received their degrees from other institutions beyond the 13 UM institutions and Asbury. Highest among these other institutions (not fully listed here), Hood Theological Seminary had 11 ordinands in 2015 and Vanderbilt Divinity School had 9.



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2009-2015 PERCENTAGE OF ORDINANDS FROM UM SEMINARIES

As noted above, 2015 saw the highest concentration of Deacon and Elder ordinands from UM-affiliated institutions in recent years, with nearly two-thirds (62%) of the ordinands receiving their degree from a UM institution. This represents a 4% increase over the previous year, and an almost 9% increase over 2009, when just 54% of the year's Deacon and Elder ordinands received their degree from a UM-affiliated institution.

Looking across the last seven years, shown in Figure 1, there is a clearly discernible *upward* trend in the percentage of ordinands who received their degree from a UM-affiliated institution. While we cannot with any degree of certainty provide explanations for these numbers, this trend certainly paints a promising picture for those in The UMC who desire to see higher concentrations of UM clergy educated at UM institutions and who have made concerted efforts in recent years to improve the processes and supports that allow UM candidates for ordination to attend UM institutions.

Figure 1. Percentage of Ordinands at UM Seminaries, 2009-2015.

