



Report from Centro Hispano de Estudios Teológicos (CHET)

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of Centro Hispano de Estudios Teológicos writes, “CHET is a theological and ministry training center for Latino clergy and lay leaders, focusing on *“misión integral.”* This is expressed through the integration of evangelism and discipleship, church leadership and planting, lay family counseling, spiritual formation, and community transformation. In 32+ years of ministry, CHET has grown from 14 students to a current enrollment of 300 students per quarter. With fewer resources than other comparable institutions, through the passion and commitment of a small staff and a diverse adjunct faculty and board, CHET’s core value of *“formación integral”* with cultural, personal and ministry sensitivities, as well as academic excellence, are modeled.

CHET’s mission is to provide the highest quality theological education and practical ministry training possible, while maintaining student fees and tuition at accessible levels so students, many of whom do not have access to traditional seminaries, have a pathway to ordination and service in the Covenant, in Latino churches beyond the Covenant, and lay leadership in the proclaiming the good news through word and deed. Underwriting student tuition 60-65% is only possible through the labor of love of adjunct professors and staff, and the financial support of many—board members, individual donors, local churches, the Covenant and its conferences, and a small endowment started by First Covenant Church LA in 1989. The challenge to raise resources sufficient to match the need is ever present.

Since our last board meeting in December 2021, we have been moving forward to address a series of challenges and opportunities. Along with ordinary developmental challenges that are always to be expected, we have been living with the adaptive directions of CHET’s activities in response to the pandemic and several substantial and emerging societal issues. The rate and magnitude of change has required us to be more flexible and adaptable as our times have remained fraught with

unpredictability and uncertainty. Yet CHET has remained faithful and fruitful, confident of God's loving values and mission in and with the Latina world God loves.

This past December we celebrated the 147 students who successfully completed one or more of CHET's programs. Among our recent graduates, we had students from the Pacific Southwest Conference, and also from the Northwest, Central, Midwest, and Midsouth conferences. We even had graduates from the IPEE, a sister denomination of the Covenant in Ecuador.

In our 32-year history, CHET has grown from 14 students in 1989 to an enrollment of 300 students per school quarter, with a 120-average-full-time equivalent (FTE). Before Covid-19, CHET served the surrounding greater Los Angeles area with a single central teaching center in Compton, California. Students outside of this geographical area attended strategically located learning centers. In April 2020, CHET switched to an all-online teaching model that has expanded opportunities to serve students across the United States and beyond our borders. As the pandemic subsides, CHET intends to move to a hybrid learning model that will seek to combine the best of both online and in-person education.

We are pleased that the strategic plan was finalized and approved in December. We are even more thankful that board committees have begun actively working toward reaching the plan's goals for each of the identified strategic areas—resource development, student recruitment and retention, faculty development, staff development, and programs and curriculum. The rate of progress on these items is not even, but things are moving forward in all these areas.

An unexpected challenge for the Board of Directors of CHET and the CHET community in general has been the painful realities of continuing health difficulties for our beloved president, Dr. Juan Martínez. At the same time, we had to attend to our fiduciary responsibilities as a Board of Directors for CHET. In essence, with guidance from the Covenant, CHET board officers served as de facto president roughly from late October through mid-February, until the directors had completed a process of selection and employed Dr. Magdalena Sánchez to serve as interim president. We are very grateful for Dr. Sánchez and believe that she is God's provision for CHET in this season.

Dr. Sánchez writes, "We are on the brim of great challenges and great victories. Among the challenges we are facing is trying to adapt to the world that has transformed so much in the last three years.

Given CHET’s history of initiatives and programs responding to the needs of Latino communities and churches, the Spirit has been calling us to respond to the composition of the mosaic in front of us. This mosaic includes the second and third generations of Latinos—children and grandchildren of those first students 32+ years ago. Among the other challenges we are facing, perhaps the most salient is how can CHET best serve and resource our Latino churches and help the next generations live into their hybrid identity and Christian faith?”

We ask for your prayers in this time of discernment. We know that together, as a community of faith, we will discern what God is calling us to do.

To God be the glory!

Magdalena Sánchez, Ph.D.
Interim President of CHET
And
The Executive Committee of
The Board of Directors of CHET