Seminarian Experiential Learning Report Guidelines — 2027

Notice to participants: The following parameters have been established to ensure that your participation in the 2027 Samuel DeWitt Proctor Leadership Symposium meets the requirements of Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc., and your home your institution. You should complete and submit your report on or before the date set by your institution. Please email a copy of your report to, no later than April 1, 2027:

Rev. Damien Durr,
General Secretary and CEO
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc.
Email: damien@sdpconference.info, and

Rev. Dr. Danielle Ayers,
SDPC Trustee and Symposium Co-Chair
Email: Danielle@sdpconference.info

Seminarians and HBCU students who participate in the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference Leadership Symposium – ***in person*** – and seek to earn credit for experiential learning, or take the Symposium as an intensive, are requested to complete a Learning Report (5-7 pages), includes the following:

1. State your personal learning objectives for taking this course.
2. In what ways did the sessions and your Symposium participation contribute to your ministry formation or public leadership.
3. In addition to the opening and closing sessions, which other sessions did you participate in, i.e., the Intensive Sessions, Leadership Strategy Labs, and Action Labs?
4. Explain other Symposium experiences, if any, contributed to your learning.
5. Clearly explain the performance measures and outcomes that demonstrate the value of this learning experience for you.
6. In addition to completing the Experiential Learning Report, you will be expected to complete any additional assignments required by your home institutional faculty. The faculty advisor of the home institution awards final grades. As a courtesy, SDPC will forward a copy of your report to the Symposium Co-Deans.
7. Please complete and submit the SDPC, Inc., Symposium Evaluation Form. The forms will be available online and distributed at the Symposium. Your experience matters to us! It will help to inform our planning for future Leadership Symposiums.

SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE, INC.

2027 LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

Friendship-West Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

February 22-24, 2027

SEMINARIAN - WINTER INTENSIVE - COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title*: "From Sacred Fire to Prophetic Discernment: Equipping Seminarians for Public Leadership at the Intersection of Faith and Justice!"*

Scriptural Anchors: In Leviticus 6:12, God charges priestly leaders to keep the fire on the alter burning; and in Matthew 16:1-3, the Pharisees, and Sadducees quiz Jesus by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. Jesus responds, *"When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather...Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."*

SYMPOSIUM CO-DEANS

- Rev. Teresa L. Smallwood, J.D., Ph.D., dean and vice president for Academic Affairs, and the James Franklin Kelly and Hope Eyster Kelly Professor of Public Theology, at United Lutheran Seminary.

- Rev. Earle J. Fisher, Ph.D., senior pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church, Memphis, TN.; dean of Chapel, and assistant professor of Religious Communications & Africana Studies, LeMoyne-Owen College, The University of Memphis, and founder of #UPtheVote901

Introduction

"In America, because of our diversity, our freedoms, our economic adequacy, our youth as a nation, our unquestioned status as leader of the world, it behooves us to give the needed direction toward the fulfillment of the highest and best that human spirit can embrace." Rev. Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor

As prophetic words of our beloved namesake, the Rev. Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor continues to kindle the transformative works of SDPC, Inc., we are excited to release the SDPC, Inc., 2027 Winter Intensive Symposium Course Syllabus. It is the first in a series of smaller convenings, intended to cojoin and deepen the development, preparation, and ministry works of 200-250 seminarians as ethical public faith leaders, theologians, social justice organizers, spiritual advocates, policy thinkers, and institution builders. Drawing from two pillars of Black institutional life - the Church and Higher Education. The Symposium is a bridge, *not a replacement,* for the annual Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc. Clergy and Lay Leadership convening. This inaugural event allows SDPC to strengthen its financial supporter base and maintain its commitment to seminarian formation, while planning and organizing for the 25th Anniversary of the Annual Clergy and Lay Leadership Conference in February, 2028.

Course Overview

The 2027 SDPC Symposium Intensive theme: *"From Sacred Fire to Prophetic Discernment,"* is an extension of the Annual 2026 Clergy and Lay Leadership Conference theme. Last year, seminarians learned about "resistance, resilience, and response" as strategies for keeping the flames against "injustice" burning. What are the "signs of the times" speaking? How will seminarians, faith leaders, and HBCU institutions use "sacred fire" to perform works that, in an age of erasure, violence and vitriol, prioritizes "*Futuring Black Lives*" and addresses the urgent needs of our communities, in general?

Why Texas?

Historically, SDPC has convened where the moment and dominant issues in the community needed and welcomed its presence. In the aftermath of Katrina, we gathered in New Orleans, and in Memphis, for the fiftieth commemoration of the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the "Fight for Fifteen" battle over low hourly worker wages, which today, remains at $7.25. No matter the circumstance, our principal aim has always been to connect with, listen to, learn from, and engage with the community, especially those leading and doing human rights "work on the ground." Given the situation in our nation and the world: with local and federal elections ahead in 2026, 2027 and 2028, the State of Texas is central to SDPC's decision to call the community to assembly in Dallas.

Purpose and Goal of the Winter Intensive Course

During the 2027 Symposium, participants will recognize and discern the "signs of the times" as the Winter Intensive Course encounters the State of Texas as a national laboratory. It is where the religious, political, and public policy direction in America is being contested. State versus local authority, voting rights, redistricting, public education, immigration, reproductive and maternal health, food insecurity, healthcare access, criminal and environmental justice, economic inequality, book bans, curriculum debates, and the role of religion in government: all are being argued in Texas, often by competing versions of Christianity, in the same public square.

Following challenging and thought-provoking sessions with the Symposium Deans and SDPC Founders, participants will move to "strategy" and "action" laboratories to collaborate and discuss leadership strategies and using the Academy, i.e., scholarly works to fortify and sustain transformative ministries in their local communities. Seminarians may choose the "action" laboratories as places to "seed" ideas for preaching, teaching, organizing, policy advocacy, and ministry across multiple contexts.

Specific Course Objectives – Symposium participants will:

- Understand the signs of the times theologically, holding Leviticus 6:12 and Matthew 16:1–3 together as a charge to tend and to direct the flame for this present age.
- Examine Independent Black Institutions, including the Black Church, HBCUs, and SDPC's seminary and HBCU network, as traditions of institution building (Winn) and as investments in democracy (Wilson).

- Discuss what leadership means for this present age, through Leadership Strategy "Action" Labs that carry learning from the academy into communities.
- Build an enduring network of seminarians, HBCU students, and Texas-based and national partners, including the Black Faith Coalition.
- Apply the theological, public policy, and education lenses sharpened by this convening to the state, school, or congregation where seminarians, HBCUs, and all Symposium participants already serve.

Course Requirements

Non-Credit:

1. Symposium ***in person*** registration ($275 per student) completed and confirmed in WHOVA (SDPC's event management app).
2. Access to the seminarians' portal in WHOVA.
3. Attendance and full participation in all seminarian sessions, February 22–24, 2027.
4. Pre- and post-Symposium collaboration between students is encouraged: networking and related professional opportunities.
5. Completion of required Course readings.

Credit:

1. Three (3) semester hours or five (5) quarter hours,
2. Symposium ***in person*** registration ($275.00 per student) completed and confirmed in WHOVA app.
3. Attendance and full participation in all seminarian sessions, February 22-24, 2027.
4. Access to the student's portal in WHOVA.
5. One (3–5 page) reflection paper, in conformity with home institution's requirements: How this intensive learning experience informed your understanding of Prophetic Discernment: Equipping Seminarians for Public Leadership at the Intersection of Faith, Justice, and Works.
6. Completion of required Course readings.
7. Course Registration Process.

Sponsored Seminarians

- Students at <u>*sponsoring*</u> seminaries and related institutions enroll for this course at their home institution as part of their Winter 2027 schedule. The home institution sets the requirements and evaluation criteria.
- Other seminarians may select the sponsoring Seminary most appropriate for enrollment and transfer of credit back to their home institution. In all cases, the host Seminary establishes the registration process and tuition fees.
- Continuing education units may also be available.

Symposium Schedule - *Subject to minor changes***.**

DAY - DATE	TIME	Session
Mon, February 22	8:00 - 8:45 AM	Registration + Continental Breakfast
	9:00 - 10:30 AM	Opening Circle + An Engaging Conversation with SDPC Founders
	10:45 AM - 12:15 PM	Formation + Foundation of Public Leadership
	12:30 - 1:15 PM	Community Lunch
	1:30 - 4:30 PM	Seminarian and HBCU Intensive Sessions
	4:40 - 5:00 PM	Day 1: Reflections and Closing Circle
Tues, February 23	8:00 - 8:45 AM	Registration + Continental Breakfast
	9:00 - 10:30 AM	Opening Circle + "Called for this Moment: Building Public Leaders" Panel
	10:45 AM – 12:15 PM	Leadership Strategy Labs
	12:30 PM – 1:15 PM	Community Lunch
	1:30 PM – 3:00 PM	From the Academy to the Community: Action Labs
	3:15 PM – 4:30 PM	Day 2 Reflections and Closing Circle
Wed, February 24	9:00 – 9:30 AM	Continental Breakfast
	9:45 AM – 11:00 AM	Worship, Word, Work! Closing Circle and Sending Forth

***Required Course Readings** (Selections will be posted on the seminarian portal as access to resources permit. Students will also be directed to other digital resources.)

**SDPC Prophetic Intelligence Readings*, an article series released to the SDPC network.

*Wilson, John Silvanus Jr., **Hope and Healing: Black Colleges and the Future of American Democracy**. Harvard Education Press, 2023

*Winn, Maisha T., **Futuring Black Lives: Independent Black Institutions and the Literary Imagination.** Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville, TN., 2025.

Highly Recommended Readings
King, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, Jr., **Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos to Community?** Beacon Press, Boston, MA., 1968.

Wright, Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Jr. **A Sankofa Moment, The History of Trinity Church of Christ.** St. Paul Press, Dallas, Texas, 2010

Note: Syllabus subject to minor changes