

## **Graduate Certificate in Imam and Muslim Community Leadership (GCIMCL)**

### Purpose

The GCIMCL program was started in 2010, in cooperation with the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Herndon, VA, and its Fairfax Institute, when the Muslim community leaders in the Washington, D.C., area recognized the need for imams and other religious leaders to become familiar with the North American context and to receive education and credentials in the United States. This program prepares male and female students to understand and affirm the variety of religious commitments they will encounter as spiritual caregivers and community leaders (many of them as imams) of Muslim communities that are engaging with secular and other religious communities in North America. Through the course work and advising, the program prepares a cohort of imams and other Muslim religious leaders in the basic skills of religious leadership in the United States, including preaching/public speaking, pastoral care and counseling, organization and administration of the local mosque, engagement with surrounding agencies and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, and the religious education of one's religious community. It aligns well with the Seminary's mission is to prepare leaders, students, scholars and religious institutions to understand and live faithfully in today's multifaith and pluralistic world by affirming the particularities of faith and social context while openly exploring differences and commonalities.

### Goals

To meet these goals, students complete eight courses, earning 24 credits. For each course, student achievement of learning outcomes is assessed by a combination of tools, including written essays, class discussion, one-on-one interviews, and formal written quizzes or tests. Students in this program also meet individually with the program director to demonstrate their attainment of the competencies described above.

### Program content

The program is intended for part-time students, extends normally over a period of two to three years and consists of 24 credits. The program consists of two supervised Field Education courses (Reflection on Ministry Experience and Clinical Pastoral Education) coupled with six courses from the following areas: Practice of Ministry; Interfaith Encounter; American Muslim Communities; Advanced Islamic Scripture; Islamic Ethics; Islamic Theology and Spirituality.

One required supervised Field Education course (Reflection on Ministry Experience), which is offered once every two-year cycle, will be offered only in Herndon, Virginia. It has been offered twice, in 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, and will be offered in 2014-2015. We believe offering this course in a two-year cycle is sufficient for students to fulfill this requirement. In addition, the program requires that students complete a basic unit of CPE. We have arranged for students to enroll in "The Part-Time, Multifaith CPE Program" of The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. This program allows participants to use clinical aspects in their current ministry settings and then reflect on these in a CPE group process that reduces time away from work and home. JTS accepts each year approximately 16 students into this program, which is open to clergy of all faiths. The agreement is that the JTS program would consider approximately 4-5 qualified students from our GCIMCL program for participation.

### Educational Resources and Learning Strategies

The Seminary tries to offer two courses per year in Herndon, VA. Students enrolled in this program are encouraged to take all of the courses offered in Herndon, since most of the students come from the

Washington, D.C., area. It is appropriate for students in this program to take courses taught online and on the Hartford campus to earn their 24 credits.