

Alumni Spotlight: Edwin Aponte (MATS '82)



Current title: Dean of the Theological School and Professor of Religion & Culture at Drew University

Family: Wife: Laura, Son: David

Favorite professor: Dr. Richard Peace & [Dr. Douglas Stuart](#)

Favorite class: Spiritual Pilgrimage

A favorite memory: It is difficult to select just one favorite memory, since I have many good memories, particularly from some of my classes. But as I think about my time at Gordon-Conwell the fondest memories are of times spent with classmates in

conversations outside of class. And some of those fellow Gordon-Conwell students became future colleagues and lifelong friends.

Would you tell us about your role there at Drew?

I serve as the executive dean of Drew University Theological School, an embedded graduate seminary which is one of the three schools of Drew University. In my role as dean, I serve as the executive of this seminary. Moreover, as a tenured full professor I also teach courses in the Masters and Doctoral programs of Drew Theological School, as well as being an advisor to Doctor of Ministry students.

How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to be serving in your current role, and what were some of your other positions in higher education?

It is very difficult to answer this question briefly. However, there is no doubt that my Gordon-Conwell experience gave me the materials to build a foundation upon which I built as I grew into and better discerned my multifaceted calling to bridge church and academy. In living out that challenging vocation, I have had many positions in higher education: Director of Financial Aid and Instructor of Biblical Studies at United Wesleyan College; Executive Director of the Center for Latino Studies and Assistant Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at North Park University; Associate Professor, Christianity and Culture, and Director of Advanced Studies of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University; Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of the Seminary, and Professor of Religion and Culture at Lancaster Theological



Seminary; Executive Director of the Louisville Institute; and now Dean of the Theological School and Professor of Religion & Culture at Drew University.



What do you love about the work you do?

There are several aspects of my work to bridge church and academy that I love. I really enjoy the opportunity to help others to discern and live into their respective callings. I like the opportunity to be creative, especially in meeting challenges when some say, “That can’t be done.” I continue to marvel that God gave me the gift to see both the big picture and also the details, and how they relate, in accomplishing what we are called to do in the church and in the world.

What are the particular challenges you encounter in serving as a Dean in higher education in general, and in your specific role and context?

Like many others in higher education the financial challenges of higher education are extremely difficult to address.

How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your work in higher education?

My Gordon-Conwell education gave me a base from which I embarked on a journey that combined ministry, teaching, scholarship, and service in higher education, and that also allowed me to grow and develop in ways that I never anticipated while I was a Gordon-Conwell student.

Do you have any publications or links to share?

- Co-authored with Miguel A. De La Torre, [Introducing Latinx Theologies](#), (Orbis Books, 2020)
- Co-authored with Miguel A. De La Torre , [¡Santo! Varieties of Latino/a Spirituality](#), (Orbis Books, 2012)
- “Popular Culture and Caribbean Religions,” [The Oxford Handbook of Caribbean Religions](#), Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado, ed., (Oxford University Press, 2024)
- “Understanding Spirituality and Theologizing Popular Protestantism,” [The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Latinoax Theology](#), Orlando O. Espín, ed., (Wiley-Blackwell, 2023)
- “Hope, Theological Education, and the Boardwalk,” [Borderlands of Theological Education](#), Joshua Davis and Deirdre Good, eds., (Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2022)
- “Foreword,” in [A Biblical Study Guide for Equal Pulpits](#), ed. Young Lee Hertig. Eugene, (Wipf & Stock, 2022)
- “Reflections on the Pedagogy of My Professor and Mentor Katie Geneva Cannon,” *Wabash Center Journal on Teaching*, 1, no. 1 (January 2020): 107-110

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- “Friedrich Schleiermacher,” in [Beyond the Pale: Reading Theology from the Margins](#), Miguel A. De La Torre and Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas, eds. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2011)
- “Metaphysical Blending in Latino/a Botánicas in Dallas,” in [Rethinking Latino/a Religion and Identity](#), Miguel A. De La Torre and Gastón Espinosa, eds. (Pilgrim Press, 2006)
- “A View from the Margins: Constructing a History of Latino/a Protestantism,” in [Hispanic Christian Thought at the Dawn of the 21st Century](#): Apuntes in Honor of Justo L. González, Alvin Padilla, Roberto Goizueta, and Eldin Villafaña, eds. (Abingdon Press, 2005)
- “Coritos as Active Symbol in Latino Protestant Popular Religion,” *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 2, no. 3 (1995) 57-66.