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### **New Collaboration Fast-tracks MDiv at Andrews University**

Andrew Francis

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In the weeks leading up to these dates, host churches will benefit from a mass social media campaign promoting the series.

“With approximately 6,500 Adventist churches dotting the landscape of North America, our denomination is uniquely positioned to be a center of healing for those

who are struggling,” Rodriguez observed. “We filmed ‘MindFit’ to place churches at the forefront of the mental health conversation. May the love of Jesus be reflected through us as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in bringing physical and spiritual healing to a world perishing in hopelessness.”

Visit [MindFitEvent.com/Host](https://MindFitEvent.com/Host) to join the myriad churches serving their communities through this unique evangelistic event. ■

*Amanda Blake is a writer for the Voice of Prophecy.*

# New Collaboration Fast-tracks MDiv at Andrews University

**The Bachelor of Arts in theology program and the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program at Andrews University are collaborating to provide an easier pathway for students to complete both the undergraduate and graduate programs.**

In the 2024–2025 school year, undergraduate theology students will have the opportunity to take 15 shared credits of upper-division classes that will count toward both their undergraduate degree and a subsequent MDiv. Through increased overlap and simplicity, both degree programs hope to increase efficiency for students.

Fernando Ortiz, the MDiv program director, expressed his excitement about and approval of the partnership between the undergraduate Department of Religion & Biblical Languages and the graduate program in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. “This collaboration is an unprecedented opportunity for undergraduate students at Andrews to have a seamless transition to the Seminary and save time. We are thrilled to enhance the opportunities for both programs.”

Because many undergraduate theology students go on to pursue an MDiv or other graduate-level program at the Seminary after graduation, it made sense to Ortiz and Rodney Palmer, chair of the Department of

Religion & Biblical Languages, to provide a simpler path for students to pursue their academic and career goals.

The partnership also allows students from the Department of Religion & Biblical Languages the opportunity to go into the pastoral field after graduation and gain valuable ministerial experience. Then, they may return to Andrews and begin a graduate degree in the Seminary with a head start because of the upper-level classes they have already taken.

The collaboration is expected to benefit not only students but also the distinct programs and their faculties. Palmer stated that he believes the collaboration will allow for “a greater working relationship between the Seminary and the undergraduate program,” since the two programs are currently separated under different schools within the greater Andrews University umbrella. Ortiz is hopeful that the added benefits and easier connection between the two programs will entice more students to attend both the MDiv program and undergraduate theology program.



▲ **L to R:** Fernando Ortiz, MDiv program director and Rodney Palmer, chair of the Department of Religion and Biblical Languages.

This new collaboration is one of several initiatives being developed to increase the number of theology students attending the University. For example, the Lake Union Conference recently announced a new scholarship program for religion and education majors who are members of the Lake Union.

Although the collaboration is designated to begin in the upcoming 2024–2025 school year, Palmer expects that some current sophomore and junior students will take advantage of this opportunity and apply to earn Seminary credits early. After a review of their degree progress and timeline, these students will be able to take advantage of the positive changes being made to theological studies at Andrews University. ■

*Andrew Francis is a student writer for the Office of University Communication.*