



What New York Theological Seminary Students are saying about training provided by Rev. (Dr.) Valerie Oliver-Durrah

"I want to convey my appreciation for the passion you bring to the field of fundraising. Your knowledge and involvement in the fundraising field is commendable. In the short time that we share in the classroom laboratory as you framed it; you provided a clear focus, guidelines, and useful resources that will help me build a strong fundraising strategy for the church. The tools and resources that you provided to the class have motivated to go deeper and put into action; a 501 (3) (C) corporation to strategically manage existing programs within the church. This will help to focus the community development programs and services that the church is already doing. The church is already engaged in senior services, youth programs, arts and culture programs, health education programs, job opportunities, and programs that benefit the congregation and the community at large. This will give the church an opportunity to do ministry with a purpose, whereby setting a clear vision and goals for the programs that are needed. And at the same time develop and seek resources to serve people.

I want to suggest, that you consider speaking to the NYTS leadership about having the entire student body complete a survey, and even doing a focus group session, with attending pastors to engage their thinking on fundraising strategies for their churches. I believe that this class is a valuable resource that should be evaluated further and promoted." **Respectfully, Patricia Kerr**

"I feel that the Fundraising Course offered at NYTS was incredibly beneficial for me. I think that it is a class that many students at this Seminary should take. There are many strong fundraising principles that will aid any person in their ministry and community service endeavors. It was important for me to learn about the Foundation Center and all that it has to offer. I was also enlightened in learning the process needed to secure funding for projects. I was formally unaware that such detail went into applying for grants, aids and scholarships and I now know that if I plan to secure funding I will need to be extremely detail oriented.

I think that this class should have been longer. Prior to enrolling in this course I had no knowledge of the fundraising process and would have benefitted from a more methodical approach to dialogue on this topic. Professor Durrah is incredibly knowledgeable and passionate in this area. I would have enjoyed more time learning from her about this subject of fundraising." **Warren B. Hicks**

“As a new assigned pastor six months into my pastorate this course offering came as a timely and appropriate season to gain understanding of what the essentials of developing fundraising strategies are all about. I am pleased with the wealth of resources that I became informed with and the how-to make the information useful. I realize that while experiencing the diversity of reasons for faith base fundraising which came from listening to the many different challenges of my classmates. I find that it’s been tempting in my new ministry to bring all the new ideas, plans and programs that I have become exposed to in training but there is something to be said about being patient enough to discover what exist already. I am taking time to become part of what’s present.

This valuable learning experience can have tremendous benefits and give purpose to proper adaption and application; they become indigenous to the situation. I once was told by a mentor, that you can grow dandelion in just a few hours, but it takes several years to raise an orchid. I don’t have a “right way” or the “best way” however in the discovery process it is important to have the resources that build sustainable growth and create partnerships.

The class has lead me to create for the church a nonprofit 501c, website address and email addresses for hope4mtkc.com, .net, .org. Hope 4 Mt. Kisco Community is the name chosen for this 501c nonprofit organization.

Understanding planning strategies that create long term relationships with various levels of funders, how to tell the story that speaks to the needs of concerns that rebuild infrastructure and hope which inspires transformation and trust. Knowing the right way to raise and spend money is the key task for money management.

This class has inspired me to seek a greater understanding of the fundamentals of fundraising and how to gain the interest of those that are likely to support.

The course armed us with meaningful resources and direction on where to find access to Information that can lead to fruitful results. I believe this course is an essential elective that gives a practical approach towards ministry in today’s changing landscape. I have benefited from this course and as a result wish to share with others in my denomination about shifting the Paradigms’ of the traditional ways of understanding fundraising strategies.

*Rev. Dr. Valerie Oliver-Durrah is a resource center and certainly has gained a tremendous level of experience, strength and hope about this platform and should have an extended time frame to really unpack this course in my opinion. Rev. Dr. Valerie Oliver Durrah thank you for allowing God to use you to be a blessing to our class in the time we spend together. May God continue to richly bless you and your ministry. Looking forward to sharing some B.B.Q together some time in the future. If it be the Lord’s will.” **Rev. Earl I. Lewis***