

HOUSTON CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

THE PILLARS

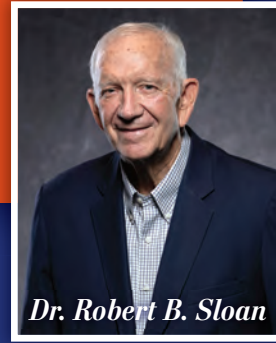
Fall 2025



HUSKIES ROAR TO THE TOP

Perfect 5-0 Sweep
Secures Southland Crown
and NCAA Tournament Berth

PRESIDENT'S *message*



Dr. Robert B. Sloan

This issue of The Pillars celebrates the successes, achievements and ongoing growth of HCU's diverse athletic programs at HCU. In just a short time, I have witnessed our student athletes demonstrate not only exceptional skill but also the perseverance, teamwork and faith that define the very spirit of our University. As we reflect on the fall and spring of 2024, my heart swells with gratitude and hopeful anticipation.

This past spring, our HCU Baseball team gave us a season to remember. Under the leadership of first-year head coach Clay VanderLaan, the Huskies captured the Southland Conference Tournament title—our first since 2015—and earned a coveted berth in the NCAA Tournament. With grit, heart, and unshakable resolve, they surged from sixth place in regular-season standings to champions, proving that nothing is impossible when we compete with purpose and unity. Their thrilling 16–11 win over New Orleans will long be remembered as a defining moment in HCU Athletics history.

Our men's basketball team also displayed remarkable resilience throughout the season. Rebuilding under Coach Craig Doty, the team showed steady growth, heart and unity on and off the court. The team finished with a 9-11 record earning a spot in the Jersey Mike's Southland Conference Championship, representing the program's most conference wins in 8 years. Their commitment to one another and to representing HCU with integrity speaks volumes about the kind of program we are building—one rooted in determination and strengthened by faith.

The victories and stories highlighted in this issue—whether on the diamond, the field, the court or the greens—are woven into a larger narrative of resilience, growth, and sustained excellence. From established programs to those still finding their stride, HCU Athletics continues to rise, united in purpose and driven by a higher calling.

Robert B. Sloan

  @DrRobertBSloan



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EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Pillars
Houston Christian University
7502 Fondren Road
Houston, Texas 77074

Main: 281.649.3000

Undergraduate Admissions:
281.649.3211

Graduate Admissions:
281.649.3269

Alumni: 281.649.3413

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subscription preferences at
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Dr. James Steen,
*VP of Enrollment Management &
Marketing*

Cary Delmark,
Assistant VP of Marketing

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Diane Tezeno,
Managing Editor/Writer

Michael Tims, *Creative Direction/
Photographer*

Michael Taylor, *Video Editor*

Naomi Engel, *Project Manager/Editor*

Chris Lampson,
Web Developer

Hope Edwards,
Web/UI Designer, Photographer

Kaylah Hubbard,
Social Media Specialist

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Jeff Sutton, Naomi Engel, Raven King,
Noah White, Immanuel Burruss

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HUSKIES SHOCK SOUTHLAND CONFERENCE



From the outside looking in, expectations for the HCU baseball program in Head Coach Clay VanderLaan's first season at the helm were low. The Huskies were picked to finish 10th in the 11-team league in the 2025 Southland Conference (SLC) Preseason Baseball Poll but finished the year at the Austin Regional of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament as the league's automatic bid recipient and the lone team from the conference in the field of 64.

VanderLaan took over as the head coach following three years as an assistant coach for the Huskies. While he was a consistent presence for the program, he began his inaugural year as head coach with a new coaching staff and just seven returning players on a 40-man roster.

"The biggest thing for year one, you know, you always want to get a three- to five-year plan," said VanderLaan. "I think, for us, the biggest thing was just establishing the culture and the expectations we have. I'm not saying anything was good or bad about the old standard or the way things were run but you have to put your own twist on your own program. So, we set our standard and expectations and set out to get the type of guys into the program who would adhere to that. The wins, whenever they may come, will come."

"Our coaching staff did a phenomenal job recruiting and brought in the exact right type of guys. They had talent but were the type of people we wanted in our program."

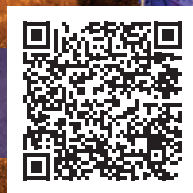
Affectionately known to many of his players as "Coach Vandy," the head man and his staff assembled their roster with 33 newcomers with their first two signed recruits coming in late June of 2024 and concluding with a January 8 addition to get to 40. That group of newcomers was comprised of 17 junior college transfers, 13 four-year college transfers and three high school signees.

"In the fall, I knew we were going to have a chance to be successful," VanderLaan added. "But sometimes you get so focused in on your own team that at some point you think you're the best team in the country and then other days you're convinced you're the worst team in the country. As we got toward our fall world series, I started seeing the strike-throwing ability from our pitchers and we played clean defense, which I think were reasons why we were successful in the spring."





SPOTLIGHT: Scan the QR code to view the full gallery of photos.



HCU [hosted] the championship series at Husky Field, the first time the campus had ever hosted an SLC Baseball Championship.

The Huskies opened the year with four games at home against Central Michigan, dropping the season-opener, 6-0, before rattling off three straight wins and outscoring the Chippewas 29-9 over that final trio of games.

VanderLaan's squad then split a pair of games on a frigid weekend in Monroe, La. against University of Louisiana Monroe before dropping a mid-week matchup against a University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) team that would go on to win the Austin Regional and become one of the final 16 teams left in the NCAA Tournament. Southland Conference play began the following weekend in San Antonio against University of the Incarnate Word (UIW). For the first time in program history, the Huskies opened conference play with a series sweep, plating 33 runs against the Cardinals.

Senior Parker Edwards, HCU's Friday night starter for the season, who also regularly served as the team's designated hitter, earned Southland Conference "Hitter of the Week" honors after batting .333 with three home runs and eight runs batted in against UIW.

The next weekend, HCU kept the winning going with two home wins out of three games against the McNeese Cowboys. The 5-1 start to the SLC schedule was the best start in the conference in program history. Edwards, meanwhile, picked up a repeat SLC “Hitter of the Week” award after hitting .417 with two home runs, two doubles, five RBIs and five runs scored.

Over the ensuing weeks, the Huskies continued rolling up wins and winning series. HCU split a four-game set against crosstown rival Rice before winning two of three on the road at UT Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), sweeping a three-game series at home over Stephen F. Austin, taking two of three at Nicholls and winning two at home against Northwestern State (NSU). At the end of that series against NSU, HCU owned an overall record of 22-12 with a 14-4 mark against SLC opponents and the Huskies were tied atop the league standings.

The Huskies’ fortunes took a turn at that point, however, after a loss in the final game of that series against NSU started a seven-game losing streak and a stretch of games during which HCU posted just a 5-12 record to close out the regular season. The Huskies dropped to sixth in the

league standings and the corresponding sixth seed in the SLC Tournament.

“One of the first meetings we had with the guys, we told them that every year there is going to be a part of the season where you stink,” VanderLaan shared. “It’s a hard game. It’s a long season. It’s inevitable. I knew when we started off pretty hot that our rough patch was going to come later in the year. Our guys were prepared for it. There was no panic when we had our first bad series of the year.”

The format of the SLC Tournament splits the field of eight into a pair of regional sites hosted by the top two seeds. The Huskies headed south to Edinburg for bracket play hosted by UTRGV and an opening game against a No. 3 seed Lamar program that swept the Huskies on the final weekend of the regular season.

What transpired from there was an impressive run by the Huskies. Coach Vandy’s boys rattled off three straight wins to claim the bracket title with a 6-3 win over Lamar and two wins over the host Vaqueros, 9-6 and 4-2, while trailing for a total of just two full innings across the three games. The stage was set for the Huskies to face the winner of the bracket being played at No. 1 seed Southeastern in Hammond, La. in a best-of-three championship series played at the highest-seeded team’s campus.

While the Huskies were pulling off their own upsets in Texas the New Orleans Privateers, the No. 8 seed in the tournament, were stringing together three wins of their own to advance. That meant HCU got to host the championship series at Husky Field, the first time the campus had ever hosted an SLC Baseball Championship.

The Huskies put on a show for the home fans as they jumped on the Privateers early in both games, never trailing and scoring 24 runs across a pair of wins in front of two capacity crowds at Husky Field. The SLC Tournament title came on the 10th anniversary, May 23, of the program’s previous SLC title in 2015 that occurred just down the road at Constellation Field in Sugar Land.

“There were two things that were great about getting to play at home,” said VanderLaan. “One is, you get to sleep in your own bed. I love going on the road more than anybody, but it’s a huge advantage when you get to sleep in your own bed. The biggest thing, however, is the eyes it puts on our school. I think, obviously, very highly of this university. I think it is, by no fault of our own, an overlooked place and it shouldn’t be. One of the reasons I like coaching here is that it holds a lot of the personal



values that I espouse, and I was just glad we got some more outside eyes on the school.”

The HCU community packed out Christian’s Tailgate in Rice Village two days later to watch the NCAA Selection Show and learn the Huskies were heading to Austin with an opening matchup against the Texas Longhorns.

Despite losses to both Texas and Kansas State at the regional, the 2025 season could be considered nothing short of an incredible success story. The team finished the year with an overall record of 32-25, marking an improvement of 14 wins from the previous year that tied for the ninth-biggest turnaround in the nation.

The Huskies’ 32 wins surpassed the win total for the program during the two previous seasons combined. It was the first time an HCU baseball team reached the 30-win mark since 2013.

One of the primary metrics used to rank a team’s season and that plays a key role in choosing at-large bids for the NCAA Tournament is RPI (Ratings Percentage Index), a ranking system that considers wins, losses and strength of schedule. HCU finished the 2025 season with an RPI of 91 among 299 NCAA Division I teams, highest among all four of the D1 programs in Houston.

While Coach Vandy certainly enjoyed the ride, he’s looking ahead and building the program and taking the Huskies to greater heights.

“Our whole theme for this year is, ‘We weren’t a fluke, but we haven’t made it yet.’ We showed people that we can win here. We try not to live too much in the past. In one of our early meetings with this year’s team we said ‘Alright, this is the last time we’re talking about last year.’ It was great, and I want to do it again because it was a lot of fun, but last year has no bearing on this year.” 🎯



*HCU Celebrates NCAA
Tournament Selection at
Christian’s Tailgate*



*Press Conference from
Game 3 Regionals,
HCU vs. K-State*

It was the first time an HCU baseball team reached the 30-win mark since 2013.



Milestone Win. HCU Baseball Team celebrates 2025 Southland Conference championship win defeating the New Orleans’s Privateers 16-11 at Husky Field.

SPOTLIGHT: Scan the QR codes to view bonus content.

GAME AND GIVING

Jalyx Hunt leads by example

Philadelphia Eagle, and former HCU Husky, outside linebacker Jalyx Hunt's story of becoming the first-ever player taken in the National Football League (NFL) Draft from Houston Christian University (HCU) has been told, but over the summer Hunt sat down to share some insight into his first year as a professional football player.

Hunt's collegiate and professional football career have, in some way, followed a similarity to his life growing up in various parts of the country. Hunt was born in Memphis but also spent time in places like Maryland, South Carolina and Florida. He then played collegiately in both New York and Texas before being drafted by the Eagles.

Although a major transition, Hunt was always confident in his ability to succeed as he moved from the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) to the NFL.



Giving Back. Philadelphia Eagle Jalyx Hunt returns to alma mater to share his journey with Husky football team.

He credits HCU for helping him to develop a focused mindset of continuous improvement and deliberate effort.

“First, it was, ‘Alright, you’re going to have to lock in. These are professional players. I know I can play at that level, but I wanted to see how far the gap was between someone fresh out of college and someone who is a seasoned vet,” shared Hunt of his mindset. “I didn’t go in thinking I was going to win every rep, but every day I knew I was going to improve on something. And that’s something I learned at HCU, actually. It was, pick one thing that day, and focus on it. It’s not always about how hard you’re working at practice, but it’s how hard you’re working at something.”

Despite the Husky football program being a relatively young program by NCAA standards, Hunt credits the program and the University for providing him with a well-rounded background that prepared him to successfully transition to professional football.

“In terms of how recently football was added at the school, there are hiccups and bumps and learning about culture in a way that you won’t have to at a place where culture is set,” said Hunt. “It was humbling to know that things might not go the way I wanted, but I still learned to lead and do it in a way that’s very positive and not in a way that’s overly cocky or overly confident or anything like that. I learned to remain humble, remain confident, and still lead by example and not always talking I’ve found really useful in the league.”

As a Philadelphia Eagle, Hunt found his way onto the field

early, playing on special teams and saw his role grow as the season went on. He leaned on veteran players for advice and tips as he sought to find his footing in a new world. “I’m the type of person who’s going to ask questions of people who have been doing it a while. I’ll ask guys at different positions,” shared Hunt.

Having cemented his spot in the rotation late in the season, Hunt recalled the atmosphere at Lincoln Financial Field ahead of the NFC Championship game against division rival Washington. He recalled the feeling around the city, saying, “I can’t even explain the energy of the city. The day before, they said arrive at the stadium earlier than you expect. People were camping out. As packed in the stadium as it was, outside was just as packed with tailgating, RVs and TVs. It was insane.”

The Eagles made no mistake about earning their way to the Super Bowl, wrapping up a dominant 55-23 win over the Commanders. In the Super Bowl, Hunt recorded a sack of Patrick Mahomes and celebrated with an archer motion into the air. That motion earned a fine from the NFL that turned into a moment that brought Philadelphians together to help local youth. Actor Rob McElhenney offered to pay the fine for Hunt, but the former Husky found a way to impact others.

“I’m blessed enough to be able to pay my own fine, but I DMed (Rob McElhenney) and said ‘I appreciate you reaching out, but I can pay my own fine. If you’re serious about paying the fine, you can donate to people who are trying to do bigger things,’” shared Hunt.

Hunt described playing in the Super Bowl as a blessing and a goal he has wanted to achieve his entire life.

“But in the grand scheme of life, knowledge and access is so much more. If I can use this platform to help other people in their step of achieving their dreams, I want to do it. I tweeted out for anyone who was serious ‘to donate whatever you were going to send to me to send it to them.’ Within like six hours we had \$25,000 and the goal was \$20,000,” said Hunt.

The money raised went on to help send 80 high school students on college trips to explore continuing their education beyond their immediate surroundings.

Hunt is now in year two of professional football and is set to be recognized with HCU’s Emerging Alumnus Leader Award this fall at the Spirit of HCU Awards Dinner. The Emerging Leader Award is given to honor an undergraduate alumnus of 10 or fewer years who has had early career success and made a positive impact in their community.

Hunt has proven, he is an emerging leader both on and off the field. 🏈

“I learned to remain humble, remain confident and still lead by example.”

JALYX HUNT,
HCU Alumnus



HEARTS IN THE GAME: How HCU Athletes are Writing Their Own Victory Stories

There’s something beautiful about watching college football players discover that sometimes the toughest opponent isn’t on the field—it’s invasive bamboo in an elderly woman’s backyard.

Steve Moniaci, HCU’s Athletic Director, still lights up when he talks about that particular Saturday morning during Sharpstown Day, when 200-plus student-athletes showed up with work gloves and big hearts.

“I can remember us digging for hours, digging out bamboo in her backyard,” Moniaci recalls with the kind of fondness usually reserved for championship victories. “And I thought at any point our kids were just going to give up. And they didn’t. They persevered through—it was mostly the football team—and we got that backyard cleaned up to where it could have been on Good Morning Houston.”

These aren’t just student-athletes collecting community service hours like trading cards. They’re young people discovering what it means to show up when the work gets hard, when nobody’s keeping score except the person whose life you’re changing.

The numbers tell part of the story: a department-wide 3.41 GPA this past spring, the highest ever. Every team posted above a 3.0 for the first time in a decade. But Moniaci knows the real magic happens in moments that don’t show up in any stat sheet.

“We require them to do public service as a team at least once every year, but many of them will do many more than that,” he explains. “I think that helps show the kids what they need to do to give back to the community.”

The Student Athlete Advisory Committee meets twice monthly, voting on which community projects deserve their energy. When someone calls asking for help, the answer is almost always yes.

From the Restoration Team partnership with KPRC2 Community to Fellowship of Christian Athletes programs, HCU Athletics is discovering that the best victories happen when nobody’s keeping score.

As Moniaci puts it, “We are the hands and feet of Christ.”

It’s a philosophy that transforms community service from obligation into calling, ensuring these athletes carry more than trophies—they carry the knowledge that sometimes the most important triumph is the one where winning means somebody else gets to smile. 🏈

Q + A

Steve Moniaci

HCU ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

As Athletics Director, what does success look like to you beyond wins and losses?

Success for me certainly starts with our athletes being successful at their sport. Everyone likes to win games. But beyond that, and more importantly, success is going to the three different days of graduation that HCU has each year and seeing our athletes walk across the stage to receive their degrees — and then watching how proud their parents and family are of them after the ceremony is over. Success is going to Late Night Breakfast and having them come up and tell me they are ready for finals the next day. And success is going to our end-of-year athletic ceremony and having an athlete on each team get up and talk about the highlights of their season in a polished fashion, which often includes the telling of how much their team has grown spiritually.

Which coaching or recent staff hires have made a significant impact, and how have they shaped HCU's athletic programs?

Five of our sports have had head coaching changes over the last two years, and while each of those sports were coached by very good coaches prior to the changes, the impact and energy of the new hires – not just the head coaches but also the assistants that they brought with them – have energized the whole department. I might add that each of the new head coaches approaches their sport with a servant leadership ethic and with the idea to instill in their athletes not just winning in their sport but winning in their walk and in their life.

Which programs do you believe are poised for breakout success in the upcoming seasons, and why?

We obviously want to continue the runs we started this past year in men's soccer, football, basketball and baseball. We always think that volleyball and beach are going to be near or at the top of their league, and as I mentioned earlier, we are looking for women's soccer to take a step up to the league prominence that we experienced for so many years under Coach Misty Jones. With the advent of the transfer portal, one now has very little knowledge of how we are going to stack up against our opponents, so the best we can do is be the best version of ourselves that we can be.



SPOTLIGHT: Scan the QR code to watch the full interview with HCU Athletics Director Steve Moniaci.



Sports Highlights. *Michael Taylor sits down for a one-on-one interview with HCU Athletics Director Steve Moniaci for a recap of the 2024 season.*

Looking ahead, what is your long-term vision for HCU Athletics over the next five years?

First, we'd like to continue to improve our facilities for our athletes. This will help us not only recruit better, but to compete better. Second, we want to continue to improve athletically in our league. We want to be in the top half of our league in every sport and competing for championships. Last, we want to improve our attendance at our home events; so that when our young men and women step onto the fields and the courts, they know they are supported by friends, family, and Husky fans who are all rooting them on to victory.

Over the past several years, what have been the most significant milestones or achievements across HCU's athletic programs, and how have they shaped the department's overall growth?

I think two things have helped to shape the department the most over the past several years. The first has been the new head coaches who have come on board in several of our programs. Football, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, and women's soccer have all seen new head coaches in the last two years, and I think the new head coaches have brought a new spirit and new ideas to their sports. We have seen the success already in football, men's basketball and certainly baseball this past year, and we'll look to see that same sort of excitement from women's basketball and women's soccer in the next couple of seasons. The second has been winning conference championships in both volleyball and baseball over the last several seasons. We've also seen record results and championship efforts by individuals in the sports of track and field and golf during this time, as well as men's soccer reaching the championship game in their league this past year. This sets a bit of a tone for the rest of our sports, letting them know that it can be done – and keeping them striving for the same sort of results.

In what ways is faith actively integrated into the day-to-day life of HCU Athletics, both on and off the field, and how do coaches and staff encourage spiritual growth among athletes?

Each of the coaches does this in different ways. Some take their athletes to Sunday services during parts of the year. Some sports have bible studies. Some emphasize giving back to the community. And all of them rely heavily on the power of prayer with their teams. Each team manifests this differently, but all with the same goal of leading the young men and women further in their walks.

EMBRACING THE P R



It's a new world in college sports. After years of debate and lobbying, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) made two drastic changes in player empowerment and mobility: name, image and likeness (NIL) rights and the transfer portal, the NCAA's database and application by which student-athletes can transfer schools.

Historically, college athletes have been prohibited from capitalizing on their names. And while they've always been allowed to transfer schools, they were required to sit out a season before they could suit up for their new institution. But in 2021, this changed. The first blow was the Supreme Court's NCAA v Alston decision, which did away with the prohibitions on income earned by student athletes. The second was the NCAA's retooling of the transfer portal which did away with the previous rules requiring student-athletes to sit for one full season. They can now play immediately for their new teams.

The effect of the retooling of the transfer portal has had a significant effect on HCU's approach to recruiting says HCU Head Football Coach Jason Bachtel. "In the past, it was all about long-term high school recruiting cycles, but now you're really running two processes at the

T A L

same time—identifying high school talent for the future and evaluating portal players who can help right away.

It used to be expected that a player would matriculate as a freshman and be shaped in a three-to-four-year process by the coaching staff, team and school culture of their institution. But now, coaches must adjust their approach to recruiting.

HCU Athletics Director Steve Moniaci says that “It has become increasingly harder to recruit a freshman athlete and expect to have them for all four or five years of their eligibility,” adding that coaches now increasingly target freshman recruits who are more polished and more prepared to make an immediate impact than before. “The philosophy that a coach can recruit a freshman, develop him or her, and then benefit from that development after two or three years of maturity is now not very likely. If we are recruiting a freshman, we usually have to be able to project that they can help us pretty quickly,” shared Moniaci.

This has introduced a new level of flexibility to roster construction, enabling more dramatic and immediate changes to player personnel. Athletes entering the transfer portal often bring valuable experience but need a change of scenery or to move closer to home. “The junior college pipeline, in particular, has been a fruitful recruiting field,” says Coach Bachtel, “Junior college players often had slower high school recruiting cycles, but gained valuable experience at the junior college level which they can bring to HCU for immediate impact. And, even better, they will be around for multiple years.”

In addition to recruiting from junior colleges, Bachtel said there’s now the opportunity to reconnect with players they pursued out of high school, players who “may not have had the success they wanted elsewhere and are ready to come back home to Houston and play in front of family and friends. In doing so, it also strengthens our connection to the city of Houston and reflects the pride we share in being part of the City of Opportunity.”

The exciting new possibilities afforded by the new transfer portal are not, however, without their challenges. “The portal moves fast,” Bachtel notes, “and you have to make evaluations and decisions in a matter of days.” Furthermore, there is some roster attrition when players leave HCU, looking for opportunities to make money at other institutions that have lucrative NIL deals. “Managing the roster is difficult at times,” says Bachtel. “Each season brings the opportunity to have a whole new team.”

With the advent of the transfer portal, the landscape of college sports has become more fluid. Rosters shift more frequently, offering players greater opportunities—both financially and in terms of experience—and demanding increased adaptability from coaches. Yet in many ways, the essence of the game remains unchanged.

“The core of the game hasn’t changed,” said Bachtel. “It’s still about relationships, culture and developing young men to compete together. The fundamentals of hard work and accountability remain the foundation.” 🏈

DEFYING THE ODDS

Doty Leads HCU from Underdogs to Southland Showdown

by Immanuel Burress



Julian Mackey



Elijah Brooks



Bryson Dawkins

It was July 11, and I found myself back in Sharp Gymnasium for my third season as a manager of the Husky men's basketball program. The gym was familiar, but the faces were not. A new HCU basketball rack sat in the corner, a new coaching staff was settling in, and only four players remained from last season's roster. This was the first official practice of a season that would see the Huskies transition from a slow non-conference start to earning a spot in the Jersey Mike's Southland Conference Championship.





The day began with a practice plan full of short, dynamic drills—three of which I had never seen before. For an hour, the players moved nonstop through timed drills focusing on communication, switching, guarding, rebounding and dribbling. It was a full display of hustle and energy from day one. Coach Craig Doty, a three-time National Champion and three-time National Coach of the Year from Division II Emporia State University, introduced himself and shared his vision supported by a strong lineup of assistant coaches and new faces like Georgia State transfer Julian Mackey, Itawamba Community College transfer Bryson Dawkins, North Dakota transfer Elijah Brooks and four returners from the previous season.

Doty laid out his approach for the new year. “Right away we said that we wanted to double our win total and be successful in all aspects of our student-athletes’ lives for every micro-victory that we could get, whether that was community service, whether it is academics or whether that is going to the Southland tournament,” he said.

Summer ended and fall practices shifted to offense while maintaining Doty’s defensive intensity. New plays featured more one-on-ones to create defensive matchups and exploit mismatches and switches. Players embraced the freedom Doty’s offense provided, enjoying more space and scoring opportunities. Multiple scorers on the floor meant more options and counters depending on how opponents defended.

Julian Mackey, a senior guard, said, “The offense was so beneficial because a lot of our plays involved all of our scorers and the plays put all of us in a spot to make a play.”

The non-conference schedule included eleven games, with a 3-8 record. The first two wins came at home against Avila University and Rockford University, by a combined margin of 47 points. Following that was a four-game stretch decided within the final possession or minute.

“We continued to be process-focused instead of results-focused. This allowed our players to get a consistent approach from the coaching staff and ultimately led to on-court success and finishing games with wins,” Doty said. The program earned its first Division-I victory since November 23, 2018, when Mackey scored a career-high 32 points to lead the Huskies past the University of Louisiana Monroe, 74-68.

The Huskies entered Southland Conference play, starting with two games in early December and then continuing through 18 conference matchups. Despite being picked last out of 12 teams in the preseason poll, the team started conference play strong, going 7-3 and sitting second midway through the schedule. They finished 9-11—the most conference wins the program had seen in eight years—earning a spot in the Jersey Mike’s Southland Conference Championship.

Much of the team’s success came behind the experienced trio of Mackey, junior guard Bryson Dawkins, and senior guard Elijah Brooks. The scoring ability of these three simplified the game for the Huskies, each player seeing their numbers triple from previous seasons.

The players credited the trust and support from the program for their success. “Doty gave me the chance, he believed in me and gave me the chance to be a part of an offense and do my thing,” said Mackey.

Dawkins echoed that sentiment: “It was more of the coaches supporting and believing in my abilities to go out there and play my game. Even through the bad stretches I had in the season, the staff and my teammates continued to believe in me which boosted my confidence.”

Building on the positives from the 2024-25 season, Coach Doty emphasized the need to “keep expanding our roster and bringing in talented student-athletes” to continue raising the program’s success.

The Huskies entered the fall 2025 season with returning core players including guards Elijah Brooks and Deaundre Samuels, forwards Trent Johnson and Demari Williams, and center Ahjany Lee, who missed last season due to a torn ACL.

This team isn’t just playing games—they’re building a culture of resilience, excellence and community. With returning leaders and rising talent, the future of HCU men’s basketball looks bright. 🏀



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The 2024-25 athletic seasons at Houston Christian University were defined by both achievement and growth across several programs, none more compelling than the Huskies' resurgent baseball team. Their Southland Conference (SLC) tournament championship came on the 10th anniversary of the program's previous league title and also signaled a renewed competitive spirit in all of Husky Athletics. As we reflect on a year of milestones, we find stories of perseverance and success.

HUSKIES



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Women's Cross Country Posts Best-Ever SLC Finish; Men Continue Building

HCU women's cross country earned its best-ever Southland finish, placing third with 110 points, while the men also achieved their top result with 116 points, led by Edouard Lecrivain in 15th place. At the NCAA South Central Regional, the women placed 13th out of 29 teams. Senior Arlette Concepcion finished 49th (20:53.3) in the 6K, and the men placed 20th.

Theresa Fuqua



A Resurgence Anchored in Leadership and Resolve

The 2025 baseball season marked a thrilling resurgence under new head coach Clay VanderLaan. The Huskies posted a 32–23 record—a 14-game improvement from 2024—and captured their first SLC tournament title since 2015 with a 16–11 win over New Orleans. Their NCAA regional appearance, though marked by losses to Texas and Kansas State, provided invaluable postseason experience and momentum for future success.

Clay VanderLaan



A Season of Rebuilding and Developing Potential

Under new head coach Craig Doty, the men's basketball team embraced a rebuilding year focused on growth, defensive intensity, and a dynamic offense. Despite a 3–8 non-conference start, the Huskies finished 9–11 in Southland play, earning a conference tournament berth and achieving their most conference wins in eight years. Doty's vision and leadership laid the groundwork for sustained progress and future success.

Craig Doty



Heartbreak and a Foundation Laid

HCU men's soccer had its most successful season in years and reached a conference tournament championship match for the first time since 2010.

HCU fell in the Ohio Valley Conference Championship match in heartbreaking fashion as Southern Illinois University Edwardsville scored a golden goal in the second overtime to thwart the Huskies.

Ryan Pratt



Navigating Transition Under New Leadership

In his inaugural season, head coach Jason Bachtel guided the football team through a year of transition. The Huskies concluded with a 5–7 overall record and 3–4 mark within the Southland Conference.

Noteworthy, however, was the team's offensive firepower, exemplified by a commanding 70–7 victory over Louisiana Christian and a season-closing 62–24 win over Northwestern State.

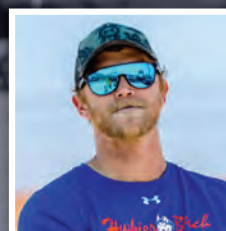
Jason Bachtel



Beach Volleyball Is Competitive Despite Youth

HCU beach volleyball closed 2025 with a 13-20 record and 4-4 in Southland duals. Sophomores Kirstin Gilmour and Rachel Heilbrun led the team at 21-11, earning wins over ranked foes from Texas and Grand Canyon. The Huskies narrowly missed advancing to the final day of the SLC Championships after falling to San Jose State in an elimination match.

Cameron Sitler





Mary-Ellen Hall



Facing Adversity and Looking Forward

HCU softball endured in a season that saw long-time head coach Mary-Ellen Hall unavailable to be on the field with the team. The Huskies reached the SLC Tournament for the fifth-consecutive year and the team's resilience in the face of adversity will be a critical component of their development moving forward.



Trent Herman



Competitive Tenacity Amidst Mixed Outcomes

The women's volleyball squad demonstrated commendable competitiveness throughout the season. With an overall record of 11-17 and an 8-8 conference tally, the Huskies displayed resilience and tenacity in the SLC Tournament, very nearly pulling off a first-round upset of No. 2 seed Stephen F. Austin.



Theresa Fuqua



Steady Progress and Competitive Presence

In track and field, HCU saw five student-athletes qualify for the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field West Prelims to compete for a chance at reaching the NCAA Outdoor Championships. The Huskies also had their third overall and first-ever male athlete earn SLC Student-Athlete of the Year honors for both the indoor and outdoor seasons.



David Shuster



Strong Showing and Growing Promise

The HCU Men's Golf Team showed steady improvement, delivering consistent performances and developing a stronger competitive edge. While still seeking major titles, the team's cohesive play and solid individual rounds revealed a firm foundation and rising potential. With key players gaining valuable experience, the Huskies are poised for continued growth and greater success in upcoming seasons.



Jordan Jeffers



Solid Growth Underscores Future Potential

HCU Women's Golf Team continued strong play on the links, posting a second-place finish at the SLC Championships with true freshman Ploy Makmanee finishing just two strokes shy as an individual. The season featured moments of strong individual play and team progress. With dedicated recruitment and player development, the women's program looks positioned to remain one of the league's top programs.



Nick Whiting



Growth Shown in Year One With Coach Nick Whiting

HCU women's soccer finished 2024 at 5-9-5 overall and 3-4-3 in Southland play. After opening with four road games, the Huskies improved steadily, showing offensive progress in conference action. In Coach Nick Whiting's first season, the team displayed promise and laid key foundations for future growth.

ALEXIA JONES:

Leading On and Off the Court

Imagine having dominated collegiate volleyball, launched two successful businesses, mentored young athletes, completed a rigorous academic program, prepared for nursing school and held leadership positions in multiple campus organizations...all simultaneously. This meticulously choreographed dance was something Alexia Jones perfected.

Jones was an outside hitter for the Houston Christian University volleyball team, who graduated in May 2025 with a degree in Kinesiology and Exercise Science with a specialization in Wellness Management. She is a multifaceted individual with admirable determination, an entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for helping others.

Her athletic achievements were a true reflection of her commitment to the sport. During her senior season, Jones played 103 sets, racked up 25 kills, 28 aces, and totaled 53.5 points for the Huskies.

But Jones's success wasn't just a result of



physical training—it was a product of her dedication to herself.

“Don’t let the game control you,” was her advice to athletes everywhere.

She said, “Keep everything in the gym, in the gym.”

Balancing pushing physical limits and maintaining her mental well-being allowed Jones to keep her passion for the sport and perform at her highest ability.

This balance extended into all areas of her life.

Once volleyball season ended, Jones had more time to focus on her entrepreneurial ventures. The first of these was a balloon decorating business she operated.

“Balloons are really therapeutic for me,” she explained. “It started off as just a hobby, but then I realized I could turn it into something real.”

It was a client-call basis balloon decorating business, with her busier periods being around major holidays and graduation season.

Most recently, she launched a meal preparation service catering primarily to other HCU athletes. What started as casual cooking for herself evolved into a business after a simple social media post.

“I posted my weekly meals then I jokingly wrote, ‘Meal Prep business on the way,’ and people started responding that they were interested.”

With the support of her mother, Jones began accepting orders and building her clientele through word of mouth and on Instagram.

These ventures exemplified not only Jones’s initiative and business expertise, but her desire to improve the lives of those around her.

While studying Wellness Management, Jones prepared to enter nursing school where she aimed to further develop the necessary skills to provide care and support to those in need.

Her commitment to lending a hand extended into her meaningful leadership roles on campus as well. As vice president of the Sigma Theta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., she embodied the organization’s dedication to “Sisterhood and Service.”

One community outreach effort Jones was proud to take part in was called Childhood Hunger Initiative Power Packs (CHIPP). Through this initiative, members of the sorority gathered to pack food kits that they delivered to food-insecure children and families within local communities.

“I love that event because you get to see the impact that you’re having on these people’s lives, and it changes you,” she said.

Jones also served as the Athletic Representative for HCU’s Student Government Association, acting as the liaison between the athletes and the Athletic Director.

“My role was to interview athletes, see what they like, don’t like, and what they would like to change,” she shared.

Of all the titles she held, the one that carried the greatest impact was “coach.”

Jones was on staff at Houston Juniors Volleyball Club where she coached the Adidas 15’s team. Bringing her wealth of personal experience, she was devoted to guiding the next generation of volleyball superstars. Her coaching philosophy was centered on prioritizing the well-being of her players.

She told her athletes, “If there are days you are hurting, I have been there, I get it. You can only be tough for so long before something is really wrong.”

Jones also made sure to teach her players the importance of teamwork and supporting one another on and off the court.

“There’s six on the court, but there’s also 10 or 12 others on the bench, and honestly, you can’t win a game without the bench,” she shared.

This lesson in the importance of a strong team dynamic was something Jones learned during her time as a Husky. To her, their team bond was always something amazing and rare.

“We all genuinely loved each other and were excited to compete with each other every day, and I loved that,” she said.

Reflecting on her time at HCU, Jones’s impact was defined by the consistent effort and character she brought to everything she did.

“One thing I know is that I worked my butt off every single day I walked into that gym.”

From launching businesses that served her community, leading campus organizations and coaching young athletes with the utmost compassion, Jones demonstrated that success comes through connecting and uplifting those around you.

Alexia Jones not only balanced multiple responsibilities, she thrived in each of her endeavors, and created a meaningful and lasting impact along the way. 🏆



the road to

**BIG
RED**

The Huskies football team had the unique opportunity to travel to Lincoln, Nebraska, to take on the storied Nebraska Cornhuskers in the iconic Memorial Stadium. More than just a game, the trip was an opportunity for the Huskies to serve as ambassadors for HCU, representing their school with pride. Players and coaches balanced a full schedule of practices and team meetings leading up to kickoff. It was not only a memorable athletic challenge but also an educational and cultural experience, underscoring the broader mission of HCU Athletics—developing leaders of character both on and off the field. 🏈



FRIDAY
11:50a Team arrives on tarmac from HCU and awaits preflight security check at airport



FRIDAY
2:49p Team arrives in Omaha, Nebraska and heads to hotel



FRIDAY
4:35p Team arrives at hotel where players receive treatment in preparation for Saturday's game



FRIDAY
7:42p Team participates in devotionals/prayer time



SATURDAY

6:00a Equipment team arrives at Memorial Stadium to prepare for football team



SATURDAY

9:16a HCU football players arrive at stadium and are seen by training staff before game



SATURDAY

11:15a Team kicks off against the Nebraska Cornhuskers



SATURDAY

11:02a Players pray and prepare for the game

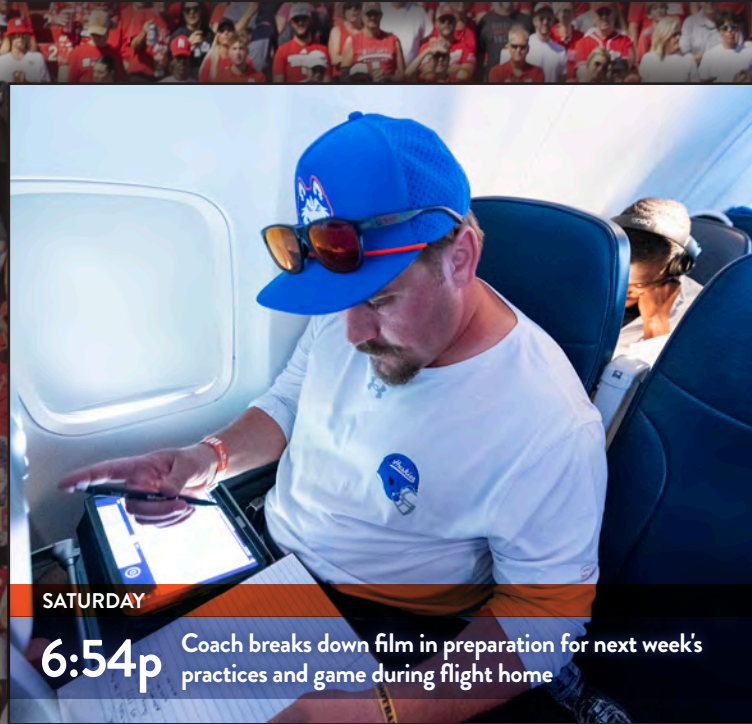
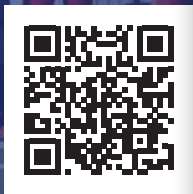


SATURDAY

2:29p Game clock hits 0:00 and teams come together on the 50 yard line for prayer



Scan the QR code to view the full gallery of photos.



SATURDAY

6:54p Coach breaks down film in preparation for next week's practices and game during flight home



SATURDAY

9:36p Team arrives back on campus

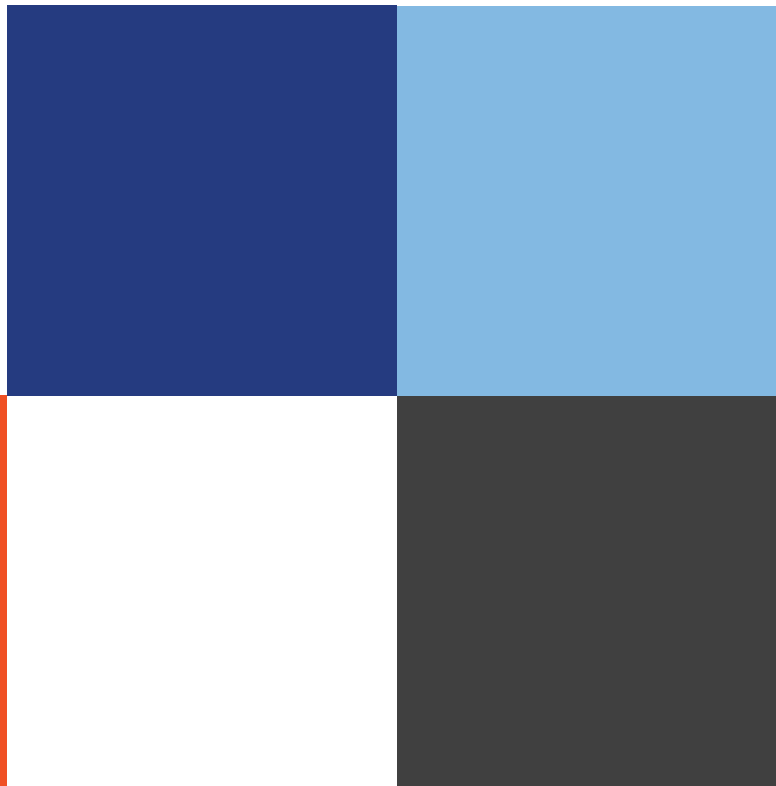
PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

**Houston Christian University:
Executing Strategies for
Growth and Impact**

Rooted in our steadfast commitment to excellence in Christian education, Houston Christian University has continued to thrive—advancing academic excellence, enriching our campus environment, celebrating the accomplishments of our students, friends and alumni, championing our Southland Conference-winning baseball team, and deepening our impact in the community.

'24

'25



ROBERT B. SLOAN
President



As we reflect on the 2024–2025 academic year, I am filled with gratitude for the momentum, mission clarity, and Kingdom impact we continue to experience at Houston Christian University. From record-breaking enrollment to groundbreaking innovation, this year marked a season of extraordinary growth.

Together, we launched new degree programs aligned with today’s most pressing workforce needs, celebrated our first Doctor of Ministry graduates, and opened Founders Hall II—expanding academic space for the Honors College. Generous donors fueled initiatives such as the Grace Hopper Scholarships, enabling the doubling of computer science and engineering enrollment, and supported the construction of the \$60 million Sherry and Jim Smith Engineering, Science, and Nursing Building now underway.

Our students, faculty and alumni are living out our mission—from community engagement to championship athletics. Husky Baseball inspired us all with a thrilling Southland Conference title and NCAA Tournament berth, while student-athletes posted a record 3.445 GPA and gave back through 1,000 plus service hours.

We welcomed the largest incoming class in school history for Fall 2025—another signal that HCU’s mission and momentum are stronger than ever.

This year, HCU remains in a strong financial position, enabling us to both sustain our current momentum and strategically invest in initiatives that drive long-term growth and institutional excellence.

This report highlights the impact of your support and HCU’s unwavering commitment to excellence in Christian higher education. We are preparing students to lead with wisdom and serve with integrity—in Houston and beyond. 🙏

Academic Success

PAGE **28**

Athletics

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Kingdom Advancement

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Enrollment

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Financials

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ACADEMIC SUCCESS

HCU continues to advance its mission by expanding academic programs to nurture well-rounded students ready to positively impact the world. Pairing innovative teaching with state-of-the-art facilities, HCU remains a thriving center of academic excellence grounded in faith and forward-thinking education.



Scholarly Thought. *HCU Associate Professor of History Robert Llizo leads a discussion with Honors College students.*



IMPERATIVE 1: Growing Size and Place

HCU's mission reflects the Lordship of Jesus and seeks the greater good of our city. As we grow as a comprehensive Christian university, we are committed to producing more Christian graduates across all fields. To achieve this, we're launching new academic programs and expanding current ones, aiming to enroll 10,000 students across all levels and formats by 2030.

Grace Hopper Scholarships for Engineering and Computer Science

A visionary donor is funding up to full tuition for new students with a 3.25 GPA to accelerate growth in engineering and computer science programs. The donor challenged HCU to double incoming majors in Computer Science, Cyber Engineering, Cybersecurity, Electrical Engineering, Information Systems or Mathematics from fall 2023 to 2024, and again by 2025. Incoming student counts rose from 93 in 2023 to 209 in 2024, and we met the goal to double again with 375 new students in these programs in fall 2025.

NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

HCU's Strategic Enrollment Plan is driving our growth towards 10,000 students by opening new degree programs that appeal to students and meet strategic market needs.

From 2024-25:

- Bachelor of Social Work – Residential
- BS in Learning, Technology, and Design – Hybrid
- MS in Data Science – Online
- MS in Leadership – Online

Launched in Fall 2025:

- BA in Classical Christian Education – Residential
- BS in Engineering Science – Residential
- Master's of International Business – Residential
- MSHRM in People Analytics – Residential & Online
- Professional MBA (PMBA) in Accounting and Finance, in Business Data Analytics, and in Management – Residential & Online
- MS in Criminal Justice – Online
- MS in Artificial Intelligence – Online
- MS in Computer and Information Sciences – Online
- MS in Data Science – Two Online Formats



Expanding Student Success

This year, HCU launched the Writing Center, staffed by trained student mentors offering online and in-person support. In its first year, the center surpassed expectations by coaching 390 students—over twice its goal. Meanwhile, new staff in Counseling, Career and Calling, Student Success and Residence Life have significantly expanded our capacity to serve and retain students.

Expanding Educational Spaces for Growing Programs

HCU celebrated the ribbon-cutting for Founders Hall II on Feb. 18, 2025, marking the completion of the final building in the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty. The new addition includes nine classrooms, one seminar room and a new home for HCU's Honors College.

On April 10, 2025, HCU held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Sherry and Jim Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building. This \$60-million, 71,000-sq.-ft., three-story, multi-disciplinary facility will be a cornerstone of HCU's commitment to academic excellence. It will feature advanced laboratories, cutting-edge learning spaces and state-of-the-art technology for engineering, science and nursing programs. Construction is underway on the east side of campus, with a direct view of the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty.

First Doctor of Ministry Program Graduates

The first four graduates of Houston Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program earned their degrees at the May 2025 Spring Commencement. Tailored for ministry professionals, the DMin offers advanced academic study with practical application. In three years, the program has grown to 42 students across three cohorts and two concentrations: New Testament and Faith & Culture.

Inspiring Firsts. *Houston Theological Seminary's inaugural class of Doctor of Ministry graduates celebrate milestone achievement.*



IMPERATIVE 2: Reinvigorating the Christian Liberal Arts Core

When classical liberal arts disciplines are shaped and infused by the convictions and the character of a Christian worldview, they become channels through which we can guide students to more fully know and make known God, his creation in its complexity, humans as his image-bearers and his plans to redeem and renew the world for his glory.

New Core Curriculum

Drawing from HCU's Ten Core Convictions, a faculty team has identified nine focal literacies that will enable every HCU graduate to excel. Dr. Emily Stelzer, professor of literature, was appointed to a new position as dean of the core curriculum. Core courses will be redeveloped around these focal literacies in order to launch the new core in Fall 2026.

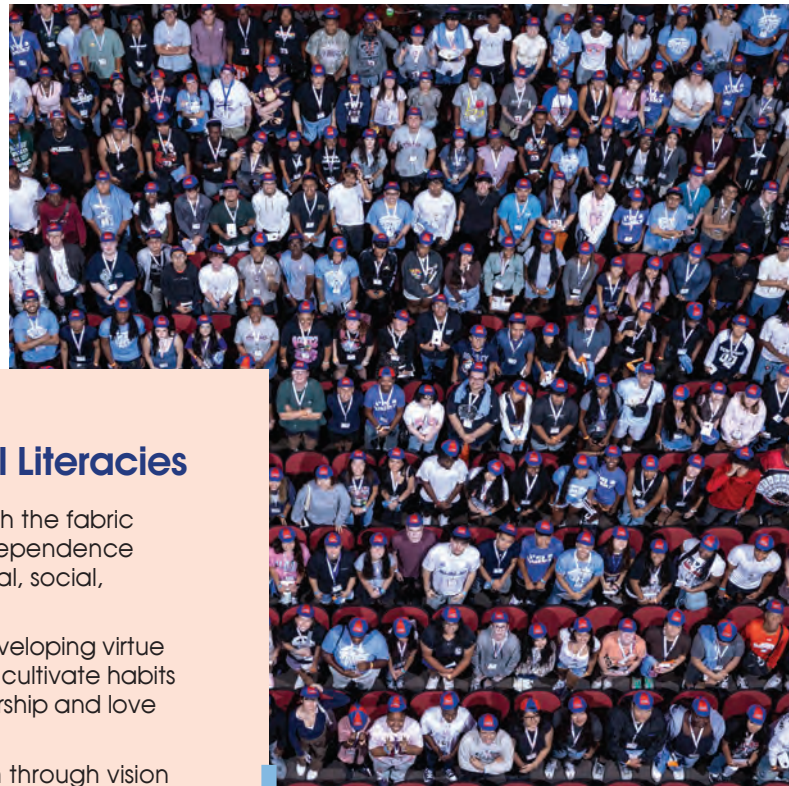
"Knowing God" Core Curriculum Focal Literacies

- Biblical literacy
- Theological proficiency
- Scientific literacy
- Quantitative literacy
- Aesthetic literacy
- Recognition of the dignity of humans as God's image-bearers
- Engagement with the fabric of human interdependence (historical, cultural, social, literary, etc.)
- Flourishing by developing virtue and creativity to cultivate habits of service, leadership and love for others
- Christian wisdom through vision and practices of Christianity

"Persuasion and Poetics"

In support of the new core, a new two-volume anthology, "Persuasion and Poetics," was prepared for use in freshman-level English courses. This reader includes topically arranged scripture, prose and poetry, with writing assignments aligned to help students engage reflectively with the mission and framework of the revised core curriculum. Volume 1 was piloted in Fall 2024, with all residential sections using the new reader in Spring 2025.

HCU's Community Work-Study Program supported over 1,750 hours of student work at a number of non-profit organizations (e.g., Salvation Army, Boys & Girls Club, BakerRipley and Buckner International). Student-athletes recorded over 1,000 hours of community service.



New Class. Incoming freshman class gathers in Dunham Theater following Welcome Days' traditional Beanie Ceremony.

IMPERATIVE 3: Renewing Community Life and Culture

As we grow in size and influence, we also want to grow in depth and in ability to serve others - through spiritual formation, professional development and community engagement.

Spiritual Life

The 2024–25 theme, *TRUE*, was inspired by Jesus’s words in John 8:31b–32: “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Throughout the year, our teaching series explored key dimensions of truth: how we can reliably know what is true, our true identity as image-bearers of God, the path to true peace amid anxiety, the value of true community within the church and how to seek true answers to life’s most difficult questions.

The impact of Convocation continues to grow, while personal discipleship flourishes through dozens of one-on-one relationships. Spiritual renewal was evident during our fall and spring *IGNITE* weeks, and our partnerships with eight national campus ministries remain strong. A new initiative, the HCU Local Church Collaborative, launched this year to help students prioritize membership and active ministry within a local church.

Faculty discipleship cohorts continued for a fourth consecutive year, offering a one-semester journey of learning, faith development and community to equip participating faculty to more richly integrate their academic disciplines with the Christian faith.

SPOTLIGHT: Scan the QR code to learn more about Convocation in the 2025-26 Academic Year.





Legacy of Service. HCU student veterans Ryan Martz (top) and Logan Henderson, president of the Husky Veterans Association (bottom), continue their mission of service in the classroom and across campus.

C-LITE Initiatives

The Center for Learning Innovations and Teaching Excellence (C-LITE) offered programs to advance academic quality across the University. Key activities included New Faculty Orientation, the Fall Community Symposium and ongoing adjunct faculty onboarding and development opportunities, all designed to support instructional excellence. C-LITE also hosted a variety of book discussions, evidence-based workshops and consultations to enhance instructional practices and student success.

Community Service

HCU's Community Work-Study Program supported over 1,750 hours of student work at a number of non-profit organizations such as the Salvation Army, Boys & Girls Club, BakerRipley and Buckner International. Student-athletes recorded over 1,000 hours of community service.

Cullen Trust Grant for Early Literacy

In August 2024, HCU was awarded its first \$100,000 grant from The Cullen Trust for Higher Education to enhance early literacy at two Title I elementary schools located near campus in the Houston Independent School District. Twenty HCU students served as tutors and reading helpers at Lovett and McNamara elementary schools.

In 2025, HCU won its second \$100,000 award for this program and added an additional elementary school: Neff Elementary School.

Veterans, Transfers and International Students

Through initiatives in the Strategic Plan, HCU has added staff and resources to support veteran, transfer and international students. We have seen significant growth in the number of military-affiliated and veteran students, nearing 300 in Fall 2025. New resources have also been provided to Residence Life, Student Life, Student Success, Career and Calling, and the Counseling Center, resulting in significant gains in retention of undergraduate students.

IMPERATIVE 4: Engaging the Marketplace

HCU marketplace initiatives seek to help students serve God's purpose with work that benefits the world particularly in the fields of health and wellness, energy, education, cyber and data.

College Advisory Boards

Each college at HCU has an advisory board that has expanded its reach into Houston marketplaces and civil society, building partnerships to improve the quality of programs and to provide opportunities for graduates. Cumulatively, these advisory boards leverage the support of over 140 members, who provide connections to more than a hundred different corporations, churches, non-profits and other institutions.

New Cyber and Data Degrees

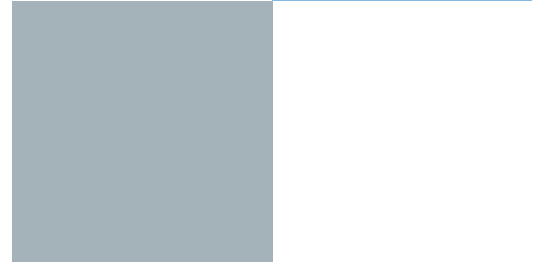
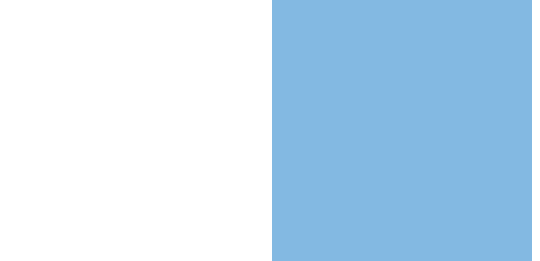
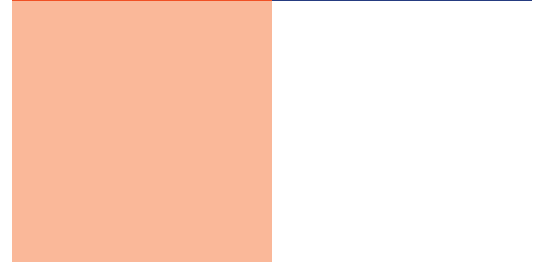
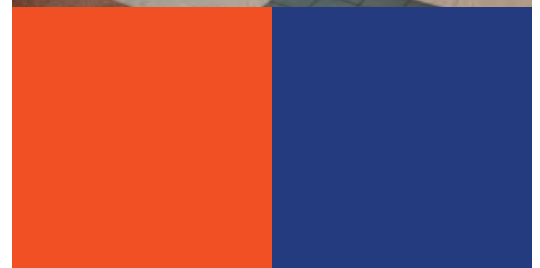
Because of the increasing importance of data science and cybersecurity to every economic sector, we have been rapidly building our undergraduate and graduate degree programs in these fields, expanding our faculty, and exponentially growing our majors in programs like artificial intelligence, computer science, cyber engineering, data science and information systems.

Center for Christianity in Business (CCB)

The Center for Christianity in Business (CCB) advanced its mission through a series of four luncheon seminars addressing pressing marketplace challenges. Featured speakers included James Taylor, President of the Heartland Institute, who spoke on Christian engagement with climate issues, and Dr. Emily Wenger, Assistant Professor at Duke University, who spoke about the responsible use of artificial intelligence.

This year also marked the launch of the CCB Scholars Program, made possible by more than \$100,000 in external funding. The program provides \$5,000 scholarships to incoming students in the Archie W. Dunham College of Business, along with access to a network of Christian business leaders and opportunities for professional and spiritual formation.

HCU has the only ABET-accredited Cyber Engineering bachelor's program in Texas.





Artists Rise to the Top. Constantine St. John won first place for the above entry, titled, "La Hambre," and Dominic Clay won second place for his entry, titled "CY," in the 2024 annual statewide Rising Eyes of Texas juried art competition. Five HCU students were among the 29 artists whose artwork was featured in the exhibit.



Business Certificate Programs

With support from corporate partners, 85 HCU students earned certificates in banking, commercial real estate, leadership and professional development—gaining insights from industry leaders to build skills for marketplace impact. Weekly “Meet My Major” events, the annual Commercial Real Estate Forum, and 70+ guest lectures and workshops further connected students with alumni and industry professionals.

HCU was named one of the Best Colleges in Texas by U.S.

News & World Report in 2025.



OUR SIX COLLEGES

Archie W. Dunham College of Business

- Accounting, Economics and Finance
- Management, Marketing and Business

College of Arts and Humanities

- Narrative Arts: Cinema, Media Arts and Writing
- English, Modern Languages and Communication
- History, Philosophy, Law and Society
- Music
- Visual Arts
- The Honors College

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

- Counseling
- Education
- Psychology

College of Science and Engineering

- Biology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics
- Engineering and Computer Science

Linda R. Dunham School of Nursing

- Nursing
- Kinesiology

School of Christian Thought / Houston Theological Seminary


- Theology
- Apologetics
- Classics and Biblical Languages



IMPERATIVE 5: Planning for Continuous Improvement

Continuous academic program review and improvement remain a strategic priority. Positive accreditation was received from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for education, ABET for engineering, and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for nursing. We completed year four of a five-year internal review cycle for all academic programs. Operational enhancements include:

- “BookPass” for digital, affordable instructional resources
- Transition to cloud-based “Banner SaaS” enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, modernizing processes
- Long-term facilities maintenance planning
- Policies guiding appropriate AI use aligned with HCU’s Christ-centered mission

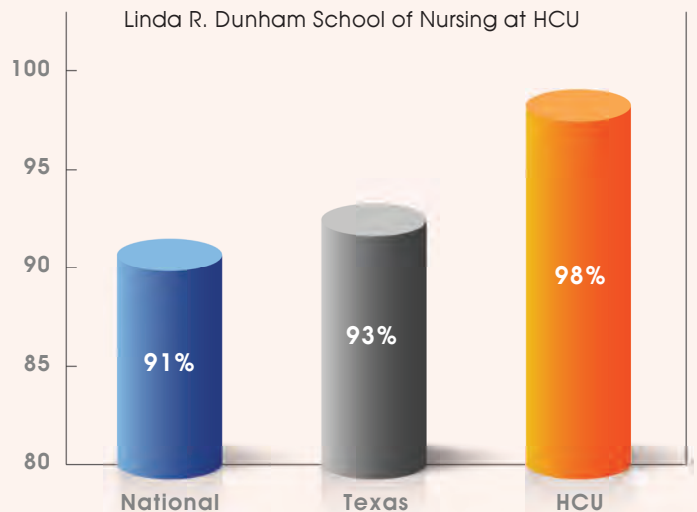
Final branding and marketing efforts led to new media partnerships, updated campus signage, a redesigned website, and increased Houston-area awareness of HCU. 



2025 Piper Professor. *Dr. Lisa Ellis was named the 2024-2025 HCU Piper Professor. Dr. Ellis is an associate professor of biology in the College of Science and Engineering. Piper Professor nominees who are selected as university candidates each year are submitted to the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation to be considered for statewide recognition. She is also president of the Faculty Assembly and sponsor of Beta Beta Beta Honor Society and is a Secondary Athletics Certification Officer.*

First-Time NCLEX Pass Rate

Linda R. Dunham School of Nursing at HCU



2024 National Council Licensure Examination Pass Rate

HCU graduates have found success in careers at many notable organizations:

- Second Baptist Church of Houston
- M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
- The Walt Disney Company
- Chevron
- Bank of America
- HP
- Fluor Corporation
- Houston Texans
- Voddie Baucham Ministries
- The Sundance Film Festival
- U.S. House of Representatives
- NASA



Only the Best. HCU alumna Dr. Nay Chevalier was named 2024 B.E.S.T. (Baptist Educators Serving Texans) Award winner. Awards are given annually to honor a teacher or administrator in Texas public schools who is a graduate of a Texas Baptist institution and a member of a Texas Baptist church. Chevalier earned a doctorate in Educational Leadership in Mental Health and Human Services from HCU's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in 2023.

ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Fueled by a championship victory and a renewed spirit of leadership, Husky Athletics is rising to new heights. With HCU Men's Baseball claiming the Southland Conference title and new coaches bringing fresh vision across multiple sports, we are pursuing our calling of shaping student-athletes who compete with purpose—in mind, body and soul.

Huskies Capture Southland Conference Title

In his first year at the helm, head coach Clay VanderLaan led HCU baseball to its second-ever Southland Conference (SLC) championship, completing one of the best turnarounds in NCAA baseball in 2025.

The Huskies posted a 32-25 record—improving by 14 wins from the previous season, tying for the ninth-biggest year-over-year jump nationally. A decade after their first SLC title, the team once again surged through the tournament, sweeping bracket play as the No. 6 seed in Edinburg, Texas.

HCU then hosted a thrilling championship series against New Orleans at Husky Field, where overflow crowds witnessed back-to-back victories (8-3 and 16-11) as the Huskies clinched the title and a spot in the NCAA Tournament.

Although the Huskies fell to second-ranked Texas and Kansas State in the Austin Regional, the team's performance established them as a program on the rise with momentum heading into future seasons.

Ticket Punched.
HCU Men's
Baseball Team
captures Southland
Conference Title.



MEN'S SPORTS

Baseball
Basketball
Cross Country
Football
Golf
Soccer
Track and Field

WOMEN'S SPORTS

Basketball
Beach Volleyball
Cross Country
Golf
Soccer
Softball
Track and Field
Volleyball

Academic Excellence

HCU student-athletes continued to excel in the classroom in 2024-25, with 27 earning academic All-Conference honors, including standout Edouard Lecrivain (track & field) who was named SLC Student-Athlete of the Year for both indoor and outdoor seasons.

The Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll recognized a record 254 HCU student-athletes for achieving a 3.0 GPA or higher—surpassing last year's 242. In the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC), men's soccer had 11 athletes named to the Commissioner's Honor Roll, with senior Sam Zeeman earning the OVC Medal of Honor for the highest GPA in his sport.

Department-wide, HCU's scholarship student-athletes recorded an impressive 3.445 cumulative GPA, with every sport posting at least a 3.0 GPA.



17 NCAA Division teams



Run the Race. *SLC Student-Athlete of the Year Edouard Lecrivain powers ahead of his competitors during the NCAA West First Round at E.B. Cushing Stadium in May 2025.*

Women's Basketball Coach


Following the arrival of four new head coaches last year, HCU introduced just one new face for 2025-26: Drew Long, the sixth head coach in HCU women's basketball history, who joined in April.

Long comes from McMurry University in Abilene, where he transformed a 2-16 team into a 23-6 NCAA Division III Sweet 16 contender in just four seasons, closing with a 54-48 record. His 2024-25 squad posted the third-best mark in program history, earning him D3Hoops.com Region Coach of the Year honors. During that season, he coached Emily Holland to all-region, honorable mention All-America, and a spot in the 2025 Division III All-Star Game.

In 2023-24, Long was named American Southwest Conference (ASC) Coach of the Year after guiding the ASC Player of the Year. Prior to McMurry, he held administrative roles at Abilene Christian University, including Deputy Athletic Director, where he oversaw multiple sports, athletic facilities and operations.

Long also coached at Faith West Academy in Katy, leading the team to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 3A state semifinals and mentoring two all-state players. Earlier in his career, he spent five seasons as a men's assistant coach at the U.S. Air Force Academy and three years under former NBA coach Jeff Bzdelik at Colorado.

A native Houstonian, Long played at Northwestern under coach Bill Carmody and holds a Bachelor of Science in Communications and a Master's in Coaching Administration from Concordia University – Irvine.

"To return to the city where it all started is unbelievable," Long said. "I'm grateful for this opportunity and eager to see what God has in store for HCU women's basketball." 

Drew Long, Head Coach of Women's Basketball



Department-wide, HCU's scholarship student-athletes recorded an impressive 3.445 cumulative GPA, with every sport posting at least a 3.0 GPA.

Huskies in the Community

HCU student-athletes continued to make a strong impact across campus, the Sharpstown area and the broader Houston community during the 2024-25 academic year, logging 2,090 hours of community service.

From helping fellow students on move-in day to teaming up with KPRC-TV for a housing restoration project for Houstonians in need, Huskies represented the University with pride. Among many initiatives, men's basketball brought smiles to Braeburn Elementary students during "High Five Friday," and softball athletes spent a day with Special Olympics participants.

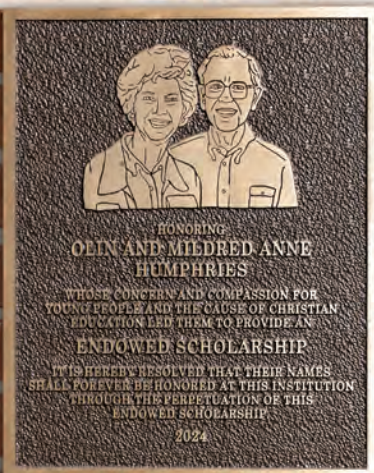
Women's soccer players engaged in prison ministry, while baseball players helped beautify the Avondale House grounds. HCU football took on hunger relief at the Houston Food Bank, assembling 16,400 meals for the Backpack Buddy Program.



Giving Hearts. This year, a transformative planned gift from the estate of Olin and Mildred Anne Humphries established the Olin and Mildred Anne Humphries Endowed Scholarship.

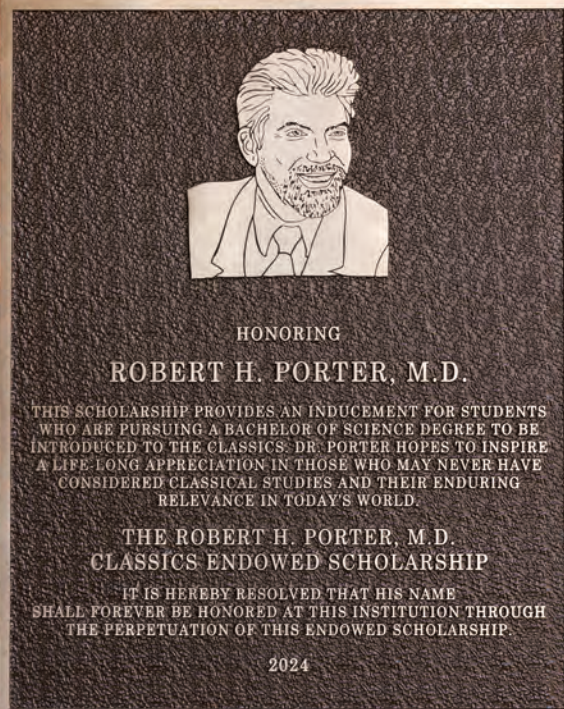
KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT

During the last fiscal year, Houston Christian University received more than \$12.7 million in generous donations from alumni, friends and foundation support. More than \$79 million has been raised for capital projects for the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty complex and construction of the Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building.



"While modern education increasingly emphasizes STEM, it is equally important to preserve the connection to the foundations of our Western heritage. The Classics are the intellectual and cultural roots of this heritage. By studying them, students are better able to balance modern innovation with an understanding of the wisdom of the past."

ROBERT H. PORTER, MD



The Annual Fund

The HCU Annual Fund transforms lives, with 98% of students receiving some form of financial aid. It addresses the University's most critical needs, including scholarships and student programs that ensure a Christ-centered education for all. Signature initiatives like Huskies Give Big and the LOVE HCU Auction support scholarships, academic programming, spiritual and student life, and faculty and staff development.

Since its inception in 1991, the Spirit of Excellence Gala has been a cornerstone event of the Annual Fund.

Endowments & Scholarships

The University Endowment supports HCU's mission and financial stability, ensuring the continued pursuit of Christian higher education. In 2023–2024, over \$1.7 million in endowed scholarships were awarded, thanks to 383+ generous donors. Established in 1969 by Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr., the Endowed Scholarship Program remains a cornerstone of student support. Specialized awards—like the Robert H. Porter, MD Classics Endowed Scholarship—offer tuition incentives for undergraduate students studying the classics.

Covenant Society/ Planned Giving

The Covenant Society now includes nearly 200 members committed to sustaining HCU's future through estate planning. This year, a transformative planned gift from the estate of Olin and Mildred Anne Humphries established the Olin and Mildred Anne Humphries Endowed Scholarship. Their generous bequest honors their unwavering commitment to faith, education and nurturing the next generation of servant-leaders who will carry their values forward.



“I am so blessed to have been given the opportunity to be an Alumni Endowed Scholar on the Jane Jester [‘68] and Stephen Andrew Marmion Alumni Endowed Scholarship. This scholarship has meant so much to me as it has given me the opportunity to learn, grow, and pursue God’s calling on my life.”

DANIEL JACOB,
Class of 2028

Capital Giving

Sherry and Jim Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building

Philanthropic support continues to drive HCU's future, highlighted by the April 2025 groundbreaking of the Sherry and Jim Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building. With a \$20 million lead gift from the Smiths, over 80 donors have contributed to the \$60 million, 71,000-square-foot facility. Set to open in Fall 2026, the state-of-the-art building will feature advanced labs, tech-enabled classrooms and collaborative spaces to prepare students for high-demand careers. It marks a key step in HCU's plan to grow to 10,000 students by 2030 and develop future servant-leaders in engineering, science and nursing.

Sherry and Jim Smith	Vivian L. Smith Foundation	Stephen Pickett '08
Linda R. and Dr. Archie W. Dunham	Lucy and Skip McBride	Sandy and Reid Smith
Esther Tan Wong	Sharon and Dr. Les Saunders	Dr. Alfredo Villareal Gonzalez '80
Sarofim Foundation	Ed Rachal Foundation	Charles Copeland
The Cullen Trust for Higher Education	Dr. Barbara Taylor-Cox '81 and Ray L. Cox, Jr. '81	Pam and Clois Smith
Linda Davis and Bruce Williams	Sandra and Frank Mooney	Melanie and Dr. Duane Brooks
Sue and Dr. Robert Sloan	Carrie and Ron Woliver	Becky and the Honorable Jeff Leach
Hamill Foundation	Rosalyn and Barry Margolis	Nona and Rev. Tom Mosley
Jennifer and Tadd MBA '99 Tellepsen	Tana and Dale '83 Jefferson	Dr. Susan Priest
The Brown Foundation	Cathy and Steve Moniaci	Heather and Dr. James Steen
Cindy and Randy '76 Garbs	Emmitt Nelson	Vivian Camacho Winslow '91
The Fondren Foundation	Judy and Geren Graham	Rev. Willie Davis
Col. Newt Cole	Kelly and Rev. Gregg Matte	Dr. Jacqueline Peltier Horn
MD Anderson Foundation	Orphalinda and Rev. Ramiro A. Peña	Shelby Stafford Waddell '17, MA '19
Memorial Hermann Health System Foundation	Melissa and Matthew Morris	Gillian Alexander
The Elkins Foundation	Lindsay and Marc Rylander	Jill Bullard '90 and David Almaguer
Cindy and Dr. Dan Wilford	Jan and Jerome Smith	Dr. Marie Mater
Jennifer '99 and Damon '00, MBA '03 Maddox	Linda R. Dunham School of Nursing	Mark Schmidt
Max Cowan	Judi '94 and Mark Pyburn	Julie Voss
Drs. Jane '75 and C. J. '77 Wheeler, III	Susan and Clay Porter	Patricia Bailey
Becky and Dr. Tom '75 Wheeler	Jane Jester '68 and Steve Marmion	Candace '94 and Keith Desrosiers
The Joella and Stewart Morris Foundation	Vicki and Dr. Stanley Napper	Teri Marbach
The John M. O'Quinn Foundation	Kintra and Rev. Garry Blackmon	Michael Matlage
The Cullen Trust for Health Care	Madeline and Ted Collier	Dr. Lisa Ellis
Dr. Diane '93 and Stanley Williams	Cheryl and Rev. Omar Garcia	Donna Cox
Alice and Dr. Lawrence '78 Fan	Cyndi and Keith Jacobson	Betty Howell
Kathie Magness	Hillary and Dr. Chris Kouba	Victoria Means
	Dr. Chuck Lang '75	Melanie Hagerty '06
		Peter Bolin '21



From left to right: Dr. Robert Sloan, University President; Houston Mayor John Whitmire; Jim Smith; Sherry Smith; and Rev. Ramiro A. Peña, HCU Board of Trustees Chairman



Mayor John Whitmire with HCU Linda R. Dunham School of Nursing students



The Sherry and Jim Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building in the making!



SPOTLIGHT: Scan the QR code to view bonus content.



AMANDA ARCHER



MIKHAIL ABAKUMOV

Auxiliary Groups

Auxiliary groups remain faithful supporters of the University. The American Museum Society celebrates 60 years of promoting public interest in the development of the cultural and educational aspects of the Museum of American Architecture and Decorative Arts on HCU's Campus. Its outreach to the community provides opportunity for tours, lectures and special events related to the historical impact of Texas.

The Guild celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2025, having raised more than \$2.6 million. Since 1994, 246 masters and doctoral students in theology and education and graduated through these scholarships.

Mikhail Abakumov, a Ukrainian theology student living in Poland said, "I do not have the right words to fully express my deep appreciation for this scholarship. The Master of Arts in Apologetics means a great deal to me and plays a significant role in the development of my ministry."

While an Education doctoral student stated, "Knowing that The Guild Scholarship Committee believes in my potential fuels my determination to excel in my studies and uphold the values of leadership, integrity and lifelong learning."

"I am profoundly grateful to The Guild at HCU for the endowed scholarship. Their generous support is making it possible for me to complete my doctorate in Executive Education Administration this May. The scholarship helps me to further serve and empower teachers in Christian private schools, striving each day to lead with the heart and example of Jesus. Thank you for investing in leaders who are dedicated to transforming education through faith and service!"

AMANDA ARCHER,
Ed.D Executive Educational Leadership '26



Esther Wong and her son, Lee Wong, Connecting Cultures. *Esther Wong, founder of the Spahr-Tan Center for International Education and a major supporter of the Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building and the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty, has advanced Houston Christian University's global mission through her generous leadership, deep heart for Christian education and lifelong commitment to connecting students across cultures.*

HCU's Advisory Councils play a crucial role in supporting the mission of each academic area. Comprised of alumni and community leaders, these councils provide strategic guidance, mentorship and financial backing, strengthening programs, creating more opportunities for students, and promoting meaningful connections between the University and its broader community.

Foundations and Grants

During the year, Houston Christian University celebrated the extraordinary achievement of securing more than \$3.8 million in private grants from generous foundations and corporations whose partnership strengthens every facet of our mission. These vital investments supported the Annual Fund, meeting the University's greatest needs; advanced capital projects that enhance our campus; and provided scholarships for students in Science and Engineering, Theology, Nursing, Business and beyond. They also fueled educational programming across key disciplines, equipped STEM disciplines with state-of-the-art technology, expanded digital access through laptop initiatives, and bolstered Athletics operations that enrich student life. Together, these grants embody the shared commitment of our partners and the HCU community to cultivate academic excellence, spiritual growth, and servant leadership.

Events and University Relations

HCU's Events, Camps and Conferences initiatives brought unprecedented vibrancy to campus life, with programs strategically aligned to the HCU 2030 Strategic Plan and the Ten Pillars 2030. From national conferences and immersive youth camps to fine arts and STEM programming, HCU hosted major initiatives organized by program area and infused with Christ-centered purpose. Each event, whether fostering student pipeline engagement, showcasing marketplace excellence or deepening community culture, embodied key strategic imperatives and advanced the University's mission across academic, cultural and spiritual dimensions.



Honoring the Linda R. Dunham School of Nursing at the annual Nursing Dean's Development Council Luncheon. *From left to right: Keith Garvin '23 MAA, Sydney Moore, Cary Dunham '93, Laura and Mark Shook, Dr. Robert and Sue Sloan*

ENROLLMENT RECORDS

Building on a record-setting year in 2024, HCU achieved its highest enrollment in University history in 2025—a 10 percent increase that underscores rising demand and continued momentum toward our 2030 enrollment goals.

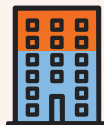


Husky Spirit. HCU students cheer on Huskies in Sharp Gym.

Fall 2025



**In-Person
Students
3,348**



363 Freshmen
632 Upperclassmen
live on campus



**Online
Students
1,345**



Welcoming Start. Incoming freshmen celebrate Welcome Days' traditions in Dunham Theater.



954

**Class of 2029
Freshmen
attend class in person**



138

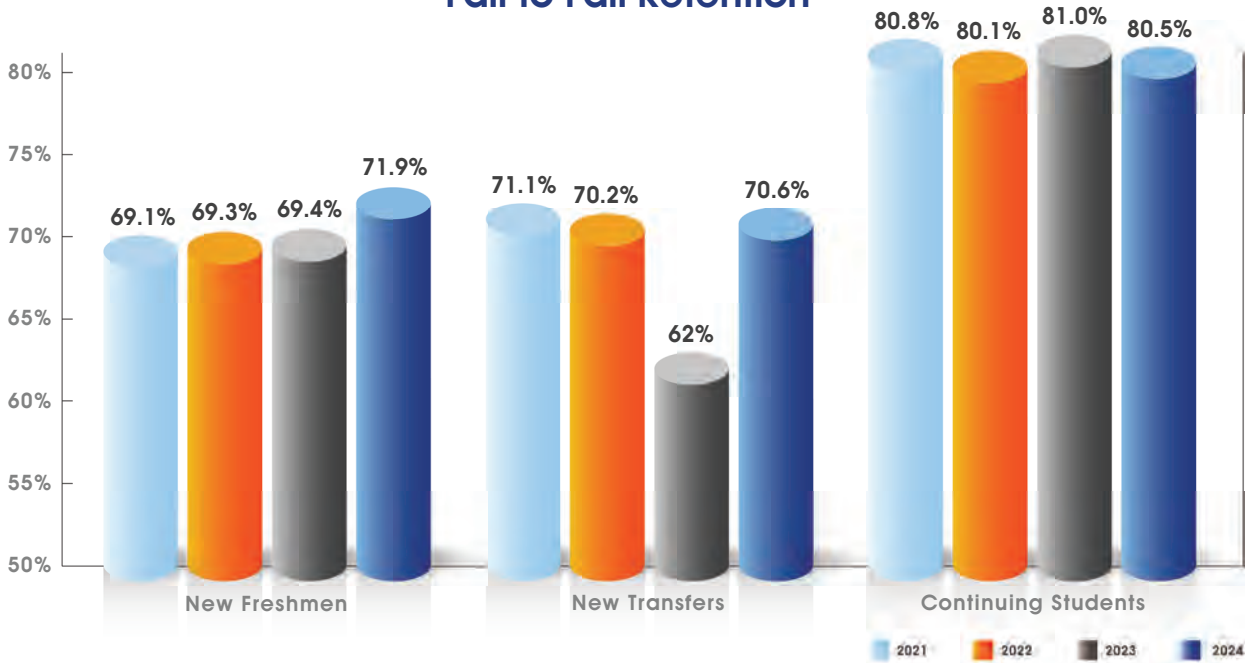
**New Graduate
Students
attend class in person**

Undergraduate Freshmen and Transfers Fall 2025



The University welcomed a record 954 first-time freshmen, up from 701 in Fall 2024, reflecting an impressive 36% year-over-year increase. Additionally, 197 new transfer students joined the Husky community, which was a 6% increase over last year's transfer numbers.

Fall to Fall Retention



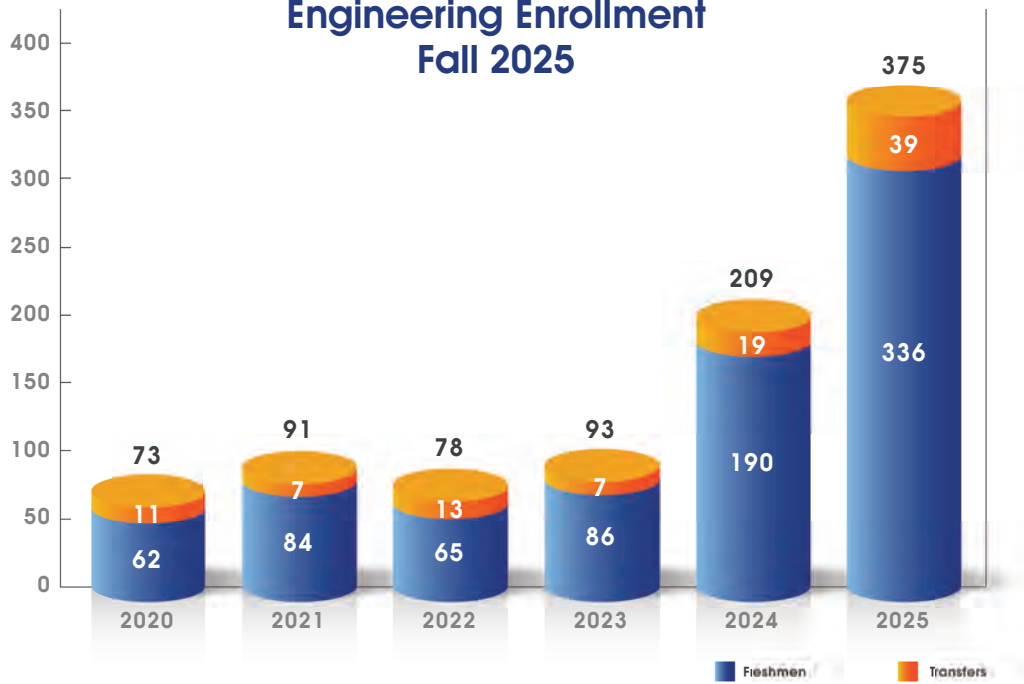
The retention rate for new freshmen saw a statistically significant increase, up two and a half percentage points year over year. Transfer retention bounced back to 71% and the retention of continuing students remained stable at 80%.

Veteran Enrollment Fall 2025



HCU has become one of the fastest-growing destinations in Texas for veterans and military families with veteran enrollment more than doubling over two years. Since 2023, the number of veterans has increased from 145 with an additional 155 enrolled, a total growth of 108%.

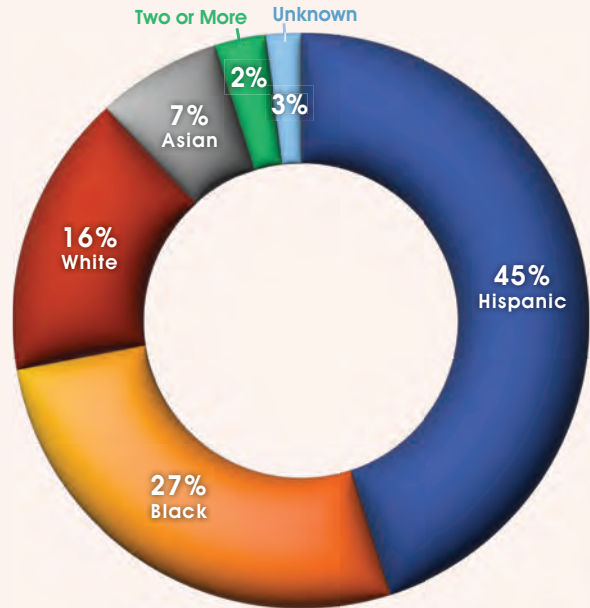
Engineering Enrollment Fall 2025



Engineering enrollment has doubled in each of the past two years. Our goal for fall 2025 was to enroll 375 engineering majors. We enrolled exactly that many students including 337 Grace Hopper Scholars and 38 non-Hopper enrollees.



Ethnicity



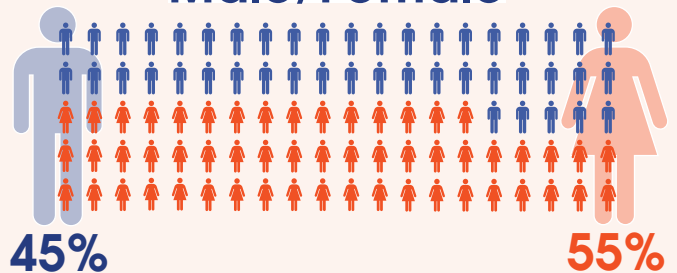
Fall 2025 Enrollment

Undergraduate 2,819

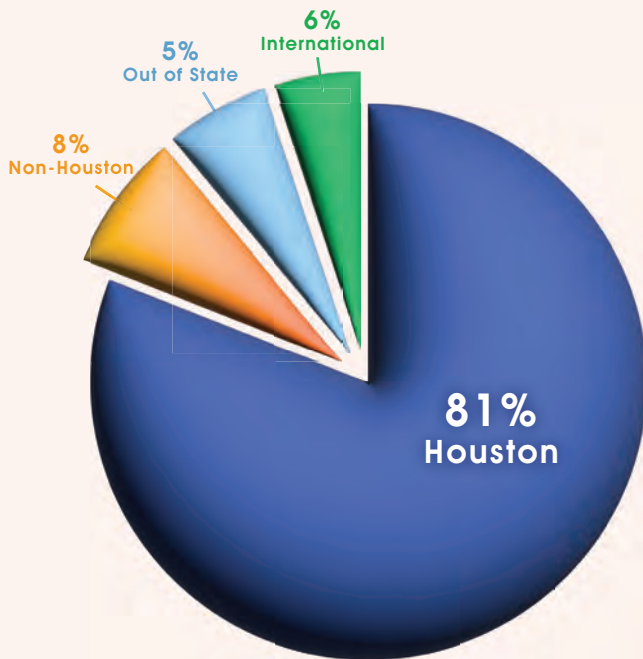
Pampell Global 1,345

Graduate 529

Male/Female



Undergraduate Enrollment Distribution



Religious Preference



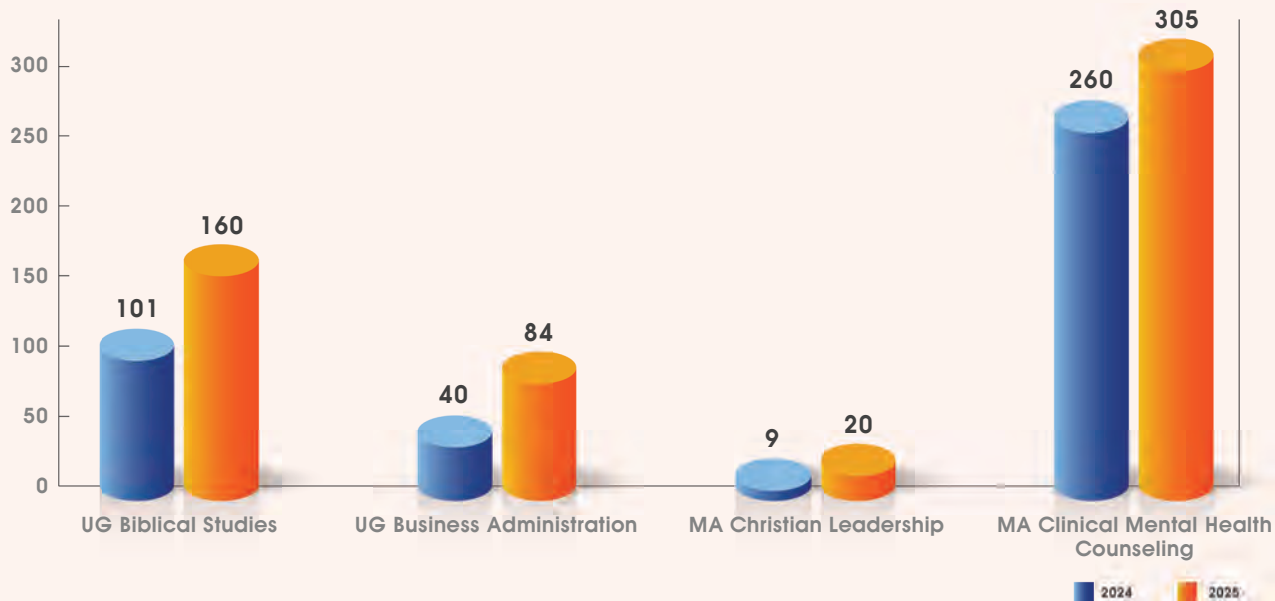


On-Campus Students Receiving Financial Aid

97%

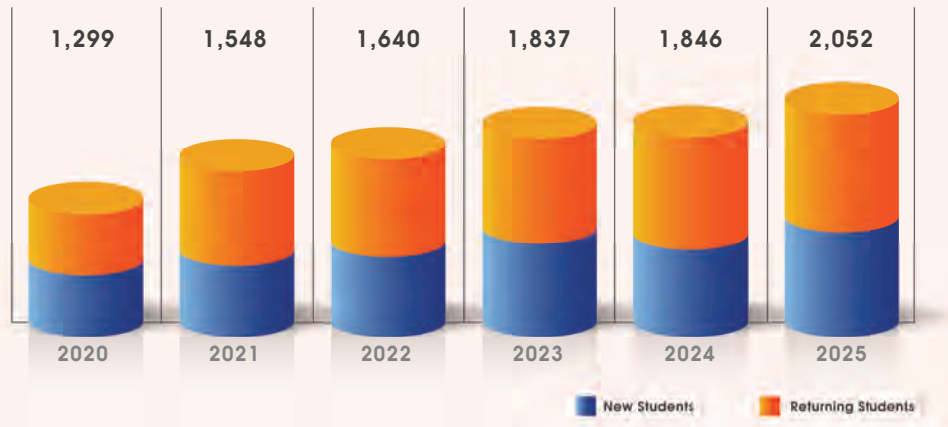


Online Program Growth Year over Year | Academic Year 2024-25

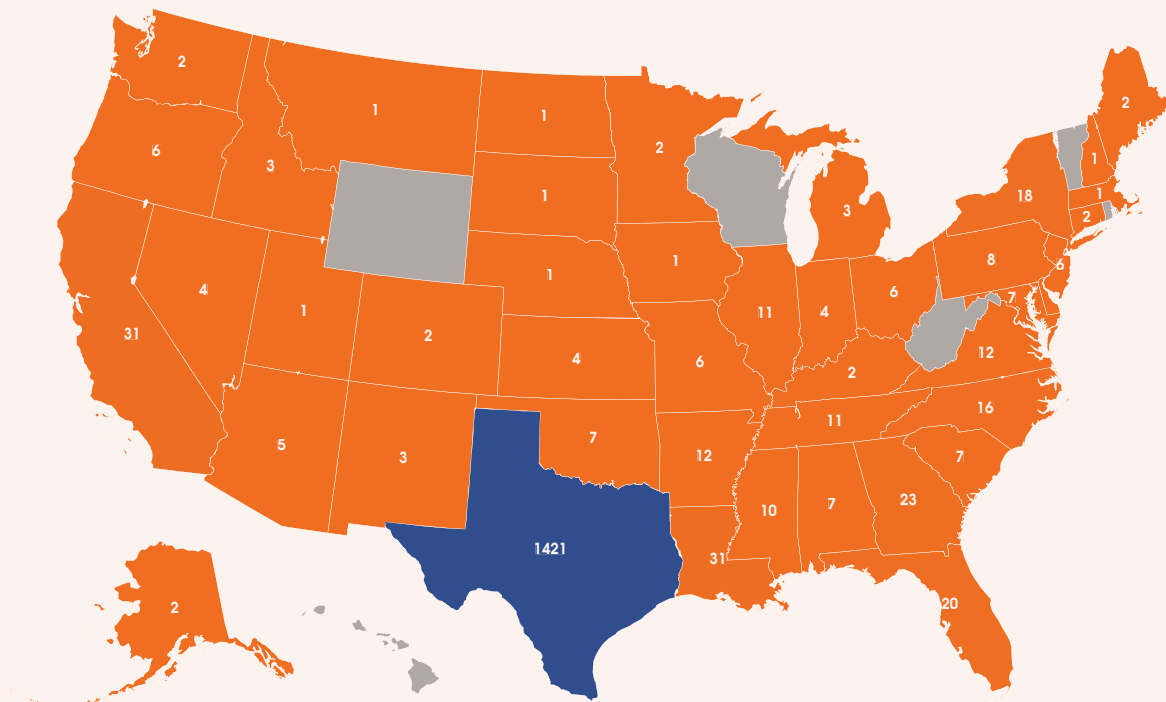


Continuing a growth trend measured last year, the most significant increase in annual program enrollment can be seen in the undergraduate Biblical Studies program, 58%. Undergraduate Business Administration online students more than doubled from 40 to 84 – a 110% increase. On the graduate enrollment front, the MA Christian Leadership enrollment also doubled and in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, the MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling saw a 17% increase.

Online New & Returning Enrollment | Academic Year 2024-25



Pampell Global Campus experienced a significant increase in year-to-year enrollment for the 2024-25 academic year, reaching a record 2,052 students – an 11% rise from the previous year’s enrollment of 1,846, demonstrating strong growth and interest in the University’s online offerings. Returning students increased five percent and we enrolled 1,004 new online students – a 19% increase over last year.



Another encouraging area is the increased footprint in our online campus to 45 states and seven foreign countries:

- Canada
- Poland
- Slovakia
- Austria
- Grenada
- Jamaica
- Nigeria

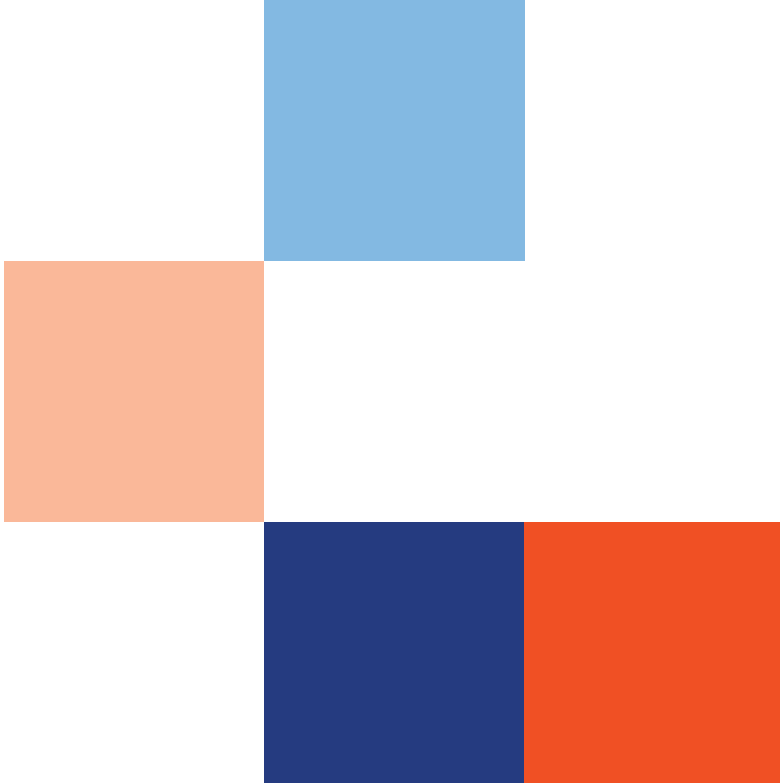
FINANCIAL HEALTH

HCU remains steadfast in maintaining a strong financial foundation while pursuing strategic investments that will drive long-term growth. Through prudent stewardship and visionary planning, the University is positioned to expand its programs and facilities—to support our faith-based mission and meet the evolving needs of our community.

Statement of Financial Position

As of Fiscal Year Ends 2025 and 2024

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Current Assets	237,602,244	208,780,314
Non-Current Assets	162,638,561	146,856,539
Total Assets	400,240,805	355,636,853
LIABILITIES		
Current & Non-Current Liabilities	132,926,002	107,566,417
Total Liabilities	132,926,002	107,566,417
NET ASSETS		
Restricted Nonexpendable	77,843,283	76,082,305
Restricted Expendable	73,625,416	56,909,359
Unrestricted	115,846,104	115,078,772
Total Net Assets	267,314,803	248,070,436

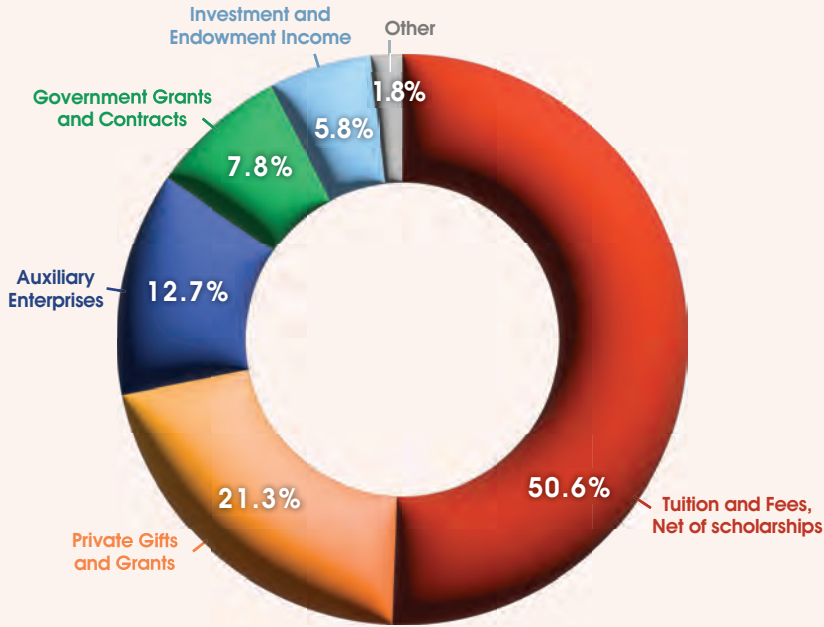


Statement of Activities

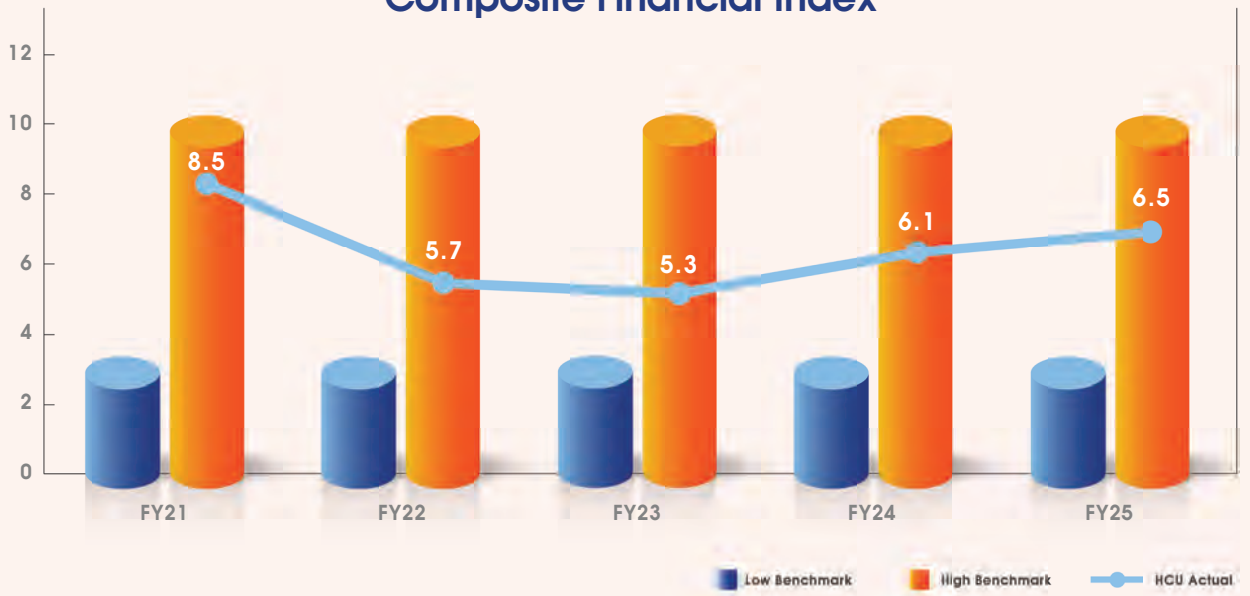
As of Fiscal Year Ends 2025 and 2024

	2025	2024
Revenues	101,821,015	91,347,245
Operating Expenses	90,132,746	90,091,794
Use of Funds for Operating Expenses	84,957,703	84,512,948
Depreciation	5,175,043	5,578,845
Increase in Fair Value of Investments	6,497,003	9,013,081
Other Non-Operating Income	1,059,096	1,300,643
Change in Net Assets	19,244,368	11,569,175
Beginning Net Assets	248,070,435	236,501,260
Ending Net Assets	267,314,803	248,070,435

Sources of Funds



Composite Financial Index

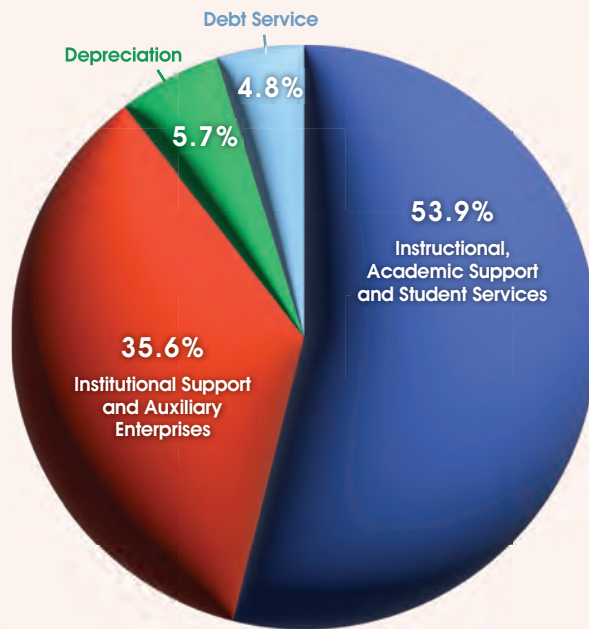




Endowment Values



Uses of Funds



FAMILY, FAITH AND A FRESH START

Houston Christian University's Women's Basketball Program has a new leader at the helm, with deep roots, a clear vision and a story that students and fans can rally behind. Coach Drew Long may be new to the sidelines of HCU Women's Basketball, but his journey, character and coaching philosophy make it perfectly clear that he is here to build something meaningful.

For Long, accepting the position this past spring following four years as the head women's basketball coach at McMurry University, in Abilene, Texas, represents a full-circle moment in his journey.

"It's surreal, honestly. It's so special," he says about returning to his hometown. "I remember playing high school games in Sharp Gym... and now being able to coach in that gym is pretty cool."

With family and friends nearby, Long feels right at home in his new role.

"It's nice to come home and be a part of a program and a university like this," he added. "It's a good fit."

Long's basketball story began with older siblings, backyard games and a shared love of the sport. After playing two seasons at Northwestern University, his playing career was cut unexpectedly short after an injury that led to hip surgery.

"The doctors told me I would be out six to eight weeks, and then they came back and said, 'No, actually your career is over.'"

But that blow eventually led him to his true calling.



Long's approach to the game is refreshingly player-centered, emphasizing trust and real-world preparation. Rather than micromanaging through constant play calls, he prepares his players to think independently and adapt on the court.

"I put a lot of trust and faith in the players," he explains. "In practice, we simulate game situations, so when we are in a game, they are able to make reads and adjust to different defensive styles."

This trust extends far beyond the court.

"One of the biggest reasons I got back into coaching was the personal relationships," he shares. "What you build off the court, that trust, leads to special things on the floor."

When asked how he led McMurry from a 2-26 season to the NCAA Sweet 16 in just four years, Long's answer was simple:

"It starts with recruiting genuinely good people." He jokes, "I am too old to be dealing with a bunch of knuckleheads. I want to enjoy coming to work."

At HCU, his vision for the program is one of unity and accountability.

"We talk a lot about the name on the front of the jersey," he says. "It's about who we are as a program and what we represent."

"At the end of the day, it's more than just basketball," he reflects. "These girls will go on to get great jobs, and hopefully become, if they choose to, great mothers and great wives, and to me, that's the most important part about it."

"We talk a lot about the name on the front of the jersey. It's about who we are as a program and what we represent."

DREW LONG,
HCU Women's Basketball Coach

As a father to three daughters, Alice, Christy and Emery, Long sees his team as extended family.

"This job has made me a better dad, you know, and being able to see, 'oh, that might be my kid in four or five years.'"

Long ultimately envisions a culture where his players are "leaders in the classroom, the community and on the floor and "just all-around good people."

Perhaps the most profound influence on Long's coaching philosophy happened entirely outside of the sport. After leaving his coaching position at the Air Force Academy, he received a cancer diagnosis that fundamentally shifted his priorities.

He had what he calls "a hard reset" which led him to step away from coaching, reassess what truly mattered and return with a new purpose.

"The whole reason for getting back into coaching was completely different from my original reason for wanting to coach," he shared. "I always thought to myself, 'I can be the best, make a huge impact and change lives'... but the impact those kids at McMurry had on me and my family was far more than I had on them," he reflected.

"That experience, in a crazy way, saved my life."

Off the court, Long is a devoted family man who enjoys spending time with his wife, Melissa, their three daughters and four dogs, Buster, Rhymes, Biggie and Gia.

When he's not coaching or dashing between his kids' countless practices and games, you might find him unwinding by the lake around a fire pit or exploring one of his unexpectedly creative passions.

"I love to barbecue," Long shares, describing a dedication to 10- to 12-hour brisket smoking sessions on his homemade smoker.

Even more surprisingly, he has a background in art and graphic design. "Twelve years ago, I was an art teacher," he reveals. "I did kindergarten through high school art."

This creative background still serves him today as he occasionally takes on graphic design projects for friends.

As he embarks on his second season as head coach, Long brings a powerful blend of coaching experience, administrative insight and deeply held values that position the program for lasting success.

His first year at HCU not only marked a new chapter for Long but signaled a bold new era for HCU women's basketball—one defined by his unwavering commitment to trust, discipline and genuine care for his players. His vision reaches far beyond the scoreboard, as he aims to build a culture of excellence both on and off the field. 🏀



**BEYOND THE
BLUE AND ORANGE:**

Huskies Go Pro

Houston Christian University has built a proud tradition of developing athletes who go on to excel at the professional level across sports and around the globe. From the basketball court to the soccer field, baseball diamond, and football gridiron, former Huskies have taken their talents into elite leagues in the United States and internationally. Whether competing in the NFL, Major League Baseball, or professional leagues in Europe, Asia and Latin America, these standout alumni have carried the HCU spirit to the highest levels of competition, earning championships, breaking records and representing their University with distinction.

RACHEL ARTHUR, Women's Basketball

Arthur played four seasons for the HCU women's basketball program from 2012-16. She was inducted into the HCU Hall of Honor in 2023 for a career that included 1,221 career points, 219 assists and 154 steals. Arthur has played overseas in Germany since finishing up at HCU, most recently playing for Rutronik Keltern.

MORRIS AUSTIN, Baseball

Austin spent three seasons with the Huskies, finishing his career with a 4-2 record and three saves. The right-hander struck out 49 batters in 44.1 innings. He was selected by the Milwaukee Brewers in the 10th round of the 2023 Major League Baseball Draft. 2025 marks his third season of professional baseball. As of Sept. 4, Austin was pitching in High-A ball for the Winston-Salem Dash in the Chicago White Sox system.

ART BERNARDI, Men's Basketball

Bernardi was a two-year player for the Huskies, transferring to the Huskies following two years playing at a junior college. He totaled 720 points with 319 rebounds in just 53 games. He then signed a professional contract in 2023 to play professionally in his native Brazil that started a 10-year career that wrapped up in 2024.

IAN DUBOSE, Men's Basketball

DuBose played three seasons (2017-20) for the Huskies, earning his degree in three years and being named Southland Conference Student-Athlete of the Year in 2020. In just three seasons, DuBose racked up 1,446 points, 560 rebounds, 275 assists and 133 steals in 90 games. Following one year at Wake Forest, DuBose has played the last four years for teams in Germany, the Czech Republic and the UK.

SAM HOFMAN, Men's Basketball

Hofman played two seasons for the Huskies, earning his degree before moving on to play at Temple. In two years, he started 48 of the 61 games he played in and totaled 467 points and 342 rebounds. A Brussels, Belgium native, Hofman is in his second year playing professionally in Belgium.

ALEXA HUERTA, Women's Soccer

Huerta played three seasons at HCU, earning her degree in just three years, before going on to sign to play professionally in Mexico's Liga MX Femenil along with teammate Emily Jaimes. Huerta appeared in 48 matches for the Huskies, finishing her career with 12 goals and eight assists.

JALYX HUNT, Football

Hunt, a two-year starter at HCU, piled up an impressive 13 sacks in just 21 games for the second-most in a career all-time. He was drafted with the 94th pick of the 2024 draft in the third round by the Philadelphia Eagles. Hunt's rookie season with the Eagles saw him finish with a Super Bowl title and a sack in the Big Game. In 16 games played, Hunt finished with 21 tackles, 1.5 sacks and a pair of forced fumbles.

JOSH IBARRA, Men's Basketball

Ibarra was a force on the floor for the Huskies from 2014-18 before injuries cut his time on the floor short. He appeared in 89 career games, scoring 909 career points while adding 403 rebounds and 129 blocked shots. He signed his first professional contract with Mexican club, Fuerza Regia, and has played consistently since then. In the last seven years he has played in Mexico, Canada, Venezuela, South Korea and Indonesia, winning a total of four league championships.

ABBEY SUTHERLAND, Women's Basketball

Sutherland was a four-year standout for the Huskies, starting 81 of 93 games. She played at HCU from 2019-23. She ended her collegiate career with 466 points, 294 rebounds, 117 blocked shots and 116 assists before signing a contract in Australia with the Kilsyth Cobras. Sutherland has played the last two seasons with the Melbourne Tigers.

EMILY JAIMES, Women's Soccer

Jaimes spent four seasons playing for the Huskies, finishing her career with eight goals and five assists in 52 career games. She signed a contract to play professionally for Atletico San Luis located in San Luis Potosi, Mexico in Mexico's Liga MX Femenil in 2025.

CALEB JOHNSON, Football

Johnson, a five-year member of the HCU football team from 2016-20, became the program's first-ever player in the NFL when he signed a free agent contract with the Chicago Bears in 2021. He ranks in the top five in program history in tackles, sacks and fumble recoveries. In four NFL seasons, Johnson has played in 65 games with 38 tackles for the Bears and Jacksonville Jaguars.

BAILEY ZAPPE, Football

Zappe, the record-setting quarterback, who became the first-ever HCU player drafted in the NFL draft, played four years at HCU, earning a degree finishing his career as the program leader in every passing category for a career and a single-season. Following one season at Western Kentucky, he was picked in the fourth round of the 2022 NFL Draft by the New England Patriots. In his first three seasons in the league, Zappe has played in 15 games while making nine starts.

ERIN MCGARRACHAN, Women's Basketball

McGarrachan spent three seasons playing for the Huskies after transferring from UT-El Paso. In 62 career games for the Huskies, she totaled 562 points and 189 rebounds. She signed to play in the United Kingdom with the Leicester Riders in 2015 and played professionally in the UK up until her retirement from the sport with the Caledonia Gladiators this past May.

A Culture of Champions: SCORING GOALS THE HCU WAY



The phrase “more than an athlete” has grown beyond sports and become a broader cultural message. Even if you’re not into sports, it reminds us all that we are more than what we do — a timely message in a world where our worth often feels tied to performance. While sports often unify American culture, they can also highlight our tendency to place too much value on achievements and titles.

So, it seems fitting that HCU’s values would attract talent with a deep-seated desire to reimagine what an elite soccer program would look like – where players develop a profound sense of identity that transcends what is quantified by stats and scoreboards.

Nick Whiting has officially entered the arena. Our new women’s soccer head coach has set his sights on building a culture where the drive to win helps players arrive at the revelation of how God is uniquely calling them to serve others, invest in their families and lead communities. His lofty ambition to cultivate winners who are equipped to navigate life once the cleats come off also necessitates recruiting a distinctive kind of player.

“Character is a huge part of our new program. We want our players to be successful in everything they do – and do it the right way. They have done community service on their own. We have the most genuine and caring group a coach could ask for. We are going to continue to bring in players that fit that mold.”

Marked by his well-traveled background as a “military kid” – he approaches coaching through the lens of diverse cultural experiences which offer him the ability to engage players from all walks of life while making the team feel like a tight-knit family.

“My parents were in the Air Force. We moved to Europe, so I grew up in Germany and England. I fell in love with the game there. When I graduated college, my eyes opened to how much impact a coach can make on a student-athlete’s life.”

In the rearview, it’s easy to catch a glimpse of God’s hand weaving together the intricate details of Whiting’s life – drawing all the threads together to bring him to HCU. “I had been to campus multiple times when I was the Associate Head Coach at McNeese. I spent the last two years after that at Western, and we put together the best season in


“Character is a huge part of our new program. We want our players to be successful in everything they do – and do it the right way.”

NICK WHITING,
Women’s Soccer Head Coach

school history. Multiple schools expressed interest in me for their openings, but I reached out to HCU because it really fit everything I was looking for. I wanted to be somewhere that I believed in, not just the athletic department, but the mission of the school as well.”

As he begins to realize his aspirations as a head coach, his commitment to honoring Christ has imparted God’s fingerprints on every decision he is making to rebuild his soccer team.

“My faith is very important to me. I believe it’s the backbone to a successful program. We are going to ask a lot of our players. We need to know them as more than just soccer players, and we need them to know how much we value them as people. I think we can become one of the premier soccer programs in the Southland Conference. Student-athletes want to come here. They want to be part of the school’s mission. The sky is the limit, and we believe we’re on our way to becoming a national brand.”

With Coach Whiting at the helm of HCU cultivating a new path forward for athletics – we are eager to cheer him on as he coaches our team to make all the right plays, on and off the field. 

RETURN TO ROOTS: Colin Montgomerie Reconnects with HCU

In a night filled with laughter, memories and heartfelt admiration, legendary golfer Colin Montgomerie returned to his alma mater, Houston Christian University (formerly HBU), not as a student-athlete or Hall of Fame inductee—but as a treasured guest reflecting on a journey that started on the fairways of HCU and led to global acclaim.

During an exclusive Q&A session conducted by HCU President Dr. Robert Sloan, Montgomerie—affectionately known as “Monty”—charmed the crowd with his wit, humility and deep appreciation for the University that launched his career.



From Huskies to Hall of Fame

Before reaching the heights of golf stardom, Montgomerie was a standout four-year letterwinner at HBU, a two-time All-American, Player of the Year in 1985, and a TAAC record-holder for shooting 11-under par in tournament play. He recalled his collegiate years fondly, calling them “the best four years of my life.”

“I will always say the most important thing I’ve ever done in my life was getting my degree from HBU,” Montgomerie told the crowd. “It allowed me to take the chance to turn pro, knowing I had something to fall back on.”

A Career Born on the Back Nine

In a moment that felt almost scripted by fate, Montgomerie recounted how a nine-hole job interview with IMG executives at Turnberry became the unexpected launching pad for his professional golf career.

“I birdied the 10th ... holed out of a bunker at 11, chipped in around 14 or 15 ... and finished with a massive putt on 18, he said. They looked at me and said, ‘Colin, you’re not going to work for us, we’re going to work for you.’ In that moment, he realized that a pro golf career was in his future.

That confidence and charisma carried him to 31 European Tour victories, an undefeated Ryder Cup singles record, and a place in the World Golf Hall of Fame.

The Evolution of the Game

When asked by Dr. Sloan how the game has changed, Montgomerie offered a thoughtful reflection. “Well, it’s changed dramatically and ... it’s stayed the same,” he said. “What has changed of course is the physicality of the game.” There used to be two variables: the golf ball and the golf club.” The third variable today is “the athlete,” specifically citing Tiger Woods and the impact he has had on the game. He believes that one fundamental has not changed. “The guy that can handle the pressure and hole the putt on the last green normally wins.” For Montgomerie, it is that simple, “the lowest score wins ... and it’ll always be that way.”

Ryder Cup Memories & Mental Tricks

One of the most compelling segments came when Montgomerie spoke about his Ryder Cup legacy—where he famously never lost a singles match across eight appearances.

He detailed the nerves of teeing off first at the 2004 Ryder Cup at Oakland Hills. His secret weapon? The 37 times table.

“And that’s all I was doing, reciting my 37 times table in my head as I was teeing off. It took me away from all the technical stuff that was going on and got me in a frame of mind to hit the ball.”

Reflecting on the Journey

Montgomerie is grateful for the opportunity to still compete in a game he loves. But in a sport that can be all encompassing, he describes spending time with family as his top priority. “Family is number one for us,” said Montgomerie. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to return to his alma mater and amazement at how quickly time has passed. “It was only yesterday that I was at the university and ... here we are now, but it’s been a great experience.”

Full Circle

Montgomerie’s return to Houston Christian University wasn’t just a homecoming—it was a full-circle moment. Surrounded by current student-athletes, coaches, alumni and supporters, he stood as a reminder of what HCU fosters: excellence, humility and the courage to chase dreams.

As the evening concluded, President Sloan summarized what many were thinking: “You may be a global icon, Colin, but to us—you’ll always be a Husky.” 🏌️

MONTGOMERIE’S HCU LEGACY

- Two-time All-American (1986 and 1987)
- 1985 Player of the Year & TAAC Individual Champion
- Still holds the TAAC tournament scoring record (-11)
- Inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2013
- Namesake of the annual Montgomerie Invitational at Sweetwater Country Club

NEXT PLAY: FROM STUDENT-ATHLETE TO CORPORATE SUCCESS

Anthony Hill remembers the moment everything changed—the turning point that transformed him from a defensive liability to an essential starter on the HCU Husky Basketball team.

During his senior year, after a tough stretch that included a coach's decision to bench him preceding a blow-out loss, Hill refused to settle for a diminished role on the team. Instead, he chose to reinvent himself as the defensive player his team needed.

"I knew this was my last season playing meaningful basketball and I had to make a choice, just ride the bench my senior year or do something about it. One thing our team needed was a defensive leader and so I got into the best shape of my life and each day in practice, I defended like my life depended on it," said Hill.

His determination paid off, earning him a starting spot and later, recognition as the 2013 Great West Defensive Player of the Year.

For Hill, the transformation went beyond basketball—it was about embracing a mindset rooted in self-awareness, determination and relentless effort, principles that continue to fuel his professional success today.

"While at the time, it was about basketball, that was a life lesson and reminder to me that nobody else is going to get the things you want for you. Once you set your intentions, it is on you to do the work to make it happen," said Hill.

It comes as no surprise that Hill was recently named a 2025 Dallas Business Journal "40 Under

40" honoree. Since earning his communications degree with a minor in international business from HCU, he has been intentional in carving out a path of professional success, beginning at the age of 26 as vice president of the corporate partnership division of the Florida Panthers.

Hill's early leadership role with the hockey team did not happen without conscious effort. Fueled by the same self-driven determination that positioned him to become a star player, Hill recalls his decision to walk into the president's office and pitch himself for the job following the departure of the previous vice president - a move he now describes as "crazy and highly ambitious," but one that ultimately landed him the job.

"Some might say I am either blessed with or suffering from delusional confidence," says Hill, but the Husky alum credits God for directing his path and reminding him that "there is no room that he is not fit to be in."

Hill would go on to oversee entertainment partnership sales for the Detroit Pistons where he managed entertainment corporate sales, led negotiations on club naming and amphitheater lawn entitlements and oversaw 150+ live events before embarking on a career at Uber.

Since joining Uber, Hill has built strategic relationships and driven substantial growth at the





company—founding Black@Uber, an employee resource group to support Black sales professionals through mentorship and professional development and building a team that grew partnership revenue from \$87 million to \$675 million in his role as head of regional enterprise partnerships for Uber Eats.

Even what some might call missteps in his life have worked out for his good. He recalls taking a leap of faith to leave the corporate arena to pursue a start-up venture that was short-lived and credits his previous success with Uber for opening the door for his return in his present role as head of enterprise restaurant sales.

“It is a role that I likely would never have pursued had I never left,” shared Hill. “I’ve heard it said that ‘career decisions sometimes only make sense in reverse’ and tough times have led to me running all of the advertising across the country for enterprise restaurants.”

The HCU alumnus attributes his success to a strong foundation of faith and a solid upbringing. The son of Tony Hill, a three-time Pro Bowl wide receiver for the Dallas Cowboys, Hill was raised by parents who exemplified servant leadership and instilled in him the values of humility, service and integrity—principles that continue to shape his life today.

Hill places a premium on faith and family, believing they are essential for maintaining balance, purpose and perspective.

“Every day that I wake up, I know what matters. My faith and my family. In tough seasons at work, anchoring on those things allow me to succeed through tougher times and keep me from getting worked up about worldly issues that don’t ultimately matter.”

Looking back on his journey from the basketball court of Sharp Gym to the corporate arena, Hill is immensely grateful.

“If I never receive another blessing from God for the rest of my life, I would still be blessed beyond measure. I am currently living out so many of my answered prayers and if I lose sight of that, I’ve missed the point.” 🙏

HUSKIES EXUDE EXCELLENCE ON AND OFF THE FIELD



The Huskies excelled on the field, court and classroom in 2024-25, reaching a cumulative 3.0 grade point average from all HCU student-athletes for the first time since the department expanded to add a football program.

The HCU men's golf program played no small part in that department-wide academic success and had five players earn Cobalt Golf All-America Scholar honors from the Golf Coaches Association of America. HCU was one of just 24 programs nationwide to have at least five players honored and was the only school from the Southland Conference with that many honorees. Additionally, the HCU men were awarded the GCAA Team Academic Award for the third-straight year and earned the President's Special Recognition for maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher.



HCU women's golf had five honorees of their own to receive Women's Golf Coaches Association of America All-America Scholar honors while freshman Ploy Makmanee was an academic all-conference honoree.

Men's and women's soccer teams were both recognized by the United Soccer Coaches with the Team Academic Award, making HCU one of 168 schools across all levels of collegiate soccer with both teams honored. The HCU women placed a pair of student-athletes on the SLC academic all-conference team while the men had 11 All-Ohio Valley Conference Academic honorees.

The HCU football program had six academic all-SLC selections, the most by any team in the conference, giving the Huskies at least five academic honorees for the second-straight season. Meanwhile, on the hardwood, the men's team placed three players on the SLC all-academic team for the second year in a row while the women made it 10-straight years with at least one selection to the league's academic team.

The track and field/cross country program saw Edouard Lecrivain win Student-Athlete of the Year honors for both the indoor and outdoor seasons, the third time an HCU athlete has won both and the first time a member of the men's team accomplished the feat. He was one of six Huskies to be named academic all-conference while both the men's and women's teams were recognized by the US Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association as All-Academic Teams with four student-athletes named all-academic by the association.

Both the indoor and beach volleyball programs picked up American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Team Academic Award recognitions. The indoor program has earned the distinction in eight of the last 10 years while beach was named to the Honor Roll by the AVCA for ranking in the top 20% for team GPA nationally. Both programs also had two student-athletes voted onto the SLC all-academic teams for their respective sports.

In the diamond sports, the SLC champion baseball team had three players earn SLC academic selections while softball had a pair. Additionally, the softball program had a program-record 13 players achieve National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-America Scholar-Athlete recognition.

Beyond the numerous academic accolades, Huskies made their presence felt and their names known around the league. A total of 41 student-athletes earned all-conference honors last year.

Among those athletic standouts were two players, softball's Haylie Savage and volleyball's Audrey Pearce, who became four-time all-conference picks. Both were the first to accomplish the feat for their respective programs.

Men's soccer had a pair of players earn superlative honors with Sam Zeeman garnering a nod as the OVC's Defensive Player of the Year while Morgan Worsfold-Gregg picked up a selection as the league's Freshman of the Year.

Men's basketball's Bryson Dawkins achieved a first for the program since joining the Southland as the first-ever first team all-SLC selection. 🏀

A HEART FOR HEALING: BOB MARLEY'S MISSION OF SERVICE

When Bob Marley stepped into the athletic training room as an injured college basketball player decades ago, he had absolutely no idea he was walking into his life's calling. What began as standard rehab protocol blossomed into an extraordinary 42-year career that continues to touch the lives of thousands. From student-athletes on high school fields in rural Texas to the professional sidelines of the Houston Texans, Bob Marley has built a legacy rooted in compassion, service and an unwavering commitment to helping others.

Marley's journey into athletic training was not planned; it was providential. After an injury halted his collegiate basketball career, Marley found himself drawn to helping others recover from the same setbacks that he experienced.

He reflects, "I spent a lot of time in the athletic training room and fell in love with the whole of it, taking care of people and getting to know people, but still being involved with athletics."

When Marley entered the field, athletic training was still finding its identity.

"Some people believed we were more medically advanced, and some thought, "They're just personal trainers, they don't know anything about medicine. It was confusing."

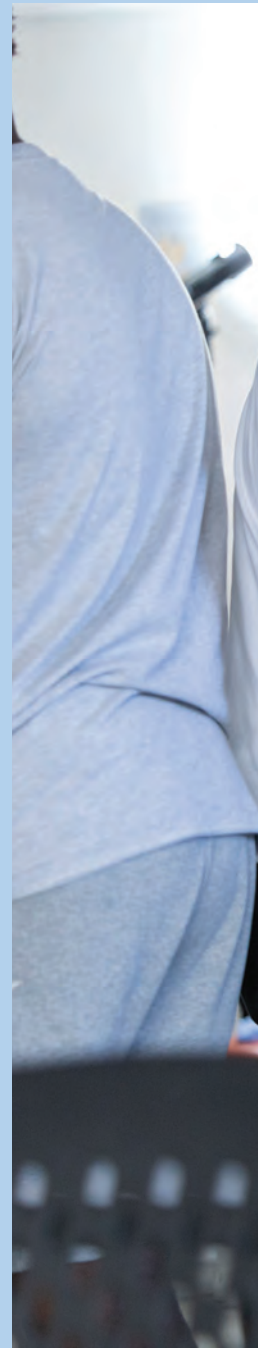
Today, the landscape for the profession has transformed drastically, with as many as 80 athletic training positions open in the greater Houston area alone. Marley is exceptionally pleased with this reality.

"It's been fun to see it grow," he says. "As schools continue to grow and realize the value of an athletic trainer to a team, more and more jobs are opening up," said Marley.

For over four decades, Marley has been a pivotal part of Houston Christian University.

Beginning as the head and only athletic trainer on campus, Marley has worked with notable athletes, including the current HCU Head Softball Coach, Mary-Ellen Hall, World Golf Hall of Famer Colin Montgomerie, and major university benefactor, Benny Agosto.

When asked what makes HCU a place worth dedicating 42-plus years to, Marley said, "It's the relationships you build, and the quality of people that are here, from students to faculty and staff."





At the core of Marley's approach to athletic training and education lies his Christian faith, which has shaped his view on his role in the lives of his students.

"I'm a big believer in being compassionate, understanding and trying my best to help people," he shared.

His servant's heart has opened doors to opportunities that expanded Marley's impact far beyond HCU's campus. His compassionate approach caught the attention of the Houston Texans organization, leading to a 16-year relationship with the NFL team.

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After assisting on the sidelines, Marley's role evolved to traveling on road trips with the Houston Texans and even helping out with mini-camps and performing physicals for the team.

Perhaps Marley's most significant contribution to athletics in Texas has been his pioneering community outreach program. In 1989, Marley began what would become a transformative initiative in regional high school athletics.

What started as hourly visits to a few local schools exploded into a comprehensive program where Marley ended up visiting 72 schools a week.

The program's reach was extraordinary, taking place in schools as far away as Victoria and all the way down to Galveston. And the impact has been transformative, with more trainers completing weekly visits and some of these schools even hiring full-time athletic trainers.


Now Marley serves as a liaison, checking in on these schools every so often, making sure they have all they need.

The program's reach extends beyond just medical care. Thanks to the generosity of the Houston Texans, Marley is now able to use his access to supplies to give necessities like Gatorades and athletic tape to schools in need. Last year, the Texans contributed \$285,000 worth of supplies to the program.

In the classroom, Marley's wealth of experience translates into invaluable lessons for HCU kinesiology students. While Marley admits he doesn't remember some of his past philosophies, his current life model is simple but profound: "I just try to treat people the way I want to be treated: the golden rule."

This approach has served him well, from memorable moments with NFL stars like J.J. Watt who gave him the nickname "Green Bean," to the countless high school athletes whose lives he has touched through his outreach work.

Today, Marley continues his busy schedule. A typical day for him reflects his deepest commitments. After teaching his morning classes, Marley rotates between a handful of high schools he still visits, returns in time to pick up his granddaughter from school and take her to her theater rehearsals, and ends the day spending time with his family.

As the athletic training profession continues to evolve and expand, Marley's legacy is evident not just in the thousands of athletes he has treated, but for the model of servant leadership he has created in sports medicine. His story demonstrates how a heart willing to serve others, guided by faith and compassion, can open doors far beyond what anyone might imagine. 

ALUM-A-GRAMS

1970s

Nancy Hall '73 is the Owner and Teacher of Nancy Hall Piano Studio.

Tom Senter '73 was inducted into Aurora, California's Placer High School's 2025 Athletic Hall of Honor. He came to HCU from Placer High School to play basketball. Tom is now retired and lives in League City, Texas with his wife Sandy. Prior to retirement, he returned to California to serve as a pastor in Grass Valley, Roseville, Sacramento and Loomis.



Joseph Knight '74 branched out on his own this February and works for Knight Industrial equipment as a Sales Consultant.

Maricia Phelps-Magee '76 has retired as a Registered Nurse, Assistant Administrator of Patient Care Services Hospital and Home Health.



Gilbert Raynor '76 is the President of Grace Logos Support-Philippines, translating Biblical material into Visayan and Ilonggo languages, supporting the training of indigenous pastors with a nascent seminary in Davao City on Mindanao, Philippines. It has been a blessing to see the Word of God taking root in some of the very remote areas of the Philippines.

Diana Grosscope Hogge '77 officially retired from teaching in HSID.

Daniel Robinson '78 recently retired from his role as a pediatrician.

1980s

Suzette (Burch) Thompson '82 After 11 years in marketing and a 24-year career in the classroom, Suzette began her next adventure with the Georgia Department of Corrections as a GED instructor. After a short, but highly successful 15 months in this position, she was promoted to Educational Program Specialist for the northern half of the state. In this position, Suzette visits state and county prisons, meeting with offenders in the 17–21-year-old age group who are hesitant to enroll in GED or in-house high school classes. Suzette's mission is to motivate, celebrate, help educate and show Christ's love to Georgia's young offenders, thereby reducing recidivism.



Donald Brown '83 is a Pastor at Matagorda AUMC and works for Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Margarita (Fourzan) Ackley '83, MEd '89, is a retired Texas Teacher and retired U.S. Department of Education Program Officer.

Mark Edworthy '83 is a Pastor and Network Director at CityRise Church.

Kevin Sumrall '83, MA '90 is a Professor of Psychology at Lone Star College.

Nichole & Benny '86 Agosto are the 2025 Honorees for the Maurice Hirsch Award for Philanthropy through the Houston Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals! HCU was proud to work alongside South Texas Law to support the nomination of the Agostos for this important recognition. This prestigious award recognizes individuals or families with a proven record of exceptional generosity and meaningful impact. Benny and Nichole exemplify this spirit through their unwavering commitment to HCU. In 2023, the Agostos were recipients of the HCU Spirit of Excellence Award.



Lieutenant Christopher Gomez '86 is a Program Consultant for the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Brena Baumann-Gonzalez '87 is the Chief Development Officer of Planned Giving for the Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation.

Mark Benson '87 is the West Division Executive / Private Banker for Bank of America.

Sara (Thomas) Meyer '87 retired in 2022 as a high school math teacher. She now works part time as a Birth to Five Coordinator for Ready, Set, Grow, at the Quincy Children's Museum in Quincy, IL.

Jo Ann Morton '87 is a payroll specialist in Wharton ISD.

Louis Bruno MBA '88 retired in 2020 after 43 years at Procter & Gamble. He wrote his second book, "The Days When Ella Came Down the Stairs," a story for grandchildren and for the grandparents who love them so – ages 4 to 104. Twice as nice, Lou's wife, Adele, brought

Ella's adventures to life with her endearing illustrations. Available now at byLouBruno.com



Colonel Rhonda L. Richter '88 is an Infection Control RN at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Kelly (McMathon) Holt '89 is Deputy Superintendent in Pearland ISD.

1990s

Joe Key '91 will be completing his 35th year singing in the Houston Grand Opera Chorus this May.

David Roberts '91 is Minister of Christian Education at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.

Wilson Lo '92 has been named a Best Dentist by D Magazine since 2012 and a Super Dentist by Texas Monthly magazine since 2010.



Rachel Yeates '92 is a Senior Trainer at Corporate Auto Nation.

Melany Barlow '93 is Sr. CSM at DailyPay.

Chris Kuhlmann '93 MBA, CHC, CHPC started a new position as CEO | President at Prosper 3J2, LLC.

ALUM-A-GRAMS

Ben Henderson '94 works for InjuryRx as Regional Sales Director.

Donna (Randall-Moses) Hamilton '96 is the Chief Operating Officer at Hamilton Consultancy Services, LLC.

Harold Layne '96 is a Teacher and Coach in Mercedes ISD.

Dr. Sheila (De Ann Julien) Pope MLA '96 founded an independent automobile dealership, Pope's Automotive, LLC, located on West Bellfort Avenue in Houston.



Kish Hughes Russell-Yoquelet '96 is celebrating seven years as the business owner and Chief Grants Officer of Kish Russell Grants & Compliance consulting services with nine "Compliance by Design" books authored and published in the ESSA federal grant compliance book series and creator/presenter of the nationally recognized ESSA and Title I Compliance Academies.



George Thomas '96 is the CEO/President of Adult and Teen Challenge of Texas. He proudly shares that two of his children will be attending HCU in the Fall of 2025.

Sandy Gaw MEd '98 has been appointed by Mayor John Whitmire as the new Director of the Houston Public Library. With a decorated career in education and leadership, including honors such as HISD Principal of the Year, she brings a strong vision for community engagement and expanded access. Gaw looks forward to working alongside the mayor and community to ensure Houston's libraries remain vibrant centers of learning and culture.

Rhonda Harmond MEd '98 is a Science Teacher at Robinson ISD.

Daisey McCloud Chambers '98, MAPCP '02 is the Director of Counseling Services at Texas A&M University Galveston.

Kavitha Tamerisa '98 has been working at MD Anderson Cancer Center as a PA for the last 17 years. She will soon serve on the Board of the Texas Gulf Coast PA Association. Additionally, she is a candidate for the DMSc, the doctoral program, and will be starting in the fall. Kavitha's three children are growing up fast, and she is enjoying living life, building her career and traveling around the world. "Special thanks to HCU for giving me the foundation I needed to be successful in life!"

Jonathan Wiles '98 completed a PhD in Organizational Leadership (Business Management Concentration) from Eastern University in Philadelphia, PA. His dissertation was "Crisis Vision Anchoring and Reiteration: A theory grounded in the experience of INGO leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic."



Christina (Herman) Bell '99 is a Sales Enablement Manager at McGrath RentCorp.

Casey Kaplan '99 started a new position as Vice President, Compliance and Regulatory Affairs at Lowe's Companies, Inc.

Amy Hay MSHA '99 was named Chief Business Officer at CTMC, a joint Venture between Resilience and MD Anderson Cancer Center. Before joining CTMC, Amy was Senior Vice President of Strategy and Business Development at Varian, a Siemens Healthineers company.

Jennifer Maddox ADN '99 is an Elementary School Nurse in Cypress Fairbanks ISD.

2000s

Lucas Davis '01 is a Professional Land Surveyor.

Cliff Mayton '02 purchased the Christian Brothers Automotive - Champions location in July 2021. A second location will open in Willis, TX later this year.



Lisa (McNerney) Treleven '02, MAP '09, EdD '22 was appointed by Governor Greg Abbott to the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities for a term set to expire on February 1, 2027. The Committee recommends changes in disability policies and programs, supports a network of committees on people with disabilities, issues awards to promote greater awareness and promotes compliance with disability-related laws.

Laura Bell Davison '03 and her daughter wrote a book together, "All the Tea: Mom and Me." "It started as a way to connect but turned into something special. *All the Tea: Mom and Me Edition* is a passing journal we created to help moms and daughters have real conversations, share fun stories, and "get" each other again (or maybe for the first time). If

you're a mom (or know one) who's looking to reconnect, laugh and grow closer with your daughter this summer, you can find it now on Amazon."



Elisha (Williams) Fontenot '03 is the Secondary School Director of Choirs at Covenant Christian School.

Juan Heredia '03, MAPH '16 is the Pastor of the Spanish Ministry at Sugar Creek Baptist Church.

Sarah (Wilkinson) '03 and Tim '04 Ganger returned from international mission work in London in November 2023, and Tim was installed as Lead Pastor of Village Church Hampden in June 2024. Sarah is a Teacher for Baltimore City Public Schools. Together with their four amazing teenagers, they are settling into a new life and ministry in Baltimore, Maryland.



Allison Fox '04 is a Tax Director - Global Transfer Pricing and Controversy at TechnipFMC.

Teal Holden MSHA '04 is the Senior Vice President of Memorial Hermann Health System in Ambulatory Services, Post-Acute Care & Community Health.

Stephen Hunt '04 has accepted a role with Parkland Corporation as Director of Trading for their Houston, Calgary and Cayman offices.

Rodrigo Miralles '04 is a Line Pipe Sales & Project Manager at Tenaris.

Javier Malave '04 is a Marketing Manager for Emmaus Homes.

Judy (Davis) Clack '06 is retired and living in Missouri City.



Naomi Green '06 is the Senior Customer Service Advisor for Travelers.

Kari Bottoms '08 is VP of Operations at 4 Church.

Sandy Porter '09 works for Workforce Solutions as a Talent Development Specialist.

Cody Still '09 had his custom music featured in the new trailer for *Wicked: For Good!* You can hear his dark and epic arrangement of "No Good Deed" from 0:28–0:56 in the trailer: <https://youtu.be/vt98AIBDI9Y>

2010s

Richard Whiting '10 is the VP Senior Analyst at Prosperity Bank.

Keith Riley '10, MATS '12 recently graduated with his DM in Leadership and Spiritual Formation from Portland Seminary. He also published his first book based on his doctoral work: *Thin Places: A Six-Week Prayer Guide for Experiencing God in Your Every Day.*



Hannah Stovall '10 is the Kid's Director at The Paradox Church in Fort Worth.

Disa (Foster) Badillo '12 works for CivicPlus as a Demand Generation Manager.

Jovani Diaz '13 founded her own personal injury law firm, JD Law Firm in 2023.

Silvia Mendez '14 accepted a new position as a Multilingual Education Specialist at KIPP Texas.

Larry G. Freaney, '14, MAC '16, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, CCTP competed in the Spartan Winter Death Race on January 23, 2025—one of the world's toughest endurance races. Of the 19 global participants, none completed the grueling 56-hour challenge in subzero temperatures, marking the event as the first-ever "Black Class."

Tabatha Trapp '15 was promoted to Senior Marketing Manager at Micro Transponder, where she will drive new marketing strategies to Vivistim and help bring new hope to chronic stroke survivors.

Michael Hernandez '15, after 10 years of coaching and teaching, wrote a book from the perspective of a father, educator and coach to pass on practical, Christian-centered advice to the rising generation. The book is currently available on Amazon and titled *"Before You Go: Life Advice for the Rising Generation."*

Julia Martinez-Mitchell '15 is a Special Education Para-Teacher in Aldine ISD.

Christopher Ross '15 is an Attorney at Cokinos | Young.

Jakora Snow '16, MEd '20 is a Legacy 68:5 Associate at Houston's First Baptist Church.

Joseph Christopherson '17 is the Director of the Academy at Houston Christian University.

Paul Roxas '17 is an Account Executive at Amazon.

Alexis Tucker MBA '17 is an Area Construction Manager for Meritage Homes.

Olga Timmons MED '17 works for Pasadena ISD as a Substitute Teacher.

Joshua Arrizola '18 is a Hospitality Manager at Topgolf.

Raymond Chukwuma '18 is a Psychotherapist at Houston Mind and Brain.

Weston Smart '18 started a new role as Talent Acquisition Manager at Dometic Mobile Cooling.

Ralph Wehmer '18 is a recent Cum Laude graduate from St. George's Medical School and began his internship in Internal Medicine at Morehouse Medical School in Atlanta.

Saly Kim, MS '19 is a Payroll Specialist at The Morgan Group.

Hannah Mannion MBA '19 is now the Senior Development Manager at the Women's Fund for Health Education & Resiliency.

Joseph Baldo '19, MA '21 and **Jacqueline Elizondo '19** got married in 2022 by **Hahn Bielfeldt '18**. Jackie and Joseph now live in Indiana where Joseph is a PhD candidate (ABD) in Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, and Jackie works as a Registered Nurse on campus.



Jonathan Rangel '19 accepted his first head coaching job at Brazosport High School. He will be the new Head Boys Soccer Coach and Spanish 1 Teacher. He and his wife moved to Lake Jackson, TX, where they will be starting a new season of their lives. He will also be starting his master's program at HCU!



2020s

Brandon Cunningham '20, MS '21 was recently honored as the HAABSE (Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators) Secondary Teacher of the Year for Greater Houston. This prestigious recognition was awarded at the 38th Annual HAABSE Teacher Awards and Recognition Ceremony on Jan. 16, 2025, at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The event celebrated the dedication and excellence of 260 outstanding educators across the Greater Houston area, all honored as HAABSE Campus Teachers of the Year. Following a rigorous evaluation process conducted by a panel of educational leaders, Brandon was selected as the top secondary educator for our region. He carries with him the values, lessons and inspiration instilled during his time at HCU.



Jennifer Sandoval '20 is a Bilingual Elementary Teacher in Alief ISD.

Ajoke Afuye MA '21 is a Registered Nurse at Memorial Hermann Hospital.

Ian Newville MATS '21 is a Campus Minister at Campus Collective.

Jacquelynn Pettigrew, MEd '21 is a Middle School Teacher for the Houston Galveston Archdiocese.

Syrina Garcia '21 started a new position as a Provider Relations Specialist at Astrana Health. She will be focusing on strengthening partnerships with healthcare providers to support quality care delivery and collaboration across their network.

Laura Medrano-Flores '21, MFA '23 is an Adjunct Art Professor at San Jacinto College. She is also engaged to her fiancé, Jay.



Lena Stewart '21 is a Sr. Provider Specialist at Healthcare Highways.

Shamara Coleman Young '21 is a School Operations Administrator at Vermilion Charter Academy.

Shaterrica Alvarado '22, MA '23 works for Community Medical Services as a Clinic Manager.

Kristen (Kleymeyer) Horner '22, MBA '24 is an Area Representative for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at the University of Colorado.

Marlon Henderson MDiv '22 is a Senior Pastor at First Pilgrim Calvary Missionary Baptist Church and just completed a PhD in Organizational Leadership from Luther Rice College and Seminary in Lithonia, GA.

Willie Kelley EdD '22 is an Assistant Principal in Conroe ISD.

Sarah John '22 is the Associate Music Minister and Music Ministry Assistant at Tallwood Baptist Church.

Erin Shelly '22 is now an Event Coordinator at Little Rock Convention & Visitor's Bureau.

Rochelle Smith, MA '22 is the proud owner of Positive Thoughts Innovation Service, a nonprofit providing life coaching and Christian counseling to teens and single mothers.



Iyamu Ese '22 works for the City of Austin in Contract Management.

Fredy Quiroz '22 is working at Par Pacific Holding, Inc. as a Senior Analyst, Strategy & FP&A.

Maleena Bennett '23 is a Special Education Teacher in Fort Bend ISD.

Gabriel Cardenas '23 is an Accountant at Bowles Womack.

Cameron Garcia '23 is a Registered Nurse at MD Anderson.

E.T. George '23 is excited to share that he's recently accepted the role of Editor, Technical Quality, for the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) Corporate Learning Organization. George is grateful for the spiritual and educational training received at HCU, which has undoubtedly played a role in his career journey.



Jenna Frigon '23 works for Bay District Schools. She won 2023-24 Rookie Teacher of the Year for the district.



Nathaniel Ewest '23 has now started a new position as a Data Feed Sales Specialist at S&P Global.

Michelle Edidiong '24 is a Registered Behavior Technician for MedCare Pediatric Group.

Jacqueline Everette Knox MFA '24 is a Senior Legal Assistant at the Social Security Administration.

Oksana Solis MA '23 is a Clerk in Harris County.

Jessica Padgett '24 is now pursuing the MLS program at Texas A&M University Law, School of Law.

Edmi Salazar '24 is a Graphic Designer for Houston Christian University.

Charline (Law) Jackson MA '24 is a School Psychologist in Fort Bend ISD.

Maria Zepeda '24 is a Tax Associate at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Dr. Lorrie Chretien EdD '25 is Chief Operating Officer at Vita-Living, Inc.



Tara Gaede '25 is a Facilitator for East Central BOCES in Limon, Colorado.

Natasha Jones '25 is a Cyber Security Analyst at Kinder Morgan.

Regina Jones MA '25 is a Counselor and Owner of RCD Family Services, LLC.

Nekane Moyer '25 started working at the Marriott Marquis Houston in the events department. She enjoys working and connecting with clients.



Dr. Judith Thony EdD '25 is an Education Consultant.

Kiza III, HCU's faithful Siberian Husky mascot, has reached an end of an era as she enters retirement with the Ewest family. Thank you, KIZA, for leading the pack with pride! #HCU Husky for Life #DAWGS Up



Andrew Rodgers, who attended HBU in the 80s on an athletic scholarship, recently completed his MBA in Strategic Management and Leadership. He has had a successful police and private security career, working with several worldwide organizations, including Axon Enterprises Inc, the world leader for Tasers as their Quality, Curriculum and Compliance lead.

HUSKY PUPS

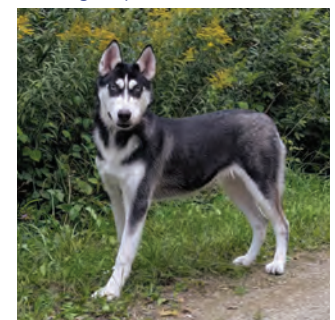
Deborah '07 & John '06 Gibson just welcomed their 8th bundle of joy, Aria Joy. That brings the total to five girls and three boys. They all reside in their home in beautiful Montana.



Larry G. Freeney, '14, MAC '16, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, CCTP and Jovani Diaz '13 welcomed their fourth child—and first son—Roberto Emmanuel Freeney on Feb. 24, 2025.

Amy Simpson '23 and her husband are currently expecting their first child! Their daughter, Daisy Jo Simpson, is due in October.

Kiza IV, HCU welcomes a new mascot, born March 7, 2025, to the Husky family to carry on a proud legacy of loyalty, energy and Husky pride. Welcome to the pack! #Dawgs Up



HUSKY GRAND PUP

WEDDINGS

Laura Branam '86 has been blessed with eight grandchildren. In the picture, she is with her five younger grandchildren as the other three are away at college.



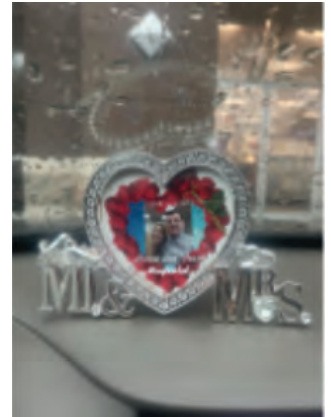
JT Jakubik '17 married Macey Sims on May 2, 2025, in the Woodlands. The couple had their honeymoon in Rome and Santorini and visited the Vatican the morning the Husky Baseball team won the Southland Conference Title. Additionally, they bought a house in Missouri City, TX to start their new chapter.



Noah Chicoria '22 and Chelsea Ramraj '24 got engaged on a cruise in February during an excursion to Grand Cayman. They have been the best of friends since their freshman year of high school where they met in band. It was Chelsea who encouraged Noah to transfer from a state school where he was miserable to HCU where he thrived alongside her. They were in the Husky band. Although Noah graduated early, their friendship continued and deepened into love. Wedding planning is underway!



Louise Woods Mofield MBA '24 married Frank Mofield on June 4, 2025. Additionally, she recently began working at Shell Oil as a Marketing Supervisor.



IN MEMORIAM



Dr. Carol Ann (Halliday) Bonds '68 passed away on March 8, 2025. She was involved in the life of the University through her service on the Board of Trustees. Professionally, she rose to the role of Superintendent of San Angelo ISD and was awarded the Distinguished Alumna Award by HCU in 1992 and the Region XV Superintendent of the Year in 2010.



Charles R. Price '71 passed away on March 1, 2023. His 50-year career in retail management included Eckerd Drugs, Oshman's Sporting Goods, Leewards Craft and Stage Stores.



Curt Floyd MBA '81, former Trustee and Adjunct Faculty Member, passed away on Feb. 3, 2025. He and his wife, Donna Dee, were involved in many important initiatives, including the President's Leadership Council and the Linda R. Dunham School of Nursing Council.



David Sekel, MBA '89 passed away peacefully in his Colorado Springs home on March 11, 2025, after a four-year battle with renal cell cancer. He spent much of his career with Dell Computers, where he helped protect global systems from the Y2K Millennium Bug.



Dr. Roy Tiemeyer '75 passed away on March 9, 2025, after a long career as a well-respected dentist in Flour Bluff. He retired in 2022.

IN MEMORIAM



Dr. W. Lou Shields, former Vice President for Student Affairs, died Feb. 8, 2025, maintaining to the end her deep love for her God, her family and friends. In 1981, she joined HCU as the Associate Dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. Additionally, she served as Associate Vice President for Strategic Planning, President of the Faculty Assembly, and on many university committees. At HCU, Lou received many honors, including Faculty Woman of the Year, the first Mayfield Staff Award, a tile on the Walk of Honor, and was greatly humbled to receive the honor and rank of Faculty Emeritus upon her retirement in 1997, as Vice President for Student Affairs. She was affectionately known by the students as “Dr. Lou” or “Mama Lou” and took seriously her calling as an educator.



Missy Wells, former Administrative Assistant to the Provost, passed away on Feb. 4, 2025. She shared her love and joy of the Lord with the many students and faculty she served on campus.



Rosemary Samuelson '92, a resident of Richmond, Texas, passed away on May 16, 2025. As a Registered Nurse, she spent most of her career caring for patients at Shriners Hospital. She was dedicated to her profession and returned to school to expand her knowledge in healthcare administration, earning her BA in Accounting.



Shara Zatopek MAP '99 passed away on April 23, 2025. During her career, she was a health-system pharmacist at M.D. Anderson Hospital, a community pharmacist and pharmacy manager for both chain and independent stores. Shara’s career at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy spanned 30 years.



Billy Dale Harvey MLA '04 passed away in May of 2025. After a career in oil, he went back to school to become a mortician. Soon after, he came to HCU to get his MLA which allowed him to pursue his “true calling” as the director of the Mortuary Science program at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.



Lynette Pate RN '81 passed away on May 5, 2025. While at HCU, she was part of the steering committee that established Sigma Theta Tau, the National Nurses Honor Society, becoming a charter member. Much of Lynette’s nursing career was spent at Hermann Hospital before moving to Boise, Idaho.



Kimberly Marie Sarver '86 passed away in Crockett, Texas, on May 28, 2025. She worked in mortgage banking before becoming a full-time educator, spending many years teaching elementary school in Baytown, Texas.



Dave Mannen, former HCU Golf Coach, passed away on June 4, 2025. Known for his quick wit, sharp intellect and competitive spirit, Dave had a lifelong devotion to both family and sport. His coaching began at HCU in 1976 as an assistant basketball coach before moving over to men’s and women’s golf for 16 years, earning multiple TAAC Championships and Coach of the Year awards. He was inducted into the HCU Athletics Hall of Honor.



Margaret Jane Dalton Walding '68 passed into heavenly rest on June 9, 2025, due to complications from her long battle with Parkinson’s disease. Throughout her life, she was involved in church work and charitable activities. Her vocational life was focused on the education of elementary children. Her love for children was the foundation for a distinguished teaching career that started in Houston, and she taught in several states until her retirement in 2005. Margaret is survived by her husband of 57 years, James Douglas Walding '67.

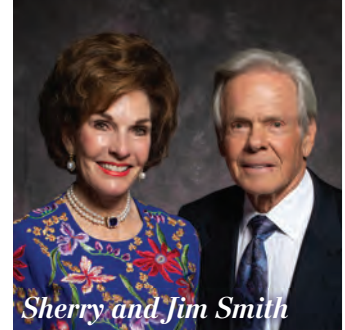
Fritz Herbst II, MBA '90, passed away in Brenham, TX on the evening of July 26, 2025. While he found success in numerous positions, his pride and joy was his family.



Dr. Verna Peterson, Professor Emerita, passed away on July 29, 2025. She joined the HCU School of Education faculty in 1976 and retired in the summer of 2011. While at HCU she developed and oversaw certification programs in Early Childhood Education and Educational Diagnostician. Additionally, she coordinated HCU’s 504 program.



**Houston
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Sherry and Jim Smith

SPiRiT of *Excellence* GALA

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2025

On November 6, 2025, HCU welcomed alumni and University friends for the 2025 Spirit of Excellence Gala. This “Dream Big ... Change Lives” themed event was chaired by Jess '00 MEd '02 & Cary '93 Dunham and surpassed the fundraising goal for scholarships. The Gala was on campus in a tent on Holcombe Mall, showcasing the ten pillars and HCU’s iconic Hinton Building. Upon arrival, guests got a look at our new construction – the Sherry & Jim Smith Engineering, Science & Nursing Building.

In order to reach our goal, tables and other sponsorships were purchased by our generous University donors. In recognition of their extraordinary commitment, we recognize sponsors Donna & Steve Coggins and Family and the Tellepsen Family at the Pillar of Vision level.

The festive tent was filled to celebrate our Spirit of Excellence honorees and enjoy a keynote from Bob Goff, an author and the Honorary Consul to Uganda. His book, Dream Big was the inspiration for the Gala’s theme. It was the students who were our biggest beneficiaries of the evening, as all proceeds benefited scholarships.



Janice McNair



John S. Dunn



John M. O'Quinn

HONORING

Janice McNair

Legacy of Excellence Award

John M. O'Quinn Foundation

Spirit of Excellence Award

Sherry & Jim Smith

Founders Medal

*The Guild of
Houston Christian University*

Spirit of Excellence Award

John S. Dunn Foundation

President's Award



*Jess Rogers Dunham
'00, MEd '02 & Cary
Dunham '93*

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HOMECOMING 2025: HUSKY PRIDE SHINES BRIGHT!

SPOTLIGHT: Scan the QR code to view the full gallery of photos.



Huskies came together for a memorable day filled with fellowship, celebration and school spirit! Highlights included the inspiring Spirit of HCU Awards Luncheon and an exciting football game against SFA. Thanks to all who made Homecoming 2025 unforgettable—Forever Huskies!



For more information about
Houston Christian University,
call 281.649.3000 or visit HC.edu.

