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## ***JOHNSON C. SMITH*** ***Theological Seminary***



**2014-15 Annual Report:**  
**“Constancy in the Face of Change”**



*Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary is the only historically African-American theological institution among the 10 seminaries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Nearly 148 years old, it continues to be one of the most dramatic manifestations of the denomination's commitment to diversity and equity. Its guiding values include the celebration of the black Presbyterian heritage and a championing of justice and the Reformed theological tradition.*

# *President's Letter*

August 2015

Dear Graduate, Supporter, Friend of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary;

Grace and peace!

One of my favorite snapshots of the year is this one (right) of myself standing with three Presbyterian Women—Sheila Louder, Barbara Leath, and Virginia Hawkins-Stephens. The picture was taken during the January 2015 JCSTS vision launch and grand unveiling. It was a joy to stand with these women each of whom uniquely helped shape my ministry over the past 20 years. I salute these women who represent the overarching theme of this report: constancy in the face of change.



When JCSTS announced in April 2014 that the institution was disaffiliating from the Interdenominational Theological Center after a 45-year membership, many within the seminary community expressed fear that JCSTS would be unable to sustain itself as a freestanding institution. Despite our reassurances and rationale about emerging changes in higher education and the incumbent need of JCSTS to reposition itself to attract students, it quickly became apparent that words were not enough. For many, JCSTS simply was going to have to demonstrate its viability and stability over time.

And we are doing so.

This report summarizes JCSTS' current institutional status and burgeoning identity as a justice-oriented Christ-centered institution. It also describes JCSTS' ability to maintain its presence and craft its identity during a year of radical change. I believe this constancy is a feat in and of itself—evidence of the seminary's faithfulness to the Lord's call; and I am convinced the seminary is on a journey toward the forefront of theological education.

JCSTS warmly invites you to join this exhilarating adventure of faith and service.

In gratitude and joyful anticipation,

*Paul T. Roberts, Sr.*

Paul T. Roberts, Sr.  
President

# *A Timeline of the Seminary's History*

The history of Johnson C. Smith Seminary is marked by bold moves. The fact that the institution was founded on the heels of the devastating Civil War represented courageous imagination. Against many odds, it became The Freedmen's College of North Carolina in a simple wooden building in Charlotte, North Carolina. Established first to teach reading, writing, and other basic skills to freed slaves, in short order it was training teachers and preachers. The theological department of the college graduated its first ministers in 1872.

**1867**-Leaders of Catawba Presbytery establish The Freedmen's College of North Carolina. Soon thereafter, fund raising by Mary Biddle of Philadelphia generates \$1,400 and college is renamed Biddle Memorial Institute to honor her late husband, Major Henry Biddle.

**1872**-Seminary division graduates first three students.

**1876**-Col. W. R. Myers of Charlotte donates first eight acres to school, which soon becomes Biddle University.

**1919**-Biddle becomes first historically black school in South to offer degrees in education.

**1923**-Jane Berry Smith (right) of Pittsburgh, PA, gives an endowment for new buildings to honor her late husband. This leads to the renaming of the institution as Johnson C. Smith University.



**1938**-JCSU is an independent college, affiliated with the United Presbyterian Church.

**1941**-JCSU admits its first women students to the freshman class.

**1944**-JCSU is founding member of the United Negro College Fund.



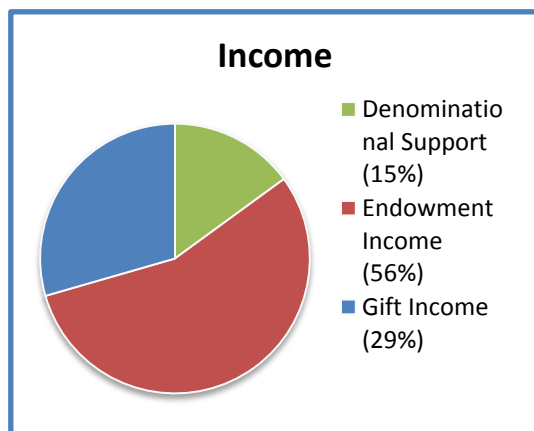
**1969**-Facing loss of accreditation, the seminary leaves JCSU to become affiliated with the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta. The move is spearheaded by alumnus James H. Costen, Sr. (left), and is approved by the 182<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S. Costen becomes Administrative Dean of JCSTS which reopens with four students. Costen eventually becomes President of the ITC.

**2014**-JCSTS disaffiliates itself from the ITC, relocates to the offices of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta at 1024 Ponce de Leon Avenue, and re-establishes itself as an independent seminary still affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**2015**-JCSTS adopts new strategic plan, institutional statements, staffing plan, and names Paul Roberts as President.

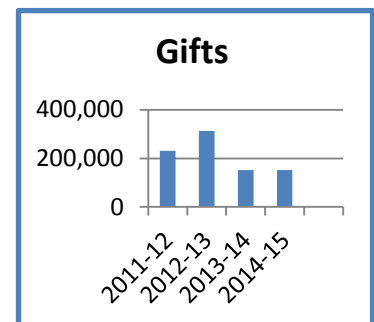
**2017**-JCSTS commemorates 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## Financials



JCSTS has three primary income streams indicated by the pie chart to the left. The seminary has a 4.5 million dollar endowment (managed by the Presbyterian Foundation) from which the majority of annual income is derived. Gift income accounts for approximately 30% of the JCSTS annual budget, and denominational support accounts for the remainder. The bar graph (right) indicates donations received over the last four fiscal years. The spikes in 2012 and 2013

are largely the result of one-time contributions, bequests, and designated gifts. Overall, the baseline of gift income JCSTS receives (over and against endowment income and denominational support) currently hovers around \$150,000 annually.



With an expanded staff (described in another section of this report), a two-year track record of clean audits, a compelling new mission, vision and strategic plan, and increased denominational visibility, JCSTS expects to double its gift income in the 2015-16 fiscal year.

## Strategic Plan

In January 2015, JCSTS Trustees approved a new three-year strategic plan. At the heart of the plan is a mission emphasizing educational innovation and community building. The seminary is on track to complete first and second year goals by June 30, 2016. The new mission statement reads:

**Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary provides innovative theological education to advance communities of faith, justice, and compassion.**

Key aspects of the strategic plan include—

- establishing core institutional values
- creating a signature educational program that encapsulates the seminary's mission, excites the seminary's constituency, and captures the attention of prospective students
- acquiring technological infrastructure and instructional capacity
- designing assessment tools and measures that position the seminary to apply for accreditation and other types of scholastic endorsements
- identifying appropriate staffing configuration
- designing and offering diverse learning opportunities including professional and lay leader development, immersions experiences, and certification programs
- creating justice-oriented, community-based curricula and degree program for clergy, activists, and others engaged in Christian service
- creating institutional culture of innovation
- establishing mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations



## Technology

According to EDUTOPIA.ORG, the use of video for homework is on the rise; mobile computing is "beyond the tipping point"; and most kids don't use traditional computers to connect to the Internet at home.



Therefore, instructional technological integration means more than teaching basic computer skills, informing students of related software programs, or creating an attractive website.

JCSTS' mission of 'providing innovative theological education' requires the seminary to achieve a standard of tech integration that is routine, seamless, and

transparent in support of curricular goals. The seminary is striving for tech integration across the curriculum that, based on research, deepens the learning process. In particular, tech integration must support four key components of learning: active engagement, participation in groups, frequent interaction and feedback, and connection to real-world experts. Since, technology also changes the way teachers teach, effective tech integration at JCSTS will necessitate that faculty assume not only traditional roles but the additional ones of adviser, content expert, and coach.

## Staff



In April 2015, trustees approved an expanded staff structure to conform with the seminary's new mission and strategy. The new configuration includes President, Executive Assistant to the President, Academic Officer, Administrative Officer, Development Officer, Digital Content Specialist, Chief Financial Officer, and Worship Institute Program Director.

## Institute of Worship, Preaching, and Sacred Arts

This Institute of Worship, Preaching, and Sacred Arts at JCSTS offers premier learning opportunities for persons interested in the distinguishing and historic practices of the African-American Christian church and its ministry.

Instructional opportunities are available beginning late summer 2015, with classes being added consistently throughout the fall. Five certificate programs will be available in 2016:

- **African-American Reformed Worship**  
*A biblical, theological, and socio-cultural exploration of Christian worship theory, practice, and administration drawing on African, African Diasporic, and Euro-American church traditions*
- **Liturgical Foundations for Justice-based Ministry**  
*An intensive study of the interdependency that exists between Christian worship and justice as reflected in the Bible and other sacred texts*
- **African-American Sacred Music**  
*A study of the vocal and instrumental sacred music and liberation songs of the African diaspora*
- **Preaching**  
*A laboratory in which students hone their preaching craft by examining the exegetical, ethical, stylistic, and societal contributions of Black preaching in America*
- **Technology and Arts**  
*A theological and methodological examination of the uses of technology, movement, and visual/dramatic arts as tools for Christian formation*

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