

a means for continuing support.

CONCLUSION

OBES hopes to promote a spirit of charity and cooperation among its membership. It also hopes that this statement will further assist in the calling to be faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

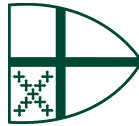
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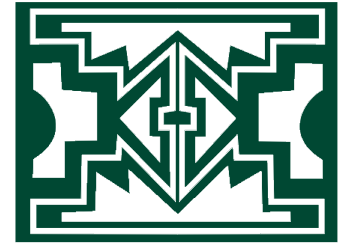
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OBES



ORGANIZATION FOR BLACK EPISCOPAL SEMINARIANS

DESCRIPTION

The Organization of Black Episcopal Seminarians (OBES) is comprised of seminarians who are postulants and candidates that are canonically resident in one of the nine provinces of the Episcopal Church. The group is administered by the Office of Black Ministries as part of the Recruitment, Training and Development Initiative (RT&D).

HISTORY

During the socio/political upheaval of the 1960s, a small group of black seminarians gathered for prayer and support in 1968 at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It became evident at the meeting that seminarians could benefit from periodically coming together for prayer and support, networking and sharing their concerns. Hence, OBES was born.

PURPOSE

The group exists to encourage its members in the ordination process of the Episcopal church; to affirm the black religious expression and its witness to the larger Church; to foster collegiality; to provide support and training, and to strengthen the Christian faith of its members through prayer, study and worship.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEETING

The Office of Black Ministries convenes an annual conference and meeting for seminarians attending one of the 11 Episcopal seminaries. Conferences are held alternately at an Episcopal seminary, a black Episcopal college campus, or at an overseas site. The conference participates in the formation and preparation of seminarians as they pursue their vocations. Travel to overseas sites provide exposure to different cultures and encourages increased overseas mission among black seminarians.

The annual meeting of OBES is convened by its president. An agenda is prepared and minutes of the meeting are circulated to all participants.

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING

Twice a year, seminarians are invited to seek funding to supplement their tuition. Applications are received and processed by the Office of Black Ministries. They are then reviewed at the bi-annual meetings of the RT&D Committee in June and November. Scholarship awards by the committee are forwarded to the internal Episcopal Church Center Scholarship Committee for final approval. Each applicant and the seminary are apprised of the award. Checks are mailed to seminaries in two equal payments in August and November.

MENTORING

The mentoring initiative matches seminarians with experienced clergy for interaction during their seminary years, and one year following graduation. Mentors and seminarians are expected to communicate at least four times each year. Mentors make every effort to attend graduation and/or first ordination of their mentees. The Office of Black Ministries convenes an annual Leadership Conference that offers mentoring partnerships an opportunity to participate in workshops and seminars.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Participants of the OBES Conference are assigned to groups consisting of four or five individuals. The groups provide opportunities for seminarians to cultivate meaningful relationships with one another within the context of the conference. They covenant with one another to extend the support relationship beyond the conference. (In the event that a seminarian is unable to attend the conference, that seminarian will be assigned to a group).

Groups are expected to schedule two dates for a teleconference meeting. Group leaders can contact the Office of Black Ministries at 800-334-7626 ext. 6084, or email vharris@episcopalchurch.org to make arrangements for the one hour or less conference call. Seminarians are asked to place a high value on small groups as