



**SOUTHERN
EVANGELICAL**
Seminary & Bible College

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

2024/25





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INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN & SCHEDULE

Direct Student Learning Assessment – Faculty

1. Degree Program Review (rotating five-year schedule)	Spring by Faculty and Registrar
2. Portfolio Rubric (each degree program)	Spring by Academic Advisor

Student Learning & Experience Inventory – Registrar

1. Entering Student Inventory (ESI)	Summer
2. Seminary Experience Inventory (SEI)	Summer
3. Graduating Student Inventory (GSI)	Summer
4. Alumni Inventory (AI)	Every five years (next up in 2025; replaces GSI)

2023/24 RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW

Recommendation	Person/Department Responsible	Documented Change
Enhance feedback on assignments to improve learning outcomes (SEI)	Faculty	TBD
Improve communication from administration/faculty for timely information delivery (GSI)	Student Life; Faculty	TBD
Increase library resource accessibility for better academic support (ESI)	Library; Online Ed; Student Life	TBD

2024/25 INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2025 student surveys show that SES students are deeply aligned with the seminary’s mission and highly value its apologetics-focused, academically rigorous education. Most are online, bi-vocational learners seeking ministry training or further scholarship. Students express strong satisfaction with faculty and the curriculum but highlight needs for faster communication, clearer advising, and more connection with peers. Addressing these areas will further enhance the experience without compromising SES’s core values.

Recommendation	Person/Department Responsible
Improve responsiveness to student inquiries	Faculty; Student Life; Registrar
Enhance academic advising experience by becoming more proactive in the process	Faculty; Student Life; Registrar
Increase community engagement, communication, and student interaction	Student Life; Communications

RETENTION & GRADUATION RATES

Undergraduate Retention Rates*

2024/25	42%
2023/24	45%
2022/23	21%
3 Year Average	36%

Graduate Retention Rates*

2024/25	59%
2023/24	54%
2022/23	56%
3 Year Average	56%

Undergraduate Graduation Rates**

2019 Cohort	9%
2018 Cohort	21%
2017 Cohort	15%
Average	15%

Graduate Graduation Rates**

2019 Cohort	23%
2018 Cohort	18%
2017 Cohort	13%
Average	18%

*Retention rates are fall-to-fall headcount comparisons (including certificate students) minus graduates and, given the non-traditional SES student demographic, include all part-time and full-time students (this does not account for students who skip semesters).

**The graduation rates above are fall-to-fall measurements at 150% of the expected time for completion (bachelor degree rate is 6 years from the first enrollment) and include all certificate and degree students (this is not necessarily representative of our actual student body).



DEGREE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Due to on-going personnel changes, the scheduled degree program overview was not completed. We will be back on the posted schedule (below) for next year's assessment.

Degree Program	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Bachelor of Arts Religious Studies	X				
Marts of Arts in Religion	X				
Master of Arts in Apologetics	X				
Master of Arts in Apologetics & Theology		X			
Master of Arts in Philosophy		X			
Master of Arts in Biblical Studies			X		
Master of Arts in Church Ministry			X		
Master of Divinity in Apologetics				X	
Master of Divinity in Biblical Studies				X	
Master of Theology				X	
Doctor of Ministry in Apologetics					X
Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy of Religion					X

GENERAL & DEGREE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES DIRECT ASSESSMENT THROUGH PORTFOLIOS

Due to on-going personnel changes, as well as potential changes to the portfolio review process, the scheduled portfolio assessment was not completed this year.



ENTERING STUDENT INVENTORY (ESI) 2024/25

The Entering Student Inventory for 2024/25 offers insights into the backgrounds, experiences, plans, and satisfaction of new students at Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES). Their feedback, summarized below, will guide SES in enhancing student engagement and addressing concerns.

Total Responses

12

Awareness & Recruitment

All respondents learned about SES from external sources, most commonly from alumni, prominent apologists (such as Frank Turek, Alisa Childers, Melissa Dougherty), podcasts, and internet research. Word of mouth and notable faculty/alumni play a significant role in recruitment.

Enrollment Patterns

Every student reported SES as their first or second choice, and each only applied to SES or one other seminary. All respondents live over 100 miles from campus, indicating our online presence is key.

Aspirations

- *Planned Uses for Degree:* Most intend to serve in various ministries, including church ministry, para-church ministry, teaching, or personal enrichment.
- *Degree Goals:* The majority (over 75%) aim for a Master's degree; a smaller group plans for a Ph.D. or Bachelor's degree.

Lifestyle & Preferences

- 12 out of 13 intend to work full-time (40 hours/week) while attending SES, emphasizing the need for continued flexible, asynchronous learning options.
- Most plan to dedicate 6–15 hours/week to SES studies.

Financial Concerns

- While most feel they can manage academic and personal demands, about half express concern about financing their education, with several indicating they would apply for federal funding if available.
- The majority report knowing where to get financial aid information.

Academic Experience & Support

- Students express high confidence in using SES's digital tools (Canvas, Digital Theological Library, Populi).
- Nearly all plan to engage with professors via email; fewer plan to use the phone.
- Most rely on degree worksheets, advisers, or the school catalog to track degree requirements.

ESI, continued ...

Key Testimonials

"Love the apologetics focus in every class! It's one of the main reasons I chose SES!"

"Lord willing, and GPA allowing, I am interested in pursuing a PhD after the master's degree."

"First, SES was not my first choice, but the necessary choice. ...the reason I chose SES was also because of their founders and faculty (Geisler, Turek, Childers, Wallace) and its concentration on apologetics, even among bible classes."

"Overall, I would recommend SES, but I would have some commentary for the new student as to what to expect and how to prepare."



Conclusion

The ESI survey highlights SES's appeal to geographically dispersed, working professionals seeking advanced, apologetics-focused theological education. Students are primarily recruited through high-profile alumni, faculty, and online content, underscoring the importance of digital presence and word of mouth. While satisfaction is generally high, students note a need for improved financial aid options and suggest enhancements in online course pacing and interactivity. The unwavering emphasis on apologetics emerges as a strong, distinctive draw for the incoming class.

SEMINARY EXPERIENCE INVENTORY (SEI) 2024/25

The Seminary Experience Inventory (SEI) 2024/25 survey provides a comprehensive overview of student experiences at Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES). This detailed report includes key findings, testimonials, and recommendations based on the survey data.

Total Responses

52

Overall Academic Satisfaction

Most students are highly satisfied with SES, frequently choosing the highest rating (5) for academic experience, faculty, and mission achievement. Strong loyalty and positive morale are repeatedly indicated.

Administration & Communication

- While the majority rate administration and communication positively, several students experience frustration with faculty and administrative response times, particularly via email.
- A few note challenges reaching staff due to the remote work model and lack of direct phone access.

Course Availability & Delivery

- Most find course registration and use of Populi/Canvas easy and satisfactory.
- A minority express concern about the availability of required courses when needed and about courses being too condensed or missing deeper interaction.
- Students appreciate the overall online environment but suggest more consistency in grading (especially regarding Turabian format) and request more feedback on assignments.

Community & Student Life

- Participation in virtual events and clubs is low, with many respondents unaware of or not engaging with these opportunities; some cite lack of time due to full-time ministry.
- Prayer support and awareness of volunteering opportunities receive mixed responses, with a minority reporting high engagement.

Library & Resources

- Opinions are split: some appreciate the library, while others find its interface difficult or the digital format of books suboptimal for extended reading.
- Several suggest technical improvements (e.g., easier navigation, more user-friendly search).

Financial Considerations

Students acknowledge tuition as competitive and affordable, which is appreciated, but note the trade-offs involved in system features and service speed.

SEI, continued ...

Key Testimonials

"I am deeply grateful to God to be enrolled at SES and I am loving my studies! As a South African I never would have been able to afford an education like this without the discount that you have offered, thanks! SES has significantly impacted my life and ministry!"

"My advice, keep tuition reasonable, focus on the core, and when you're able to solve the other issues go for it, but let's NEVER compromise our teaching of God's word or our mission."

Conclusion

The SEI 2025 results indicate that SES is succeeding in its mission to provide a meaningful academic experience grounded in Christian apologetics and theology. Students hold the faculty and educational quality in high regard, with many expressing deep gratitude for their formation at SES. At the same time, the data surface actionable opportunities for improvement, particularly in administrative responsiveness, faculty-student communication, course availability, and digital resource accessibility. While SES's focus and affordability are valued, especially among international and bi-vocational students, enhanced feedback mechanisms and expanded support resources would further strengthen student satisfaction and engagement.



GRADUATING STUDENT INVENTORY (GSI) 2024/25

The survey results from the Graduating Student Inventory (GSI) for 2024/25 provide valuable insights into the experiences and future plans of recent graduates of Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES). The following is a summary of the key findings, including notable testimonials.

Total Responses

8

Motivation for Attending SES

- The apologetics focus and the integration of philosophy, theology, and apologetics are the two leading reasons students chose SES.
 - References are frequent to SES's unique blend of classical philosophy and Christian apologetics.
-

Satisfaction & Recommendation

- Nearly all graduates rate their overall experience as "Good" to "Excellent," with most choosing "Excellent."
 - The majority would recommend SES "without reservation" to prospective students, reflecting strong institutional loyalty and satisfaction.
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Course Delivery & Student Profile

- Almost all graduates are residing more than three hours from campus.
 - The predominant enrollment pattern is part-time study while working full-time (40+ hours/week).
 - Students indicated that SES's structure accommodates working professionals and distance learners.
-

Academic & Spiritual Outcomes

- Respondents report increases in understanding of the Bible, Christian doctrine, and apologetics.
 - Most agree they have developed a distinctly Christian worldview and critical skills for evaluating theological and moral issues.
 - Several note maturation in their relationship with God and training for evangelism, missions, and apologetic ministry.
-

Support Services & Advising

- Ratings for faculty accessibility, teaching quality, and course availability are consistently high.
 - Academic advising receives mixed ratings, with some finding their adviser less available or helpful.
 - Library and digital campus environments are generally rated "good" to "excellent" but receive occasional constructive criticism regarding usability and navigation.
 - Timeliness of staff response is seen as adequate but noted for occasional delays.
-

Post-Graduation Plans

- Graduates plan diverse next steps, including full-time ministry employment, pursuing higher degrees (Ph.D., professional degrees), or launching online ministries (e.g., YouTube, podcasting).
 - A minority are pursuing secular employment or further professional training.
-

GSI, continued ...

Key Testimonials

"I'm looking forward to learning more at SES so I can grow in my personal faith and fulfill the Great Commission."

"Great experience. Very thankful for SES!"

"The reason I chose SES was the integration of philosophy, theology, and apologetics."

"My adviser was helpful"

"I developed an ability to defend the Bible and the doctrines of the historic Christian faith."

Conclusion

The GSI 2025 responses underscore SES's core strengths in classical apologetics and integrated Christian worldview education, which draw and retain distance-learning, working professionals. Graduate satisfaction is high, with students affirming notable growth in their biblical understanding, apologetic competency, and spiritual maturity. While experiences with academic advising and digital campus tools show some variability, the overall academic environment, faculty quality, and mission fulfillment receive strong marks. Graduates leave SES well-prepared for ministry, ongoing scholarship, and leadership, attesting to the seminary's success in meeting its educational and formational objectives

