

*Class of 2021*



*Commencement &  
Celebration*

*May 20, 2021*



## **Mission Statement**

Stark College & Seminary exists to equip educationally underserved followers of Christ for service in the church and community.

## **History**

In 1945, several leading Baptists of South Texas considered the possibility of a local college to train ministers, and established the University of Corpus Christi (UCC) on Ward Island in 1947. UCC continued as an effective four-year university until 1972.

Due to enormous financial pressure after Hurricane Celia, Texas Baptists voted to give Ward Island to the city of Corpus Christi, who in turn established Texas A & I at Corpus Christi in 1973, which later became Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi.

Texas Baptists retained ten acres of land adjacent to the larger campus and began offering courses as the Baptist Learning Center (BLC) in partnership with Howard Payne University (HPU). Thanks to generous donors and despite the many challenges, BLC expanded to a full campus in 1980.

In 1997 and later in 2011, SCS partnered with Hardin-Simmons University and Logsdon Seminary to offer baccalaureate and graduate degrees. In 2010 the Baptist Learning Center changed its name to South Texas School of Christian Studies (SCS). In 2018 SCS obtained initial accreditation from the Association of Biblical Higher Education to offer the Certificate, Diploma, and Bachelor's in Ministry degrees. That same year, SCS Trustees changed the name to Stark College & Seminary to better clarify the mission. In 2019 SCS also obtained accreditation for the Master in Ministry.

## **Institutional Symbol**

The Bible is the ceremonial institutional symbol of authority. The Faculty Marshal is selected each year and carries the Bible which proceeds the processional of faculty and students.

## **Academic Regalia**

*Education: Light Blue*

*Divinity: Scarlet*

*Philosophy: Dark Blue*

The wearing of academic regalia dates back to the 12th century and has been a tradition in American academic institutions since colonial days. The certificate, diploma, and bachelor's gowns worn in today's ceremony fall in a straight line and have pointed sleeves. The long black master's and doctoral gowns are similar except for the sleeves, which are oblong on the master's gown and bell-shaped on the doctoral gown. The doctoral gown also has velvet trimmings on the front and sleeves, with the three bars signifying the number of degrees of the graduate. In recent years, several institutions have elected to change the graduate gown color to their official school colors.

In addition to the standard doctoral gown, the president's regalia includes a fourth bar on the sleeve and a presidential collar. The collar or medallion typically captures historical elements of each institution. For instance, the official college seal anchors the collar with the president banner across the top. On both sides of the collar is the University of Corpus Christi emblem and the original Hand and Dove logo. Finally, the president's names are displayed.

## **Graduation with Honors**

The students wearing gold cords maintained a 4.0 grade point average throughout their entire program and are graduating with honors. A 4.0 grade point average means these students scored A's in all of the courses they took at Stark.

## **Invocation**

Nidia Quintanilla, SCS Trustee  
*Worship Pastor, BT Church*

## **Welcome**

Dr. Jena Dunn, *Provost*

## **Special Recognition**

Dr. Tony Celelli, *President*

## **Pillar of Light Award**

Dr. Julio and Monica Guarneri

## **Charge to Students**

Dr. Steven Parker  
*Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church Weslaco*

## **Conferring of Certificates and Diplomas**

Andres Garcia, *Director of Certificate Program*  
Dr. Celeste Gonzalez-Moreno, *Director of Diploma &  
Bachelor Programs*  
Primitivo Pagayon, *Registrar*  
Dr. Jena Dunn, *Provost*

## **Benediction**

Dr. Karlene Lyn  
*SCS Board Chair*

## **Recessional**

Please remain seated until the graduates have exited

## **Exiting Instructions**

Tina Villarreal Cooper  
*Vice President, Student Experience*

## **Certificate in Ministry**

Melissa Marie Astudillo  
Abraham A. Díaz-Rodríguez  
Wendy Karina Gonzalez  
Kathryn R. Johnston  
Smiriam J. Limon  
Jorge Luis Lozano  
Penny Reyes  
Rene Reyes  
Merpuvel Pueblos Roa  
Tamara Tijerina

## **Bachelor of Arts in Ministry**

Rogelio Rocha, Jr.

## **Master of Arts in Ministry**

Kevin W. Harris





## **Stark College & Seminary Board of Trustees**

Kathryn Albin  
Mark Casanova  
Jeanette Gordon  
Velma W. Kemp  
Donald Leavell  
Dr. Karlene Lyn  
Andrew Miller  
Gary Morgan  
Jim Naismith  
Lee Ortegon

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