

Report of the General Synod Professorate

The office of General Synod professor involves representing “the living tradition of the church in the preparation and certification of candidates for ministry,” as well as exercising “the ministry of teaching within the RCA as a whole” (*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 8 [2023 edition, p. 74]). We fulfill this office both individually and collectively. Elected and installed by the General Synod, we remain amenable to the General Synod in matters of doctrine, striving at all times and in all ways to fulfill our calling faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully.

There are presently four General Synod professors:

Rev. Dr. Carol Bechtel
Rev. Dr. Jaeseung Cha
Rev. Dr. Micah McCreary
Rev. Dr. Chad Pierce

Each professor was nominated by a theological agent of the General Synod and then elected by the General Synod to exercise a substantial and continuing role in preparing candidates for ministry in the Reformed Church in America (RCA) under the authority of their nominating agency.

Pastoral Formation Oversight Board

The General Synod professorate is represented on the Pastoral Formation Oversight Board (PFOB) and continues to be in dialogue with that board regarding matters pertaining to the Certificate of Readiness for Examination (CRE). Our work in this area has focused on the effects of the potential restructuring of the RCA on the ordination and supervision process for candidates under the care of classes. We are also working on creating and recommending potential guidelines for the ordination process as well as the transfer of ordinations into the RCA, particularly among candidates/ministers from Latin America.

Additionally, we continue to look for best practices regarding commissioned pastor training, the Approved Alternative Route through the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA), as well as other areas pertinent to the reception, care, examination, and ordination of candidates into the RCA.

Denominational Commissions and Agencies

The General Synod professors have also been represented on a number of commissions and agencies important to the work of the church. Rev. Dr. McCreary has served on the restructuring team, providing his own theological insights as well as being the liaison to the team from the professors, particularly regarding the oversight of the professorate by the General Synod.

Members of the General Synod professorate are represented on the committees of the MFCA that recommend the granting of the Certificate of Readiness for

Examination to students at non-RCA seminaries and candidates pursuing the Approved Alternate Route (AAR) for ordination.

Finally, the members of the professorate are represented on the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team to create, facilitate, and monitor best practices among our classes for their commissioned pastors.

Professional Work

In addition to serving on denominational teams, the professorate continues to guide the education of students seeking ordination at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, at Western Theological Seminary, or through the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency. While our numbers are few, members of the professorate teach in areas of Old and New Testaments, Theology, and Practical Theology, helping to form our candidates for ministry in the RCA.

We are particularly excited for the new DMin cohort led by Rev. Dr. Carol Bechtel at Western Theological Seminary for women, called “Seeking Sabbath in a Frantic World.”

Conclusion

In all of our work, we continue to explore new possibilities for our collective role. We are grateful for having been charged with this call and are deeply sensible of our responsibility to the church. We solicit your prayers and your advice, and we are committed to engaging conversation at all levels of the RCA’s life and work.

Respectfully submitted,
Chad Pierce, moderator