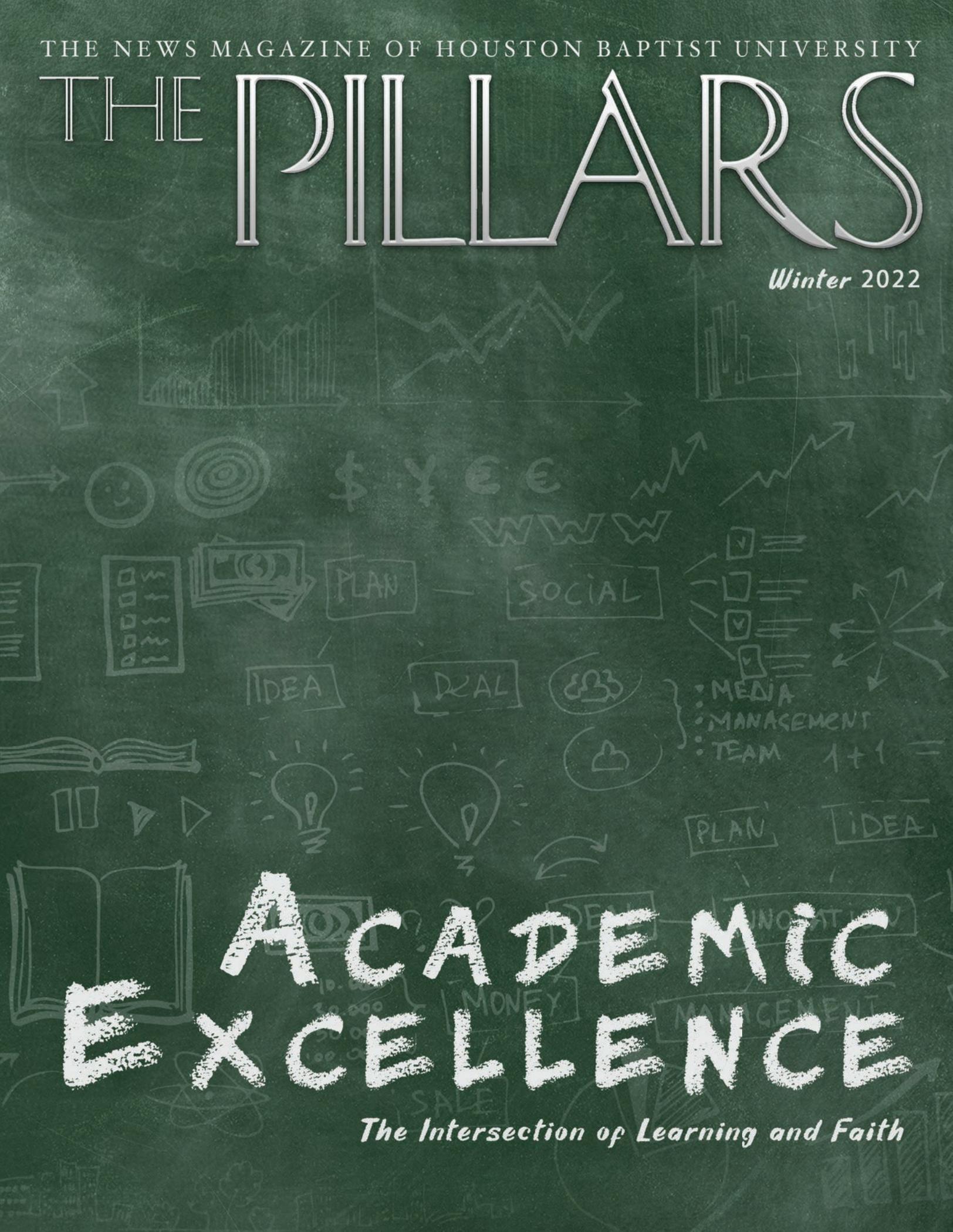


THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOUSTON BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

THE PILLARS

Winter 2022



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The Intersection of Learning and Faith

The Pillars is the news magazine of Houston Baptist University and is published in print and online.

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Dr. Jerry Johnston, Vice President of Innovation and Strategic Marketing, talks to Dr. Michael Roqué Collins, Professor of Art at HBU, for *Think About It*, No. 238, set to air on April 4, 2022 on HBU's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn social media pages.

I have had a unique perspective to see God at work through transformed lives at HBU! *Think About It*, our HBU filmed podcast, is released weekly on all the university's social media channels. We feature the stories of the many *transformed* lives of men and women due to HBU's influence and academic training. Recently, I completed the **238th** interview featuring Michael Roqué Collins, Professor of Art at HBU. Students and faculty in numerous interviews reveal how God has used HBU to change the entire trajectory of their lives! Each with its unique signature of inspiring stories reminds us of why HBU fulfills an irreplaceable role in our nation. When you pray for HBU, give to HBU, encourage students to attend HBU, you join in God's work through HBU. Distinctly different, HBU relies on God and core Christian convictions to guide its academic training. Bringing God daily and hourly into HBU by dedicated faculty and staff makes an unseen dynamic difference – changed lives who change the world! We rely on God's word, God's will, and God's plan of excellence in academic training in all the disciplines to equip men and women to become all that the Lord has planned for them. C. S. Lewis, a former Oxford atheist academic, wrote "*Surprised by Joy*" when he discovered salvation through Jesus Christ and God's plan for his life. Similarly, God uses HBU to create a **supernatural** academic training experience student by student.



Daniel Roqué Collins, HBU Professor of Art, in recent "Think About It" podcast, episode 1 and on HBU's YouTube channel.

Scan the QR Code to hear HBU's "Think About It" podcast guests share their thoughts on the importance of academic excellence.

Together, as a team, we stand in awe of what God is doing at HBU! Under the direction of a God-fearing, God-honoring leader, President Robert Sloan, daily, we seek to collaborate so that HBU's mission in an increasingly darkening world will increase. And, we invite you to join us in what God is doing! One of my favorite authors, Walter Isaacson, released his latest book, *"The Innovators,"* a 10-year literary project that carefully explains the digital world's launch and meteoric transformation that impacts every person globally. Isaacson's emphasis that this transformation happened due to **collaboration is most interesting to me**. It reminded me of God's work through HBU – it takes a dedicated **partnership** to build a great University in one of America's most dynamic cities, Houston. Please join what God is doing through HBU!

Dr. Jerry Johnston
VP of Innovation & Strategic Marketing

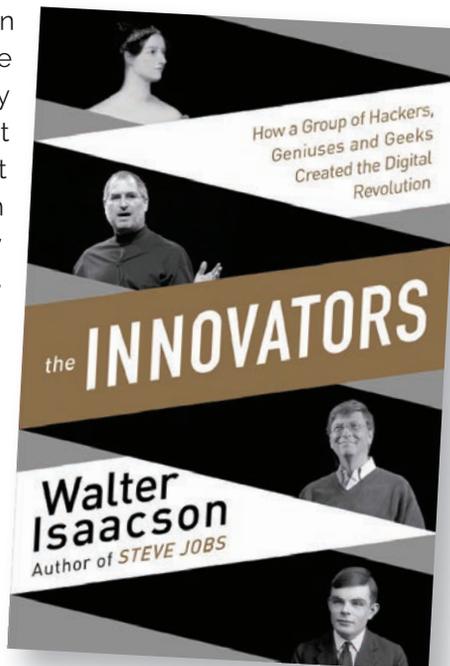


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The academic work of a Christian university embodies a role that is vital and necessary for our culture today. It is work that takes place at the intersection of learning and faith. To be sure, great learning is not required to be a person of faith. The simplest individual who has faith in Jesus Christ can lead a life of wisdom and productivity. And a person of great learning who is devoid of faith and full of cynicism can lead a life of brokenness or even destruction.

But pitting faith against learning creates a misleading alternative that need not prevail anywhere, and certainly not in a Christian university. Faith and learning are not contradictory. Everyone has some sort of faith, but the crucial question is, what is the object of our faith? Faith in money, faith in human brilliance and achievement, trusting technology to solve life's problems—these

are all ways that ultimately lead not only to disappointment but also to despair.

What we seek to do at a Christian university is express our faith through the love of God, a love that takes place with all the heart, mind, and strength. To love God with the mind does not negate the importance of our emotions or our physical activity, but loving God with emotional trust is hampered and diminished greatly when it's done without a stewardship of the mind.

C. S. Lewis once wrote—and I paraphrase—that you don't have to be educated to be a Christian, but being a Christian is a great education. Certainly the students at HBU don't have to choose between faith and a formal education. How wonderful it is to have an opportunity to receive a formal education shaped and influenced by the faith of great mentors, counselors, and academics like those at the University—faculty and staff who

themselves are submitted to the mind of Christ. To love the Lord your God with all the mind, as well as the emotions and strength, allows for the development and use of all the gifts available to us to live with wisdom and influence.

In some circles, it's fashionable to tout the lack of education of some Christian leaders—and I have no doubt that many great ones have had no formal education. But almost every Christian leader I've known has wished for the opportunity to learn more. In that connection, it's also fascinating to notice how the writers of the New Testament were prepared for the amazing task of intellectual, philosophical, and theological integration that they achieved when God filled them with the Spirit and used them to write the Scriptures. One of the most brilliant minds in the classical world is reflected in the life and works of the apostle Paul, the lawyer-theologian-politician who wrote thirteen books of the New Testament. But even Paul was outdone in terms of sheer word count by Luke, the brilliant, apparently classically trained writer who by tradition was also a medical doctor. Luke's two works, Luke and Acts, account for a slightly greater percentage of the New Testament than the writings of Paul, and together they wrote more than half of the New Testament.

These two Christian leaders are only the start when it comes to minds acutely prepared to do God's work. Matthew was, according to tradition, the note taker of the twelve apostles. It was his job to record what Jesus said, something he did with a precision enhanced by his abilities in record keeping as a tax gatherer—before he became a follower

of Jesus. And then there's the anonymous author of Hebrews, who wrote the book that provided an astounding integration of Old Testament Levitical laws regarding purity, sacrifice, and priesthood and showed how these are fulfilled through the priesthood and sacrificial, purifying blood of the resurrected and ascended high priest, the Son of God himself. And I could go on regarding other New Testament writers. The grammar is simple when it comes to the Greek of some, but the theology is profound, and they are all writing in at least a second language.

Our work at HBU is focused on producing whole persons—people who by their submission of heart, mind, and body to the living God as revealed through Jesus Christ are able to be salt and light in the world. It is through preparation and hard work, through a faithful education, that our students are able to lead and serve others in their families, churches, businesses, and other institutions. And by excelling in the worlds of arts and entertainment, business and finance, education and entrepreneurship, they are better able to do God's work in the world.

Thank you for your love, support, and prayers for HBU. In all that we do, we strive to submit ourselves through learning and faith to the comprehensive truths revealed in Scripture, the creation, and society—to all the truths of God embodied in the person of Jesus Christ.



Dr. Robert Sloan
HBU President



@DrRobertBSloan



Ritamarie C. Tauer, CPA, MACCT
SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

Houston Baptist University Reaffirmed by SACSCOC

In January 1968, Houston Baptist University (HBU) was first accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) after applying for candidacy in January 1966. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the regional commission

responsible for accrediting degree-granting institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and some institutions in Latin America and other international sites approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Regional accreditation validates the quality

of an institution as a whole and evaluates multiple aspects of an institution, including its academic offerings, governance and administration, mission, finances and resources. Accreditation by SACSCOC signifies that the institution (1) has a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) has resources, programs and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission, and (3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives.

In April 2021, HBU welcomed the SACSCOC On-Site Reaffirmation Committee for a virtual visit to campus to perform a review of the Focused Report and the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) both submitted in mid-February 2021, as well as sections of the Decennial Compliance Certification, submitted in September 2020. The nine-member Committee was comprised of peers from similar institutions with the goal of conducting a focused evaluation of the campus. Interviews were conducted with the University President, Dr. Sloan, the Executive Council, deans, directors, faculty, staff, and students. In addition to the lengthy list of interviews, numerous internal documents were examined. At the conclusion of the two-day virtual visit, the University was found to be in compliance with all 73 standards comprising the Principles of Accreditation, with no follow-up reports requested. The Committee included numerous gracious comments about the visit, including *“All representatives of the institution were extremely professional and courteous during the virtual visit which made the Committee’s work enjoyable and rewarding. It was obvious to the Accreditation Committee that the leadership of Houston Baptist University is dedicated to ensuring compliance with the SACSCOC standards.”* In addition, the Committee was *“impressed with the institution’s Quality Enhancement Plan and the entire QEP Committee.”*

Obviously, this wonderful news was everything I had hoped for but it should be noted, this result is the product of many dedicated administrators, faculty and staff committed to excellence! In the fall of 2017, a University Reaffirmation Committee was created to begin to prepare the campus for the Reaffirmation process. The purpose of this committee was to review the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation in anticipation of the preparation of the upcoming Decennial Compliance Certification Report. The committee was divided into nine subcommittees, each assigned to different sections of the report. During the 2017-2018 academic year the subcommittees performed a compliance audit; carefully reviewing the current status and identifying possible ‘red flags’. During the 2018-2019 academic year, those ‘red flags’

were remedied, which cleared the way for the 2019-2020 academic year to be the reporting year for the Compliance Certification Report. In the spring of 2020, this committee began working very closely with me and Lisa Covington, Senior Director of Assessment and Compliance, as we began to write the report narrative. This was a consuming task and those serving on this University Committee demonstrated an amazing commitment for which I am very grateful. The members included Lisa Covington, Brenda Whaley, David Davis, Trae Holcomb, Carol Lavender, Katie Alaniz, Collin Garbarino, Chris Kugler, Candace Desrosiers, Victoria Means, Missy Wells, Susannah Michael, Brenda Woods, Dean Riley, Samantha Bottoms, Donna Stallings, Tina Butler, Michael Dei, Edith Gabbard, John Holmes, and Karen Francies. This all-star team was in my prayers regularly.

Concurrent with the work of the Reaffirmation Committee was the work of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Development Committee. This committee, chaired by Brenda Whaley, was charged with oversight of the QEP topic selection; development of the structure, budget, and assessment of the QEP selected; preparation of the QEP proposal for SACSCOC, and the appointment of the SACSCOC QEP evaluator. Members of this committee included Brenda Whaley, Vicki Alger, Hannah Wingate, Chris Hartwell, Jean Tarrats-Rivera, Allyson Cates, Page Hernandez and four students; Taylor Kollmorgen, Jessica (Tran) Nguyen, Sidney Salazar and Andre Walker. This committee carefully reviewed all requests for proposals and after much deliberation, finally selected *Mission Metacognition* as our next QEP. In addition, they were tasked with presenting and defending the QEP to the On-Site Review Committee. Their efforts were blessed with a glowing report from the Review Committee: *“the planning process used to design and implement the QEP was excellent. Each step in the process was well planned and executed in a timely manner using a wide range of administrators, faculty, staff, and students, which ensured that all voices were heard. The personnel assigned to implement the QEP from both the faculty and the student success areas shows a commitment by the institution to making Mission Metacognition a success.”*

The report prepared by the SACSCOC On-Site Reaffirmation Committee was forwarded to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for a final review and vote for reaffirmation. At the Annual Meeting on December 2, 2021 the Board of Trustees unanimously voted to affirm our reaffirmation with no further reports due!

HBU is no ordinary institution. We are blessed to work with God-fearing, hard-working administrators, faculty and staff who love what they do and love HBU. This 10-year reaffirmation is a testimony to each and every one of them!

SIGNS, SY

By Dr. Avin Brownlee

I first stepped onto the HBU campus in early March of 1973. I had “sorta been invited” by Dr. H. B. Smith, Vice-President for Academic Affairs and I sort of invited myself. To Dr. Smith, this was just a visit, but to me, it was a job interview. One of the first things I noticed was a plaque on his office wall. This plaque was the University Seal: a cross lying over an open Bible with the scripture John 14:6 written beneath and encircled by the words: Houston Baptist University Texas 1960.

Two weeks later, I was back on campus for a real job interview which ended in the office of Dr. William H. Hinton, University President. As I was escorted into the president’s office, I saw the seal again, first as a relatively large statue on a table against the back wall and again, engraved into the front of the presidential desk. During the interview, Dr. Hinton handed me a University catalog and told me to open the front cover and read the University Mission Statement (there was the University Seal again, inside the front cover). Dr. Hinton emphasized the Christian nature of the University and certainly made it clear that nothing would ever be more important to the University than its Christian foundation and mission. He also stressed that all faculty and staff must be professing Christians. Some years later it struck me that the University Seal looks somewhat like a livestock brand. It is God’s brand on HBU, telling the world that HBU belongs to God.

The enrollment was small and there were only three academic buildings when I joined the faculty of HBU in the fall of 1973. These buildings were Atwood I, a smaller version of our Moody Library and the Quadrangle (aka the MD Anderson Center and the Brown Administrative Complex). Anyone

SYMBOLS & LANDMARKS

familiar with the University knows that there has been tremendous growth in the student body, faculty, staff and physical plant of HBU since then.

In my opinion, there has also been strong, steady spiritual growth and increased commitment to the Christian mission of HBU. Today I took a stroll around campus just to look for some outward signs, symbols and landmarks of this Christian commitment. These outward signs are important because they are a reflection of the inner soul of the University, and they let the rest of the world know who we are, what we stand for and that we are proud of our Christian commitment.

Here are some of the things I observed. Walking into the Quadrangle from the front parking lot, one sees the words of John 14:6 carved into stone masonry on the left wall of the Brown Administrative Complex, the first building erected on campus. The University Seal is found in the heart of the campus, carved into granite in the walkway across Holcombe Mall. It is also found in or on almost every building on campus, (in the Moody Library lobby, the upstairs lobby of the Science Building, the front and back external faces of the Hinton Building, on the floor of the Hinton building directly under the dome, on the front face of the University Academic Center, in the lobby of Sharp Gym and on many doors throughout campus). The seal is also incorporated into the brickwork of the main entrance off Fondren. Almost every hallway, open space or office complex in any academic area is decorated with scripture, religious art or inspirational Christian thoughts. Many individual faculty offices and doorways are also presented this way. Paintings of the “Stations of the Cross” are found in several buildings.

There are also important landmarks on campus that reflect our Christian mission. The “Descending Dove Sculpture” is behind the Hinton building and represents the Descending Spirit of God. We also have a statue of University Founding Father Stewart Morris, sitting on a park bench holding a Bible. The large doors to Belin Chapel with the crosses carved into them are statuesque. And, in my opinion, the most impressive landmark is the Belin Tower, topped

with its gold cross.

In one of His parables, Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand and it gives light to everyone. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Proudly displaying all these outward signs of our commitment and faith in Christ is one way that HBU shines its light to the world. As our light shines, it attracts students, parents, faculty, community leaders, donors and others. These people contribute to HBU in their own special way, creating positive feedback that makes our light grow stronger. In 1973, HBU was sometimes called “Houston’s Best Kept Secret.” It was a small school with limited influence in southwest Houston. Among other things, our steady shining light has grown HBU into a major university, well on its way to having a global impact in Christian higher education.

At HBU, I have served under three University presidents, each with unique personalities and talents, but all dedicated to God and the Christian mission of HBU. These presidents, along with the counsel and assistance of the HBU Board of Trustees, have guided the growth and influence of HBU. God has richly blessed our University and will continue those blessings because we are unashamedly Christian.

About Dr. Avin Brownlee

Dr. Avin Brownlee is a professor of biology in HBU’s College of Science and Engineering. He earned a MCS and PhD in biology from the University of Mississippi and a BS in biology TE-Secondary from West Texas State University. Brownlee came to HBU in 1973 and was Department Chair from 1990 until 2008. Under his leadership the biology department underwent extensive curriculum changes, keeping the department at the leading edge of biomedical education. Dr. Brownlee has been recognized by the University for his outstanding teaching several times. He received the Opal Goolsby Outstanding Teaching Award in 1978, 1982, 1988 and 1998. In 2009, Dr. Brownlee was the Piper Professor nominee from the College of Science and Math. His hobbies include hunting, piano, reading, and collecting and restoring antique clocks.

A Higher Education

By Dr. Diane Williams

HBU has been an important part of my life for nearly three decades. My relationship with the University is an integral part of God's purpose for my life and has filled me with countless moments of impact and inspiration. HBU has not only enlightened my mind but ignited my heart. It is so much more than a university. It's an institution at the intersection of learning and faith. As the brand depicts, HBU truly is "A Higher Education."

As our President, Dr. Robert Sloan so aptly stated, "The academic work of a Christian university embodies a role that is vital and necessary for our culture today."¹ While secular universities might define academic excellence solely on the basis of rankings and networking, HBU responds to a higher calling. Our students are part of a faith-based community bound together by diversity, discipleship and dedication. We define academic excellence by the integration of education with Christianity through the lens of a global economy. Our campus is at the epicenter of one of the most dynamic cities in the world driven by international prominence in energy, healthcare, supply chain and space travel. HBU is well postured to benefit from these economic growth engines while infusing a Christian world perspective that is a differentiator in the global marketplace.

In John 13:34-35 (NIV) Jesus says "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Diversity is at the heart of HBU, and we truly love one another. We are an intimate learning environment in the heart of one of the most diverse cities in the country. Student life at HBU is about much more than books, tests and lectures. It is about stepping into a community where each person is recognized as a distinct individual. We not only develop each student academically, but spiritually, physically and relationally, immersing them in a diverse, yet inclusive culture. I'm constantly amazed at the breadth and depth of our student body and the faculty that challenges them on a daily basis.

HBU has a rich Christian heritage. In Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." HBU is a wonderful

place to practice this Great Commission. It's so refreshing and inspiring to see a community living through faith. I'm impressed by the conversations on campus, the sharing of faith and the dedication to manifesting our Christian heritage. You can feel it in the courtyards and the classrooms, not just in the chapel. It's an energy that elevates the HBU academic experience to a higher calling.

Consider Philippians 4:8-9 (NIV) "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." True, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable – all describe HBU. What our students are learning, they put into practice with a heart for discipleship. As Pillar Six of "The Ten Pillars 2030" states "all forms of instruction are best done not only by reading and lecturing but by a kind of practicing discipleship." At HBU, academic excellence is empowered by the discipleship of our students and faculty. We use our collective and individual voices to proclaim the Good News, serving as disciples throughout the community.

Finally, HBU is a great place for giving. In Matthew, 6:20-21 (NIV) scripture states, "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." We are dedicated to generously giving of our time, talent and treasure, sustaining our academic excellence through the recruiting and retention of the highest caliber students, faculty and staff. We are equally invested in advancing higher education through academic innovation and advanced technology. HBU is blessed by generous donors who not only believe in our vision and mission but invest in academic excellence at all levels.

Since 1969, HBU has been a beacon for academic excellence with a Christian Worldview. We've made an indelible mark on the lives of so many students, faculty, staff and friends. Our standard of excellence continues to elevate as we activate our "Ten Pillars 2030" and continuously strive to fulfill our brand promise of "A Higher Education." I'm truly blessed to be an alumna and to share in our Husky pride.

¹Article for "The Pillars" (Winter 2021-22) by Dr. Robert Sloan, January 12, 2022.



About Dr. Diane Williams

Dr. Diane Williams '93 is a proud alumna of HBU. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1993. She has served as an HBU Board of Trustee since 1997 and was appointed Board Chair in 2005, the first woman to hold the post. She was chair of the Presidential Search Committee which brought Dr. Robert Sloan Jr. to HBU as the University's third president. In 2006, she received an honorary doctorate, Doctor of Humane Letters, from HBU and is a member of the Guild. She and her husband, Stanley, have left a lasting imprint on the University. The couple played key roles in fundraising and construction of the Morris Cultural Arts Center and Belin Chapel and funded the adjacent, Williams Fountain, which serves as a place of rest and spiritual reflection. As members of the HBU Football Founders Touchdown Club, they are among the benefactors whose generosity helped establish intercollegiate football at HBU. The couple also helped the University adopt its current mascot, Kiza, and continue to support the live mascot program. They also established an endowed academic scholarship at HBU to honor their children and extended family and donated two rare Chinese bibles to HBU's Dunham Bible Museum.



What is a True Christian Education?

By Benny Agosto, Jr.

Over 40 years ago, I came to Houston to attend Houston Baptist University (HBU). My eternal goal was to play collegiate soccer and attain an education while I did it. Little did I know that the decision that I made to come to HBU would transform my life.

I was born in New York City and raised in Puerto Rico. From a young age, I was taught by my Puerto Rican parents that through hard work and determination, anything was possible. “I can do all things through Christ who gives me the strength that I need.” Philippians 4:13. I cannot tell you how many times I heard that verse at home growing up in San Juan. This is a principle that was etched into my soul by my parents, Don Beno and Marina Agosto, and one that I have shared with my family moving forward. (Frankly, with anyone who cares to listen!) I have applied this principle throughout my life, in school, on the soccer field, and now, in the courtroom and in my law practice at the law firm of Abraham Watkins Nichols Agosto Aziz and Stogner in Houston, Texas. Both of my parents have a sixth-grade education, and every day they would tell my siblings and I to be sure to get an education. I remember my father telling me that no one can ever take that away from you. My parents knew the struggles of being a migrant family without a formal education. I learned very quickly that a good, top-notch education is one that would prepare me for the career challenges in the future. A better education, I have learned, is one that would teach you not only how to be prepared for the challenges of the job, but also for the challenges of life. That is what a true Christian education is all about. This is what I learned while at HBU.

Education can change the world. By increasing access to a quality education, we have come to learn that the results can be transformative to students, the community they live in and society as a whole. No one can deny that the value of investing in education is crucially impactful. It has been reported that the value of investing in education is indisputable: it reduces inequality between men and women, improves economic development, promotes peace

and lifts people out of poverty.

A Christian education can do more than that. It can transform a man or a woman at a spiritual level. To tell my story, I would have to tell you about the grace, mercy, forgiveness and victory over the enemy that Jesus has blessed me with over these years since I attended Houston Baptist University. The seeds that were planted in my heart to become the best that I can be, work hard at my craft/education and always be present to give back to my community, were learned at HBU. The true examples of the Christian walk that I received from the administration, coaches and faculty at HBU still guide me today. In fact, I would have never known that I was the beneficiary of kindness and giving by President Hinton, had I not been invited to attend a scholarship luncheon for students receiving endowment awards. It was then that I learned that the President of the University had chosen me to be the recipient of the scholarship. I was floored. But what I really learned was that when you give of yourself and your finances to benefit others, and for the glory of God, you are guaranteed positive results. The heavens will open up its floodgates of blessings over all.

So, what is holding us back? Why are we fearful of supporting or giving to a Christian university like Houston Baptist University?

In life, we need to be connected, not just present. The way we can connect with our alma mater, HBU, is to find ways to support it. It could be done by volunteering during alumni activities, giving back to help support our students, or even better, providing financial assistance and scholarships to help the needs of our students. We should never be afraid to support an institution that is promoting Christian values and a top-notch Christian education – Houston Baptist University.

“For God has not given us the spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

Let’s be strong, fearless, and full of love, the love of Christ, and let’s find ways to help others while giving God the glory for all things. I pray for God’s favor to be with you and bless you, now and always.

About Benny Agosto, Jr.

Benny Agosto, Jr. '86, is the managing partner and trial lawyer in the highly-acclaimed-and- respected law firm of Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Agosto, Aziz & Stogner. He is also the proud founder of The Mexican American Bar Association Foundation. Additionally, he is co-founder of the Hispanic National Bar Association’s Legal Education Fund, which provides scholarships for young Hispanic law students in the Houston area. More recently, he established the South Texas College of Law Benny Agosto, Jr. Diversity Center at the law school he attended in Houston. Benny lives his life by always challenging himself to keep learning, to love and support his wonderful family, and to make every attempt to better his community. As a former HBU soccer player and coach, he has shown continued commitment to supporting the soccer program. He truly exemplifies the many characteristics that HBU holds close.

Art and Spiritual Excellence

By Michael Roqué Collins

Since 1998, it has been a pleasure and honor to teach, research and provide service at Houston Baptist University. I currently hold the positions of Senior Artist in Residence in painting and Professor of Art.

After a planned departure from HBU in 2002 to work with other universities that maintain Master of Fine Arts (MFA) programs in studio visual arts, it was a pleasure and an honor to return to HBU in 2006 to help build a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) and a terminal MFA program in studio visual arts on our campus. The decision to turn a tenure offer down at a big 12 university and return to HBU was made very easy by the announcement that Dr. Robert Sloan would be our president after many years of dedicated and excellent leadership and service at Baylor University. Baylor has long been one of the finer BFA studio visual arts programs in Texas. It had always been my prayer and goal, within a Christian university, to build strong enduring studio visual arts programs and returning to HBU enabled me to build these programs that are now thriving at HBU.

A question might be, why develop and maintain studio visual arts programs at a Christian university? The answer is one that my creative life has long considered and is held close to my heart. Art heals and art engages love. It does so by very direct processes that may be found through classical studio training.

As Rilke, the German Christian poet once wrote, and I am paraphrasing: *one learns disciplines through creative efforts that heighten the state of love, gestation and perseverance, through one's art and the surrounding and encompassing faith-filled life we chose to lead.* Our studio practice teaches us to examine and meditate on nature's rhythms that are indeed God's handiwork. This fine arts training encourages all to see the larger picture prior to plugging in the details. The expression that God is in the details is amplified by the knowledge that one accomplishes a higher degree of resolution in any art form allowing the initial errors of any project to be consumed by deeper and further reflections on nature as God's thumbprint. In painting as well as other visual art expressions, it is commonly held that one's creative process progresses from expressive and loose beginnings through multiple destructions and redevelopments of an idea to eventually reveal a more resolute form hopefully

worthy of regard. It is this very battle that disciplines an art student to the sensitivities needed for polishing an art form or expressing creativity. In visual art, we equate this ebb and flow of how form evolves in a work of art to our Christian beliefs of cycles of birth, life, death and resurrection for all who accept Jesus Christ as savior. The patience and sense of perseverance that the practice of studio visual art develops in each student are palpable and life-affirming and underscores the beauty and power of the universe, which our Lord has created for our benefit and well-being. When one humbles themselves to record God's creation as best seen initially as a priority for young artists through the classical study of people, places and things, their appreciation for the majesty and complexity of God's ultimate creation intensifies. One might equate the importance of what I have just described through the sensations of standing in a cold rushing river and being still within the moment of God's majesty where one sees all around them, through the rushing water, the luminous sky, the fish alive and only partially visible. The very grandness that God creates before us through the power of his nature always leaves me praying and thankful for the emersion, even if fish are not caught. The practice of studio visual arts leaves students grateful, more disciplined, respectful of things that are at first not easily comprehended or mastered and above all more conscious of God's rhythms in nature that surround us all.

This sense of needed gestation is one of the grandest elements of humility and an attribute which I have been most grateful for, as it discourages me from passing premature or limiting judgments and encourages a thoughtful meditation on complex creative issues and processes as well as the profundity of the human condition we share. The new world of digital and internet connectivity and fast-paced consumption is an excellent example as to why a slower form of creativity and gestation of complex processes is so desperately needed. The balance of the two states is indeed invaluable.

Additionally, the realm and study of illumination as a powerful force for spiritual energy is long held in the history of art and though challenged by darker contemporary forces and complications is needed now more than ever. The study of light is one of the core sensibilities developed in beginning classical-oriented studio drawing and painting courses. The knowledge that light and shadow are fully



engaged when we observe and interact with the natural world is a hugely profound concept. The idea that God's light shines down on a parched and cracked earth was suggested to me in an art essay that our former HBU colleague, Jim Edwards, wrote about my art so long ago, though it is as true today as it was in 1993 when first written.

Another powerful reason for maintaining our studio visual arts offerings is the healing attribute found in the sense of patience that is always developed when one engages in a studio practice. Patience in art and the acceptance this practice provides leads one to a realization regarding the idea that judgment of others is not ours to deliver. Love is what is mandated by our shared faith. Even for students exposed to art appreciation or visiting our fine arts museum with hands-on experimentation, the varied processes inherent in this exposure initiates a deeper understanding of the creative history we share as a civilization. At least the Socratic methodology one employs when viewing visual subject matter heightens creative sensibilities that are so valuable for negotiating the complexities of our current era. How

we approach everyday lives in a creative and innovative manner often is stimulated by the study of studio visual arts and art history.

The art of higher Christian education is to stimulate in each student and faculty passion for creativity, learning and believing. To have learning adventures that honor our shared faith in Jesus Christ as savior is the focus of our endeavors. I am proud of the 60-plus years that HBU has offered a platform for this sort of spiritual and intellectual growth and am grateful that studio visual art remains part of the core of HBU's arch towards greater academic and professional excellence.

About Michael Roqué Collins

Michael Roqué Collins has served as a Visiting Professor of Art in 1998 and now holds the rank of Senior Artist in Residence-Painting and is a Professor of Art at HBU. In addition, he is the Senior Director of the department of Studio Visual Arts. He earned a BFA in Art from the University of Houston and was a Meadows Fellow and Teaching Assistant during his MFA period of study in Studio Art from Southern Methodist University. His teaching focus is on introducing college students to the field of art and to social and creative thinking within a Christian context.

The Foundation of Academic Excellence

By Roy Jones

As a 20-year old transferring to Houston Baptist University after my sophomore year of college, I perceived myself not as a student-athlete but rather an athlete-student. Thriving in my athletic career had been my number one goal. Having grown up in Houston, which at the time was simply a growing metropolis with a small-town feel, I didn't have much awareness of the University situated practically in my backyard. Rather, I was simply looking forward to returning to familiar surroundings of family and friends, continuing my athletic career, and pursuing my college education after having begun my college career far from home.

The prior season, I had played against HBU in both home and away games. Regarding the road game against the Huskies, I remember traveling to the game from our hotel and the driver asking if anyone knew the actual

location of the school. This was of course, pre-Google or GPS. One of my, then, teammates pointed to me and said, 'This guy is from Houston.' I remarked, "Yes, but I have no idea where the school might be," although I had grown up a mere 20 minutes from the campus.

Leaping forward in time, about seven or so months later, I arrived for the first week of classes at HBU. I must confess, I hadn't given much thought to the fact that the word "Baptist" was squarely and firmly embedded in the middle of the institution's name. From a personal perspective, I had professed and accepted the Lord and was baptized as a pre-teen. I had actively grown to young adulthood in my parent's home in the Christian faith, having served in various capacities in what could be best termed "a conservative traditionalist Baptist church." But I was now a young adult college student, living on my own,

which can be an interesting and cautionary intersection of one's religious upbringing and the secular world.

I could not have been more ill-equipped for what I would encounter at HBU. The first prong was the deployment, and rightfully so, of caring, academically trained faculty and staff that followed a well-rounded approach and were invested in the success of each student. While I have not attended a course at HBU in more decades than I care to remember, next-generation members of my family who have attended, expressed the same thoughts regarding HBU faculty and administration.

The next element was and remains to this day, the University's foundational pursuit of academia in a Christian environment. As the seventh pillar of the governing Ten Pillars states: "Bring Athens and Jerusalem Together," my personal growth and transformation was a product of the masterful ability of the administration, faculty, staff, and yes, student body, to combine scholarly knowledge with spiritual understanding and teachings. Herein lies my understanding and perspective of true academic excellence in a Christian environment: to burnish young minds, cultivate perspectives, and provide for a fulfilling academic experience rather than sacrificing, actively promulgating Christian principles.

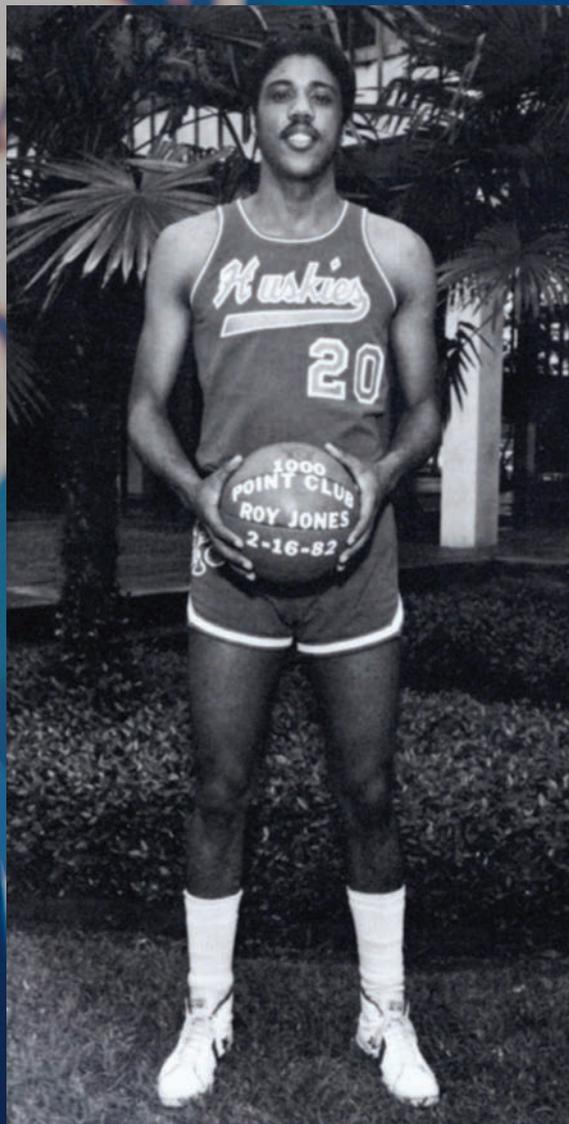
The final element is the school's core reason for coming into existence has remained intact and been built upon through the careful nurturing of academic excellence while remaining true and steadfast to its most basic guiding purpose. This was foundationally expressed to me in the required segments of biblical curriculum study, through the mandated attendance of weekly assembly, all the while cultivated in a culture of spiritual growth and wellness. Then, as now, Christianity remained under attack and antithetical to many worldly pursuits. The God-centered pursuit and unconditional profession that "Jesus is Lord" has spiritually fed and academically enriched the lives of students whose paths have led them to and through HBU. As classes, faculty, staff and guiding administrations have experienced seasons that have

come and gone, the core principle has simultaneously remained the same while ever-flourishing.

As an alumnus, when I visit the campus today, I am always taken aback by the tremendous transformation the campus has undergone. The dynamic growth in terms of physical campus structures, expanded curriculum offerings, and student body enrollment, all serve as discernable testaments to the vision of the founders and their, likely deemed at the time, "overly ambitious" belief that something of great import could ever rise out of old rice fields in southwest Houston. As the Christian faith sets forth, "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"

It has been my lifelong appreciation to be associated with the University and to have been transformed from that young naive athlete-student to a thriving student-athlete. Subsequently, my faith has been built on an ever-increasing foundation, started as a young pre-teen, augmented, shaped, and honed while at HBU and carried forth through a fulfilling life's journey through family pursuits, professional accomplishments, and most importantly, spiritual growth.

Thankfully, the Caretaker of the vineyard directed me to HBU, allowed me to thrive while there, did not see the need to cut me down, and patiently waited for some productive fruit. My experience at the University resulted in personal growth and an impact that has sustained itself, not only in my case, but I would submit for innumerable others, which, by itself, is a definitively strong argument for the pursuit of academic excellence with a distinct Christian worldview.



About Roy Jones

Roy D. Jones '83 graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Finance and Financial Management Services from HBU. He is a financial industry professional with a long-tenured career in banking both in the public and private sector, real estate development, enterprise-risk and retail/corporate banking operations. He has held leadership roles in the private sector including mortgage brokerage, retail lending and commercial lending oversight. A former member of the HBU Huskies Basketball program, he enjoys traveling and spending time with family.

Solid Christian Academics Matter, Today More Than Ever

By Dr. Randy L. Hatchett

Academic Excellence in a Christian University

I bless many diverse efforts to train Christians. There are cultures without a written language where ministry training requires future pastors to master a faithful and effective retelling of 150 biblical stories. Closer to home, I bless the many Bible studies which instruct and encourage community. Also, I bless Bible Colleges. They typically give less emphasis to general education. But their students learn well-crafted short answers to threatening challenges from Marx to Nietzsche and beyond. Bible Colleges offer a ‘boot camp’ review of Bible content and teach a method used to extract the content for teaching and preaching. I bless this God honoring endeavor.

I, however, wish to address the necessity of a Christian university (I am aware universities vary greatly). The very name “university” requires students engage important texts and ideas; we explore and tease out meanings; we assess cogency; we ponder the practical consequences and character genuine truth commands; we inquire how every field of study connects to the profound truth of the Christian message. Without this we are neither Christian nor a university.

Universities train for careers and professions and nurture a meaningful and rich student life. But no amount of institutional and student achievement makes a university Christian without the love (and diligent pursuit) of wisdom and the wisdom of love (centered in the Lordship of Jesus). The vision and goal of excellence in Christian education requires, but is not achieved solely by turning out students who do well in the arenas of management, education or sociology.

Neither is it attained by extending Christian kindness, praying in class or sharing the gospel with unbelieving students, though I cherish the liberty that HBU has provided for me to live out my faith for the last 30 years. Crudely put, a bunch of Christian people operating a university does not make it a Christian university. Excellence in Christian education requires learners recover the neglected Christian teaching. We must then seek to integrate these convictions coherently (think Christian worldview) and embody them in our living and churchmanship. Finally, we must apply and integrate his Lordship into whatever practice, work, career and service we take up. Our Christianity must theoretically and conceptually inform how we practice law, count money, advertise, make films and manage human resources. Without this connection between faith and learning Christian academic excellence is still unachieved.

Christian Teachings Matter, Creation for Example

We live in an ironic and tragic circumstance: the critics of Christianity are unaware that their sentiments to care, share, seek justice and protect the dignity of persons are legacies of the Christianity they rejected; today Christians are unaware of the doctrines that generated these values. Sadly, both Christians and their critics have forgotten how radical Christian teaching appeared alongside its pagan environment.

We forget convictions have consequences. Christians traditionally believed that a good and generous God made us and the world we inhabit. Christians taught that He purposed to know and enjoy communion with us. He did not abandon creation when the human family shared in a rebellion of betrayal. This God kept up with the human family and keeps or sustains the world today. We are not only indebted to God for restoring us through his Son, but we are also in debt to God for our very lives. Every intelligence, initiative, and good instinct we have ever known is the gift of His Holy Spirit. Christians should see life as a gift and worship with great gratitude.

On the political right, we ignore creation when we declare our achievements as “self-made” men and women. Sloppy Marxist lingo may wrongly claim every achievement and possession is the result of injustice; but this does not excuse us from failing to honor God as the giver and sustainer of life. On the political left, every instinct and behavior is justified if it is self-chosen. People are coached to create themselves and fashion their own image and story. Young people are collapsing, perhaps even dying, under the pressure to curate their Facebook pages. Sadly, young people are told they should create their own sexual identities and choose their own sexual rules. The creator God is missing from our minds and hearts.

Academic Excellence Is Necessary, Not an Optional Luxury

Quality academics face many obstacles. We live in a hostile culture which is increasingly dismissive of faith. Long-held Christian standards are seen as signs of moral impairment. University education proves expensive; poorly prepared students require remediation; often students come without any hint of history (not knowing who Ulysses S. Grant is) or any sense that they are missing anything important; they need no working memory beyond the news cycle. We compete against state supported schools and for-profit ventures. Some schools are extremely easy and in effect sell college credit rather than requiring students to earn it.

A portrait of Dr. Randy Hatchett, an older man with white hair, wearing a grey suit jacket over a blue button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred office setting with a window and a whiteboard.

Our churches face grave challenges as well. Churches that struggle to survive, conclude they cannot require converts to train in any meaningful way. Even church-going students know few stories; some students are unable to locate Moses as preceding David; it is simply no longer their story.

Christian identity and mission need the church and the university to step forward and face the challenge. We must circle the wagons and teach. We must rediscover and relearn our distinct teaching and embody them in community. As we regain our bearings, we will remember that we hold a different message and destiny that we are obligated to share. We need bible studies of every sort. But the way forward will not only need boot camps but something like the Naval Academy (lofty, I know). We do not need to know lines about Marx. We need to learn Marx. We need to measure this pseudo eschatology by seeing its deficiency in light of the true destiny of the world found in Christ. This higher learning is essential. When you see it, celebrate it, support it, recruit students and stay involved.

In 30 years at HBU, I have been inspired by those who have embodied excellence. I briefly mention several reflections. I met Robert Sloan before he was a big shot. As a young scholar, he treated me like my work was important. His ministry is defined by his pursuit of excellence in integrating faith and learning. I am grateful for his stewardship of this noble vision. I came to HBU in the fall of 1990 with David Capes, now director of Lanier Theological Library. David

and I worked hard at scholarship, family and church service. His scholarship and friendship are gifts and much of my writing is attributed to his encouragement. My friend Chris Hammons displays excellence across many venues; he is the University's best lecturer (in political science, no less); he excels in scholarship and administration. Finally, I shared in the search to replace Gene Wofford (another treasure) and the Lord was good to bring Ben Blackwell. He has already distinguished himself as an important scholar. We have co-authored a book about teaching doctrine. Ben's working title for the book was *Orthodoxy (right teaching) So What?* The tag captures my theme: the truth and truths of the gospel matter greatly; they are essential for Christian academics.

About Dr. Randy Hatchett

Dr. Randy Hatchett is a Professor of Theology in HBU's School of Christian Thought. He also serves as program coordinator for Theological Studies (BA) and Christianity (BA). He earned his BA in Religion from Dallas Baptist College in 1978 and went on to earn an MDiv in Theology from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1982 and a PhD in Philosophy of Religion in 1989. Dr. Hatchett has taught in the areas of areas of philosophy and theology; Biblical hermeneutics is an ongoing interest. His writing interests include: hermeneutics, church history, and theology. He received the Opal Goolsby Outstanding Faculty Award (1999-2000). He revised Bruce Shelley's Church History in Plain Language, 4th ed. (Thomas Nelson, 2013) and coauthored with Ben Blackwell, Engaging Theology: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Introduction, (Zondervan, 2019).



Christ- Centered & Mission Driven

By Dr. Mordecai Brownlee

As written in the word of God in the Book of James Chapter two verse fourteen, “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?” As we reflect on the current state of our communities, society, and our future, we must ask ourselves, now more than ever, what is Christ calling us to do? Our God-given purpose, our truest sense of self is not simply found in thought, it must be lived by action.

Houston Baptist University, an institution that for more than 60 years has operated as a premier example of Christ-faith in action, realized early on its responsibility in empowering Christians towards their God-inspired calling. Guided by its institutional mission, HBU provides a learning experience that instills in students a passion for academic, spiritual, and professional excellence as a result of our central confession, “Jesus Christ is Lord.” It is in this mission statement that we, as students, graduates, and stakeholders of our beloved institution find our own personal charge. To be Christ-centered and mission driven. It is through our journey of faith that we learn how best to equip ourselves to serve as “the light” in the midst of darkness. As Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. penned in his final sermons for his 1963 book “Strength to Love,” “Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.” It is the Christ within us that calls us to be, as Jesus stated in the Book of Matthew chapter five verses fourteen through sixteen, the light of the world.

In physics, energy represents the capacity for doing work. Furthermore, through science we understand that all forms of energy are originated from a source. As we live in this world, but not of this world, we must never allow the realities of society to dim our light. However, to maintain this energy, and do the work of Christ, we must never lose sense that in Christ we find our source. The word of God in John chapter fifteen verse five states, “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me (Christ)—and I in him—bears much fruit because apart from me you can accomplish nothing.” Houston Baptist University provides a Christ-centered education that equips its students to serve as “the light” in an array of professions to meet the changing needs of the community and society.

Honestly, at the time, as a student of HBU, I failed to fully comprehend the significance of the instruction I received. However, as a proud two-time alum of HBU and now a president of a college, I have deep appreciation for my knowledge learned. Even more importantly, I now understand how my faith prepared me to learn. As Dr. Robert Sloan shared in his Winter 2021-2022 “President’s Message” for The Pillars, “Faith and Learning are not contradictory.” Together, faith and learning provide an infrastructure for the journey Christ has pre-designed for us all. As with all learning, information evolves over time. While Jesus Christ

is the same yesterday, today, and forever more (Hebrews 13:8), technology certainly is not. It is imperative that we embrace the significance of life-long learning. Such learning enables our ability through Christ to remain present and relevant in society’s ever-evolving realities.

The diversity of our journeys in Christ is perhaps the biggest asset to the body of Christ. Our histories and certainly our realities are not the same. However, we serve a Christ that remains the same. Through the quality education provided by HBU, we learn to accept the truths of this world to empower us to be the change of this world. Canadian novelist Robertson Davies once shared, “The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend.” Essentially, it is our faith that presses us to strive towards the realities we have yet to understand. This, in turn, identifies the power of faith and learning. Learning alone can lead to the reinforcement of hatred, prejudice, limitations, error-thinking and bias against others. However, through our faith in Jesus Christ, we are called to showcase spiritual maturity, strength of character and moral virtues. As 1 John chapter two verse eleven states, “But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.” Through our faith we are called to be the light and not the darkness. We are called to showcase God’s love and power through our roles in society by serving as a living testimony of God’s grace. Once again, the power of faith and learning are showcased - one variable creates room for the other.

I am honored to be an alum of Houston Baptist University. My bride, Daphne Brownlee is also a proud alum of Houston Baptist University, and the institution will always hold a special place in our hearts. On September 2, 2006, we married in front of the Hinton Center located on the steps of the University’s pillars. On that day we forever cemented our love for one another and our love for this amazing institution. In closing, may we all embrace the responsibility we have as believers of Christ to be the light of the world. May we all find our purpose and through our faith discover the mission that God has for us to respectively fulfill. As the community of Houston Baptist University, may we all be Christ-centered and mission driven.

About Dr. Mordecai Brownlee

Dr. Mordecai Ian Brownlee (BA 08' and MS-HRM 11') proudly serves as the sixth President of the Community College of Aurora in Colorado. In addition, he is a columnist for EdSurge and presents frequently on the future of higher education, community colleges, and educational technology. In 2020, Dr. Brownlee was featured by EdTech Magazine as one of the 30 most interesting voices in higher education who is shaping the conversation around IT and EdTech. In 2022, Mordecai was featured by Diverse Issues in Higher Education Magazine as a “New School” leader representing the next generation of college presidents.

The Christian University and the New Creation

By Dr. Eric Johnson

The Apostle Paul referred to Jesus Christ as “the Beginning, the first-born from the dead” (Col. 1:15). That’s because in Christ’s resurrection God initiated the long-promised new creation (Isa. 66:22) in which all that had gone wrong in the first creation was—mysteriously—redeemed and resolved, and a new way of life—in relation to God—was established. Since then, God has been inviting human beings through the gospel to follow Christ into the new creation (Rom. 10:8-13; 2 Cor. 5:17), to get raised from the dead of their sin (Eph. 2:1-6), created anew in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10), and enabled to become increasingly new persons (Eph. 4:22-2; Col. 3:9-10), as they co-author with Christ a new story through a renewal of their understanding, feeling, and relating to others. Nowhere on earth is there greater potential to realize the new creation than at a Christian university. Most undergraduate students are at an age when they can personally lay down a Christ-centered foundation for their lives that they can build upon thereafter. Graduate students have the opportunity to make their Christian faith more integral to their vocation or pursue a new vocation for God’s glory and their own joy. Setting the stage for such personal transformation is the prayerful study, research, dissemination and teaching of the faculty, which advances the new creation by taking every discipline, more and more, captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). For this to happen, the Christian university needs to open itself up to Christ afresh, in every era, seeking from him ongoing renewal of its educational activity and curricula. But this task has become especially difficult in our era.

The Secular Revolution and the Modern University

According to Christian sociologist Christian Smith, a “secular revolution” began in the late 1800’s in the West, and by 1950 all of America’s major universities were thoroughly secularized. As a result, reference to the living God who created and ordered the universe, and who now offers salvation to humanity, is not permitted there. The only worldview allowed expression in the modern university is some kind of secular humanism, which affirms the existence of nothing beyond the material universe.

The Christian community, therefore, has a tremendous need today for its own institutions of higher learning, where the light of the new creation is allowed to illuminate human understanding, affections and practice. However, two daunting problems have faced the Christian community for the past 150 years: 1) how to develop new-creation versions of all the disciplines, when secular humanism sets the academic standards in our day, and 2) how can faculty members be trained in new-creation education, when secular universities offer the vast majority of doctorates they need to be appropriately credentialed.

Re-Visioning the Christian University according to the New Creation

Such tasks far exceed the capacities of any single institution and will require the efforts and resources of the entire Christian community. But there is no hope of that happening apart from the spiritual power unleashed in the new creation that began in Christ’s resurrection (Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:6). What would that look like?

The new creation, now, is found anywhere that hearts, minds and lives are being renewed by the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:26; Rom. 12:1-2; Titus 3:5). This happens whenever God’s people see the way things really are in the universe and live accordingly. For example, that God is the ultimate source of everything good in the universe (James 1:17); that God’s glory (or His beauty) is being continuously manifested all around us (Ps. 19:1), from the farthest reaches of the universe to the activity of bacteria at the bottom of the ocean to the location of quantum particles in the Large Hadron Collider; and that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is ordering everything by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3); that all people are made in God’s image, and therefore always manifest some glory, and so, are to be valued and treated with a corresponding respect, regardless of their economic power, political persuasion, disabilities, or criminal record; that sex, gender, and family are a part of God’s loving design plan, and so display his glory, but so does our compassion for those saddled with a disordered sense of gender or sexual attraction; and that the world’s racial, ethnic, and national diversity just begins to illustrate the infinite beauty (or glory) of God. Most importantly, God’s glory is



especially manifested in his people becoming more like him—more righteous, more loving, and more humble, in part because they’re better able to see, and repent of, their own hindrances to His glory.

Christian universities would seem to be the best place, after the Church, to enhance the ability of Christians to see all of reality spiritually, by training its participants (students and faculty) throughout the curricula how to grow in wonder and awe, more and more, throughout their lives, at the glory of God being manifested everywhere in the universe. For this to happen, in addition to the necessity of the Holy Spirit mentioned above, the Bible will also play a major role. As Dr. Sloan suggested in his introduction to the Ten Pillars 2030, the scriptures give Christians a set of what we might call “worldview-spectacles” that we need to re-vision the universe so we can see more of God’s glory, and to rightly interpret—according to the new creation—the knowledge, values, and practices coming out of modern universities. Some disciplines, of course, will rely more directly on Scripture than others, depending on how much the latter shines light on the former (e.g., the humanities and social sciences more than mathematics and computer science), but all the disciplines require an ongoing re-visioning, especially in our day. One implication of this is that all the departments of Christian universities would benefit

from biblical, theological and Christian philosophical expertise and resources, to help them better critique the reigning assumptions of their disciplines and develop new-creation versions of those disciplines, insofar as a Christian worldview makes a difference, so the true glory that resides in them can be best discerned.

Where better to be schooled than a Christian university with a new-creation agenda. The Ten Pillars 2030 is an inspirational document that could serve as a manifesto for Christian higher education in the 21st century, and it offers HBU’s faculty, students and constituency a unique blueprint for how to realize the new creation on a university campus. Let’s go look for some glory, shall we?

About Dr. Eric Johnson

Dr. Eric Johnson is a Professor of Christian Psychology in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences and Asst. Director of the Gideon Institute of Christian Psychology and Counseling. He earned his BTh in Theology from Toronto Baptist Seminary & Bible College, an MA in Christian Studies from Calvin College, and an MA and PhD in Educational Psychology from Michigan State University. Johnson has edited, written or co-written five books and published over 50 peer-reviewed articles in psychology, theology, and a Christian approach to psychology. Before coming to HBU, he taught at University of Northwestern and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

THOUGHTS ON ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

By Holly Frost

My name is Holly Frost. I wasn't a straight-A student. I didn't graduate at the top of my class. While at UT-Arlington (UTA), I had a full-time job that often prevented me from having a typical class schedule. I took classes that interested me and related to the type of engineering job I was looking for when I graduated. It took me 10 years to graduate with that schedule.

While studying, I creatively thought about how my studies would be used in the real world. My goal was to develop an understanding of how to apply that subject matter. True academic excellence is reflected by an understanding that can only be obtained by immersing oneself deeply in their studies and applying the knowledge gained.

The approach I followed provided me with both a mastery of the material I had studied and an appreciation for its real-world applications. After graduating from UTA in 1973, I was an engineer at Texas Instruments for a few years before I started Texas Memory Systems (TMS) in 1978. When I started the company, I was its only employee (unpaid).

At TMS, I had little money, so I cut expenses and personally tried to do everything. A customer approached and asked me to design a fast storage system for processing seismic data. I dove deeply into the project. I learned all that I could concerning application software, fast transfer interfaces, processor and memory chip technology, PCB layouts, and several minor technologies, too. I learned each technology as needed. Not too early or too late.

As the company grew, I kept building memory systems, kept expanding the requirements, and kept adding new features. And I began to hire engineers. Slowly we built an engineering company. When we had money, we hired more engineers.

All of the employees who stayed long term shared

one common trait. They were each willing to jump into the deep end with respect to the projects assigned to them and learn. Not at a superficial level, but to the point they utterly understood the problems they were facing and the solutions they developed. They were also willing to make mistakes quickly (and work hard to fix them). At my company, we thought hard, worked hard, and – sometimes – made money. When we didn't have money, we just survived.

The hands-on persistent learning approach I developed during my academic career and fostered at my company paid off. Texas Memory System grew to be a global leader in solid-state memory systems and was acquired by IBM.

In his book, "Outliers," journalist Malcolm Gladwell notes that success is strongly associated with a depth of understanding of a particular subject matter that can only be obtained by hours of intensive focus, real-world experience, and practice. Citing numerous examples, Gladwell demonstrated that knowledge obtained through applying learned concepts with a hands-on approach produced the most dramatic results (as opposed to rote learning through memorization).

Approaching your academic efforts with the goal of obtaining a true, practical, understanding of your studies aligns with the teachings of Our Lord. In Luke 5:4, Jesus instructed Simon, James, and John to "Put out in deep water and let the nets for a catch." Jesus knew that real success depended on taking the time and effort required to row out of the shallow waters and drop a net into the deep. The same is true with your studies. Instead of memorizing material just for a test, head out into the deep waters and truly learn.

To help you on a path to true academic excellence and future success, I offer the following practical tips that have served me well:



BE INTENSE AND EVALUATE YOURSELF CONTINUALLY:

When in class (or studying outside class) ask yourself: “Do I truly understand what I am hearing/reading/ reviewing (or I am just memorizing it)?” If not, speak up. Ask questions.

UNDERSTAND HOW WHAT YOU ARE STUDYING CAN BE APPLIED IN PRACTICE:

Once you have reviewed your academic material ask: “Do I know how this information or idea can be applied in the real world?”

If so, visualize exactly how you could apply what you have learned. If not, push yourself hard to produce at least one practical application. If, after a reasonable effort, you can find no such applications, talk to a classmate and/or your professor. The act of understanding how what you are learning can be applied in a real manner will allow you to gauge the true depth of your understanding.

As an example, while a student studying electronics, instead of just memorizing concepts associated with electronic circuits, I actively attempted to use those concepts to do something practical, like designing a computer. While I didn't have access to electronic components or equipment, I was able to attempt a paper design.

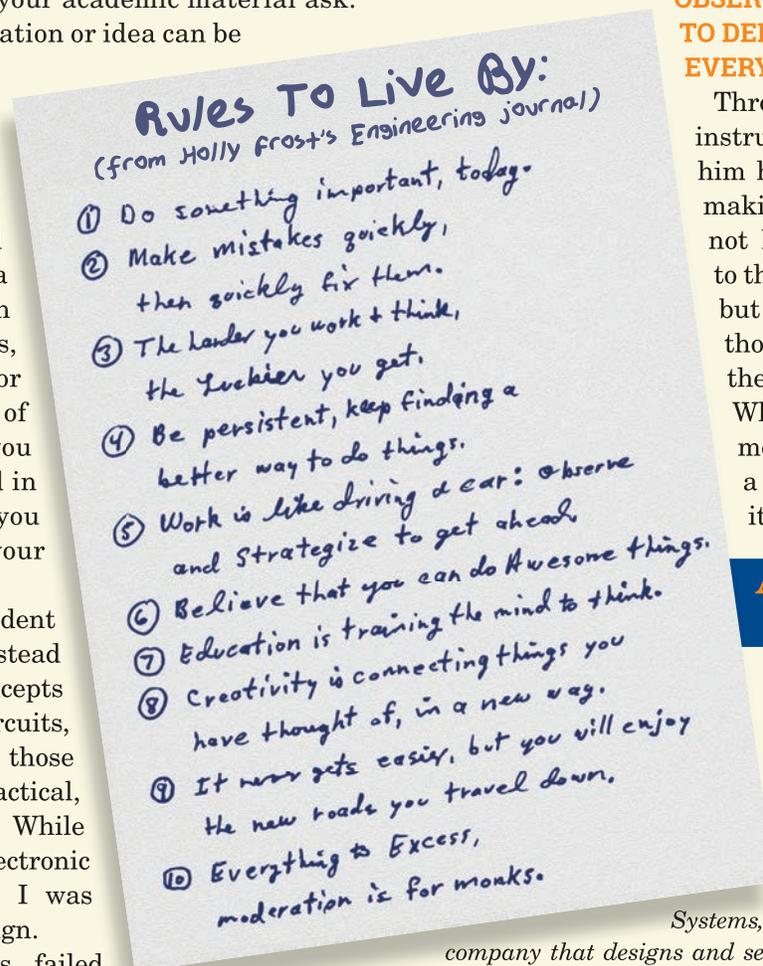
Several of my attempts failed and made me appreciate that I didn't learn or understand all that I initially thought I had. But I kept trying. And trying. Through repeated attempts, I was able to learn what I needed to learn and obtained a depth of knowledge that I would not have been able to obtain had I not tried to use what I was learning in practice. Lessons learned easily are often written in sand and quickly forgotten. Lessons learned after persistent effort are written in stone and retained.

EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM YOURSELF:

Set your expectations high and don't give up if you find subject matter challenging at first glance. Most anything worth obtaining requires deliberate, focused effort. Those seeking marginal results, typically put in only marginal efforts. Those who truly believe that they can achieve great things, will exert great effort and the result of such effort is often success.

OBSERVE, LISTEN AND TRY TO DEEPLY UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING:

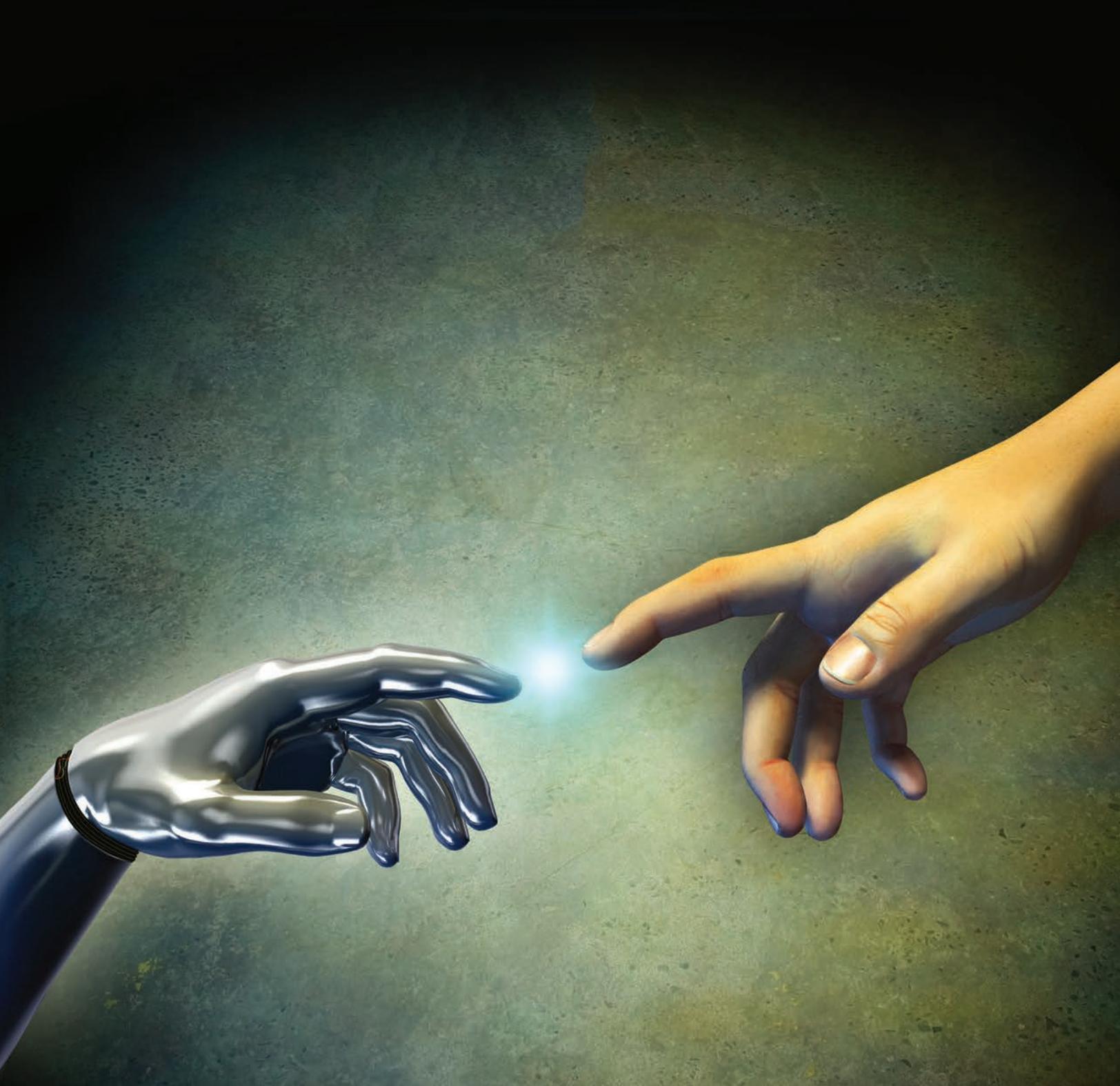
Throughout the Gospels, Jesus instructed: “He who has ears, let him hear.” In so doing, He was making clear that we should not lightly observe and listen to the messages provided to us, but that we should truly hear those messages, contemplate them, and learn their depths. While his specific Gospel message was not directed to a group of college students, it easily could have been.



About Holly Frost

Holloway “Holly” Frost was born in Venezuela. He earned a degree in Mathematics, with a minor in Electrical Engineering, from the University of Texas at Arlington. He is founder and CEO of Texas Memory

Systems, an IBM computer hardware company that designs and sells solid state storage systems that accelerate demanding enterprise applications. The company boasts its award-winning RamSan product line which delivers fast, reliable, and economical solutions to a broad range of enterprise and government clients around the world. He was named a 2021 Fellow by the National Academy of Inventors for creating and facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on the quality of life, economic development, and the welfare of society.



Christ in the SCIENCES



Bringing Science and Faith Together

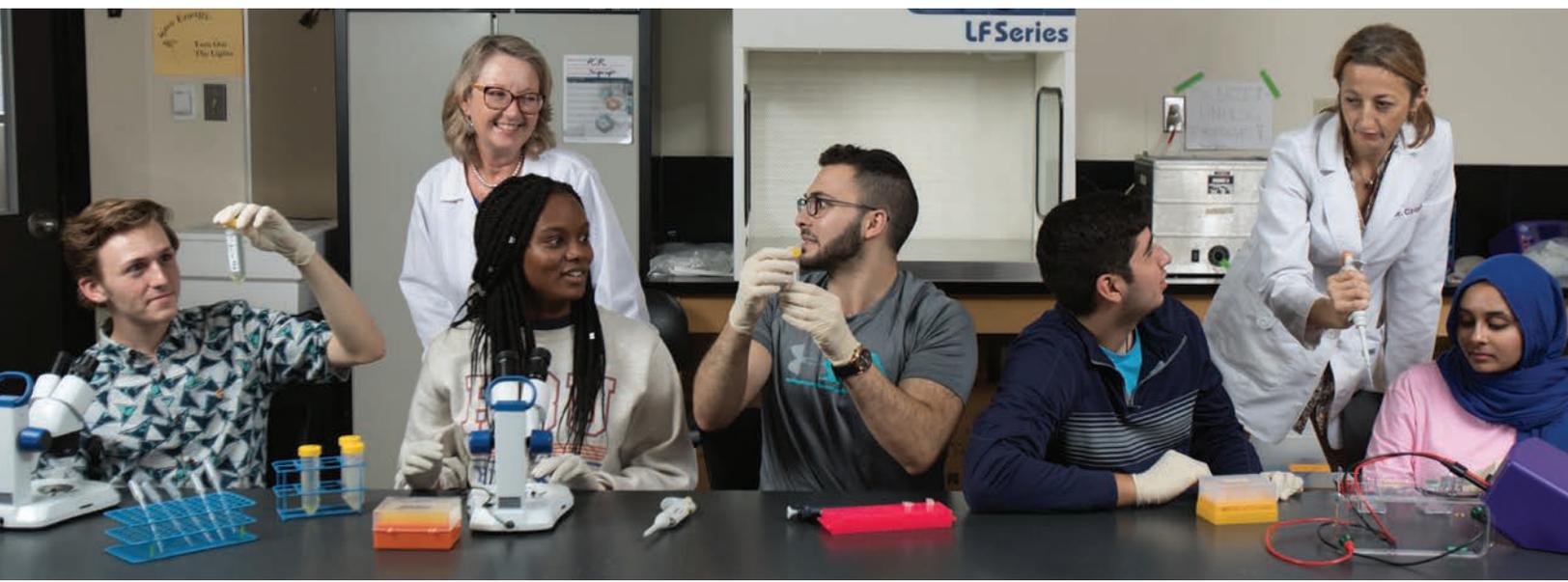
By Dr. Rose Reins, Assistant Professor of Biology



At HBU we have such a wonderful and unique occasion to offer a distinctively Christian education in all disciplines. For me, as faculty in the Department of Biology, this is particularly exciting as we study the science of life and explore the intricacies of God's creation in our courses. What an awesome opportunity we have to approach the sciences from a Christian worldview, shining a light into the secularism that most students have experienced in their science education. I like to begin the semester with an introduction to science and faith and I pose this question to my classes: "How many of you have heard or been taught that science and faith just don't go together?" Most students not only answer "yes," but some, at the end of the conversation are actually amazed, even incredulous, that faith and scientific study, so often seen

as separate, are not contradictory but in fact intimately related, and that as we study this can lead us into a unique act of worship and praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, who "existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything... hold[ing] all creation together" (Colossians 1:15-17, NLT). Indeed, this is the opportunity and responsibility that we have here at HBU—thanks be to God!

As HBU faculty, we are constantly being encouraged and stretched to integrate our faith into our curriculum, our pedagogy and in our relationships with students. One area of growth that I am really excited about in the College of Science and Engineering (COSE) is student mission opportunities. The Lord is moving in this! This spring, in the biology department, we are offering a new course for academic credit that will incorporate Christian evangelism and hands-on career training and exploration with an international medical mission trip experience. Our hope is that this course will encourage reflection on vocation as



calling--living on mission. Students will gain a clearer vision of what it means to be a health professional and experience "real world" clinical scenarios in patient medical care. In addition, the purpose of the trip and the mission of the on-field organization will be evangelistic, taking the good news of Jesus into the world. Students will learn how to share their faith and will participate in devotional and worship times on the trip. It is our hope that this opportunity would continue to be offered each year as part of our biology course offerings and be expanded to include other STEM-related fields and vocations.

Excitingly, we are seeing an increase in student interest in faith-based activities as new opportunities are initiated and offered. Last year, we started a COSE Bible study that meets once a week to discuss the Word of God and grow in Christian community. A neat part of this gathering is that faculty, staff and students (a pretty diverse group!) all come together and participate in this group. In addition to the Bible study, we have a core group of students that have

a passion for medical missions and have started to meet regularly, discussing how to serve the local community of Houston. They have made a connection with Casa El Buen

Our hope is that this course will encourage reflection on vocation as calling—living on mission.

Samaritano, a local organization that shares the love of Christ while providing healthcare to low-income populations, and have begun to organize training and service opportunities, including assisting with a flu vaccine drive this fall.

Please join as in prayer as we seek, as HBU's vision states, to train and build up "future leaders of the world who also live as servants in the kingdom of God." We are praying that these opportunities will be life transformational experiences for our students and will grow HBU's impact on the world and the Kingdom of God with graduates who are prepared for spiritual and professional impact in their chosen STEM fields. We are asking the Lord to expand these programs to be even bigger and more impactful than we can imagine, knowing and trusting that He does the impossible, so that His name will be glorified!





Living and Studying in a Meaning-Filled University

By Louis Markos, Professor of English



I have had the privilege of teaching English at HBU to thousands of students over a span of 30 years. Although the personal concerns, cultural backgrounds and levels of academic preparedness of my students have fluctuated quite a bit over the decades, one thing has not changed: their seemingly innate

interest in etymology. Whenever I pause in my lecture to parse for them the Greek or Roman or Anglo-Saxon roots of words, their ears always perk up and their attention sharpens.

They may have been raised in a postmodern society that has instilled in them the belief that words are nothing more than arbitrary, man-made constructs, but they know in their

hearts and souls that that is not true. They naturally seek out meaning in words, and when I demonstrate for them that "nostalgia," "provide," and "gospel" mean, literally, "homecoming pain," "to see before," and "good news," I can tell by their faces that they feel they have, for a moment, peered into something transcendent and metaphysical.

And the same goes for good and evil, right and wrong. HBU is blessed to be one of the most diverse universities in the country. Though my fellow faculty and staff members are all believing Christians, I have been afforded here the rare opportunity to teach Christians from every denomination, Jews and Deists, Sunni, Shia, and Sufi Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus, Sikhs and Zoroastrians, Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses, and seekers, agnostics, and atheists of all kinds.

And yet, despite this religious diversity, my experience



as a professor has confirmed for me that the vast majority of my students have a clear moral understanding of the distinction between virtue and vice. That moral sense is written in their conscience and runs far deeper than their particular ethnic background.

Indeed, one of the major reasons that our Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist parents send their children to HBU, and let them live on campus, is that they want them to receive an education that respects and abides by the moral codes embedded in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.

Now, the growing threat of cancel culture and the aggressive relativism of social media have made my students more reticent about affirming publicly the existence of moral absolutes, but I can tell by their responses in class and in their essays that the majority of them are still fully aware that moral standards exist and are binding. That does not mean that

they do not violate those standards—we *all* do, for we are all sinners—but it does mean they are aware of them and, most of the time, feel guilty when they break them.

The number of students embracing moral relativism *has* increased; nevertheless, with very few exceptions, they all believe firmly that they possess an in-built purpose that they feel compelled to discover and fulfill. Even those who support the transgender agenda do so less because they believe gender is meaningless than that they want all people to have the right to pursue their deeper identity and purpose.

They may parrot what they read and hear on social media, but most retain an unshakable sense that words and morality and their own identity and purpose are real and meaningful and transcend the tight, spatiotemporal limits of our world. This they understand on an intuitive and visceral level, as they also understand that the world and their bodies

How wonderful that HBU students can study at a university whose professors know what intelligent design looks like.



have been designed. They may speak the language of Darwin in which they have been raised, but they know that the world in which they live and the people with which they interact are not merely products of random, purposeless time and chance.

Whatever their background in terms of evolution or creation, science or religion, our STEM students, experience has taught me, are happy to be learning in an environment where they can acknowledge that we have been fearfully and wonderfully made, that our universe runs by laws that are rational and discernable, and that we can rest our decisions on the foundational belief that we all possess innate and essential worth and value and that we can trust our senses.

The evidence that our world and ourselves have been intelligently designed runs through every weave of the fabric of creation. We see that design—and not just the illusory appearance of design—as much in the macrocosm (the Big Bang and the fine tuning of the universal constants that allow for the possibility of human life) as in the microcosm (our front-loaded, information-rich DNA and the irreducibly complex molecular machines that keep our bodies running).

As rational human beings, we know how to identify the difference between randomness and intelligent design, what William Dembski has called specified complexity. That is why most people, whether or not they have studied archeology, have no problem differentiating between a circular arrangement of stones placed there by the chance forces of weathering and the mysterious, but clearly human-designed circle of stones known as Stonehenge; or between a jagged cliff that bears a slight resemblance to a human profile and the four heads on Mount Rushmore; or between arbitrary shapes and squiggles on a rock wall and the hieroglyphics on an Egyptian temple.

The late Carl Sagan initiated the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) to scour the universe in search of evidence for alien life. Yet that same Carl Sagan willfully blinded himself to the abundant evidence for design in the cosmos without and the DNA within. How wonderful that HBU students can study at a university whose professors know what intelligent design looks like and are not afraid to identify and celebrate it when they find it.

Here we can study the STEM as well as the true root and seed.

Students integrate hands-on active learning while using mini projects to expand their programming, engineering, and problem solving skills.





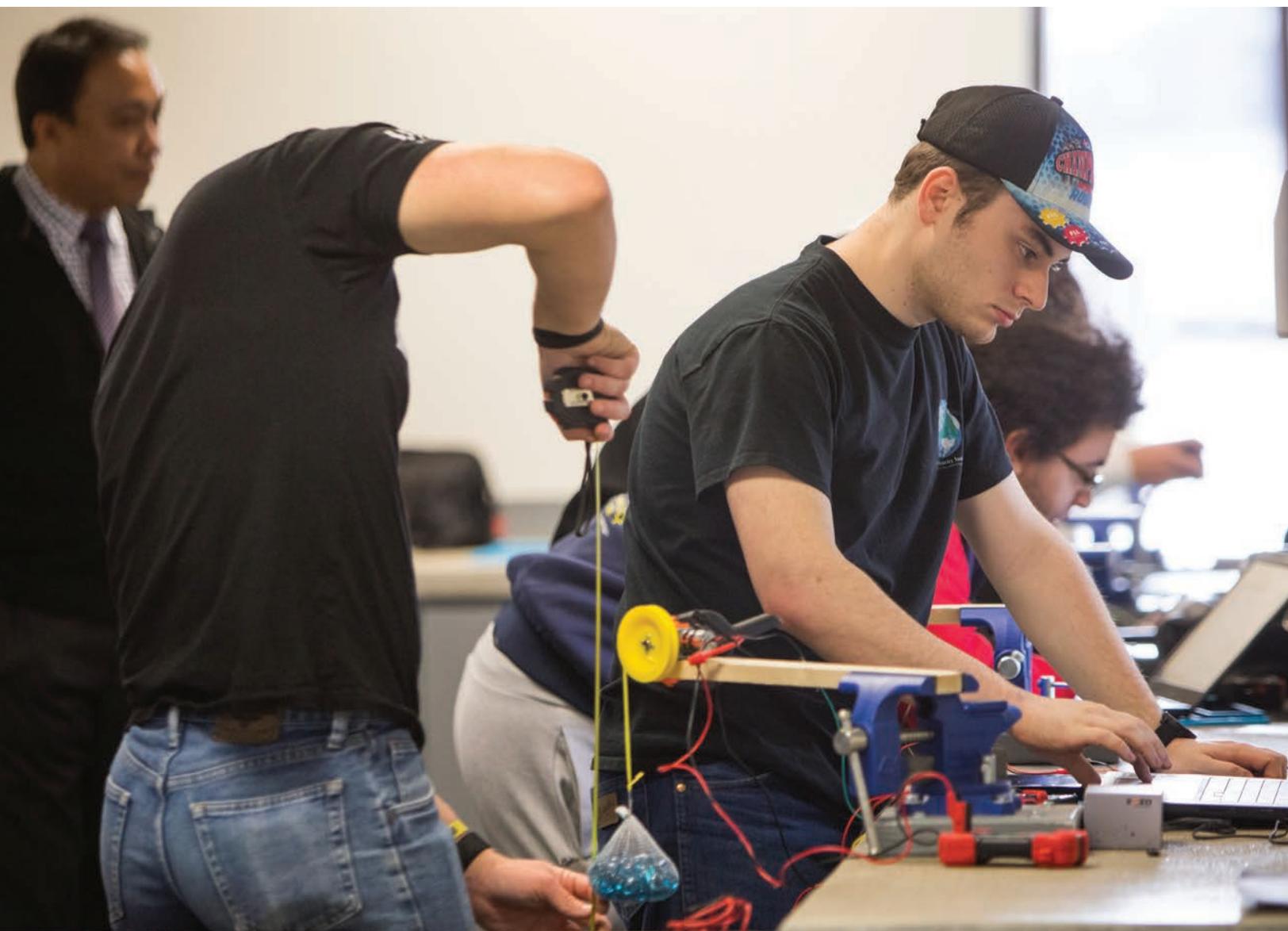
A Walk Through the Life of an Engineering Student: A Professor's Perspective

By Dr. Melissa Carlton, Assistant Professor of Computer Science and Dr. Marian Zaki, Assistant Professor of Computer Science



Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Cyber Engineering are the inaugural Bachelor of Science degrees offered in the Department of Engineering at HBU. In the fall of 2021, HBU began offering an Information Systems degree as well. One of the first courses students in all four degrees experience is the Introduction to Computer Programming course. In this course students have an opportunity to build their first minicomputer using a Raspberry Pi as part of their Securing America's Future through Engineering (SAFE) Lab Cyber kits, while building a robot and smart factory utilizing their SAFE Lab Engineering kits. Students integrate hands-on active learning while using mini

projects to expand their programming, engineering and problem solving skills. Throughout the semester, students are excited to have the opportunity to learn about memory modules, circuitry and the dangers of electrical current causing harm to their Raspberry Pi or Arduino. During the first circuit building activity, stories of individuals that incorrectly setup their Raspberry Pi and circuit connections are shared with students. This provides an opportunity to share how individuals within the Bible did not always make the correct choice, such as Jonah who ran from God, eventually realized his error while in the belly of a big fish, repented, and praised God. An incorrectly connected circuit may cause a Raspberry



Pi from working, which fondly is referred to as a “fried Raspberry Pi”. However, when a mistake does occur it gives the opportunity to demonstrate grace and patience that students do not always have in their own lives.

In the second semester, students have practiced and tested various hands-on projects with their Raspberry Pis. This permits the curriculum to expand on that knowledge and grant the students a chance to create their very own Raspberry Pi project using the Python programming language. Projects in the past have included a beat box, light sensing mini blind system, roving web camera robot, various interactive games and learning systems. Students are encouraged to research solutions for those challenges they encounter while designing and developing their Final Pi projects. These projects are the foundation for building the students' project and time management skills while working with a team. Relationships form and are nurtured in and out of the classroom. It is also during this time that students are comfortable asking during and outside of

class for prayer as well as encouragement from faculty members.

The sophomore year greets students with a curriculum that includes data structures, systems programming, operating systems, and/or microprocessors. Students are challenged with shifting from Python programming language to JAVA and C programming languages as well as the Linux operating system. They learn more about logic gates, floating point arithmetic, performance analysis and algorithms design and how each are important for the engineering of any computer system. It is during this year that students begin to acknowledge they are able to create something, which permits the integration of creation related examples from the Bible. Unfortunately, students seem to test their ability to create something in six days as the Lord did, but learn study habits and the importance of asking for help earlier than the night an assignment is due.

Many students return for their junior year having taken courses to enhance their learning experiences. All are eager



Our founding dean of engineering, now HBU Provost, Dr. Stan Napper designated a Bible verse for the engineering programs in 2018, “... ‘The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build...’” (Nehemiah 2:20, NKJV).

to learn and prepare for graduation. Computer science and cyber engineering students learn how to connect the computers they have built in their freshmen and sophomore years to a computer network or IT infrastructure as well as investigate the world of digital forensics, computer architecture, and theories of computing. Electrical engineering students pursue knowledge in electrical and electronic circuits. These courses are all important to preparing students for their respective internships that they participate in during the summer before returning to complete their final year at HBU.

During the senior year, an opportunity to design, develop, and build solutions for an industry problem greet students, which is in its inaugural semester this Fall 2021. Additionally, courses presenting the topics of applied cryptography, reverse engineering, data analytics, embedded systems, and SCADA systems are covered. Each degree and course infused with biblical guidance as well as faith strengthening interactive hands-on project-based learning empowers

a student with the tools and skills to serve both God and mankind. Graduation quickly approaches as the year passes. Our graduates are prepared and ready to begin their new journey as a member of their future employer.

Our founding dean of engineering, now HBU Provost, Dr. Stan Napper designated a Bible verse for the engineering programs in 2018, “... ‘The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build...’” (Nehemiah 2:20, NKJV). As the students, faculty, and staff continue to build and follow the Lord’s will, the God of heaven continues to grant success to HBU’s engineering programs. The largest engineering freshmen cohort was welcomed this semester is just one success. Another is the admission of students into the newest engineering degree: a Bachelor of Science in Information Systems. We are grateful for the support we have received and look forward to celebrating the first graduating class of computer scientists, cyber engineers, and electrical engineers (our pioneers) in May 2022.



Faith, Science, and the Unborn

By Anthony M. Joseph, Professor of History



Few contemporary issues reveal the fruitful intersection of faith and science quite so powerfully as the history of Christian reflection on the nature of the unborn child. The modern Christian understanding of the unborn owes much to the work of scientists, particularly physicians, in defining the nature and development of unborn life in the womb. Christian thought has both inspired and made use of the work of scientists to greatly enrich our understanding of what the unborn child really is.

Over the long expanse of two millennia, there is no question that Christians have accorded a high moral status to the unborn child. The early church saw human gestation as the work of a God intimately involved in the creation of each human being. The embryo was no less the work of God at earlier stages of development than later ones. This view passed from the Scriptures into the teaching of the early church; thence to the Church in the Middle Ages, to the Protestant Reformation, and beyond. Throughout, abortion was regarded as a failure to show due reverence for God's work and a serious moral wrong—an offense against the work of God in the womb.

Remarkably, the Christian respect for the unborn child stood for centuries alongside the acceptance of an ancient pagan science that did not understand the unborn as fully human from the moment of conception. Rather, the unborn were thought to pass through a series of developmental stages which culminated in full humanness but did not begin in full humanness. This was the theory of delayed ensoulment—that the human soul entered the body not at conception but at some later point in gestation. Aristotle, for example, was taken to believe that the soul entered male embryos at 40 days gestation and female embryos at 80 days.

In the seventeenth century, however, a new science of embryology came into being that ultimately overturned ancient understandings of the unborn. Both Christian reflection and empirical science created this new embryology. Two physicians, the Belgian Thomas Fienus (1567-1631) and the Italian Paolo Zacchias (1584-1659), became the first Christian voices in the West to propose that human life began at or near conception rather than after

a succession of physical stages and ensoulments. Fienus theorized that the human soul entered within a few days of conception—it was the soul, he asserted, that directed the subsequent development of the unborn. Zacchias argued for ensoulment at conception in the final volume of his nine-volume treatise *Medical-legal questions* (1621-1650). Still later, in 1677, the Dutch scientist Antonie van Leeuwenhoek discovered human sperm. Leeuwenhoek did not entirely understand what he was looking at under his microscope. But his discovery, when combined with developing cell theory, indicated that living organisms had very small, microscopic beginnings. No one was sure how the embryo was first formed in the womb—the mammalian egg would not be discovered until 1826, and knowledge of fertilization came even later—but by 1800 educated physicians held that the embryo was fully human from the moment of conception. There were no “plant” or “animal” stages in human gestation—only a seamless progressive development in which life, motion, and humanness were present throughout, from conception onward.

The history of the unborn child reflects a powerful and fruitful union between faith and science.

It is hard to overstate the impact of the new embryology. Inspired by Christian reflection, it in turn influenced Christian thought. Christian theologians abandoned the theory of delayed ensoulment in favor of ensoulment at conception. Impressed by the new embryology, the Sicilian

Catholic priest Emmanuel Cangiamila wrote in his work *Sacred Embryology* that fetuses should be baptized if their safe delivery was in doubt. William G. T. Shedd, a Calvinist Presbyterian, explicitly affirmed immediate ensoulment and remarked that “foeticide is murder in the eyes of God, and of a pure human conscience.” In law, too, the influence of the new embryology could be felt. In Europe and America, legal codes began to reflect its luminous discoveries. In the United States, physicians led the cause for legal protection of the unborn. They persuaded state legislators to enact laws protecting the unborn child from abortion. From 1821 to 1910, every American state produced such a measure.

For centuries, Christians have understood faith and science to be not only compatible but complementary and mutually supportive. There have certainly been bumps along this road, and even saboteurs along the roadside. But the history of the unborn child reflects a powerful and fruitful union between faith and science—a union that, God willing, will be strengthened and solidified over time, come what may.



The Holy Spirit and Nursing

By Abigail Hester, Adjunct Professor in Nursing



There is such beauty in the human body. The created individual that is reflecting our triune God. The minute parameters that are required to keep this body at peace were intentionally and precisely placed only to be investigated and learned through the study of physiology. We get to witness the wonder God placed in every person, and as we know more, our worship only intensifies. As a result of learning how the body is supposed to work, we are also confronted by the impact of sin in the world and within man. The insult of disease, the result of sin, reveals our depravity and has been doing so very acutely during our current season. The weight of this understanding of what should be and what is because of sin in the world creates a unique place for the nurse who knows the Lord and sees the disparity upon the people they get to care

for. Disease permits the nurse to intervene in a person's life and to impact them for life here on earth and potentially for eternity. We have been given the honor to enter into the life of another soul at a very critical point in life. For some, it is one of the worst days of their lives, for others, it is one of the best. In both instances, the Lord has primed people to have a moment of reflection on their life, to see where they are and what they are committed to. And He has primed the nurse to be present in this moment, available to guide people to listen to that pull they are identifying that is drawing them to the heart of Jesus, even if they do not yet realize it.

This concept is not typically taught in nursing schools, nor really any other school for that matter. It is not part of major curriculum or even part of any licensure exam. It is a lesson that is grown through awareness and practice. An awareness of the Holy Spirit moving and pulling the individual nurse to step forward and address what the Spirit has plucked them to say or do. A practice of following that obedience



over the standard of today's expectations to avoid making waves. (This awareness and practice is for all believers, and often it is the patient that gets to impact the nurse's world for eternity). HBU in particular has taken great steps to help grow and equip nursing students to learn how to address the pull of the Spirit and to integrate faith into nursing practice

from connections with faith-based healthcare organizations within the greater Houston community. I personally had a great opportunity to precept HBU nursing students at one such organization, The Source – Houston. Here, the staff incorporates a body, mind and spirit approach to women's healthcare. As the nurse, the student had to tap into the movement of the Holy

Spirit in their lives, paying attention to the unique and present needs they saw in each individual they cared for. They took time to pray for each patient alongside the practitioner and included in the report to ancillary team members the needs they assessed for the patient. It was a joy for me to get to witness students come to understand how to integrate their

faith with their nursing practice, even if it did not result in direct salvation conversations each time. They walked away with a greater connection to the movement of the Holy Spirit and got to learn tangible ways to apply this to their roles in other settings as well.

Now, reader, I implore you to take a moment and reflect

We get to witness the wonder God placed in every person, and as we know more, our worship only intensifies

and ponder how the Spirit is moving in your own life. How have you integrated your faith into your day-to-day life? When you interact with others, are you praying for them? Are you paying attention to what God is doing in their lives and in looking to see if you may be asked to intercede? Do you listen to them and carry their concerns to the Lord on their behalf? — "I

urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4, NIV).



Students can study art, business, literature, education and the sciences. My goal for these faculty cohorts is that faculty of every discipline will be inspired and equipped to renew their disciplines with a Christian faith.

Christ and Creation

By Dr. Jeffrey Green, Associate Professor of Philosophy



As the director of the Institute of Christianity and Scholarship at HBU, I am excited to let you know about a new initiative starting in the spring that will make a big impact on our faculty. We will be launching two new faculty vocational discipleship opportunities that we have entitled

"Christ and Creation" and "Continuing in Hope." At the center of each of these programs is a cohort of 10 to 15 faculty that will be intentional about spending time together developing their skills for spiritual integration in the classroom and in their scholarship and growing their relationship with God. We are able to ask faculty to make such a rigorous, semester-long commitment because of a generous launching grant from a foundation that will fund others to cover some of their usual HBU responsibilities while they participate. (We are looking for future sustaining partners to help us underwrite this strategic investment in our faculty's professional and spiritual growth.)

The "Christ and Creation" cohort will be meeting twice a week. One day is dedicated to thinking through the mission of HBU and how that translates into our curriculum. For example, we will study the creation, fall, redemption story of the Bible and ask how to make the biblical truths about humanity manifest in our classes. We will be tackling contemporary challenges to biblical worldview and helping faculty make the case in their disciplines for a Christian ethic. In the second meeting each week we will be reading Colossians together and practicing traditional spiritual disciplines. Throughout the entire semester faculty will be building relationships with one another in the context of mutually encouraging each other's faith walk.

Similarly, the "Continuing in Hope" cohort will also meet twice a week with a goal of helping faculty develop a robust

relationship with Christ in the context of their careers. This faculty cohort will be for those already trained in worldview and spiritual integration who are taking time to be deliberate about how they can best take next steps to serve with their passions and calling. One day, we will be building up faculty's understanding of vocation and how our spiritual lives intersect with our professional lives. The other day, we will be dedicated to a study of Colossians and practice of spiritual disciplines.

In Colossians we find this wonderful account of Christ: *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

-Colossians 1: 15-20, NASB

These verses are inspiring to me because of how they open our eyes to the breadth of Christ's kingdom. It is not just in one area of our lives, but it is in everything as all things are made through Him and for Him. At HBU we do not just study philosophy and theology, but we offer a wide selection of course offerings. Students can study art, business, literature, education and the sciences. My goal for these faculty cohorts is that faculty of every discipline will be inspired and equipped to renew their disciplines with a Christian faith. My hope for our students is that in every one of their classes they will learn to love God with their minds. The sciences are an important way of understanding God's world and I am greatly looking forward to working with many of our science faculty this year.

HBU's College of Arts & Humanities believes that the Creator God fashioned a world that we can study and understand.



History Highlights the Bond Between Science and Religion

By David J. Davis, Associate Professor of History



Far from being in conflict, science and religion have a longstanding, symbiotic relationship. As Alvin Plantinga points out in his book, "Where the Conflict Really Lies," "there is ... deep concord between theistic religion and science." Both science and religion insist that we live in a world that is

ordered, intricate, and knowable and that knowledge gives us a greater understanding of who and what we are as human beings. This concord is most evident in the

humanities and the classical liberal arts, which emphasize cross-disciplinary approaches to truth.

In history, the strong connection between science and religion always has been apparent. Leading Western scientists over the past millennium often had strong ties to their Christian faith. Medieval mathematicians and astronomers like John Sacrobosco, Thomas Bradwardine and Nicole Oresme were also clergy. The Benedictine abbess Hildegard of Bingen's study of the natural world enriched her sermons and devotional writings.

Likewise, the leaders of the Scientific Revolution—Rene Descartes, Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton—were devout



Rene Descartes



Robert Boyle



Isaac Newton

Christians, often understanding their scientific pursuits as an extension of their beliefs. In fact, Boyle endowed a public lecture series that was meant to demonstrate the bond between Christianity and experimental science.

While some people mistakenly assume a rift between religion and modern science, history tells us a very different story. Even when we consider more recent centuries, the bond between science and religion remains strong. Some of the most groundbreaking innovations in science were made by devout Christians, who understood that their faith and their laboratory worked together.

The Quaker John Dalton introduced atomic theory into chemistry. The episcopal priest William G. Pollard worked on the Manhattan Project. The Presbyterian Sir John Houghton was a leading atmospheric physicist who was dedicated to connecting environmental science and Christianity. Even more recently, contemporary scientific minds like theoretical physicist John Polkinhorne and

Nobel laureates like William Daniel Phillips, Werner Arber, and Brian Kobilka, all exemplify the strong bonds between science and religion.

Like these leading scientists, HBU's College of Arts & Humanities believes that the Creator God fashioned a world that we can study and understand. From programs like Medical Humanities to courses like "Philosophy of Science" and "Unborn Life in Western Tradition and American History," our faculty and students explore how science and religion work together to help us more deeply appreciate God's created order.

Through such explorations, we come not only to an understanding of our world but also to a necessary humility when we consider the vastness of Creation. As Max Planck, originator of quantum theory, wrote in his essay "Religion and Natural Science," both science and religion remind us in different ways of "our infinite smallness" and our unique ability to grasp that smallness.



Technology, Knowledge, and Mystery

By Dr. Russell Hemati, Associate Professor of Philosophy



Technology is a mystery hidden in plain sight. It has an oft-repeated definition: applying scientific knowledge to solve practical problems, but this simple definition does not reveal what technology truly is. In order to glimpse the technological as it

is, consider the complexity of a modern computer. This level of complexity would be unmanageable if it were not for well-defined interfaces between each component. The designers of a motherboard need not concern themselves with the inner workings of each different kind of storage device since each of those devices conforms to an interface standard. Likewise, the designers of the storage devices need not concern themselves with the variety of motherboard types and manufacturers. Interfaces like these create interoperability, and interoperability creates a "black box" effect. What is important here is that the designer gains nothing from knowing what exactly is contained in that box as long as its inputs and outputs conform to the interface specification. While it is true that the

black box makes it possible to create things that work without knowing how they work, the effect is actually much stronger: the black box effect is such that knowledge of the how and why becomes superfluous – a mere curiosity. It is here, in the carefully managed complexity of the computer, that the essence of technology is most clear: Technology transforms the way we understand the world into a collection of inputs, outputs and expected behaviors.

The technological gives us so many advantages. Since humans are creatures with limited abilities to learn and remember, it would be impossible to do almost anything without being able to "ignore" what happens inside the mechanisms we use. For example, an automobile driver need not know how the car works, an auto mechanic need not know exactly how an alternator works (only that it has a rotating input and a voltage output), and the electrical engineer need not know exactly how electrons function – but in each case knowledge terminates in black boxes with their inputs, outputs and expected behavior. As a result, each person engages with a black box appropriate to their needs, allowing the rest to remain hidden. We cloak the unknown, wrap it in a usable skin, and give it levers and handles. By doing so we can bake bread,



develop machines and navigate the sea. Interacting with the unknown is a human specialty.

Technology brings with it disadvantages also. We endanger ourselves when we apply the input/output/behavior paradigm to human interaction. Technology is so effective that as we use it to solve more and more problems we are tempted to see everything as nothing more than technology.

Consider democratic government: why bother engaging in carefully reasoned political discourse when public opinion can be molded through the use of trigger phrases, media stunts and branding exercises? As these tools are refined to the greatest possible degree, we may find it the case that they are in fact more powerful than reasoned discourse could ever hope to be. The black box effect on human interaction is not limited to politics. This effect is equally apparent in the advice in child-rearing books, the practiced mannerisms of the pick-up artist, and the techniques of psychological counseling. Discovering inputs and outputs on other people can be useful, yet the humane is lost when the input/output/behavior paradigm comes to dominate human interaction.

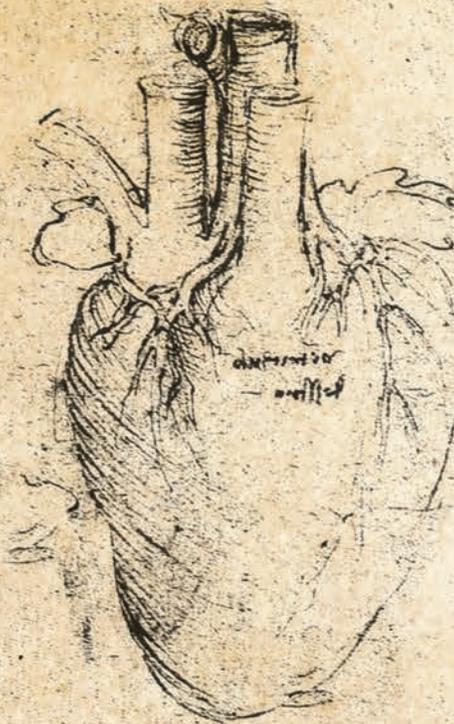
Unlike human relationships where technology must be used sparingly and cautiously, there is one arena in which technology must be resisted at all costs – our relationship to the supernatural. If the extra-sensory world, the world of God and the angels, can be accessed with its own set of handles and levers, then technology (as a kind of magic) will come

to dominate the spiritual. Since technology is, at its root, a method for interacting with the unknown and the mysterious, perhaps the siren song of technology is irresistible when thinking about the great mystery of the divine and the afterlife. Faced with an unknown that cannot be explained, all our human ingenuity can muster is a set of handles and levers. Thus, our natural tendency is to pay our tithes as though they were an investment in a financial instrument, recite the sinner's prayer as though it were an incantation, and offer evangelism lessons by way of a flowchart.

Yet the life and teachings of Jesus run counter to our technological instincts. There are no inputs and outputs for repentance or loving one's neighbor. The sinner who prostrated himself at the temple and begged for mercy grasped no handles and pulled no levers. Faith is the inversion of the technological since there are no inputs and no outputs. In stark contrast to the technological, by teaching us to love, Jesus opens a new and different way to connect to the unknown. We can no longer engineer our behavior to ensure an expected result. Instead, Jesus asks us to trust him, to be confident that he loves us and is preparing a place for us so that where he is, we may be also.

This article is an abridged version from one in *The City* at <https://hbu.edu/news-and-events/2017/05/24/technology-knowledge-mystery/>





48 SPRING 2021 THE PILLARS



168 Million Heartbeats

By Dr. MaryCatherine Harmon, Assistant Professor of Kinesiology



In the body there are over 600 muscles, 206 bones, 11 organ systems, but only one heart. One small 8-to-10-ounce heart. One heart that keeps us alive, moving, thinking, exploring, longing, creating and loving. One heart that will beat over 168,192,000 times during a student's four years at HBU. At HBU, that heart can come alive in worship at convocation or cheering for the Huskies in the stands of an athletic event or asking that special someone to grab a cup of coffee at Java City. That student's heart will see life and loss, victory and defeat, joy and sadness. And we, the faculty and staff at HBU, have been given the rare and precious gift of being the caretakers of those 168 million heartbeats.

In kinesiology we have the honor to guide each student as we teach them how scientific, objective truth can meet and harmonize with biblical and spiritual truth. We present this harmony through the teaching of the beauty of intelligent design and encourage curiosity that leads to understanding. We maintain Christ at the center of ethical research and pursue the compassionate heart of Christ in the practice and care of patients and clients.

Over the course of a kinesiology students' academic career, they will be taught the principles and interaction of the human body from the smallest chemical reactions that make a muscle contract to the motor development of the body across the lifespan. They will explore the psychology and theories of health and learn how to adapt health for the physically and mentally impaired. Students will engage in primary research and will be able to present their research at regional and state levels. Students are also given opportunities to participate in service and leadership events and experiences. All from the worldview and central confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.

Our charge to our kinesiology students is to be the voices

of the future. We believe their voices hold meaning, and given the chance, their voices can change our world. Our prayer is that their voices hold firm in the convictions of God's truth with a heart for those who are hurting. And yes, our students will walk out of HBU with every chamber of the heart memorized and a depth of understanding of its every beat. But more importantly, they will also know the heart of Christ whose love for them is immeasurable.

Antoine De Saint-Exupery once said, "if you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." Our time with our students is finite and our mission is quite simple, to know the hearts of our students so that we might teach them to yearn for the vast and endless heart of God by which science lives in perfect harmony with the world. At HBU we are graduating students not only with knowledge and passion, but with purpose built on the foundation of knowing Christ. A foundation built to withstand their next 168 million heartbeats and beyond.

We ask that you join us in our continual prayer over our students from the letters of Paul to the Colossians:

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

—Colossians 1:9-14, NIV



Stewart Morris, Jr., Lisa Simon, Esther Wong, Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr., Colton Cox, Dr. Barbara Taylor-Cox, Tyler Cox, Susan Mendenhall, Gray Mendenhall, and Dr. Robert Sloan



HBU SPIRIT of *Excellence* GALA



Dr. Robert Sloan



Melissa and Matt Morris

The 2021 Spirit of Excellence Awards was a night of celebration and special recognitions as HBU hosted the annual gala and awards ceremony on campus for the first time in the event's history. Presented by The Joella & Stewart Morris Foundation, the event featured inspiring speeches from HBU President Dr. Robert Sloan and featured keynote speaker, Tim Tebow. Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr. was presented with HBU's first Spirit of Excellence Legacy Award and Esther Wong received the night's prestigious Spirit of Excellence Award. Dr. Barbara Taylor-Cox was presented with The President's Award which was also awarded posthumously to Colonel Newton V. Cole. and Ray Cox.



Robert Schotanus, Odilete Schotanus and Abbe (Adams) Schotanus



Stewart and Joy Morris with Kelly and Gregg Matte



Dale Gregory, Esther Wong and Sharon Gregory



Tim Tebow and Dr. Robert Sloan



Tyler Cox, Dr. Barbara Taylor-Cox, Georgia Taylor and Colton Cox



Garen and Judy Graham



Marshall, Dakota, Becky, Steve and Matthew Kerns



Dr. Robert and Sue Sloan with Tim Tebow



Dr. Stewart Morris and Skip McBride



Stanley and Dr. Diane Williams with Lance and Cara Berkman



Archie and Linda Dunham with Tim Tebow



Jim Smith and Dr. Robert Sloan



Gary and Kendra Blackmon with Eunice and Arthur Davidson



Angel Romero



Dan and Cindy Wilford



HBU Student-Athletes Acade



HBU student-athletes pride themselves on excelling in the classroom. Not only do they earn recognition by the Southland and Western Athletic Conferences, but also on a national level.

Senior linebacker Brennan Young made the prestigious Football Championship Subdivision Athletic Directors Association Academic All-Star Team for the second-straight year. A Husky has been on the team each of the last three years, as Andre Walker was selected in 2019 then went on to be named the FCS ADA Scholar Athlete of the Year. Young was also named to the Southland Academic All-Conference this year and was joined by senior defensive back Coi Miller and redshirt freshman wide receiver Tyson Thompson.

Last summer, senior track and field multi-athlete Kaitlin Smith was chosen as a College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-American, the highest academic honor in collegiate athletics. The Wailuku, Hawai'i native was the Southland Conference indoor champion in

the pentathlon for the second-straight year, then earned All-American honors at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

Smith was HBU's 16th CoSIDA Academic All-American overall and the 12th in the last 11 years. Women's tennis' Evangeline Villafor was the school's first Academic All-American in 1983, then softball's Lori Denmark earned the honor in back-to-back years in 1994 and 1995. While HBU had several NAIA Academic All-Americans, softball's Rachel Werner in 2005 would be the only CoSIDA Academic All-American until HBU transitioned back to NCAA Division I competition.

Following the transition, softball's Mollye Mlcak claimed the first of the era in 2011. She would be followed by volleyball's Allison Doerpinghaus and men's soccer Bryan Brody in 2015. Brody then earned his second award in 2017, when he was joined by softball's Cecilia Bauer. Seven Huskies have earned the honors over the last three award periods (no awards were given in 2020), with softball's Demi Janak and volleyball's Kayla Davenport honored in 2018,

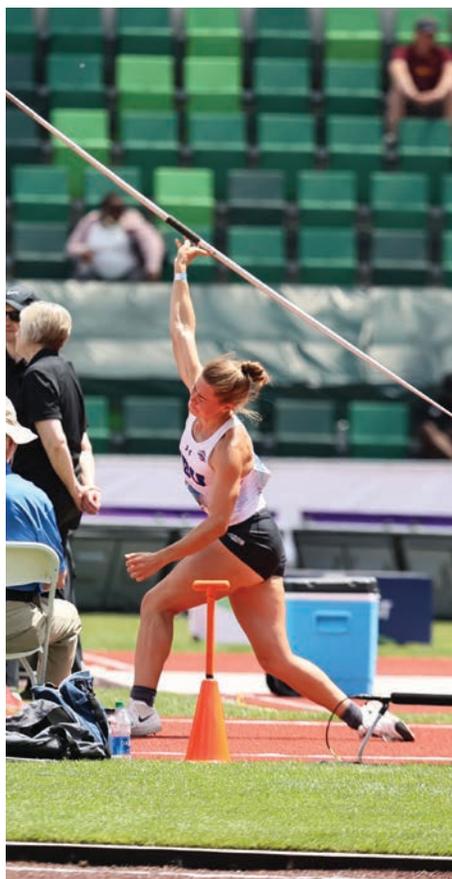
mic Awards



women's basketball's Amanda Johnson in 2018-19, women's track and field's Ana Kruletic, Janak and Walker in 2019, then Smith in 2021.

In addition to the three football Academic All-Conference selections, 11 other Huskies earned the awards in their respective sports. Women's soccer had four in Noor Abukishk, Ryan Ford, Talin Rizo and Mia Salas, and were matched by volleyball with Ebonie Ballesteros, Anna Gadway, Ellie Wipf and Kaley Feris. Cross Country had three in Jessica Rabius, Ben Drew and Stephen Aguilar.

In addition, HBU had 105 student-athletes earn a place on the Southland Conference Fall Commissioner's Honor Roll, including 24 that made a perfect 4.0 GPA. Football had 53 selections, women's soccer had 23, volleyball had 12, all 10 members of the men's cross country team earned the honor and seven on the women's cross country team were selected.



HBU Athletics Alumni Reunion

HBU Athletics hosted its first-ever department-wide Athletics Alumni Reunion at the Oct. 9 football game against Northwestern State at Husky Stadium.

More than 100 former student-athletes were on hand for a great time to fellowship and reminisce under the

tent on the hill. The department is looking to make this a tradition at least once year.

If you are a former HBU student-athlete, we would love to hear from you. Please visit the “Where Are You Now?” link under the Inside Athletics tab at HBUHuskies.com.





HBU Athletics' Community Service Recognized by the City

The HBU Athletics Department received a 2021 Mayor's Proud Partner award, presented by Keep Houston Beautiful, from Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner at the 36th Annual Mayor's Proud Partner Award Luncheon in November.

The Huskies were represented by three members of the HBU Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), football senior tight end and SAAC President Coleman Robinson, junior track and field long and triple jumper Tasheba Pleasant, softball sophomore catcher Jasie Roberts, as well as SAAC advisor Charlotte Rodgers, who is the Assistant Director of Compliance and a former HBU golfer.

HBU student-athletes across a variety of sports took part in a pair of events this year in the Sharpstown community, along with city councilman, Edward Pollard. In February, more than 100 HBU student-athletes participated in a clean-up effort around the neighborhood, then more student-athletes volunteered at the Sharpstown Halloween Carnival and Parade in October.

Keep Houston Beautiful is the city's leading organization in beautification, litter reduction and recycling education. HBU Athletics plans to continue partnering with Councilman Pollard and the community for more projects in 2022.

Alum-A-Grams

1970s



Richard Meek '71 is the President of the Rotary Club of Houston.

John Palisin '76 is a Trial Attorney at Progressive Casualty.

Harry Herzog '78 was inducted into the American Board of Trial Advocates this year, and received his 6th Super Lawyers award after over 120 trials and 59 appeals.

1980s

Patti Prasher '84 is a Realtor for Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty.

Bill Flores '85 was named Vice Chair of ERCOT.

Corrie Crowe '87 is the Owner of Corrie J. Crowe, DDS PA.

Karen (Huysman) Lebeau '88 is the Lead Senior Coach for FAST Swim Team.

1990s

Terrell Smith '90 is a Realtor for Keller Williams.

Tanya (Murdock) Sterling '94 is the Owner of High Tea Travel Concierge Agency.

Tamika (Joseph) Deese '97 is an IT Advisor for Shell.

Stephanie (Audas) Bennett '99 is the Owner of Custom Closets of Houston.

Himesh Gandhi '99 was appointed to the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy.

Susan (Wilson) Voradakos '99 is the Director of Instructional Resources for Fort Bend ISD.

2000s

Monica Delano '01 is a Registered Nurse at Michael E DeBakey VA Hospital.

Corey Ferguson '01 is a Sales and Catering Coordinator at Crowne Plaza Shenandoah.

Shronica (Witherspoon) Colbert '02 is the Owner of Colbert Express LLC.

Kanika Dorty '03 is a Teacher and Coach for Fort Bend ISD.

Javier Malave '04 is the Technical Director at Living The Word Church.

Gerardo Medina '05 was selected to be the new Principal at Paul Revere Middle School.

Ashley (Smith) Bush '07 is a Kindergarten Teacher for Alief ISD.

Aaron Garrison '07 works in Business Development for Oxford Flow.

Dr. Jameel Smith '07 is the Pediatric Lead Psychologist at Wayne Pediatrics.

Patricia (Ruiz) Morelli '08 is a Special Education Teacher for LCISD.

2010s

Page Dahl '13 is an Escrow Services Support Specialist for Independence Title.

Christine Bailey '14 is the Sr. Data Analyst at Castle Biosciences.

LarKaya Gant '14 is a Principal at Texas Virtual Academy, Stride Career Prep.

Ashley (Davis) Kelly '15 is a Teacher for Cypress Fairbanks ISD.

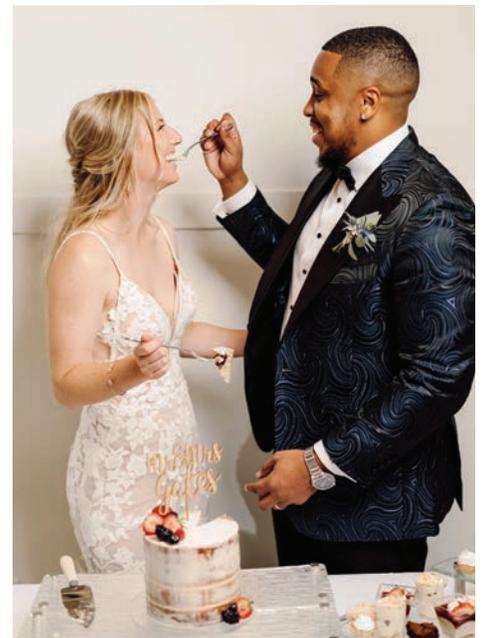
Christine (Biberdorf) Lemna '15 is an Office Manager for On Switch Patent Strategies, Inc.

Chelsea (Vincent) Denzler '16 is a Language Specialist Teacher at Berean Christian Academy.



Landon Whitt '16 is a Realtor for Oklahoma City.

Jeremy Camp '17 is a Secondary Classroom Teacher for Klein ISD.



William Gates Jr. '17 and Jennifer (Gebhardt) Gates '17 got married on September, 24 2021.

Johana Reyes '17 is a Behavioral Therapist for Behavior Innovations.

Lauren Stockton '18 is a Teacher and Coach at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory.

John Harrell '19 is the Assistant Dean of Student Services of the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at Texas Southern University.

Maria Tzunun '19 is a Teacher for Houston ISD.

HUSKY PUPS

2020s

Jared Bolton '20 is a CVICU Registered Nurse for HCA.



Shelly Williams '20 is the Senior Community Relations Advisor for Occidental Petroleum Corporation.



Bryan Porter '12, his wife Lauren and daughter Kaycee welcomed, Wyatt William, into the family on March 1, 2021.

Christal Dickson BS '20 MEd '21 is an ESL Kindergarten Teacher for Houston ISD.



Shani Jones '21 is a Teacher for Alief ISD.



Brandon Noonan '13 and his wife Jenny welcomed their third child, Penelope Rose, into the world on September 25, 2021.



Ariana Romero Salazar ('04) and her husband Luis, welcomed their daughter, Juliana Maria, on September 9, 2021. She joins big brother Guillermo, who is 3 years old.

Rosa (Castro) Moreira '21 is a Kindergarten Teacher for Houston ISD.

Elmer Navarrete '21 is a Swim Instructor for Elmer Swim School.



Halee Porter '21 is a Hospitality Educator for Houston ISD.



Shelby Waddell (Stafford) BA '17, MA '19 and her husband Chris, were blessed to welcome their first child, Ethan James Waddell, on July 27, 2021.

Kelli Putman '21 is an Educator for Sheldon ISD.



Let us hear from you! You are encouraged to submit your news items about yourself — promotions, marriages, births, travels and other bits of news — HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTOS WELCOME. Contact: [HBU.edu/AlumniUpdate](https://www.hbu.edu/AlumniUpdate)

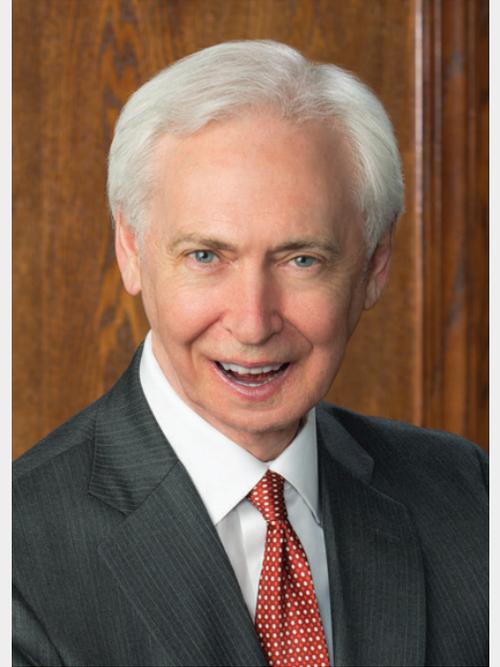
IN MEMORIAM



Dr. Linda Cecil '67 was peacefully united with the Lord on November 14, 2021 at the age of 77.



Robert "Bob" Campbell, longtime Texas Baptist Pastor and former President of the BGCT passed away on December 14, 2021 at the age of 82.



Ray Cox, Jr '81 went to be with the Lord, with his family by his side at home in west Houston, on October 18, 2021, after a prolonged battle with cancer that he fought with faith and courage.



John Wesley Suttle, Jr. '80 went home to be with his Lord and Savior, October 18, 2021.



Lydia Duran Gravois '75 went to be with Our Lord and Savior on October 12, 2021.



Brent Alan Ward '88, went home to be with Our Lord and Savior on September 21, 2021.

Core Convictions of HBU

Pillar I: God, the Creator of a Good and Knowable World

Pillar II: A Plan of Restoration

Pillar III: The Importance of Human Agency

Pillar IV: A Renewed People

Pillar V: A Mandate to Understand the World

Pillar VI: Learning and Teaching as Discipleship

Pillar VII: Life, Marriage, Gender, and Humanness

Pillar VIII: Governmental Institutions

Pillar IX: The Christian University

Pillar X: The Mystery of Unity in Christ

Houston Baptist University has a history of affirming these particular ways of thinking and living, which we hereby describe as Ten Pillars. These convictions are an essential part of the traditional beliefs and commitments of the University. They are set forth here to bring to mind the ten physical pillars that are now iconic on our campus and thus represent the durable historical and theological commitments that undergird our practices and enable us to translate our worldview, Preamble, and mission into academic programs, curricular structures, and habits of the mind and heart. HBU confesses and takes shelter under these Ten Pillars.

*Unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees
September 21, 2021*

Our Mission

The mission of Houston Baptist University is to provide a learning experience that instills in students a passion for academic, spiritual, and professional excellence as a result of our central confession, "Jesus Christ is Lord."

*Unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees
February 24, 2009*



HBU HOUSTON BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

| *A Higher Education*

For more information about
Houston Baptist University,
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