



Contact: Charles Jefferson, Communications Coordinator

Phone: 773.896.2525

Email: charles.jefferson@ctschicago.edu

CTS, Bayan Claremont announce new academic partnership

CHICAGO – July 5, 2019 - Chicago Theological Seminary and Bayan Claremont, an Islamic graduate school at Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, California, have entered into a new academic partnership to offer both master of divinity (MDiv) degrees with a concentration in Islamic Chaplaincy, as well as a certificate program, effective July, 2019.

Since the seminary's founding in 1855, CTS has been on the forefront of justice and mercy for all God's people. The seminary has continued this work with the creation of the InterReligious Institute (IRI) and subsequent programming in 2017. We are particularly excited about this new partnership because it allows CTS to more fully live into the interfaith commitments given voice in our Statement of Vision and Commitments:

"We are committed, in a global context of religious conflicts and a society structured by Christian privilege, to joyous embrace of religious diversity, expanding our ground-breaking work in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Studies to advance understanding and collaboration among the rich multiplicity of spiritual traditions and lifestances."

Stephen G. Ray Jr., President of Chicago Theological Seminary said, "This program will allow CTS to accomplish the goals of expanding our mission of delivering theological education that is relevant and transformative to the religiously plural society, which is the reality of the United States. Joining Bayan's future to that of CTS, also sends a strong statement that we stand with our Muslim siblings in this era of rampant Islamophobia."

"This is a wonderful academic opportunity for CTS," **Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder**, academic dean said. "Both our institutions have shared values and unique strengths that will benefit our students and we hope the Chicago community at-large. This new partnership continues and deepens our commitment to interreligious engagement. CTS looks forward to this new chapter with Bayan."

"This partnership with CTS provides the opportunity for the training and credentialing of the next generation of Muslim-American leaders and scholars, both women and men," **Jihad Turk**, president of Bayan said. "The innovative hybrid-intensive format of the courses makes the program accessible to students living and working around the country and the world, and allows them to pursue Islamic Studies and leadership skills with world-class faculty that will prepare them to better serve both their communities and the world in which we live. The affiliation with CTS affirms Bayan's commitment to interfaith collaboration in addressing the pressing challenges of today."

Some additional highlights of the new agreement include:

- CTS will provide classroom space and limited shared services.
- CTS will provide an accredited MDiv degree and graduate certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy.
- Bayan students and faculty will have access to all common areas on the CTS campus, to the same extent as CTS students and faculty.

-continued on next page-

- Each institution will invite the other's president to board meetings as a non-voting member.

Bayan will continue business as usual on the campus of Claremont for the 2019-20 academic year. The Bayan staff will remotely oversee the operations at CTS for the coming year and faculty are working with Claremont to achieve a teach-out plan, which is subject to review from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

ABOUT BAYAN CHICAGO

Bayan Chicago provides higher education to men and women who serve as Muslim religious leaders, scholars, activists and educators. Our program emphasizes the diversity of perspectives and experiences found in the Islamic tradition and in contemporary Islamic thought, and integrates knowledge from a variety of academic disciplines to prepare our graduates to engage their professional contexts effectively and at the highest standards.

ABOUT CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Based on Chicago's Southside, Chicago Theological Seminary is committed to creating leaders for the next generation at religious leadership...whatever that may be. A leader in social justice, CTS is committed to LGBTQ and gender issues, interreligious understanding, and racial justice.

CTS is an affiliated seminary of the United Church of Christ. Since its founding in 1855, CTS has pushed at the growing boundaries of the church in order to make faith more relevant and transform society towards greater justice and mercy. The student body now represents more than 40 different faith traditions, perspectives, and denominations.



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