



2019 FAQs Re: CST's Sustainable Future

On July 6, 2017, CST President, the Rev. Dr. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, announced that Claremont School of Theology is in the early stages of exploring the possibility of embedding within Willamette University, in Salem, Oregon. Below, you will find our expanding list of Frequently Asked Questions provided to update our students, staff, faculty, alumni/ae, donors, and friends as the process evolves. Please check back periodically. Any updates will be shared here as well.

1. What has been decided about the partnership between Willamette University and Claremont School of Theology (CST)?

Because both President Jeffrey Kuan and Willamette President Stephen Thorsett are enthusiastic about a partnership between the two schools, and because faculty and staff at both institutions have shown a strong desire to move forward with embedding CST into Willamette University, the boards of trustees of both CST and Willamette have worked to create scenarios that move the process forward.

Throughout the last 18-month due diligence process, members of **both institutions have confirmed the relationship between CST and Willamette to be mutually beneficial and have moved the conversation from exploration to a formal Memo of Understanding (MOU).**

2. What led to a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?

Both institutions created task forces comprised of faculty, staff, and board members to review the academic, governance, financial, and facility needs of a potential partnership. Our due diligence process was spent evaluating whether embedding would be mutually beneficial and successful—strategically, financially, and legally. This process was strengthened by a generous grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, and because **both institutions concluded that embedding would be mutually beneficial**, a formal MOU was an important next step.

CST's leadership spent a significant amount of time determining a strategy that would set up the school for long-term success and best serve its students and faculty. During this process, CST was drawn to Willamette because **the two institutions share common values and a commitment to high quality education programs.**

3. What is the timeline?

We foresee initiating some programs and operations for our students on Willamette's campus in the fall of 2019. It is expected that in the transition, some classes will still be taught on the Claremont campus through the spring of 2021. Our last Commencement in Claremont is tentatively scheduled for May 2020.

As these plans solidify, please know incoming students are entering fully aware of this timeline, and current CST students will be well cared for through the transition. We are in close and constant contact with our



accreditors and are following the laws set forth by the Department of Education, with protocols in place for all enrolled students to complete the course of study or transition to a mutually agreed course at no disadvantage to the student. Students currently enrolled will have the opportunity to complete their degree in Southern California by May 2021 or relocate to Willamette.

Almost all of our faculty have committed to serving CST in the transition and will teach bi-locationally through the teach-out. Their expertise will strengthen Willamette's religious studies offering, while also bringing a diversity of theological scholars into the Northwest. Willamette has expressed their enthusiasm about the presence of our faculty and graduate students in the Salem community, noting how we will deepen the programs, research, and work of faculty and students in many different fields, including religious studies, history, environmental science, politics, languages, management, and law.

4. Why Willamette? What will a move to Willamette look like for CST? Will its name change? Will it become a third graduate school?

Willamette is one of a few United Methodist-related universities in the western U.S., which makes it possible for CST to retain both its affiliation as a United Methodist seminary and its reputation as an excellent academic program with a renowned Ph.D. program and library. Also, partnering with Willamette provides several interesting opportunities to strengthen both institutions, such as expanding academic programs, including dual-degree programs and even joint degree programs with Willamette's current graduate schools (Atkinson Graduate School of Management and the College of Law), as well as coursework for Willamette undergraduates. Imagine combining Christian ethics and political science; small business administration for pastors; sacred music ministry; Hebrew Bible and environmental justice. With so many possibilities opening up for our students, imagine how that will affect and shape the church and other religious institutions. CST's graduate programs will pair very well with Willamette's existing graduate programs, providing students additional ways to fulfill their callings and to prepare them for ministry in the twenty-first century.

We are also thrilled by the additional student services offerings that will be available to our students at Willamette—health services, music ensembles, theatrical productions, lectures, programs, and more.

CST will co-locate and embed within Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. Details on potential spaces, buildings, and locations was part of the due diligence process and will be made clearer as we move forward.

CST's name will not change. Claremont School of Theology enjoys a world-renowned faculty and a way of doing theological education that is essential to who we are and to who studies at CST. In a world divided by opposing worldviews on religion, race, sexuality and gender, climate change, poverty, and privilege, CST prepares graduates to become agents of transformation and healing in churches, mosques, temples, local communities, schools, non-profit institutions, and the world at large. That will not change.

CST will become a third graduate school at Willamette, and our degree programs will be offered in a similar manner to the College of Law and the Atkinson Graduate School of Management. In addition,



CST will bring its own independent faculty and staff as well as financial resources (including its endowment) to support its operations and students, contribute to central overhead costs, and assist with integrating its programs into Willamette University. Financially, we anticipate with the reduced administrative and facilities costs associated with embedding, we will grow our endowment, operate with a balanced budget (for the first time in decades), and not merely survive, but thrive.

5. What about CST's partnerships with The Academy for Jewish Religion, Bayan Claremont, The Episcopal School (Bloy House), The Coptic Orthodox Theological School, Disciples of Christ, University of the West, etc.?

CST will maintain its diversity and mission which includes many ecumenical and interreligious partnerships. All our partner organizations have been brought into these discussions and will make their own decisions about our continued relationship. We are thrilled to share that our oldest partner, the Disciples Seminary Foundation, will move to Willamette with us—while still retaining a presence in Claremont. We are looking forward to building new ecumenical and interreligious partnerships in the Pacific Northwest.

6. What about CST's Centers, such as the Center for Process Studies, The Clinebell Institute, and the Center for Engaged Compassion, etc.?

CST's Centers are an important part of our identity and will continue to shape and inform our students. All academic centers have been brought into these discussions and are doing their own due diligence about how to move to Salem.

7. What happens to my planned gift and endowed scholarship funds?

Donations to CST will remain with CST. As always, contributions to CST are used in accordance with the donor's intent to provide high quality theological education to fulfill the mission of CST. As a donor, you may direct your contributions to any special funds, scholarships, and programs. Our office of advancement is available to help you designate your gifts.

8. What can I do to help?

There are three specific ways you can help:

- (1) **Stay in touch.** Focus on our good news and pray for more;
- (2) **Join our biannual scholarship appeals** at <https://cst.edu/giving>. Any monies you give will go directly toward supporting our incoming scholars;
- (3) **Sign up to be a CST Ambassador.** We will need your assistance in the coming months to help share our new vision and answer questions. Please contact Les Lungren, Director of Alumni/ae Relations and Annual Giving, at 909-447-2545, llungren@CST.edu for details.