Disclosure Statement Regarding the Status of
MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Memphis, Tennessee

Issued December 8, 2019, by SACSCOC

The following publicly available information is provided by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) concerning the accreditation of Memphis Theological Seminary. Information presented below is in accord with SACSCOC’s disclosure policy; staff of the Commission cannot comment further on questions specifically related to Memphis Theological Seminary. The institution has reviewed this statement prior to public posting.

Action by SACSCOC Board of Trustees took place on December 8, 2019, and the institution’s next review is December 2020.

What is the accreditation status of Memphis Theological Seminary? Memphis Theological Seminary is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges; however, the institution was denied reaffirmation, continued in accreditation, and continued on Warning for twelve (12) months following action on reaffirmation of accreditation in December 2018. SACSCOC accreditation includes all components of the institution—all programs, branch campuses, off-campus sites, and distance learning programs as reported to SACSCOC; thus, the Warning status applies to the entire institution.

What does it mean to be denied reaffirmation, continued in accreditation, and continued on Warning? A Warning imposed by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees at the time of an institution’s comprehensive decennial review follows a determination of significant non-compliance with the Core Requirements or Standards of the Principles of Accreditation—the accreditation standards of SACSCOC; failure to make timely and significant progress toward correcting the deficiencies that led to the findings of non-compliance; or failure to comply with SACSCOC policies and procedures. The maximum total time during one monitoring period that an institution may be on Warning is two years. In December 2020, Memphis Theological Seminary will have been on Warning for two years. For additional information about sanctions, see SACSCOC’s policy entitled “Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership.”

Why was Memphis Theological Seminary denied reaffirmation, continued in accreditation, and continued on Warning? Memphis Theological Seminary was denied reaffirmation, continued in accreditation, and continued on Warning because the SACSCOC Board of Trustees determined that it had failed to demonstrate compliance with Standard 7.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan), Standard 8.2.a (Student outcomes: educational programs), and Standard 13.3 (Financial responsibility) of the Principles of Accreditation. A Special Committee was not authorized to visit the institution. These standards expect an institution to (1) have a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement; (2) identify expected student learning outcomes, assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provide evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for each of its education programs; and (3) to manage its financial resources in a responsible manner. (To read the full statements for the standards cited above, access the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.)

What will happen in December 2020? The SACSCOC Board of Trustees will consider the accreditation status of Memphis Theological Seminary following a review of a Monitoring Report submitted by the institution addressing the standards cited above for non-compliance. The Board will have the following options: (1) reaffirm accreditation and remove the institution from Warning without an additional report; (2) reaffirm accreditation and remove the institution from Warning and request a Fifth-Year Follow-Up Report; (3) deny reaffirmation, continue accreditation, place the institution on Probation, request a Monitoring Report, and authorize a Special Committee; and (4) remove the institution from membership for failure to comply with the Principles of Accreditation. Commission staff will not speculate on what decision might be made by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees in December 2020.

For additional information regarding SACSCOC’s accreditation process, access the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.