



A Tradition of Leadership

DBU's Ph.D. Students Learn in Oxford, England

The Ph.D. in Leadership Studies program at DBU began in 2005. The degree was primarily formatted to develop and enhance servant leaders for the twenty-first century, and designed into the program were three summer institutes, which help students gain an outside-of-the-classroom perspective on leadership. Since the creation of the Ph.D. program, four different cohorts comprised of over 60 students have completed the summer institutes that take them to Dallas, Washington D.C., and Oxford, England to study leadership on local, national, and global levels.

Oxford, England was the choice for studying global leadership, for Oxford and its surrounding areas are some of the most historically significant places in the world. This, coupled with the fact that nearby London is one of the most diverse cosmopolitan areas in the world today, allows students to be immersed in each of the 9-hour concentrations available in the doctoral program (business, education, higher education, ministry, or general leadership).

"This trip offers a chance for students to take a step back from their busy and chaotic lives to begin synthesizing the material they have learned over the first two years," explained Dr. Stephen Stookey, director of the Master of Arts in Theological Studies and faculty leader on the trip. "The goal is that they would be able to develop a sound personal theory of leadership that can be applied to their concentration study and their lives."

After completing the first two years of core leadership courses and prior to beginning their concentration studies, students spend nine days in Oxford, traveling to various educational, ministerial, and political sites to gain first-hand experience and knowledge. While visiting such places as the University of Oxford, historical Baptist churches, and metropolitan areas of London, the students have the opportunity to learn from great leaders of the past and about current visions for the future.

Dr. Sandra Reid, professor of business and director of the Master of Business Administration program, expressed, "Students who experience the Oxford Institute come away with a much deeper understanding of God's presence and power in the world and our relative position of responsibility as servant leaders within that world."

The students visit key places in the life of leaders like William Wilberforce, the British Parliamentary and abolitionist who helped end the slave trade in England. By understanding the way Wilberforce's Christian faith influenced his commitment to social reform, DBU students are able to see historical ways in which servant leadership has changed a nation.

"Anyone who is doing even the smallest job can be doing it in service to God," expressed Maria Paniccioli, a member of Cohort IV that recently returned from their summer institute in Oxford. "Everyone has influence from where they are, and the way I see things now, after the trip, is that everyone can be a leader in the form of servant leadership."

