

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

ANNOUNCEMENTS 2015-2016

More information regarding the University of Chicago Divinity School can be found online at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu>.

Or you may contact us at:

Divinity School
University of Chicago
1025 E. 58th St.
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Telephone: 773-702-8200

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO DIVINITY SCHOOL.

This is a place, and a well-defined one at that: two buildings, Swift Hall and Bond Chapel, located just southwest of the center of the campus's main quadrangle. If you stand in front of Swift Hall and execute a 360 degree turn, your immediate horizon encompasses buildings devoted to the Physical and Natural Sciences, the Humanities and the Social Sciences, the Oriental Institute, the College, and, completing the circle, Levi Hall, the central administrative building. With modest x-ray vision or a short walk you would see the University's medical center to the west, Regenstein Library to the north, the Booth School of Business to the east, and the Law, Social Service, and Public Policy Schools to the south.

While historical accident plays a role in its physical centrality on campus, that centrality does serve to underscore the historical fact that the Divinity School was the first professional school established at the University, and that its ongoing eminence throughout the 125 years of the University's existence has been helped crucially by its engagements with the full range of the academic effort on and around the campus. Divinity School faculty and students are faculty and students of the University – facts underscored by the many colleagues who hold appointments elsewhere on campus, by transcripts of graduates that nearly always show coursework completed outside the School, and the easy fluidity of intellectual commerce. The delineating walls are low: the doorways and windows are many.

The intellectual commerce is reciprocal, and by virtue of that reciprocity the Divinity School is arguably the broadest and in many fields one of the deepest programs in the study of religion in the world. Such a claim can seem foolhardy when the object of inquiry is so protean as religion: with its appropriately perpetual foundational questions about definition, relevant datum, and regnant methodologies, no institution in time and space can “do it all.” But my claim doesn't gainsay the point. It means to assert that our goal in Swift Hall has always been, and continues to be, to keep both the foundational questions and the work that follows from answering them (however provisionally) in constant play and the richest

possible interaction. If not everything that can be termed “religion” can be found in Swift, we both acknowledge that fact and decline its presumptive paralysis.

Many, myself included, take recourse to the word “conversation” to capture our way of aiming for this goal. We hold as complementary the need to know one’s own perspective and approach, and to be constantly open to challenges to it. Intellectual work knows no greater compliment than the most probing question. That recognition mandates what conversation at its best truly is: a practice of continual respect in which argument and evidence, informed by imagination, forge and sustain a collegiality with a vocabulary and syntax refined by an ongoing commitment to sympathetic listening.

In the three decades of my association with the University, I’ve also come to realize the crucial roles played by the broader horizons of the University: the neighborhoods of Hyde Park, Kenwood, and Woodlawn in which it is located, and the magnificent, flawed, utterly essential urban plain that is Chicago. At our best, the work we pursue occurs not in an enclave but in a complex context that continually reminds us of what it must mean for knowledge to enrich and indeed to enhance human life.

So we invite you to join the conversation, knowing that if you do we shall be enriched, and hopeful that you will be as well.

Richard A. Rosengarten
Dean

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The University official responsible for coordinating compliance with this Notice of Nondiscrimination is Sarah Wake, Assistant Provost and Director of the Office for Equal Opportunity Programs. Ms. Wake also serves as the University’s Title IX Coordinator, Affirmative Action Officer, and Section 504/ADA Coordinator. You may contact Ms. Wake by emailing swake@uchicago.edu , by calling 773.702.5671, or by writing to Sarah Wake, Office of the Provost, The University of Chicago, 5801 S. Ellis Ave., Suite 510, Chicago, IL 60637.

The information in these Announcements is correct as of August 1, 2015. It is subject to change.

