

Andover Newton, Colgate Rochester drop plans for merger: Plans not "financially viable"

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Andover Newton in the Boston area and Colgate Rochester Crozer in upper New York State—two seminaries with American Baptist ties—have agreed to end merger talks, saying that plans fell short of being “financially viable” due to “economic realities.”

Presidents of the two schools said they intend to keep exploring collaborative academic programming, according to a joint statement by Eugene C. Bay of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School and Nick Carter of Andover Newton Theological School.

In the meantime, however, Andover Newton began talking about a possible partnership with a Unitarian Universalist seminary in Chicago. Carter met with Lee Barker, the president of Meadville Lombard Theological School, for initial discussions before Christmas.

“We found enough common ground to agree to continue the exploration,” said Carter. Andover Newton has ties to American Baptists and the United Church of Christ but is also “a significant center for formation of Unitarian Universalist ministers,” according to a joint statement. The Unitarian Universalist Association has headquarters in Boston.

Meadville Lombard trustees announced in November that they have authorized the sale of the school’s campus in Chicago, which includes a main educational building and three large, converted houses. The school has been in Chicago for about half of its 165-year history.