"On the move" figuratively describes Austin Grad’s status. The School continues to move forward in its mission to educate Christian servants and edify churches. “On the move” also literally describes Austin Grad’s situation since the School is in the process of relocating. In this issue of the Update, we report on the reason for the move, the progress being made and our continuing need for your prayers and support.

Being on the move can bring with it many distractions. However, we are committed to staying focused on equipping our students to be good and faithful interpreters of the Word and servants of the church. Likewise, we continue our quest to nurture and edify the church.

Austin Grad is strong because God has blessed the School with people of faith who are gifted and willing servants in its kingdom work. Two of those people, Jeff Peterson and Jack Wright, are highlighted in this issue. This year, we were saddened by the passing of three men who have been important in the life of the School. In these pages, we recognize the contributions Jim Beyer, Tom Campbell and Mike White made to Austin Grad’s legacy.

The legacy of Austin Grad continues to move forward through the generous and gracious support of countless people. We could not do our kingdom work without them. It is our pleasure to express gratitude to these kind donors on our pages of Grateful Appreciation at the center of the Update.

By the grace of God, Austin Grad is on the move fulfilling its mission and continuing its quest to know, understand, practice and pass on the Christian faith. Thank you for your interest and we solicit your prayers as the School moves forward. AG
In January 2008, Austin Grad will move to a new campus at 7640 Guadalupe Street. Moving the School was a bold decision and visionary step by the Austin Grad Board of Trustees. This decision is rooted in the legacy of the School’s founders.

Early History

Austin Grad has a long and storied history beginning in 1917. That year the University Avenue Church of Christ (UA) decided to create a Bible Chair for students attending the University of Texas (UT). This decision coincided with the church’s move from East Austin to the corner of University Avenue and 19th Street (now MLK Blvd.). This move positioned the church to have an active presence with UT students.

The Bible Chair was created under an arrangement with UT that allowed churches to provide qualified professors to teach college level classes in Bible. These courses were accepted by UT for lower level credit. By the 1970’s, the Church of Christ Bible Chair enrolled as many as 800 students per semester. This arrangement lasted until 1987 when UT decided to discontinue its agreement with the Bible Chairs. Although the decision was disappointing, UA had positioned itself to continue its role of providing higher education courses in Bible, theology and ministry.

Casting a Broader Vision

A broader vision for the Bible Chair had been formed by the leaders of UA in 1964. The elders appointed a committee chaired by Dr. A.B. Cox to evaluate the work of the Bible Chair and make recommendations regarding its future. In Dr. Cox’s report, he stated that the ultimate goal of the school was to provide, “...graduate training in Bible designed to contribute to the training of ministers, teachers, and missionaries.” In 1971, Dr. Pat Harrell was appointed director and charged with moving the School toward the goal articulated in the Cox report.

In 1975, the Bible Chair program expanded to offer a bachelor’s degree in biblical studies through an arrangement with Abilene Christian University. The program was incorporated as the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS). In 1987, it received accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to offer its own undergraduate degree. Professors teaching at Austin Grad during that period included Tony Ash, Gary Holloway, Allan McNicol, Rick Marrs, James Thompson, Paul Watson, and Michael Weed.

— continued on page 4
A Picture is Worth...

L-R: Terry Koonce, chair of the Board of Trustees, Dave Arthur, vice-president of AGST, and Neil Haney, vice-chair of the Board of Trustees, visit prior to the Building the Dream Capital Campaign Dinner in Austin.

The Class of 2007 poses with members of the AGST Board of Trustees, faculty and administration following the graduation ceremony on May 20. Dr. Tom Olbricht (second from right on front row) delivered the commencement address.

Brooke Hollingsworth '08 (center) is pictured with Brooke Moore (left) and Margie Jennings (right) of the Wimberley Church of Christ. Hollingsworth taught the Ladies Class at the church on August 28. Brooke is one example of how our students and alumni participate in the School's mission to strengthen Christian servants and edify churches.
BUILDING THE DREAM continued

The School continued to take steps forward. A successful capital campaign from 1986-1990 funded the construction of a three-story building the School currently occupies. In 1992, again through an arrangement with Abilene Christian University, the School added a master's degree in Biblical and Related Studies.

In 1995, an External Review Committee recommended that the School take steps toward offering its own accredited graduate degree with the ultimate goal being the addition of the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. In 2001, the School again moved forward by gaining accreditation for a Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS). Although the name of the School was changed to Austin Graduate School of Theology, it continued its undergraduate program. With the addition of the MATS degree, the vision articulated by Dr. Cox in 1964 was reached. However, a new generation of students and supporters had now enlarged the vision with the desire to see the M.Div. degree added.

The School Faces A Decision

The current 10,000 square foot facility served the School well for over a decade. Its location in the heart of Austin was advantageous. Being adjacent to UT, near two other seminaries, and not far from the State Capitol provided the School with many benefits and opportunities.

However, the location also had liabilities. Adequate parking was always an issue. The student parking area was often called the grassy knoll because the small area was unpaved. Surrounded by pay parking lots with strict towing policies, students were told, “If it has pavement, don’t park or you will get towed.”

As the School envisioned adding the M.Div. degree, it knew that additional full-time faculty, administrative staff, and classrooms would be required. About that time, Austin Grad was blessed with an anonymous donation designated as seed money for relocating the campus. The Board of Trustees appointed an ad hoc Building Committee. The Committee, working with members of the administration, was to study the feasibility of moving the School.

A real estate consultant recommended the School secure the services of an architect to conduct a space analysis. The architect’s report revealed the School needed approximately twice the current square footage to adequately provide for its current program and a five year growth projection. Addition of an M.Div. program would require a minimum of 25,000 square feet.

The concern about location intensified when UT offered to buy a portion of the UA property. This included the parking available to Austin Grad students. UA accepted the offer. This accelerated discussions about relocation of the School.
Board of Trustees Makes a Pro-active Decision

The Building Committee was asked to search for property with sufficient acreage to build on, explore existing facilities that would meet the School’s needs and to find a buyer for the Austin Grad building.

After much research, the Committee recommended that the Board approve the purchase of a building in the 7600 block of Guadalupe Street located near Highway 183 and North Lamar Street. It is about four miles north of Austin Grad’s current location. Austin’s main feeder routes and public transportation are easily accessible. It has approximately 27,000 square feet, and 92 parking spaces. The Board unanimously approved the Committee’s recommendation.

The purchase price for the building was $1.8 million. The first phase of the remodeling project will build out approximately 20,000 square feet. This meets the architect’s recommendations for immediate needs. The School will now have adequate floor space and parking to better fulfill its mission.

To reduce costs, approximately 7000 square feet is not being finished out. This is reserved for future building phases that will include an expansion of the library and a chapel. The projected cost of remodeling for the first phase is $2.3 million.

The Building Committee also succeeded in selling the Austin Grad building. UA expressed interest in purchasing it and offered $1 million. The offer was accepted and UA will take possession on January 1, 2008.

Building the Dream

The Board of Trustees initiated a capital campaign to raise the necessary funds to purchase and remodel the building. A Capital Campaign Committee was formed. It initiated a three-year program named the Building the Dream Capital Campaign. The title recognizes that the School is continuing to build on the initial dream of its founders and the vision of the Committee led by Dr. Cox in 1964.

Trustees responded favorably to Chairman Terry Kounce’s challenge for the Board to lead the way in the Building the Dream Capital Campaign. One-hundred percent of the Trustees made financial commitments. Likewise, all of the administration, faculty, and staff made commitments to support the Campaign. These, along with two lead gifts, total $1.2 million in gifts and pledges already received.

Becoming Part of the Dream

The formal announcement about the Building the Dream Campaign was made during a dinner at the Austin Country Club on September 28. Neil Haney, vice chairman of the Board, served as master of ceremonies. Presentations were made by Chairman Kounce and President Reid. Two alumni, Bunnie Stark and Allan Stanglin, and the current Student Association President, Josh Wilkins, spoke about the difference Austin Grad made in their lives and ministries. The presentations can be viewed by going to the Inaugural Dinner link on the Austin Grad homepage at www.austingrad.edu.

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THE UPDATE
In Memory

There is a certain virtue in every good man, which night and day stirs up the mind with the stimulus of glory, and reminds it that all mention of our name will not cease at the same time with our lives, but that our fame will endure to all posterity—Cicero.

Although saddened by the passing of three men who served Austin Grad well, we are not weakened by losing them. We are rather encouraged by the memory of their work and strengthened by the legacy they leave behind.

Jim Beyer

Dr. James Beyer (1939-2007) served as a faculty member at Austin Grad from 2002 to 2005. Prior to this, he was a professor at Lubbock Christian University (LCU) from 1971 to 1995 serving as Chairman of the Department of Psychology and Sociology. Dr. Beyer provided leadership in LCU’s development of an independent Department of Social Work. Through his leadership, the program achieved accreditation in 1984, the first such program among the Christian colleges. He served as the chair of the Social Work Department. Beyer was a leader in the National Association of Social Workers in the West Texas area until his retirement in 1995. Although retired, Dr. Beyer believed he had more to give. In the last years of his life, Dr. Beyer graced Austin Grad and its students as professor of Pastoral Theology. He truly enjoyed teaching his students how to care for others from a biblical perspective. His passion for this was so deep that the early stages of cancer did not prevent him from teaching. In a eulogy for his father, Dr. John Beyer said, “Doing this he felt the most well, though he was most sick.” Austin Grad extends its sympathy to Dr. Beyer’s wife, Louise, and their family.

Tom Campbell

Tom Campbell, a former member of the Austin Grad Board of Trustees and former elder at University Avenue Church of Christ (UA) passed away July 4, 2007. After graduating from The University of Texas at Austin (UT) in 1961 with a degree in business, he joined the United States Marine Corps. He retired at the rank of colonel with nearly 30 years of service. In 1990, he became a senior lecturer in the Department of Management at UT. A spokesperson from UT’s McCombs School of Business stated that in this position “he maintained his tradition of demonstrating excellence until this second retirement in 2005.” Campbell served as a trustee for Austin Grad from 1994-2001. This was an important period of transition. Up to this time the UA elders also served as the School’s Board of Trustees. It was during Campbell’s tenure that membership on the Board was broadened beyond the UA eldership. Austin Grad remembers his service and leadership with gratitude. Our sympathy is extended to his wife, Nancy, and their family.

Mike White

Dr. John Michael White (1938-2007), a member of the Austin Grad Board of Trustees, died from a sudden heart attack on Friday, August 31, 2007. He began serving as a Trustee in 1995. Known as “a man of God and science,” he was a much loved and greatly respected professor of chemistry for 41 years at the University of Texas. Dr. White served as the Chairman of the Chemistry Department and Director of the Science and Technology Center. His research was widely published and highly regarded by the international science community. Numerous prestigious awards were given to him. He integrated his Christian faith and his work as a scientist with grace and humility. Dr. White was a Christian first. He faithfully reflected this in his life with his family, his professional peers, his students and his church. As a churchman, he served as an elder for many years. His commitment to the church led him to accept the invitation to serve on the Austin Grad Board of Trustees. From 2001 to 2004 he served as its Chairman. Austin Grad is a better place because Dr. White contributed his professional acumen and caring touch. For that, we are eternally thankful. To his wife, Gwen, and their family, Austin Grad extends its sympathy. AG
PETERTON PROMOTED

At its fall meeting, the Austin Grad Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of President Reid, promoted Dr. Jeffrey Peterson to the rank of Professor. Peterson holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Abilene Christian University, the Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and the Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University. He began teaching at Austin Grad in 1993 and was awarded the Jack C. and Ruth Wright Chair of New Testament in 2004.

Peterson’s published scholarship concerns the development of early Christian theology with particular emphasis on the Pauline letters, the Synoptic Gospels, and the Gospel criticism of Austin Farrer. He has co-edited two books, Things That Matter: A Guide to Christian Faith and Renewing the Tradition, a Festschrift for James Thompson. Peterson is an active member of the Society of Biblical Literature, currently serving as President of its Southwest Region, and he frequently reads papers at scholarly conferences, including recent Christian Scholars Conferences at Pepperdine University and Rochester College.

Peterson regularly preaches and teaches for congregations in the Austin area and elsewhere. He has also spoken at the annual lecturerships at Abilene Christian University and Pepperdine University and at the Austin Grad Sermon Seminar. Austin Grad appreciates the faithful service of Jeff Peterson and congratulates him on his promotion. AG

WRIGHT HONORED AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Jack Wright, Vice Chancellor at Austin Graduate School of Theology received an alumni achievement award from Texas State University for his activities in the business world, the military and other areas.

Wright and his wife, Ruth, have been associated with Austin Grad since 1979 when they were named to the school’s Administrative and Development Board. Wright has also served as the school’s Vice President and as Secretary of the Board of Trustees.

The Wrights met in an economics class at Texas State and are in their 64th year of marriage. They have two married children, Sandra to Steve Durr and John to Marcelle Harb. John and Marcella have a son, Jackson.

Wright graduated from Texas State in 1942. He earned a degree in chemistry and a split minor in physics and math. Upon his graduation, Wright joined the navy. He served as a gunnery officer on a cruiser and aircraft carrier. Wright earned 14 medals and ribbons for his service.

After his release from the military in 1947, Wright went to work for Union Carbide in Texas City. He eventually transferred to New Jersey, then to Illinois. He moved to the Ethyl Corporation in 1964, retiring in 1985 as Vice President in charge of Engineering, Purchasing, Logistics, and Medical Departments.

Wright has been an active member in the Church of Christ. He has served as a teacher and an elder in the Southside Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and in the University Avenue Church of Christ in Austin.

Upon retirement, the Wrights moved to Austin. He approached James Thompson, then president of Austin Grad, about being a volunteer for the School. When asked to comment about Wright’s service to Austin Grad, President Reid said, “Through the years, our School has had many friends who provided sacrificial service. However, no one has exceeded Jack Wright’s devotion and contribution. When I put a face with Austin Grad, I see Jack Wright.”

We congratulate Jack on receiving this award. His years of service in the church and his dedicated service to Austin Grad are appreciated. AG

THE UPDATE
Reid's Reflections

It's an exciting time at Austin Grad. The fall enrollment continues to be encouraging as we reached near record numbers for the third consecutive semester. Moving to a new campus with a facility that is nearly 2½ times larger than our present building will enable us to better fulfill our mission to educate Christian servants and edify churches.

It's also an encouraging time. The Board of Trustees' decision to address our loss of parking and inadequate floor space as described in this issue of the Update demonstrates visionary leadership. This is strengthened by their personal financial commitment that provides nearly one-third of the financial resources to meet the goal of the Building the Dream Capital Campaign.

Likewise, it's a sobering time. We must raise nearly $2.25 million dollars as quickly as possible to cover remodeling costs. This will be accomplished only through God's grace and the generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations.

In this time of transition, it would be easy to become distracted from our primary purpose and mission. I am thankful that our faculty, administration, staff and student body have stayed focused on these.

By staying focused, we continue to prepare those who would serve the church and world with the good news and the good deeds of the Christian gospel. Our graduates are currently serving in 13 countries and 30 states. The number of people being touched by what God is accomplishing through the Austin Grad community is countless.

We are privileged to build the dream our predecessors held for our School. Looking forward I'm reminded that we are the stewards of the dream passed to us from previous generations. Our School began with the courageous vision of men and women born in the latter half of the 19th century. From their example and that of succeeding generations of faithful stewards of the School, we are stirred to act boldly today.

One of our more recent predecessors was the late Mike White. Mike was known for his standard leave-taking, "Press on!" As I think about the opportunities and challenges ahead of us in the months to come, I'm encouraged by his memory and motivated to press on knowing that by the grace of God we will be enabled to continue our good kingdom work.

Building the Dream continued

We Need Your Help to Move Ahead

Austin Grad has a wonderful legacy of kingdom work. Its graduates are serving churches in 13 countries and 30 states. We move ahead in faith that God will provide the necessary resources for us to continue its mission. The upcoming move positions us to expand the School's program, equip more Christian servants, and broaden our efforts to edify churches.

Your help is needed now more than ever. Approximately $2.3 million remains to be raised as quickly as possible. Please consider donating to the Building the Dream Campaign. We welcome opportunities to tell Austin Grad's story of kingdom work in churches and living rooms. To schedule a visit contact Kirk Eason, Director of Development and Public Relations, at 512.476.2772 or keason@austingrad.edu.

Construction is well underway at the new location with a scheduled completion date of December 17. We look forward to beginning the spring semester in our new building.

You can follow the progress of the remodeling project and learn how to participate in the Building the Dream Campaign at www.austingrad.edu. Your prayers and your gifts are always welcomed and appreciated. It is only through these that the School moves forward. With them we continue to build the dream!  AG
Your Support Enables Us to Train Christian Servants

Thanks to our dedicated supporters, the 2007-2008 Moving Forward Annual Fund Campaign is off to a great start. The annual fund campaign runs concurrent with our fiscal year, from August 1 to July 31.

Gifts to the annual fund allow Austin Grad to keep tuition reasonable, provide additional scholarships to students in need, and maintain our excellent faculty. These ensure that our students do not have to incur great debt to obtain a quality education.

Our goal this year is $420,000. Individuals and churches can give to the Campaign with monthly or annual gifts. Those who give $300 or more may designate that a day or more of instruction be in honor of a person/s of their choice. This is a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one or someone who has made a difference in your life.

Please contact Kirk Eason at (866) 287-4723 or keason@austingrad.edu if you have questions about how you can support the training of ministers and other Christians for service.