

The Georgia Department of Corrections is pleased to announce the creation of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) Leavell College Extension Center at Phillips State Prison in Buford, Georgia. This program is funded by the Georgia Baptist Convention and models the NOBTS College programs at Angola State Penitentiary, LA and Parchman State Prison, MS. The Extension Center will offer thirty inmates from the state of Georgia a two -year, seventy-six semester hour Associate degree in Christian Ministry and a four-year, 126 semester hour Bachelor of Arts in Christian Ministry. These fully accredited college degrees are designed to provide a broad foundation for ministry within the prison system and are based upon eight core competencies: Biblical Exposition, Christian Heritage, Servant Leadership, Interpersonal Relationships, Spiritual and Character Formation, Disciple Making, Worship Leadership, and Life Skills. The mission of Leavell College is to prepare students for current ministry within the Georgia State prison system.

The Phillips Extension Center is part of the North Georgia Hub of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and is under the direction of Chaplain John H. Morris. Dr Morris was awarded a PhD in New Testament Studies from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in December 2007.

Seminary Requirements for Admission:

1. Students must provide proof of High School Diploma, GED or College courses by copies of the documents.
2. Students must write a statement of religious experience and submit it with the application.
3. There is no requirement for a student to be a member of any particular belief group, but the classes will be taught under the umbrella of the Baptist Faith and Message and the academic standards of Leavell College. The student must be willing to accept instruction under these requirements.
4. The student must be prepared to spend 15 hours in class lecture and at least 30 hours in study per week.

Students accepted into the college program need to be prepared for extensive and time - consuming reading and writing assignments. A class will normally require completing at least one college level textbook and one long term paper. Exact reading, writing and other assignments will be listed in the syllabus for each class. Turabian style formatting will be required for term papers as well as other assignments.

Classes will be offered in a repeating two or four -year cycle of courses. Inmates can enter the cycle at any point and graduate in either two years with an Associate degree or four years with a Bachelor degree. Keeping the students on the same academic track will enable vacancies in the program to be filled at the beginning of each semester.

To maintain accreditation, the classes will be taught and graded at a college level. Failure to maintain a C average will result in academic probation and eventual expulsion from the program.

The student must be willing to act as a positive role model and leader in his own community.

Semester and summer breaks may be applied to the academic schedule.

Only twenty-five to thirty applicants will be chosen for the initial class. An alternative list will be kept of those inmates meeting the criterion but not chosen for the initial class. Additional openings may eventually come about based on the expansion of the program or openings in the class.

Department of Corrections Requirements for Admission:

1. The inmate must volunteer to apply/enter the college program.
2. The inmate must have at least 5 -7 years remaining in his sentence.
3. The inmate must be willing to refrain from requesting early release or parole while enrolled in the Seminary program.
4. The inmate must not have any Disciplinary Reports (DR's) within the last twelve months.

5. The inmate must fully complete the application process with his Chaplain or appropriate local personnel.

Anticipated Results

The Georgia Department of Corrections plans to replicate the positive impacts the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Leavell College Program has had at Angola Penitentiary in Louisiana, and Parchman State Prison in Mississippi, where prison officials saw a 40% reduction in violence since program implementation and over 600 graduates from the college. The Angola/NOBTS program, in its 13th year of operation, graduated 150 inmates last summer while the Parchman/NOBTS program awarded its first 16 degrees last summer.

The recidivism rate for NOBTS/Angola graduates is 20%, significantly lower than the National average of 65%.

According to Burl Cain, Warden Louisiana State Penitentiary, "If you educate a criminal you get an educated criminal; when you morally rehabilitate a criminal you get a changed man."

The NOBTS PEC (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Phillips Extension Center) will offer the opportunity for inmates to earn a college degree, minister under the direction of the Chaplain while incarcerated, and return to their communities with a college degree in their hands that will open doors to a future vastly different from their past.

Important Dates

- o March 3, 2008 First day of classes for NOBTS PEC Class of 2011
- o April 17, 2008 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for NOBTS PEC
- o December, 2009 AA Christian Ministry Graduation, NOBTS PEC
- o December, 2011 BA Christian Ministry Graduation, NOBTS PEC