

# **Request for Proposals *for the* Kern Scholars Initiative**

## **Executive Summary**

The priority of the Kern Family Foundation Pastoral Ministry Program is to develop the next generations of exceptional, innovative pastors. To accomplish this goal, the Foundation seeks strategic partnerships with theological schools that share this mission and will recruit and educate cohorts of Kern Scholars who will eventually become senior preaching and teaching pastors with pulpit responsibilities. The Foundation cordially invites ATS-accredited evangelical theological schools in the United States to submit proposals for the Kern Scholars Initiative.

Schools whose proposals are selected for funding will be awarded up to a total of \$1.5 m. payable over five successive years of annually-renewable grant agreements beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year.

Successful proposals will demonstrate commitment to leverage the Foundation's resources to recruit additional donors, educate the greatest possible number of Kern Scholars, tap the educational potential of seminary-church partnerships, and encourage graduates to participate actively in the Kern Network.

The deadline for submission of proposals is November 15, 2010. The notification of grant awards will be made on or before January 11, 2011.

## **Requirements of Seminary Partners in the Kern Scholars Initiative**

### **1. Annually recruit a cohort of Master of Divinity students who meet the Foundation's criteria for Kern Scholarships.**

A Kern Scholar is a carefully selected person who with scholarship funding is a full-time student in pastoral studies and upon graduation becomes a full-time preaching and teaching pastor who joins the Kern Pastors Network for lifelong learning.

#### *Criteria for a Kern Scholar*

- a. U.S. citizen.
- b. Age 27 or under at time of nomination for Kern Scholarship.
- c. 3.25 GPA from an accredited undergraduate institution and maintain a minimum 3.25 GPA in seminary.
- d. Committed to entering full-time, lifelong pastoral ministry in the U.S. pursuant upon graduation. Intends to eventually become a senior preaching and teaching pastor with pulpit responsibilities. (Most start out as youth or associate pastors or church planters; however, students who expect to remain youth pastors or to become pastoral counselors, chaplains, children's pastors, music ministers, or worship pastors do not qualify.)
- e. Committed to participating in the Kern Pastors Network pursuant upon graduation.
- f. Participates in activities offered by the seminary exclusively for Kern Scholars, enabling the individual to develop a strong sense of community.
- g. Attends annual Foundation-sponsored retreats during the course of seminary education.
- h. Maintains satisfactory progress toward completion of the Master of Divinity degree within four years of enrollment.
- i. Submits to the Foundation an annual, signed "Reaffirmation of Call to Pastoral Ministry" declaring commitment to serving in pastoral ministry pursuant upon graduation.

The question of how to assess the calling and capabilities of a Kern Scholar candidate as they relate to the desired outcomes of the Foundation is a challenging one. No one can predict with certainty a candidate's sustainability and effectiveness in future ministry. The variables are many and complex, not least of which is the manner in which God, through the Holy Spirit, is involved in the growth and development of future pastors in preparation for ministry.

Nonetheless, the Foundation has identified eight qualities that are reflected in the lives and ministries of successful candidates for the Kern Scholarship. The goal of pre-admission assessment is to identify these qualities in the life, character, and ministry of each Kern Scholar candidate.

### *Eight Qualities of a Kern Scholar*

1. Leadership. *What is the candidate's leadership track record? For what causes has the candidate provided leadership, and with what results?*
2. Skilled Communicator. *Does the candidate communicate clearly and engagingly in interpersonal and public settings, in oral and written forms, and in day-to-day living?*
3. Change Agent. *Does the candidate comprehend the need for the church to change, to move forward to a more God-honoring place? Is the candidate the kind of servant-leader who engenders the trust necessary to make such changes?*
4. Maturing in Character. *Does the candidate's life reflect a vibrant relationship with God? Is the candidate's character becoming more mature, both in Christ-likeness and in understanding the realities of life in a broken world?*
5. Creative. *Does the candidate see new possibilities for doing ministry flowing from a deep commitment to the mission of the church, kingdom values, and interaction with the cultural context?*
6. Strong Relational Ability. *Is the candidate's concern for others genuine? Does the candidate relate to people in a warm and winsome manner?*
7. Culturally Engaged. *Does the candidate understand the importance of exegeting the culture? Does the candidate desire to impact in a godly way the cultural environment of his/her ministry and American culture at large?*
8. Persistent. *Does the candidate finish projects in a manner that is respectful of the team he or she is leading as well as those who are impacted by the project itself?*

These criteria are public information used by seminary partners as a guide in recruitment of Kern Scholars.

**2. Cultivate appreciation for the Foundation-sponsored Kern Pastors Network so that your school's Kern Scholars join and contribute to the network upon graduation from seminary.**

Kern Scholars who graduate from seminary and find placement in pastoral ministry become Kern Pastors. These Pastors are eligible to participate in the Foundation's Postgraduate Initiative which includes the Kern Pastors Network (KPN). Assessment of seminary partners in the Kern Scholars Initiative includes rates of alumni participation in the KPN.

*Description of Kern Pastors Network*

The Foundation is developing a national network of innovative pastors who will lead healthy churches. The network is a voluntary, organic, member-driven community of practice that supports Kern Pastors in several important ways. It promotes the practice of exceptional, innovative pastoral ministry through educational, professional development, and networking opportunities with a particular emphasis on character formation. The KPN combats isolation, stimulates lifelong learning, and strengthens mutual commitment that fosters persistence in fulfilling the pastoral vocation. It fosters growth in both human capital (individual skills and pastoral identity) and social capital (social networks that give rise to trust, reciprocity, and shared understanding).

Currently composed of 178 young pastors, the KPN could grow to include thousands of pastors by the time the Foundation sunsets in 2035. Working together to fulfill Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern's vision of exceptional, innovative pastoral ministry, this large and widely-distributed community of Kern Pastors is becoming increasingly influential as its ideas and innovations permeate other networks, institutions, and organizations to which Kern Pastors relate.

The Foundation recognizes that excellent theological education is indispensable to the practice of exceptional, innovative pastoral ministry. We deeply value seminary partners who recruit and educate students who will build the strength and influence of the Kern Pastors Network upon graduation.

**3. Leverage the Foundation's grants to secure additional revenue from other sources.**

Seminaries selected as partners in the Kern Scholars Initiative will be awarded a fixed grant amount per five-year period and receive five equal annual payments as authorized annually upon grant report reviews by the Foundation's Board of Directors. These grants will cover no more than net tuition for all Kern Scholars at the grantee's institution. Grantees are expected to leverage the Foundation's grant for net tuition through creative and innovative designs to secure additional

revenue in order to recruit and educate the greatest possible number of Kern Scholars. Sources of additional revenue may include the Kern Scholars who may be required to pay a portion of their Master of Divinity tuition. Seminary partners are free to determine the portion of expenses paid by Kern Scholars at their institutions. However, Kern Scholars should not incur educational debt during seminary.

**4. Maximize the potential of seminary – church partnerships by tapping the significant resources of the church as an educational environment.**

Kern Scholars' commitment to eventually becoming senior preaching and teaching pastors with pulpit responsibilities should be reinforced by means of practical training in local churches through mentoring, internships, and practicums more robust than traditional field education. These educational experiences facilitate skill development and theological reflection grounded in the practice of ministry in the life of the church.

**5. Fulfill all Requirements of Partnership**

The presidents of the selected seminaries are required to attend an annual Foundation-sponsored meeting to assess progress toward fulfilling the purpose of the grants. Other seminary administrators may also be invited.

Each seminary selected as a partner in the Kern Scholars Initiative will create an administrative team to steward their school's relationship with the Foundation. One member of the team will be identified as the Seminary Contact Person to receive all Foundation correspondence.

*Role of the 'Kern Team' and Seminary Contact Person:*

1. Serve as liaison between the Foundation and Kern Scholars.
2. Interpret Foundation policy to Kern Scholars.
3. Recruit Kern Scholars according to the stated criteria and submit prioritized nominations to the Foundation annually.
4. Monitor each scholarship recipient to ensure that they have exceptional opportunities for practical training in healthy local churches, make sufficient progress to complete the MDiv degree within four years, and remain committed to the Kern Pastors Network.
5. Oversee registration of Kern Scholars for annual Foundation-sponsored retreats.
6. Provide opportunities for Kern Scholars to develop a strong sense of community within and among your school's cohorts.

7. Attend an annual Foundation-sponsored Graduate Recognition Meal for your school's graduating Kern Scholars.
8. Submit by June 30 of each year the Kern Scholars Initiative's "Reaffirmation of Call to Pastoral Ministry" letters and each student's academic transcripts.
9. Host Foundation representatives during campus visits.
10. Submit electronically the Annual Seminary Report.

When a seminary fails to comply with the terms of our partnership it may be placed on probation. (Seminaries on probation are encouraged to continue recruiting potential Kern Scholars.) At the end of the probationary term, the Foundation may restore the school to full partnership, extend the period of probation, or inform the seminary that the partnership is being terminated. In the event that the Kern Scholars Initiative is discontinued at the seminary, the Foundation will honor its commitment to all Kern Scholars currently enrolled, including the most recent incoming class.

#### **6. Demonstrate financial health.**

Provide a summary of financial data from the past five years documenting your school's financial health and your capacity to leverage the Foundation's grants to secure additional revenue in order to recruit and educate the greatest possible number of Kern Scholars. Provide a detailed budget for the first five years of the Kern Scholars Initiative at your school.

#### *Assessment of Proposals*

The following questions, in priority order, reflect the criteria that will be employed in assessment of proposals.

#### **Questions to be addressed in a Successful Kern Scholars Initiative Grant Proposal**

1. Recruitment. How will your seminary recruit the greatest possible number of the most outstanding students for Kern Scholarships? How will this recruitment strategy address both quality and quantity? By what means will you ensure that all students selected for Kern Scholarships satisfy the Foundation's criteria? What is your record of retaining MDiv students and how will you maximize the retention of Kern Scholars?
2. Kern Pastors Network. How will your school cultivate appreciation for the Foundation-sponsored Kern Pastors Network so that your school's Kern

Scholars join and contribute to it after graduation and placement in pastoral ministry?

3. **Financial Model.** Have you provided a summary of financial data from the past five years documenting your school's financial health? In what ways does your proposed financial model enable your school to leverage the Foundation's grants to secure additional revenue from other sources? Have you included a calculation of your school's net tuition, shown the method used to determine net tuition, and identified the percentage of net tuition to be covered by Kern Scholarships? Does your projected budget clearly show the portion of total expenses borne by the Foundation, other donors, and Kern Scholars (if applicable)? How will your school ensure that Kern Scholars complete seminary without incurring educational debt?
4. **Partnership.** To what extent are seminary leaders committed to fulfilling all of the Foundation's requirements of seminary partners in the Kern Scholars Initiative?
5. **Seminary-Church Partnerships.** What is your school's track record in working with healthy churches? How will the experience of Kern Scholars in your Master of Divinity program strengthen and reinforce their commitment to eventually become senior preaching and teaching pastors with pulpit responsibilities? How will your school maximize the potential of seminary – church partnerships by tapping the significant resources of the church as an educational environment?
6. **Community Building.** What is your school's plan to offer activities exclusively for Kern Scholars, enabling them to develop a strong sense of community both within and among your school's cohorts?
7. **Endorsement.** Include a letter endorsing your grant proposal signed by the seminary president and chief financial officer.

Note: If your seminary is already a partner the Kern Scholars Initiative, include a plan to manage the transition to this new iteration of the initiative.

This document and a continually updated companion document, "Frequently Asked Questions about the Request for Proposals for the Kern Scholars Initiative" may be accessed via the "Request for Proposals" page in the Kern Scholars Initiative section of the Foundation's website: [www.kffdn.org](http://www.kffdn.org). **The Presidents of seminaries submitting successful proposals will be required to attend an orientation meeting in Chicago February 1-2, 2011.**

Send ten copies of your grant proposal postmarked by November 15, 2010 to this address:

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