*There has been some talk about a concentration in African American Church Studies. Will you talk about this (vision, courses, etc)?*

Many seminaries across the United States have trouble coordinating a concentration in this area because they don’t have the faculty to accommodate the possible requirements. We found that we have at least one African American faculty member in each theological area of study. We therefore began building an African American Church Studies concentration (AACS). This still needs to go through the Master’s Committee for approval, but what we envision is a 12 credit hour concentration that students can join with other programs. For example, a student can be an Urban Fellow and also have a concentration in AACS. They can also be in the Center for Public Theology and obtain a concentration in AACS. We are looking forward to offering this track in Fall 2017. We will keep you posted as courses and more information becomes available.

*Will you speak about the lack of weekend, evening, and online courses, especially as it pertains to foundational courses (ie. Hebrew Bible, New Testament, etc.)? Also, we received a question regarding the trouble continuing students are having finding elective courses because they seem to be on the same days and times, and there is not much variation in course offerings. Will you also speak to this issue?*

Over the past year, the faculty, specifically the Master’s Committee, and the administration have been working on a plan that includes more classes during different times to accommodate the needs of students. In the fall, WTS hopes to roll out a portion of the plan, which will include less day session classes and more online and evening sections. Currently, we do not have a fully online degree available, nor do we offer all foundational classes online or during weekends. We are working on making the online and weekend options more extensive and available in the future. The plan that will be rolled out in the fall will be a step in the direction of meeting the needs of students who are not able to come to campus during the day, and subsequently, we will plan to address the foundational courses and weekend and online offerings.

OPEN QUESTION SECTION (questions and comments asked by community members in attendance)

*There needs to be separate safe spaces for students as a result of the polarized atmosphere on campus because of the elections. What is the seminary doing to facilitate these safe spaces for students to process and talk, to make the students feel safe, and to address the divisiveness that is being felt right now?*

It is important that we not go into “entrenchment mode.” We recognize that this happens when people feel threatened, but a place apart from each other may exacerbate the divisive issue. Students that need these spaces are already forming them and, at least some the students who identify as conservative, have had conversations with Gina Campbell about next steps and what they need in this time. It is the students who should be responsible for their needs in this way.

*(There was a follow up question voicing concern about continuity as students graduate)*

It is the student body that creates the continuity, not the administration. One such example was Plumbline’s luminaries on the lawn of the school over years. The students communicated the event through different graduating years and keep the event going.

*What the school is doing about students’ mental health is not enough. What is the school doing to address the mental health issues of the students besides what it is offering now?*

Student care is on Wesley’s radar. We offer vetted options of mental health professionals for students, and we have brought Lisa Banks-Williams on staff to help with helping students find the care they need. AU chaplains are also available for spiritual care for students. The school understands that there are students who still need other care. We can only do what we can with what we have.