

HOUSTON CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

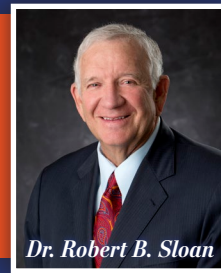
THE PILLARS

Winter 2024-2025

**WHERE FAITH FUELS
INNOVATION**

The Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building

PRESIDENT'S *message*



Dr. Robert B. Sloan

Houston Christian University is amplifying our commitment to cultivate the next generation of individual contributors in the science, engineering and nursing fields—industries with great opportunity for Christian voices, ideas and influence. We are building a dynamic campus environment where students are immersed in experiences and forward-thinking learning facilities that will prepare them to expertly steward their gifts.

The world is becoming increasingly interconnected and complex, and we want to ensure our students are able to engage it with relevant and pioneering solutions. The work that our University contributes to God's Kingdom centers on empowering students to be equipped to become the full expression of who God has called them to be and to complete the good works He has called them to do (Ephesians 2:10).

Our emphases on critical thinking, academic excellence and transformative spiritual discipleship are among the many virtues that make our University one-of-a-kind. With consideration to the great call and need for honorable and knowledgeable professionals, we are progressing in our efforts to support the holistic development of our students, through fostering an academic atmosphere where innovation is married with the timeless values that reflect the heart of the Creator. A tangible representation of our continued success toward achieving this goal is the new Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building, slated to open in Fall 2026. Thanks to the generous donations of the Smiths and several others, this multidisciplinary facility will serve students within those fields of study and our entire HCU community—celebrating a new era of enhanced creativity, collaboration and connection on campus.

Through practical application, students will learn to use technology as a tool to more effectively further God's purposes and better meet global challenges through a Christian worldview. Our faculty and staff will have enhanced ability to inspire students to actualize their God-given potential through cutting-edge equipment and labs. We are in prayerful anticipation that these spaces will be the catalyst to meaningful developments within those fields of study. We look forward to this highly collaborative space embodying our collective mission to think and act as visionaries while maintaining the uncompromising foundation of our rich Christian legacy. I am excited to see all that we will accomplish together through this dynamic expansion.

Robert B. Sloan

 @DrRobertBSloan

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

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Making College Dreams Come True

GRACE HOPPER SCHOLARSHIP HELPS TURN
HCU STEM STUDENTS' COLLEGE DREAMS INTO REALITY

Two Grace Hopper Scholarship recipients share how their dreams of attending college and pursuing degrees in the STEM field were made possible by the generosity of a private donor. Named in honor of Grace Hopper, a pioneer in computer programming, the scholarship will provide invaluable financial support to students seeking to prepare for careers in high-demand STEM fields. The unnamed benefactor's generosity aims to nurture the growth of the College of Science and Engineering at Houston Christian University (HCU) with the goal of doubling the number of scholarship recipients in 2025.

"We are deeply grateful for the support of this generous donor in supporting the Grace Hopper Scholarships at HCU. These generous awards for qualified engineering students will open up career opportunities for young people who would otherwise be unable to enter these exciting fields. This financial support will dramatically increase the number of students we are able to enroll in engineering at HCU and will benefit greatly not only the students and their families for years to come, but also the city of Houston and the workforce needs we have in this great city."

—HCU President Robert Sloan



TYREEQ HARVEY was elated when he learned about a scholarship that would pay up to full tuition for incoming freshmen and transfer students pursuing degrees in STEM at Houston Christian University (HCU).

Initially, the Houston Community College transfer student had his eyes set on attending the University of Houston. His focus shifted to HCU when he learned about the Grace Hopper Scholarship which filled the gaps in his financial aid package.

“The scholarship allows me to complete my education without worrying about being a financial burden,” said Harvey.

HCU’s Grace Hopper Scholarship is awarded to qualifying incoming freshmen students with a minimum 3.25 or higher GPA who are interested in pursuing a computer science, cyber engineering, cybersecurity, electrical engineering, information systems or mathematics degree. Transfer students with a cumulative college GPA of 3.0 or better are also eligible to receive up to full tuition. Transfer students with less than 15 college credit hours are evaluated as freshmen based on their high school GPA of 3.25 or higher.

An honor roll student in the top 10 percent of his graduating class at Sharpstown High School and a member of the National Honor Society, Harvey was an ideal candidate to receive the scholarship.

Harvey is among the first cohort of freshmen/transfer students automatically considered for the Grace Hopper Scholarship as a part of the admissions process. He is now pursuing a Computer Science degree at HCU. With the help of the Grace Hopper Scholarship, he is focused on obtaining his degree and achieving his goal of becoming a software developer and bringing software applications to life.

SETH KAMATA felt that a college education was potentially out of reach when he attended an honors reception at HCU and learned about the cost of tuition. A top student at Santa Fe High School, a member of the National Honor Society and an honors graduate, he and his parents met with an admissions counselor and were told about a donor who was paying up to full tuition to fill in the gap for new freshmen/transfer students pursuing STEM degrees.

The leading factor that led him to consider HCU was its Christian foundation, but the Grace Hopper Scholarship made attending the faith-based university a reality.

“Without the Grace Hopper Scholarship, the cost of tuition at HCU, even with my academic scholarship, was potentially out of my reach. I am so grateful to God to have obtained it, and I fully intend to be worthy of the gift and opportunity,” said Kamata, who also recruited a friend to enroll at the University.

He and his family call the scholarship a “huge blessing” because of the drastic difference in the quality of the education between private school and public school. Kamata also appreciates the opportunity to make connections with his professors and study in a Christian environment where his faith is nurtured.

During his early college search, he initially planned to pursue a degree in electrical engineering but decided to pursue a cyber engineering degree for the well-rounded education offered in both fields.

“I want to make a positive impact in my field while maintaining a healthy family and work life balance. Most of all, I would like to one day use my engineering skills to either create my own product or company to become independent,” said the HCU freshman.

Kamata believes that many of the world’s problems can be solved through science from curing diseases to constructing buildings to developing technology that helps farmers in third world countries deal with crippled, genetically modified crops.


His goal in pursuing a STEM degree is to advance technology in a way that improves the quality of life for as many people as possible, but his highest goal is “to use his God-given talents and resources to be the hands and feet of Jesus here on earth.”


“My faith is the most important thing to me, and it influences all areas of my life. I wanted to be surrounded by others that had similar mindsets and core values and want to leave a legacy of service that brings glory to Christ,” said Kamata. 🙏

THE
**GRACE
HOPPER**
SCHOLARSHIP





This scholarship closes the gap of tuition owed once grants and merit scholarships are applied. In other words, the Grace Hopper Scholarship is meant to cover the balance of tuition costs after merit and other need-based aid is awarded. To receive this award, students must be eligible to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students are required to submit their FAFSA. Once in the program, students must maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher and cannot change their major (except to one of the six listed on page 3). Post-baccalaureate students are not eligible. 



PIONEERING THE FUTURE: HCU'S NEW STEM DEGREES

Our world is rapidly evolving. But while the world changes around us, Houston Christian University remains at the forefront of innovation in the realm of STEM education. The College of Science and Engineering has been hard at work developing, introducing and implementing a suite of new degrees and programs that are designed to equip the next generation of leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively tackle tomorrow's challenges starting today.



When it comes to fields like data science and cybersecurity needing specialized skills or if it's enhancing the broad scientific foundations for future healthcare professionals, HCU is fully committed to developing well-rounded and ethically-grounded STEM professionals. The new programs offered at HCU showcase a dedication to academic excellence and the ability to seamlessly integrate faith and holistic learning with all disciplines.

Here is how HCU is shaping the future of STEM education and preparing this generation of Huskies to make a lasting impact on the world.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DATA SCIENCE

Every industry requires data-driven decision making skills. Every industry will need professionals capable of tackling complex challenges and driving innovation. And every industry is going to need ethical decision makers who can effectively handle data. That's where HCU's brand new Master of Science in Data Science program is able to stand out.

Starting in Spring 2025, HCU's Master of Science in Data Science will combine rigorous technical training with ethical considerations. Students will be fully equipped to thrive in the complex landscape that is

big data. HCU's curriculum will cover everything from machine learning and statistical modeling to data visualization and predictive analytics and graduates will be equipped to be data scientists who are both skilled and morally grounded.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN SCIENCE STUDIES

With HCU's new Bachelor of Science in Science Studies, Huskies now have the chance to pursue a unique, interdisciplinary approach to scientific education. This program has been specifically crafted for those students that crave a broad scientific background which would allow them to explore a number of scientific disciplines before finding a specialization to focus on. A comprehensive understanding of the scientific world is gained through exploring fields such as biology, chemistry, physics, medical humanities and computer programming.

With the flexibility built into this program, HCU students are able to tailor their studies to their interests and career goals. They are able to effectively prepare for graduate studies, medical school, research careers and so much more, thanks to the critical thinking skills that they build with this holistic education in science.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CYBERSECURITY

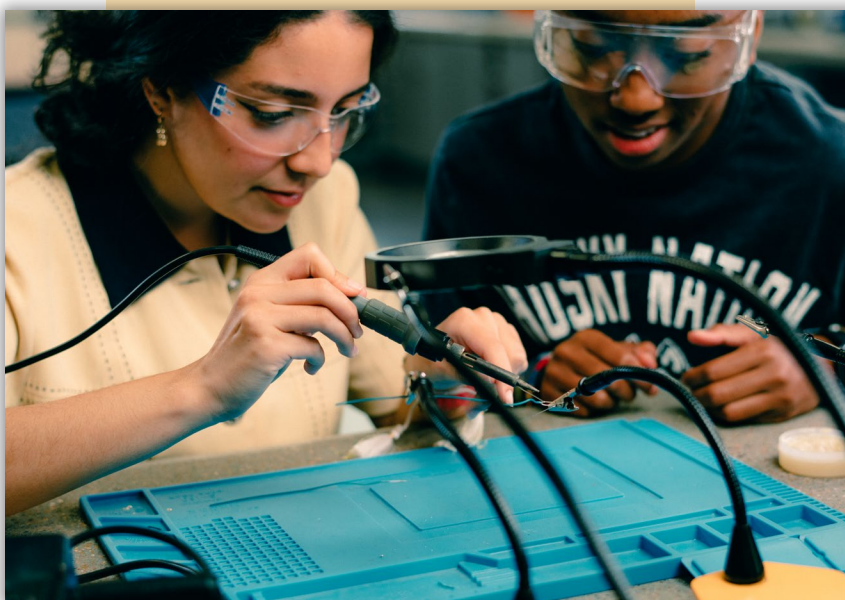
With the rapid and seemingly unending growth of our digital world, the significant need for robust cybersecurity measures grows as well. HCU is now offering two ways to grow in this field. A foundation for success in cybersecurity is laid with the Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity, which was designed to develop well-rounded cybersecurity professionals.

This undergraduate degree provides that much-needed robust foundation while also focusing on the necessary specialized skills related to protecting digital assets. Undergraduate students are equipped with a knowledge base that includes everything from ethical hacking and network defense to cloud security and cryptography with the integration of Christian ethics into the curriculum.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CYBERSECURITY

To develop a cybersecurity skillset that goes beyond that robust foundation found in the Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity, HCU has unveiled its Master of Science in Cybersecurity, which goes several steps forward with a comprehensive curriculum. Students pursuing the Master of Science in Cybersecurity program will build on their foundation and explore topics such as network security, system administration and cloud computing.

And with everything that they study in this program, HCU students will go through a program that puts a significant emphasis on ethical considerations and real-world application. The integration of project-based learning and a graduate capstone project helps ensure that students graduate having gained practical, hands-on experience to go with their theoretical background.



MINOR IN PREMEDICAL STUDIES

Helping to complement the robust STEM offerings at HCU, the Minor in Premedical Studies is designed for students across various majors across campus who are considering careers in medicine or other health professions. The Minor in Premedical Studies provides students with every course required for medical or dental school admission, as documented by the Texas Medical and Dental Application Service.

Students are able to gain a critical foundational understanding of fields such as biology, chemistry, physics and biochemistry all while integrating HCU's liberal arts core. With this minor, HCU is fully committed to preparing students to be scientifically competent and also well-versed in ethics, communication and critical thinking.

PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE MASTER'S IN HEALTH PROFESSIONS

As students look to enhance their qualifications for medical school or other health professional programs, HCU aims to prepare them with the Professional Science Master's in Health Professions. This innovative program is designed for students to gain a blend of advanced scientific coursework and further develop their professional skills thanks to a curriculum that covers topics such as biostatistics, epidemiology, molecular biology and health disparities. Graduates from this program are well-equipped to take on the challenges of advanced health professional education and careers as this program thoroughly exemplifies HCU's commitment to producing healthcare leaders who will thrive when challenged.



ENGINEERING

Honeywell



**THE
FUTURE**

HCU alumnus Ethan Schellingerhout developed a fascination for computers in middle school. He remembers watching some of his friends use their burgeoning tech skills to conduct pranks from changing the color of the Google homepage to inserting a USB drive into a laptop causing the DVD drive to open repeatedly.

His parents, both scientists, exposed him to the world of science, but his innate curiosity and broad interests made it challenging to decide on a degree program in college. He applied to HCU as an undecided major, later declaring Computer Science as his major before changing to Cyber Engineering at the end of his freshman year.

“I’m a very inquisitive person with a broad set of interests and that made it difficult for me to nail down one particular area to dedicate my studies,” said the HCU alumnus.

Despite his challenges choosing a major, his decision to enroll at HCU was easy.

“Choosing a university was easier for me than most because I knew I wanted to continue living with my parents throughout the degree. In addition to the financial advantages commuting provides, my parents are among my best friends, and I wanted to stay close to them,” he said.

HCU’s competitive financial aid package and faith-based values also factored in his decision.

A graduate of HCU’s Honors College, Schellingerhout describes himself as “an oddball among engineers” because of his deep appreciation for STEM and the liberal arts.

“As someone not innately blessed with spectacular social skills, speaking to people for hundreds of hours about often sensitive topics was very good for my communication skills. I also became a better writer, wiser, more generally knowledgeable, and made many good friends through the Honors College,” he added.

He earned his Cyber Engineering degree with a 4.0 GPA (the highest GPA in his spring 2024 graduating class). After interning at Honeywell in his senior year, he was offered a job as a cybersecurity engineer on the company’s managed security services operations team where he uses his skills to configure virtual machines with antivirus software and remote access solutions that protect clients’ networks and allows them to securely access their computers remotely.

He credits HCU’s Computer Networks and Computer Network Security courses as well as field

trips and networking opportunities coordinated by the College of Science and Engineering for preparing him for his current position.

“I never would have gotten this opportunity if not for a field trip to TRG Data Centers and my attending the Houston Security Conference, so I’m very appreciative of all the networking events the program recommends,” said Schellingerhout.

He also values the support received from his professors throughout his undergraduate studies, particularly HCU Assistant Professor of Computer Science Dr. Marian Zaki for engaging in countless conversations on computer science and cybersecurity.

“I’m glad my professors at HCU always welcomed my never-ending barrage of questions and encouraged my curiosity, a trait that has served me well in my attempt to deeply understand whatever I work at.”

In addition to a strong academic foundation, Schellingerhout is grateful for the spiritual foundation received at HCU and particularly values his involvement with the Navigators, an international Christian ministry with an intense focus on discipleship that he credits most for his spiritual growth.

For Schellingerhout, the Navigators is not just an organization, but an intimate family filled with love, support and many growth opportunities. Before joining the group, he describes a stage in his faith where he was receiving spiritual nourishment but “not giving much away.” The ministry helped him reach the next stage of his spiritual development and recognize that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

“They’ve taught me to not live for the temporary material, but for the eternal: God, His Word, and the souls of men and women,” said Schellingerhout.

The HCU alum is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence that will position him to work at the intersection of AI and Security and has thoughts of pursuing a doctoral degree, but he presently is focused on an even higher aim.

“Most importantly, I would like to be involved in some form of ministry for the rest of my life. I think there are too many Christians out there who only work their 9 to 5 and attend church on Sundays. If the Gospel is to be spread, we need to more actively participate in the body of Christ,” said Schellingerhout.

“I would love to someday be someone who excels in his field and continually spreads the gospel no matter how tough life gets.” 🙏

ON A QUEST



FOR

KNOWLEDGE



The son of Vietnamese immigrants, Justin Dieu always pondered complex questions as a young child, like, “Why do we get sick if we are dirty?” or “Why do we get woozy if we hold our breath?”

“Everything in our physical being - including the illnesses we have, the injuries we sustain, and how we get better- is rooted in our biology,” shared Dieu.

His deep curiosity coupled with the vivid stories his parents shared about patients they saw in the hospital where they worked, inspired him to pursue a biochemistry-molecular biology degree at HCU to realize his dream of becoming a doctor.

As a part of his undergraduate studies, Dieu interned at M.D. Anderson Hospital where he donned a lab coat and gloves in the melanoma medical oncology lab and checked and split cell cultures to preserve them for experimentation using protocols taught in the lab.

“After I was done prepping in the lab, I would head over to a separate building called the vivarium in order to collect samples and data from our specimens which were predominantly mice,” shared Dieu.

The internship provided him with knowledge, experience and lifelong connections as well as invaluable experience in scientific methods and insights on the treatment of melanoma.

Guided by parents who valued education and taught him to give his best, Dieu does not take the opportunities he has been afforded lightly.

“My parents were a part of the 1.5 Vietnamese generation, meaning they immigrated here as children as a result of the Vietnamese diaspora following the Vietnam war. They learned and adapted to the American way of life, and thus, instilled many of these customs and beliefs into us.

“However, I believe the most important values they instilled in me came from their Vietnamese beliefs. Specifically, that my education and career were high priorities and that I should give my best in these endeavors. Faltering and falling short of success was okay as long as I was true to myself in giving my best effort,” said Dieu.

Now, in his senior year, he has gained knowledge in many fields of science which has enabled him to answer many of the complex “whys” that intrigued him as a child. Most importantly, shares Dieu, his studies at HCU taught him how to pursue inquiry, equipping him with the tools for his future career.

Initially drawn to the University because of its close proximity to his home, the George Ranch High School graduate has come to value HCU’s inclusive environment, close-knit sense of community and the meaningful connections he has forged with professors and peers.

He credits Dr. Saul Trevino, a professor of chemistry at HCU, for not only teaching class material, but also teaching him how to effectively learn in any class.

“More than that though, Dr. Trevino always connected what he taught to the Christian faith, showing that there was beauty in the intricacies of God’s creation and that science and faith should not conflict, but rather, work in tandem to elevate one another. Science allows for us to understand, and faith allows for us to appreciate.

“He taught with a contagious joy that allowed for me to view learning as a fun and engaging experience if pursued in the right way,” said Dieu.

Encouraged by his college professors to apply for the RAMP research program at M.D. Anderson, Dieu is grateful for the knowledge, experience and connections he has gained and plans to pursue a medical career specializing in oncology.

“Through my successes and failures during the program, I developed tenacity in the face of setbacks and learned how to view myself critically in the name of self-improvement. The path ahead of me is sure to be full of obstacles, but this internship has surely provided me some tools to succeed in my future career,” said Dieu.

He lives by a personal quote that says, “Nothing good comes from lying to yourself; be truthful and genuine in your intent, be concise, and you will surely succeed.” ☩

PREVAILING

HCU alumna Yesenia Salazar never thought college was an option. The child of immigrants, her parents moved from Mexico to Houston shortly after her birth.

“Going to college was not something I ever thought would be an option for me. Growing up it was never discussed and no one else in my family attended college,” said Salazar, the oldest of five siblings.

With limited access to financial resources for college, Salazar was determined to make her dream of becoming a nurse a reality.

“Being a DACA recipient limited my options in regard to financial assistance, so I had to get a bit creative and be willing to work extremely hard to achieve this,” said Salazar.

She enrolled part-time at Houston Community College, juggling jobs as a nanny, dog walker and receptionist at a veterinary clinic to put herself through school. She also lived out of her car for several months but remained laser-focused on achieving her goals.

Earning an associate degree in 2021, Salazar’s determination and strong work ethic captured the attention of a generous benefactor who provided the financial support to enable her to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at HCU.

Seeking a school with the best curriculum for nursing, small class sizes and the ability to form connections with classmates and professors, Salazar enrolled at HCU.

“I am still, to this day, in disbelief and ask myself what I did to deserve this person’s generosity. Their generosity not only changed my life, but it also changed the life of my whole family,” said Salazar.

AGAINST THE ODDS



At 30, although older than most transfer students, she completed her degree with a 4.0 GPA, making the sacrifice to delay her wedding plans to prioritize her studies. Now working as a registered nurse at Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital in the Pediatric Heart Intermediate Care Unit, Salazar credits her success to the clinical experiences and simulation labs at HCU that enabled her to apply what she learned in the classroom.

“This helped prepare me for my first job as an RN by giving me the opportunity to experience different situations and experiences that happen every day in a healthcare setting,” shared Salazar.

She commends faculty in the Linda Dunham School of Nursing for their dedication to students and for providing a strong sense of community and a positive learning environment, including Simulation Lab Director Blake Swanson for his ability to engage students in a fun and educational learning environment and Assistant Professor of Nursing Angela Willis for her passion for nursing and dedication to students.

Today, she considers it a privilege to care for children and their families as an RN and to see smiles on the faces of her patients.

As a first-generation college student, she has inspired her younger siblings who are now motivated to pursue their dreams. But she says she couldn’t have done it without support from her family, husband and a special friend who believed in and supported her throughout her journey when she doubted herself.

Her father-in-law, William Thorne, describes her journey as “truly inspirational.”

“Yesenia truly embodies the adage that “We are not defined by adversity, but by how we respond to it.” She is an inspiration as she continues her journey of service and achievement,” said Thorne.

The HCU alumna credits resilience, perseverance and the compassion of a generous benefactor for making her dream of a career in nursing a reality.

She hopes to pay it forward by helping guide and support others who are pursuing or starting a career in nursing.

“I will forever be thankful and appreciative of the gift and opportunity I was given,” said Salazar. 🙏

DETERMINED

The chaos and uncertainty of war and the challenges of a language barrier did not stop HCU alumna Hala Alameddine from realizing her childhood dream. A native of Beirut, Lebanon, Alameddine from her early youth aspired to pursue a career in the healthcare field. Raised in a close-knit family, life was full of possibilities until war broke out in Lebanon in 1975.

Despite the devastation of living in a war-torn country and witnessing Beirut transform from a once vibrant city to a place of upheaval and loss, she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from the Lebanese University - Faculty of Public Health in 2000 and worked as a nurse at Trad Hospital and medical center in Lebanon.

“The constant fear, the loss of loved ones, and the destruction of homes and infrastructure have left an indelible mark on my consciousness. These experiences have made me deeply appreciate the value of peace, stability and the preservation of human life. Living through war has also instilled in me a sense of resilience and determination. That resilience has become a guiding force in my life, pushing me to overcome challenges, pursue my goals, and never lose hope in the face of adversity,” shared Alameddine.

For Alameddine, working as a registered nurse was a dream come true and a pathway to use her skills to enhance the lives of others through healthcare.

“I have always had a heart for service and a strong desire to make a difference in people’s lives. Becoming a nurse, I was able to fulfill my passion to make a positive impact on a daily basis.”

In 2001, Alameddine moved to the U.S. with her husband and set her focus on obtaining a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration, from then HBU, drawn by the University’s faith-based culture and family-like environment. The small class sizes enabled her to get to know her professors, one whom she commends for an “unwavering faith” in her abilities.

“As an individual with an international background and limited English proficiency, I faced numerous obstacles when it came to expressing myself in this foreign language. However, Professor Gibson’s belief in me and his constant motivation allowed me to gradually gain confidence and improve my public speaking skills,” shared the HCU alumna.

Her graduate studies provided her with the knowledge and resources that helped shape her career path, but the University also nurtured her spiritual growth and deepened her desire to make a difference in the community.

Receiving her master’s degree in 2005, she combined her passion for healthcare and leadership into a career in healthcare administration, joining Kindred Hospital in Sugar Land as an area quality director in 2014 and advancing to chief clinical officer in 2015. Today, she serves as the chief operating officer/chief clinical officer overseeing all operations at the Sugar Land-area hospital.

TO SUCCEED





Driven by a deep passion to help others, she went on to earn a Doctor of Philosophy in Health Services, Community Health Education in May 2020 while conducting research at M.D. Anderson where her findings were presented at a breast cancer symposium and published in the American Association for Cancer Research Journal.

In 2022, Alameddine experienced a devastating blow when she and her mother were diagnosed with breast cancer two days apart. The emotional rollercoaster was unlike anything she had ever experienced, but she prevailed by leaning on her faith in God and the support of family. Today, she and her mother are both in remission.

“Amidst the darkness, my faith and the unwavering support of my kids became my solace. My faith provided

hope and strength during the darkest moments, reminding me that I wasn’t alone. Through prayer, I found the courage to face each day with purpose. Equally important was the support of my kids. My kids were my reason to fight,” shared Alameddine.

She gained inspiration from a quote by Elder Bryan Mathison that reads - “When you have faith in God, you don’t have to worry about the future. You just know it’s all in His hands. You just go and do your best.”

As she looks back on her journey from a war-torn country to today, she has done just that - trusted in God and done her best. Her goal for the future is to continue to use her skills to impact the lives of others through her passion for healthcare. 🙏

Imagine.

The Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building



Imagine a building where students gather to develop the skills to ward off a global cyberattack, conduct research that leads to advances in the treatment of diseases and discover ways to address complex problems through data analysis. A world-class building featuring a collaborative learning space that engages faculty and students in the study of engineering, the sciences and nursing in new and innovative ways will soon be a reality on the campus of **Houston Christian University**.



The Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building, slated to open in Fall 2026, is a building whose time has come, thanks to a \$20 million-dollar lead gift from Sherry and Jim Smith, the largest single gift in HCU's history. Named in the couple's honor, the structure will provide state-of-the-art technology, learning spaces and labs to attract premier faculty and equip students with the skills to compete in the high-demand engineering, science and nursing fields.



WORLD

The \$60 million-dollar, 71,000-square-foot building boasts a modern contemporary design and will be an iconic multidisciplinary facility that will continue to grow and promote HCU's dedication to excellence. The three-story structure will be located on the east side of the HCU campus adjacent to Morris House, with a direct view of the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty, celebrating the University's dedication to the past and to the future.



- CLASSES

Houston-based Churchworx, a general contractor known for development of numerous faith-based and commercial projects, will join forces with award-winning Kirksey Architecture on construction of the building with a groundbreaking in Spring 2025.

HCU President Robert Sloan commended the HCU Board of Trustees for approving funding for construction of the building, paving the way for the new structure to become a reality.

“The Board’s approval of the financing plan for the new Sherry and Jim Smith Engineering, Science and

Nursing Building marks a day of historic significance for the University. These new academic facilities, including laboratories, classrooms and offices, have long been the greatest facility need for HCU and will complement our well-known and established excellence in these areas.

“The Board’s action is both careful and visionary and represents a great and important day for Houston Christian University,” said Dr. Sloan.

Dr. Sloan expressed appreciation to the Smiths and called their gift “consistent with their family’s long



STEM BU

history of generosity, beginning with Jim's father, Orrien Smith," one of the Founding Fathers of the private faith-based institution.

"Jim and Sherry have, for decades, worked tirelessly on behalf of the University and have used their gifts, as well as their wisdom, to further the Christian mission of HCU. This gift will produce spectacular results in the important STEM-related areas of engineering, science and nursing, not only for HCU but also for Houston and well beyond. We will forever be indebted to this great family," said Dr. Sloan.

With growing shortages for qualified workers in the STEM and nursing fields, the Smiths believe that a "world-class STEM building will be an unbelievable recruitment vehicle for serious students wanting a great education in a safe and wholesome campus environment."

With the increasing need to fill STEM-related and nursing jobs, the new state-of-the-art building will enable the University to prepare students for high-demand professions in fields such as data science, cybersecurity, computer science, registered nursing,



BUILDING

kinesiology, and more. With anticipated completion by the Fall 2026 semester, the new Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building will enable the University to advance Imperative One of its Institutional Strategic Plan 2030 by providing new instructional space for students pursuing undergraduate- and graduate-level degrees in high-demand STEM-related disciplines and will work in tandem with the University's goal to grow HCU's student population to 10,000 by 2030.

This is truly a building
whose time has come.

FROM VISION TO REALITY

With every vision comes careful and intensive planning. Administrators and faculty from the College of Science and Engineering and Linda Dunham School of Nursing met with the general contractor and design team to take part in the decision-making process with the aim of building a state-of-the-art structure that includes science laboratories, instructional and simulation labs, project space/capstone learning environments and faculty and administrative offices.

“To provide our students with critical learning experiences that will carry them into their future careers, it is important that our physical spaces match the high quality of our faculty and curricula. The new building will not only provide excellent lab spaces for experimentation, but also the additional space creates the opportunity for HCU to transform existing spaces into active learning classrooms that will support high impact teaching and learning practices,” said Dr. Katie Evans, Dean of the College of Science and Engineering.

Dr. Carol Lavender, Dean of the Linda Dunham School of Nursing, and her team of faculty members

look forward to the positive impact the new building and ancillary spaces will have on the University’s nursing programs and the success of faculty in preparing students for careers in the nursing field.

“We are so grateful to our donors for a building that will contribute to educating students in the Linda Dunham School of Nursing and equipping HCU nursing graduates to serve in Houston-area hospitals and community health settings,” said Dr. Lavender.

Blake Swanson, Assistant Professor and Simulation Laboratory Director, expressed gratitude to donors and campus leadership for the opportunity to have a new place to call “home” in the new building.

“We believe that the Dunham Family Nursing Center is going to help the HCU nursing program continue to grow and develop outstanding future nurses. We think the new nursing lab space will be a shining light for nursing education, while continuing to demonstrate our central confession that ‘Jesus Christ is Lord,’” said Swanson.

“The new building will not only provide excellent lab spaces for experimentation, but also the additional space creates the opportunity for HCU to transform existing spaces into active learning classrooms that will support high impact teaching and learning practices.”

DR. KATIE EVANS

Dean of the College of Science and Engineering

BUILDING RENDERING AND LAYOUT EXTERIOR DESIGN

The modern contemporary design of the Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building will incorporate a mix of brick, limestone, glass and metal panels, making the structure a dynamic focal point of the campus. The building will feature a project space design concept with an expansive glass exterior, providing a see-through look into the building's interior — a trending design choice in the construction industry.

The design creates a strong indoor-outdoor connection that includes the extension of the commons space to an exterior porch area where students can connect. On entry, visitors will be greeted with an open view of a two-story lobby with spaces for students to gather between lectures and an arching staircase leading to faculty and student lounges on the second floor.

Teaching moments are part of the student's experience, occurring not only in the learning studio but throughout the building. From the exterior design of the brick and shade structure

to the exposed ceilings, the building will act as a teaching tool. The visual impact of the rooms and floors as one approaches the facility will highlight a dynamic environment that engages students. Diverse collaboration spaces connected to natural light will be located throughout, making this building a destination for all students.

An energy-efficient shading system with LED lighting will be installed on the exterior of the building to provide shading by day and make a dramatic visual statement by night, illuminating the structure and providing a kaleidoscope of color options.

The rendering includes plans for future buildings, as well as future green space, to allow growth as the University evolves. The building is slated for completion in Fall 2026, with plans for a comprehensive parking solution to be announced before the start of construction in the spring semester. For more information, visit HC.edu/ESN.

The building
will be open for
classes beginning
Fall 2026.



For more information, visit
HC.edu/ESN.





Nursing – 2nd Floor

A faculty lounge will provide engineering, science and nursing faculty with secure storage and a place to collaborate or take a break when teaching back-to-back lab courses.

Nursing simulation will be comprised of multiple simulation suites that replicate acute hospital settings for specialty areas such as critical care, labor and delivery, and pediatrics. The spaces will be equipped with high fidelity, life-like human simulators that are diverse in race and ethnicity and include real equipment and supplies for all specialties, as well as a simulated medication dispenser.

Engineering – 1st Floor

Two freshman engineering and computer science labs will provide additional class-lab space to support significant growth in these degree areas. The spaces are designed to maintain a pedagogical model of lecture-lab that enables students to move seamlessly from theory to practice in a class-lab session.

An electronic circuits and power lab will allow students to learn and practice with power fundamentals and emerging power technologies, like solar and wind energy, which are particularly important to the Houston workforce because of the city's strong energy industry. This class-lab will also offer multiple courses in circuit and electronics analysis, which are fundamental content areas for electrical and cyber engineering.

Science Labs – 3rd Floor

The third floor will feature numerous science labs outfitted with modern technology, lab equipment and lab stations.

Three labs will be specifically designed for teaching introductory biology or chemistry.

A larger, dedicated organic chemistry lab will create opportunities for more innovative learning experiences.

An advanced chemistry lab will feature state-of-the-art instrumentation for junior and senior chemistry and biochemistry students and instruments used in undergraduate research.

A microbiology lab will feature instrumentation and chemicals that will serve nursing and STEM majors.

An advanced biology lab will feature state-of-the-art instrumentation for junior and senior biology and biochemistry students and instruments used in undergraduate research.

An anatomy and physiology lab will provide expanded capacity to serve the growing number of nursing majors.

An educational support area will provide advanced instrumentation and experimental stations in chemistry and biology, a science student project area and a science lab director's office.

Two seminar rooms will be outfitted with fundamental scientific instrumentation for undergraduate research. One room will also house an Anatomage virtual dissection table used to teach science and nursing students.

Nursing skills labs will feature two hospital-like settings where faculty will demonstrate best nursing practices and students will demonstrate those practices to evaluate clinical readiness of nursing skills. Each lab will be comprised of 10 bays that simulate general medical-surgical rooms to include low fidelity, human-like manikins and equipment and supplies needed for patient care, including state-of-the-art hospital beds. One lab will provide faculty-supervised student practice outside of scheduled lab or class for competency demonstration preparedness.

A student lounge and break area with soft seating will enable engineering, science and nursing students to collaborate, meet with faculty for assistance or study privately. Soft seating will be provided throughout the Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building to support informal, out-of-class learning opportunities, a design trend found in many new academic buildings.

For the Master of Science in Nursing-Nurse Practitioner (MSN-NP) program there will be four multi-functional, fully equipped, simulated clinical treatment rooms to allow advanced nursing students to practice assessment and skills as well as demonstrate these NP competencies at checkpoints throughout the programs.

The engineering project space will expand the capacity for students to complete projects for engineering and computing courses and engage in project work for co-curricular learning opportunities. The space will include facilities for woodworking and dirty manufacturing, enhanced clean manufacturing for 3D printing and circuit board design, project storage to allow students to work on larger footprint projects, expanded group project working space to accommodate student body growth and maintain project-driven curriculum, and an office for an engineering lab director who will mentor students.



NEW CYBER ENGINEERING LAB (ATWOOD II)

HCU's Cyber Engineering program was born out of Houston's industry need for engineers who can operate at the intersection of information technology (IT) and operational technology (OT), e.g., valves, sensors, pumps and actuators. These devices exist in all sectors of the economy, including critical infrastructures, which are prevalent in Houston. Cyber Engineering is a more modern engineering degree supported by computer science, electrical engineering and cybersecurity fundamentals, along with newer coursework specific to the intersection of IT and OT.

To support this degree, we have designed and built labs to provide training environments for our students in both the IT and OT spaces. These labs allow our students to develop their skills in attacking and defending within IT and OT and across both domains. The Cyber Engineering degree, as with all of HCU's offerings from the Department of Engineering, is a project-based curriculum with all courses taught in a lecture-lab format, providing a seamless transition between theory and practice and allowing students the necessary "real-life" experiences to make them better employees.

The IT Network lab that we currently have in place allows students to build a network from the ground up and then learn how to build and monitor security information and event management (SIEM) software, servers and other networking devices. In addition to building and working with these technologies, our students are taught how to secure and defend a network properly, using ethical decisions built on Christian morals and beliefs.

The newest engineering lab is the OT Networks lab, which was established by the support of LoneStar Electric Supply, the Metzler Family Foundation, ABB, and a U.S. Department of Education Title V grant. The lab includes 16 stations of networked programmable logic controllers (PLCs) from ABB, associated analog and digital inputs and outputs, and human-machine interfaces (HMIs).

Our vision was to create a mock Security Operations Center (SOC) where our students will monitor the network traffic from both the IT and OT labs. They will be able to analyze the data, monitor and detect threats and investigate and respond to suspicious activity. 🏠



Sherry and Jim Smith are longtime supporters of HCU. Their lead gift in 2018, the single largest gift received in HCU's history, has paved the way for construction of the world-class Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing building that will provide labs and collaborative learning spaces to prepare students to compete in high-demand STEM fields.

THE SHERRY AND JIM SMITH ENGINEERING, SCIENCE AND NURSING BUILDING

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We at Houston Christian University extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to alumni, friends and foundations for their contributions to the University's most successful capital campaign.

**The above list reflects names of donors as of Oct. 16, 2024.*



REAL-TIME MAP **EN**

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Achieving Accreditation

Houston Christian University's Bachelor's degree programs in Cyber Engineering and Electrical Engineering have been accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET and its Bachelor's in Computer Science has been accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET. ABET is the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering, and engineering technology.

ABET accreditation assures that programs meet standards to produce graduates ready to enter critical technical fields that are leading the way in innovation and emerging technologies and anticipating the welfare and safety needs of the public.

"Receiving ABET accreditation is a major milestone for our computer science, electrical engineering and cyber engineering degree programs. It is a testimony to the hard work of our advisory board, faculty, and the leadership of the College of Science and Engineering.

"We are particularly proud of the high level of instruction and support that our students in these programs receive. They will be for many years to come outstanding contributors with excellence and integrity to the economy as well as the workforce of Houston and the world beyond," said HCU President Robert Sloan.

Sought worldwide, ABET's voluntary peer-review process is highly respected because it adds critical value to academic programs in the technical disciplines, where quality, precision, and safety are of the utmost importance.

Developed by technical professionals from ABET's member societies, ABET criteria focus on what students experience and learn. ABET accreditation reviews look at program curricula, faculty, facilities, and institutional support and are conducted by teams of highly skilled professionals from industry, academia and government, with expertise in the ABET disciplines.

"This accreditation opens up even more employment opportunities for our graduates because of the respect commanded by ABET among engineering and computing professionals. HCU now has the only ABET-accredited Cyber Engineering degree in the state of Texas," said Dr. Katie Evans, Dean of HCU's College of Science and Engineering.

HCU Provost Stanley Napper expressed his gratitude to ABET for its review process.

"Accreditation by the Engineering Accreditation Commission and the Computing Accreditation Commission (both part of ABET) is the "gold" standard for undergraduate degree programs in these fields. Graduate schools and employers often require ABET accreditation for entry into their career paths. We look forward to growing these programs even more to meet the needs of our world for Christian influence in engineering and computing fields," said Dr. Napper.

ABET is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization with ISO 9001:2015 certification. It currently accredits 4,564 programs at 895 colleges and universities in 40 countries and areas.

More information about ABET, its member societies and the accreditation criteria used to evaluate programs can be found at www.abet.org.

HCU and NCyTE Center Partner to Strengthen Cybersecurity Education


Houston Christian University (HCU) is proud to announce a new collaboration with the National Cybersecurity Training and Education (NCyTE) Center, aimed at enhancing cybersecurity education and preparing students to address the challenges of today's dynamic digital environment.

This partnership aligns with HCU's mission to provide students with cutting-edge tools and techniques to tackle evolving cybersecurity threats. "We are collaborating with leading institutions like NCyTE to ensure our students are well-prepared to navigate the complexities of cybersecurity," said Dr. Stan A. Napper, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Katie Evans, Dean of the College of Science and Engineering at HCU, added, "Through this collaboration, we aim to develop professionals who not only possess the technical skills to protect digital infrastructure but also uphold ethical standards to maintain a secure and responsible digital environment. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Stephen Lyford, coordinator for HCU's undergraduate cybersecurity program, who led the effort to establish

this collaboration that will bring significant benefits to our students."

Dr. Davis Harbour, Chair of Engineering, highlighted the ABET accreditation of several of HCU's programs and an outstanding team of professors dedicated to imparting knowledge and preparing students for successful careers in the cybersecurity domain. "Our college offers a wide range of programs at the bachelor's and master's levels, delivered through in-person, online, and hybrid modalities to meet diverse student needs," said Dr. Harbour.

HCU currently offers several programs, including Bachelor's degrees in Computer Science, Cyber Engineering, Cybersecurity, Electrical Engineering, Information Systems and various Master of Science programs such as Data Science and Cybersecurity (<https://hc.edu/university-catalog/courses/DSCI/>). Soon, other programs in Artificial Intelligence and Computer and Information Sciences will be available in online and hybrid formats.

By combining NCyTE's focus on advancing cybersecurity education with HCU's commitment to academic excellence, the partnership aims to foster a highly skilled and ethically responsible cybersecurity workforce. 

Student in HCU College of Science & Engineering classroom – Photo credit: HCU/Carnegie



Local High School Students Learn About Healthcare Industry at Summer Camp

The Linda Dunham School of Nursing at Houston Christian University (HCU) and Memorial Hermann Hospital Southwest (MHHS) joined forces, for the second consecutive year, to host Future Healthcare Leaders Summer Camp, an innovative program that takes local high school students behind the scenes for an in-depth look at the healthcare field.



Students from Alief Elsik, Hastings, Ridge Point, Westside high schools, Alief Center for Advanced Careers, International Leadership of Texas (Katy-West Park High School) and various home school and charter schools participated in the innovative summer camp.

Twenty-five students aspiring to pursue careers in healthcare took part in the recent summer camp guided by Blake Swanson, Assistant Professor and Simulation Laboratory Director at HCU, and his team, and assisted by nursing school students from the Linda Dunham School of Nursing's Community Population Health Clinical program.

Participants learned about a broad range of traditional and non-traditional healthcare positions from respiratory therapists, sterile processing technicians and Life Flight pilots to chaplain services, project management and security, and more.


"Healthcare leaders do not have to be nurses; it is easy to forget that, and while one of our goals is to increase the number of HCU Huskies, the bigger picture here is to provide students the tools they need to be successful in the way that fits them and their experiences," said Dr. Carol Lavender, Dean of the Linda Dunham School of Nursing.

With the decline in healthcare workers in the past few years, HCU values the opportunity to partner with Memorial Hermann in this educational initiative to help prepare aspiring healthcare professionals.

"The Future Healthcare Leaders Summer Camp is about investing in people and investing in the future of healthcare. The high school students attending are interested in working in a role in healthcare and it's a great opportunity for them to get an inside look and learn more about various roles in healthcare," said Swanson.

By the end of the program, the goal is for students to be aware of the diverse number of opportunities that the healthcare industry has to offer while also learning how to navigate the admissions process for participants interested in pursuing their post-secondary education at HCU.

Olalekan, a student from Elsik High School, expressed interest in developing networking and leadership skills through the camp while Branson, a 16-year-old student from the Center for Advanced Careers was excited to learn more about the healthcare field in hopes of one day fulfilling his goal of becoming a radiologist.

Swanson applauded the Linda Dunham School of Nursing for its commitment to the initiative and MHHS for hosting and facilitating the week-long learning experience. 

HCU BASEBALL GOES ALL IN ON HOMEGROWN TALENT
WITH CLAY VANDERLAAN AS HEAD COACH

homegrown talent

Most young baseball players dream of ending up in the big leagues and playing somewhere like Minute Maid Park — but for Clay VanderLaan, his aspirations were a little bit different.

Getting the opportunity to coach at Houston Christian University? As VanderLaan explained it, that's a dream come true.

"I knew from a very young age, like, 'that's what I want to do for a living.' To be a Division I head coach, it's my dream and doing it in your hometown? I mean, I couldn't ask for anything more," VanderLaan said.

HCU is going all in on homegrown talent by turning to VanderLaan to lead the Huskies on the diamond and they've picked a man who is more than just familiar with life and baseball in the Bayou City. VanderLaan also happens to be pretty familiar with HCU.

When HCU picked VanderLaan to lead, the Huskies got a coach who has served as an assistant with the Huskies for the past three seasons. He knows the program's strengths and the spaces that offer opportunities for growth. With HCU propelling into a new chapter of excellence, VanderLaan is looking forward to building on that momentum.

"I'm confident in what we can continue to build together here," VanderLaan stated. "I know the best is yet to come for both our baseball program and the University."

And the best way to reimagine a strong college baseball program reflective of the Husky culture?



“Look, it starts with recruiting,” VanderLaan chuckled. “There’s no secret formula outside of that. I mean it starts and ends with recruiting.”

And as for the players VanderLaan is looking to bring in, he’s prioritizing athletes who embody HCU values — both in life and the way they approach the game.

“We’re recruiting a bunch of guys that want to be here, and they want to play college baseball,” VanderLaan explained. “It’s not a job to them. It’s a privilege to them. So, you’re definitely going to see a team that plays hard, see a team that plays with passion.”

It makes sense for a head coach who sees this opportunity as a dream to want players who would have a similar mindset. Beyond preparing for what’s shaping up to be a hallmark season, VanderLaan is intentional about cultivating a culture that will set the foundation for a lasting legacy which emphasizes the importance of integrity, discipline and accountability. “You’ve got to get the right players in here,” he said. “And not just the talent, but it’s got to be the right culture fit because if you don’t have a good culture fit, then it just isn’t sustainable.”

VanderLaan has already demonstrated an ability to do just that. HCU’s newest head coach has shown he can build a program in Houston — just ask the folks over at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. VanderLaan oversaw the Celts’ return to varsity baseball and brings a wealth of experience to his new home here.

With his focus on rebuilding and establishing a healthy team culture, he’s eager to ensure the team develops deep ties with the broader HCU family.

“We need to be more involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), things like that,” he said. “Once you have visibility on the campus, then the other stuff starts coming, right? And then what happens is our guys get invested in the University. Then they graduate, then they become good alums.”

Oh, and VanderLaan wants a similar connection between his team and the rest of his hometown.

“I want to be more involved in the Houston community,” VanderLaan stated. “Obviously, it’s not like a small college town, right? So, it’s a big city, but still, there are things that we can do to be more visible in the community.”

There’s a unique opportunity for VanderLaan here at HCU. And it’s one he’s thrilled to have. “It’s a dream come true!” VanderLaan explained. 🏆

“Once you have visibility on the campus, then the other stuff starts coming, right? And then what happens is our guys get invested in the University. Then they graduate, then they become good alums.”



Next-Level HUSKIES

HCU FOOTBALL SENDS PLAYERS TO THE NFL



TRA FLUELLEN



BAILEY ZAPPE

HCU football, in just its 11th season of NCAA football at the FCS level, has proven itself as a program that can produce professional football players.

Edge rusher/linebacker Jalyx Hunt became the first player ever to be drafted out of HCU this past April when the Philadelphia Eagles selected him with the 94th pick in the third round of the NFL draft. Hunt was an all-America selection for the Huskies in 2023 and was named Southland Conference Defensive Player of the Year. His draft stock continued to rise as the season went on and he received invitations to participate in both the Reese's Senior Bowl and the East/West Shrine Bowl. As a senior at HCU, he finished the season with 46 tackles, nine tackles for loss, 6.5 sacks, two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and an interception.

In just two seasons at HCU, Hunt racked up an impressive 13 career sacks to rank second in school history while his five forced fumbles are tied for the most by an HCU player.

Caleb Johnson, a linebacker for the Jacksonville Jaguars, is now in his fourth season in the NFL after signing with the Chicago Bears as an undrafted free agent in 2021. Through his first three seasons as a pro, Johnson appeared in 48 games with 18 tackles and a forced fumble. At HCU, Johnson earned Southland Conference Co-Defensive Player of the Year honors for the fall of 2020.

Johnson ranks third all-time in program history with 10 sacks, fifth with 278 career tackles and his seven career fumble recoveries are the most all-time at the school.

HCU's all-time passing leader, Bailey Zappe, spent four seasons with the Huskies amassing an incredible 10,004 career passing yards on 890 completions with 78 touchdown passes. The 2020 Fall Southland Conference Player of the year transferred to Western Kentucky for his final season of eligibility and was drafted in the fourth round of the 2022 NFL Draft by the New England Patriots.



CALEB JOHNSON

Zappe spent two seasons with the Patriots, throwing for more than 2,000 yards in 14 games played, posting a 4-4 record as a starter, with 11 touchdowns. Prior to the start of the 2024 season, he signed with the defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs to join their practice squad.

Tra Fluellen, a HERO Sports Freshman All-America safety for the Huskies in 2019 was selected by the



JALYX HUNT



EDOUARD PARADIS

Houston Roughnecks of the United Football League in the second round of the UFL draft. Fluellen signed his letter of intent and will join the Houston franchise for the spring 2025 season.

Additionally, former Husky Edouard Paradis was drafted by the Toronto Argonauts of the Canadian Football League in 2023 and spent the 2023 season on the Argos' roster. 🏈



HCU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PARTNERS WITH KENDRA SCOTT

The HCU women's basketball program has embarked on a partnership with worldwide jewelry brand Kendra Scott, bringing a new type of sponsorship pairing to the HCU athletic department.

"We are so excited to be working with a national brand in Kendra Scott," said head women's basketball coach Donna Finnie. "It is very important for me that we show our young women examples of successful women in business; so who better than Kendra Scott? Her story is so inspirational and we are so grateful to her marketing people for all of the opportunities we are being offered through this partnership."

The launch of the partnership took place this past summer with members of the team making an in-store appearance at the brand's Highland Village location on July 20. Team members were in store meeting and greeting shoppers while a portion of all sales from that day were donated back to the program, ultimately leading to a check of \$1,253.72 coming back to the women's basketball program.

The brand also had a pop-up shop planned for the first home football game of the season, on Sept. 7, featuring custom HCU-colored earrings, necklaces, rings and bracelets for sale. 20 percent of all sales will be donated to the Huskies from the pop-up.

On Sept. 6, the Huskies held the Queens of the Court Dinner, a fundraiser event at the Marriott Sugar Land. As part of the evening, the Huskies put on a fashion show with members of the team donning jewelry donated by Kendra Scott for the event.

"Between the in-store promotional days, the fashion show we did with Kendra Scott providing all of the jewelry for, and the ongoing HCU custom-colored packages we are promoting, we are so excited what lies ahead as we continue to build our relationship."

The Huskies have another in-store event planned for December 2024, again receiving a portion of all proceeds for the day. During the entire 2024-25 season, Kendra Scott will be donating a piece of jewelry to be given to the Kendra Scott Fan of the Game at all 16 games played in Sharp Gym.

HCU women's basketball also now has an online site for HCU fans to purchase the custom-colored jewelry, hcuwomensbasketball.splashthat.com, along with a special promo code, GIVEBACK-HIPED, on any online Kendra Scott purchases that will automatically generate 20% back to the women's basketball program. 🏀



A Year Of Growth and Achievement

President's Annual Report
Fall 2024

As we reflect on the past year at Houston Christian University, we are filled with gratitude for the remarkable progress and accomplishments across our institution. Our commitment to excellence in Christian education continues to drive our growth and success in academics, campus development, student achievements and community engagement.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Having celebrated our 60th anniversary since our first students enrolled, Houston Christian University stands as a testament to the vision of our founding fathers, developing students spiritually, academically and physically. This fall the University welcomed a record number of students and currently has an alumni population of more than 26,000.

Through the generosity of our alumni, friends and community leadership, this has been a truly inspiring year at Houston Christian University. More than \$22 million has been raised in the last fiscal year, enabling us to make significant strides in our academic offerings while meeting the needs of our students and enhancing campus facilities.

The groundbreaking of the Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building will mark a major milestone in our campus development. This state-of-the-art facility, set to open in Fall 2026, will provide cutting-edge labs and learning spaces for our engineering, nursing and science programs.

Our commitment to academic excellence is further evidenced by the launch of several new programs, including degrees in cybersecurity, information systems, and social work, among others. We are also proud to announce that our cyber engineering program is now the only ABET-accredited bachelor's degree program of its kind in Texas.

At Houston Christian University, our foundation rests on Jesus Christ as Lord. Lives are forever changed through our mission of Christian higher education. We invite you to explore this annual report and join us in celebrating the achievements of our University as we build a legacy of academic excellence, spiritual growth and community impact that will endure for generations to come.

Joel B. Sloan

President



Academic Success

HCU has advanced its mission in the past year through developments across multiple academic and student areas. From new buildings to innovative programs and impressive student achievements, HCU continues to grow and thrive.

NEW FUNDED PROJECTS AND ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

HCU's commitment to academic excellence and student support has been bolstered by several new grants and initiatives. The University received a \$300,000+ award from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Nursing Shortage Reduction Program, which will help leverage our success at recruiting, enrolling and retaining nursing students. Additionally, a \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation will support peer-led team learning in fundamental biology, chemistry and math courses.

For the second consecutive year, the Title V LEAP program continues to make a significant impact. This \$2.8 million dollar initiative has funded a new writing center, which has already provided over 100 individual writing consultations since its soft opening in Fall 2023. The program also supports more personalized instructional models in foundational math and English courses, including the addition of a new math instructor to allow for smaller class sizes.

In a move to support early childhood literacy, The Cullen Trust for Higher Education provided a \$100,000 gift to fund a program where HCU faculty and students will read to and develop the reading skills of elementary school students in two nearby Houston ISD Title I schools.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRAM SUCCESS

HCU students continue to excel both in and out of the classroom. The University's Alpha Epsilon Delta Premedical Honor Society chapter achieved first place in multiple categories, with staff advisor Amy Raimondo selected as National President. In the realm of cybersecurity, HCU teams have performed exceptionally well, with one team ranking 58th out of over 600 in the National Cyber League competition, and another winning first place in the prestigious San Antonio Capture the Flag cybersecurity competition.

The Honors College at Houston Christian University was recently highlighted as a Hidden Gem by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a designation reserved for programs with a high caliber of faculty, thoughtfully structured curricula, and a commitment both to the challenges and rewards of liberal education. Honors Scholars have continued their education at top universities. Many have gone on to excel in their careers, making profound impacts in the world-renowned Texas Medical Center and serving in the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, to name a few.

The Archie W. Dunham College of Business's new banking certificate program has prepared 48 students with additional professional skills. Benefiting from external sponsorship and the participation of at least eight local banks, this initiative provides students with valuable industry-specific training outside of traditional degree programs. The success is already expanding with a decision to launch a new real estate certificate program this upcoming year, with more professional development programs to come in the future.

Career Choices

Our graduates have found success in careers at:

- Second Baptist Church
- 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

HCU regularly looks at market conditions and demand for new academic programs. In the past year, several have launched or are in development including:

- B.S. in Science Studies
- B.S. in Information Systems
- B.S. and M.S. in Cybersecurity
- B.S. in Learning, Technology and Design
- Bachelor's in Social Work
- Master of International Business
- M.S. in Leadership
- M.S. in Human Resources Management
- M.S. in Criminal Justice
- Professional Science Master's in Health Professions

New Academic Programs

ACCREDITATION SUCCESSES

HCU's commitment to academic excellence has been recognized through several accreditation successes. The University received positive affirmation and re-accreditation from the Texas Education Agency for its education programs and from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education for Nursing programs. Additionally, our nursing students are passing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) exam at a 97% first-time pass rate compared to 88% nationally.

Notably, HCU's computer science, electrical engineering and cyber engineering programs have been accredited by ABET, effective retroactively to October 2021, its inaugural year—allowing past graduates of the program to benefit from the accreditation. HCU's cyber engineering program is the only ABET-accredited bachelor's degree program of its kind in Texas.

CAMPUS LIFE AND STUDY ABROAD

There has been a fresh vibrancy to campus life as Student Life has revitalized some traditional events and added some new signature opportunities to make meaningful connections and significant relationships that will last a lifetime. Students have come out in huge numbers this year to participate in our Fall Fest, the Polar Bear Plunge, the Winter Dance, Crawfish Boil, and Spring Fling. The Crawfish Boil was a particular highlight of the year: over 700 students plus faculty, staff and families enjoyed good food, great live music provided by a student jazz band and shopping at a pop-up market for student-

owned small businesses. More student organizations and more new Huskies participated in our summer organization fairs than ever before. A revamped Husky Cup competition for our student organizations for the year ahead will allow us to continue to build on the strong foundation of this past year that has encouraged excitement for the University's future.

Our Residence Life and Student Life departments are also growing in impact with a focus on deepening leadership development to prepare students for opportunities at HCU and beyond. This past year, a record number of students applied for University and student organization leadership positions. In preparation for the year ahead, over 100 of them participated in a leadership and discipleship retreat in August. Student Life has also prepared a new Student Organization Leadership Development (SOLD) program to ensure that campus leaders gain skills to be effective now and for developing future leaders within their organizations so that they continue with excellence after graduation.

The HCU spirit continues to thrive, with the growth of the Marching Band and the Cheer Squad expansion. These groups enhance the atmosphere at home football and basketball games, as well as other special events.

The Study Abroad program has also seen significant growth, with large groups of students visiting London, Edinburgh and Oxford, and smaller groups exploring Spain, Portugal and Italy. This expansion has been made possible through funding from HCU's Spahr-Tan Center for International Education.



DR. ERNEST LIANG,
Associate Professor of Finance, "Scaling the Business Enterprise: Lessons from the Early Church" received the best paper award from the Christian Business Faculty Association at the 2023 Annual Conference in Lakewood, CO.



DR. LOUIS MARKOS,
Professor of English and Scholar in Residence, had his book, "From Plato to Christ: How Platonic Thought Shaped the Christian Faith," chosen as the winner of the 2023 Memoria College Parnassus Prize.



DR. NANCY BROWNLEE,
Assistant Professor of Nursing, was selected as President-Elect for Galveston Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses 2024-25.

Faculty Recognition



Morris Family Center for Law and Liberty — opened in 2023 — won the Houston Business Journal’s Landmark Award, a recognition of top commercial real estate projects in the Houston area.

CAMPUS EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENTS

The University is expanding its physical footprint to accommodate growing programs and student need with Founders Hall II—the fifth of five buildings that make up the new Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty—set to open in Spring 2025.

In a major development, the Board of Trustees approved financing for the Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building (ESN) in May. This high-tech facility will house engineering labs on the first floor, nursing simulation and skill labs on the second floor, and science labs on the third floor. Architects are working directly with faculty and lab managers to design effective learning spaces. Spanning approximately 70,000 square feet, the building will also include collaborative spaces designed for learning outside the classroom. Ground-breaking is anticipated in spring 2025, with doors expected to open by Fall 2026.

THE MORRIS FAMILY CENTER FOR LAW AND LIBERTY

The Morris Family Center for Law and Liberty has seen impressive growth, hosting more than 1,000 students from across the state and nation in 2023-24. It also served as the venue for the Texas Children of the American Revolution’s annual event, which brought students and their parents to campus. The prestige of HCU’s tribute to Independence Hall continues to grow, as evidenced by its selection as a filming location for a documentary on the American founding.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND ENROLLMENT INITIATIVES


The HCU Strategic Plan (Husky 2030), known as The Five Imperatives, continues to guide the University’s expansion and development. A key focus has been on strategic enrollment growth through the launch of several new academic programs, new initiatives aimed at supporting veteran, transfer and international students, and enhancements in our Career and Calling, Residence Life and Student Success programs.

Student retention has been a priority, with three major initiatives launched in 2023-24: Early Intervention, Registration Ready, and Academic Pathways. These programs aim to increase retention of first-time full-time students.

We have continued to foster excellence and provide personal support in our growing Pampell Global Campus online programs.

Extending the reach of the University’s new name and brand has been done through several robust marketing initiatives this year. Media—billboards, television, radio—

For the third consecutive year, HCU student housing is fully occupied.



have saturated Houston and Texas with communications touting the new University name and logo, providing a well-received reintroduction to HCU on both local and national levels. The campus was blanketed with new banners on the exteriors of buildings and new wayfinding signage. All communications formats including website, email, social media and printed marketing materials have been redesigned using the new brand identity. A digital marketing campaign utilizing advertisements on popular websites and social media outlets delivered over 62 million impressions of the new University brand.

HCU is an official Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) – a designation given by the U.S. Department of Education to institutions with at least 25 percent Hispanic undergraduate enrollment.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Houston Christian University places a strong emphasis on integrating its Christian identity and mission throughout campus life. The University aims to nurture students' intellectual and spiritual development, to expertly prepare them for academic and professional distinction while fostering a spiritual excellence that glorifies Jesus Christ.

To achieve this, HCU has constructed a comprehensive spiritual curriculum that includes classroom instruction, weekly Convocation gatherings, Kaleō discipling relationships, church partnerships and campus ministries. The University's goal is to provide students, faculty and staff with abundant access to God's presence, His Word and the supportive community of believers.

Key initiatives at HCU include the weekly Convocation, which serves as a campus-wide worship gathering focused on biblically saturated, spiritually formative, and missionally engaged content. The University also holds IGNITE Spiritual Emphasis Weeks each semester, offering increased opportunities for worship and discipleship. Faculty members are supported through discipleship cohorts, allowing them to explore the integration of faith with their academic disciplines. These efforts have yielded positive results, with numerous students making first-time commitments to follow Christ, rededicating themselves or seeking spiritual guidance. ✠

Spiritual Life Initiatives

Numbers never tell the full story of spiritual transformation, but we are encouraged by the following ways we have seen students participate and respond in Spiritual Life initiatives over the last year.

MORE THAN

100

Student Leaders

ATTENDED AUGUST
DISCIPLESHIP
RETREAT

More than 50

SMALL GROUPS

met weekly for

DISCIPLESHIP

176 *Students*

PARTICIPATED IN

**ONE-ON-ONE
DISCIPLESHIP**

Convocation & Ignite Services

113 students

BECAME FIRST-TIME

**CHRIST
FOLLOWERS**

367 rededications

401

Students

SOUGHT CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY &
DISCIPLESHIP

74 STUDENTS

acknowledged they are

not ready to make a

**SPIRITUAL
DECISION**

but seek help

Every one of these students received a contact from our Spiritual Life team, our campus ministry partners or from local churches to follow up with their particular need and to offer next steps to support them in their spiritual growth.

Athletic Achievement

With former Huskies being drafted into the professional sports arena and top-ranked recruits with their eyes on HCU, Husky athletics are on the rise alongside our academics.

NEW HEAD COACHES BRING NEW ENERGY

The 2024-25 academic year brings fresh leadership to HCU athletics with four new head coaches joining a group of veteran coaches across 17 NCAA Division I sports. The four sports with new leadership are football, men's basketball, women's soccer and baseball.

Jason Bachtel takes the helm of the football program after serving as offensive coordinator in 2023. Under his guidance, the Huskies achieved their best season in program history, boasting the Southland Conference's top rushing offense and second-best scoring offense. Notably, linebacker



Jalyx Hunt became the program's first-ever NFL draftee, selected in the third round by the Philadelphia Eagles, while quarterback Colby Suits signed as a free agent with the New York Jets. Bachtel also played a crucial role in recruiting and retaining the top-ranked freshman class among all National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) programs.

In men's basketball, Craig Doty brings an impressive track record to HCU. With a career head coaching record of 259-126 and national championships at both National Junior College Athletic Association and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics levels, Doty comes to the Huskies after six successful seasons at Emporia State University (ESU). At ESU, he led the team to its best season in program history (23-9) and an NCAA Tournament second-round appearance in 2022-23. Doty's tenure saw ESU's first all-American in two decades, 16 all-conference honorees, and significant improvements in team GPA and community service involvement.

Nick Whiting steps into the role of head women's soccer coach, bringing six years of Southland Conference experience from his time at McNeese State University. Most recently, as associate head coach at Western Carolina University, Whiting helped guide the Catamounts to both the Southern Conference regular season and tournament championships in 2023, securing an NCAA Tournament berth. His teams at Western Carolina boasted both a top 25 scoring offense and defense.

Clay VanderLaan transitions from assistant to head coach of the baseball program after three seasons with the team. Under his guidance, the Huskies saw marked improvement in the 2024 season, producing six all-Southland Conference players and five academic all-conference selections over the past three years. In 2023, junior Reed Chumley won the SLC batting title, and relief pitcher Morris Austin was drafted in the 10th round by the Milwaukee Brewers, the program's first draft pick since 2018.



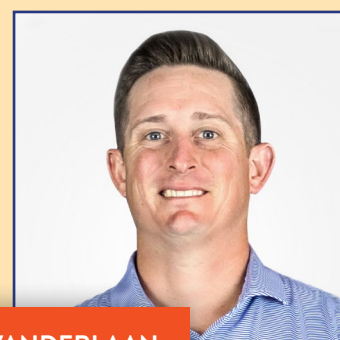
JASON BACHTEL



CRAIG DOTY



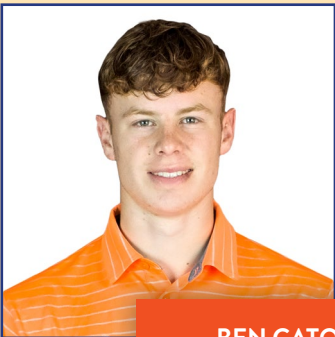
NICK WHITING



CLAY VANDERLAAN



JASIE ROBERTS



BEN CATON

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

HCU student-athletes continue to excel in the classroom. The 2023-24 academic year saw 33 academic all-conference selections, with softball’s Jasie Roberts and men’s golf’s Ben Caton earning Southland Conference Student-Athlete of the Year honors in their respective sports.

A record-breaking 242 student-athletes were named to the Southland Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll between the fall and spring semesters. The spring semester alone saw 140 honorees, representing an impressive 83% of eligible HCU student-athletes.

The department reached a new high in academic performance, with scholarship-student athletes achieving a cumulative GPA of 3.42 after the Spring 2023 semester. Women’s athletic programs combined for a 3.40 cumulative GPA, and all but one of the school’s athletic programs maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Huskies Athletics

17 NCAA Division I Teams

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



HUSKIES IN THE COMMUNITY

HCU student-athletes continue their tradition of community service both on campus and in our local neighborhoods. This year, multiple teams participated in the Sharpstown Spring Clean-Up Day, collaborating with District J Councilmember Edward Pollard, the Sharpstown Civic Association and the Houston Parks Board. This marks the fourth consecutive year of HCU athletes' involvement in local clean-up efforts, a commitment recognized in 2022 when the athletic department received the Mayor's Proud Partner Award from Keep Houston Beautiful.

Beyond environmental initiatives, HCU athletes have been active in various community projects. They assisted new students during move-in day, organized a campus 3-on-3 basketball tournament, ran a softball camp with Special Olympics, built bicycles for Sharpstown grade-schoolers, and volunteered with the Jingle Bell Express program—providing books, toys, and holiday food packages to underprivileged families.



HUSKIES HIT THE AIRWAVES

Summer 2024 marked the debut of HCU Husky Talk on AM radio station Patriot Talk 920. This weekly show serves as a platform for the HCU athletic department and University news, doubling as a coaches' show during football and basketball seasons. It will air on Saturdays at 7 a.m. and is also available as a podcast series.

Patriot Talk 920 will broadcast all 12 of the Huskies' football games live during the 2024 season, marking HCU Athletics' return to terrestrial radio in Houston for the first time since the 1988-89 men's basketball season. 🏈

Student-athletes volunteered with The Restoration Team and KPRC 2 to help a single mother whose home was damaged by both the May derecho and Hurricane Beryl.



During the last fiscal year, Houston Christian University received over \$22 million in generous donations from alumni, friends and foundation support. More than \$75 million has been raised for capital projects focusing on the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty and the new Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building.

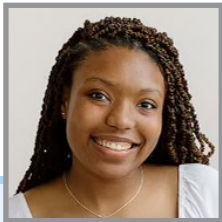
ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

The HCU Endowed Scholarship program, established in 1969, continues to be one of the most impactful ways donors ensure a lasting Christian higher education for students. The program provides financial support for academically eligible students, enhances the University's academic standing, encourages generous gifts to build the endowment, and appropriately recognizes these distinguished donors.

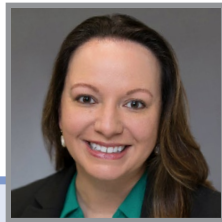
Over the past 55 years, the program has grown to include 383 scholarships. In the 2023-24 academic year

alone, more than \$1.7 million was awarded in endowed scholarships. Donors are honored at the annual Legacy Luncheon and the Brown Academic Complex walls are lined with plaques of donors recognizing Endowed Scholarships, Chairs and other special projects.

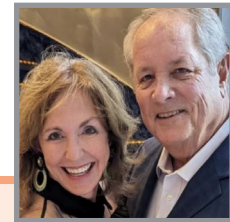
The Warren Scholarship, created by 80 donors and alumni, honors Dr. Doris Warren, who served as a faculty member and dean in the College of Science & Engineering at HCU for over 50 years.



EMILEE RICHARDSON '27, recipient of the Dr. Doris Corpier Warren Alumni Endowed Scholarship, shares: "This scholarship has lightened my financial burden and allowed me to focus on my studies and extracurricular activities. Because of everyone in the Alumni Association who gave to the scholarship, my heart is full, and I truly believe I would be telling a different story today if it were not for this scholarship."



ZOE ALFORD BEINART '01, MBA '20, reflects: "HCU has provided me with so much in my life - a scholarship that allowed me to attend this incredible university and pursue a higher education, lasting friendships, and business connections that span Houston and beyond. For me to give a small amount of my time and resources is the least that I can do to give back to HCU and show my gratitude."



MIKE MARLATT '72, who has included HCU in his and his wife's estate plan, shares: "In 1968, I chose HBC for a very personal reason: Coach Lanny Richards. He persistently recruited me to be his third baseman. The relationships I developed were phenomenal, and the Christian education was exemplary. For me, HBC was a great place to live, learn and excel. My wife and I chose to sponsor an endowed scholarship for our baseball team to continue to build high quality Christian leaders."

Kingdom Advancement

COVENANT SOCIETY AND PLANNED GIVING

The Covenant Society recognizes individuals and couples who have invested in HCU's future through planned estate gifts. These members are vital partners whose generosity sustains a legacy of giving, directly impacting the University's ability to develop future leaders who will serve in God's kingdom.

The society now consists of nearly 200 members, and in the past year, the University has realized \$3.2 million from estate gifts.

A notable estate gift came from Drs. Gloria and Wiley Biles, longtime supporters of the University. Their generous planned gift has become an Endowed Scholarship that will impact students' lives in perpetuity. Dr. Gloria Biles served as a history faculty member for many years.

ANNUAL FUND

The HCU Annual Fund focuses on meeting the University's greatest needs, emphasizing current scholarships. Key fundraisers such as Huskies Give Big and the LOVE HCU Auction make an immediate impact on students' experiences and ability to fund an education that will help support them in achieving the call that God has placed on each of their lives.

THE SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE

The Spirit of Excellence Gala is an HCU tradition, celebrating our Husky family! Since its beginning in 1991, it has become a landmark event. Now held on campus, Holcombe Mall has been transformed to welcome more than 700 guests at each event. The sold-out 2023 event featured the co-writer, director and creator of The Chosen multi-season television show, Dallas Jenkins, who emphasized the journey of faith that led to the creation of the widely popular, faith-based series, along with his enthusiasm to reach college students and others through the episodic series.

The Spirit of Excellence Gala features individuals with a deep commitment to their Christian faith, highlighting alumni and University friends with distinguished careers who value and uphold in their personal lives the vision and mission of HCU. Also, serving as a fundraiser for important University initiatives, the Gala has raised more than \$6.7 million during its history.



Randy Sorrels, '84

SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS



Benny Agosto, '86

Auxiliary Groups

HCU benefits from several organizations supporting the University's needs.

The Guild, celebrating its 50th Anniversary, has raised more than \$2.5 million for scholarships and special projects, including a unique graduate scholarship program that has awarded more than 500 scholarships supporting education and theology majors.

Other organizations that support the mission of Houston Christian University include the American Museum Society, the Dunham Bible Museum, academic Dean's Development Councils and Athletics fundraisers.

University Events and Conferences hosted 143 community events in 2024, including cultural experiences like the Taiwanese Festival, Afri-Fest, the Mariachi Festival and the Houston Civic Symphony. HCU hosted the Houston Mayoral Debate for the third time.

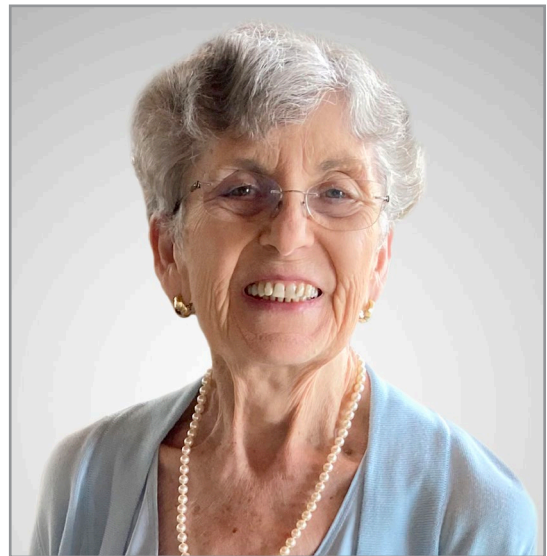
FOUNDATION GIVING

Private foundations have been crucial donors throughout the University's history. In the past year, foundation giving totaled more than \$4.5 million.

The Hamill Foundation has provided strategic support for over 20 years, contributing to scholarships, student success, campus safety and security, the Fine Arts Museum build-out and three capital campaigns.

A new collaboration with The John M. O'Quinn Foundation has resulted in support for mental health counseling, an Endowed Chair in Counseling and an endowed scholarship in the Linda Dunham School of Nursing.

LINDA DUNHAM SCHOOL OF NURSING



HCU announced the naming of the Linda Dunham School of Nursing. This special recognition honors the life and legacy of Linda Dunham who passed away in 2023.

The nursing school, which awarded its first degrees in 1972, offers faith-centered curriculum to empower students to become compassionate leaders in diverse hospitals, healthcare settings and communities and to provide care that transforms lives.

For more information on how to participate or learn about these opportunities, please visit [HC.edu/giving](https://www.hc.edu/giving).

Science students Loren Nguyen and Stephanie Balingit work to identify the optimal conditions for seed priming of nano and micro materials, part of a research project to find more sustainable practices for agriculture funded by a National Science Foundation grant and a Welch Foundation departmental grant under the mentorship of Dr. Illya Medina.



Nathan Jacob graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in fall 2023. HCU nursing students are 19% male, compared to a nationwide BSN average of 13%.



Enrollment Records

2024 BRINGS THE
**HIGHEST HCU
ENROLLMENT**

in history

2,899

UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS

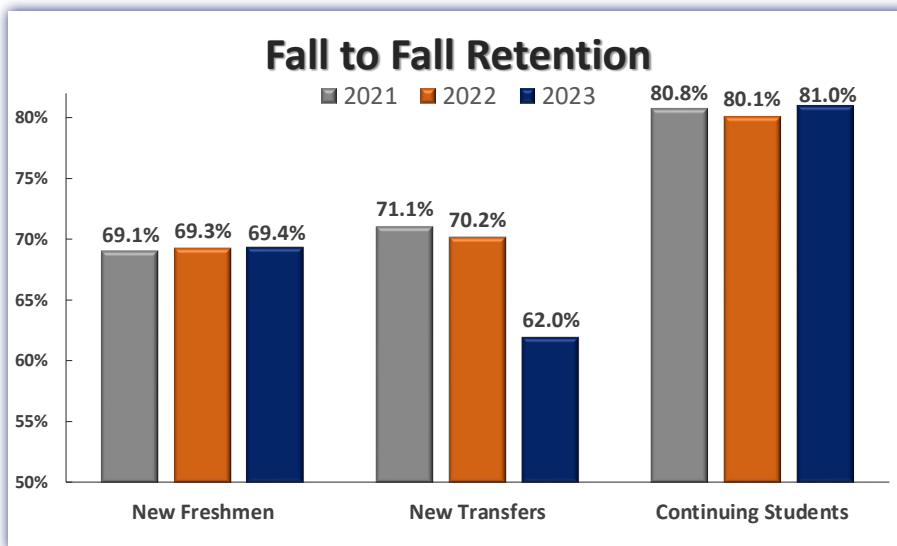
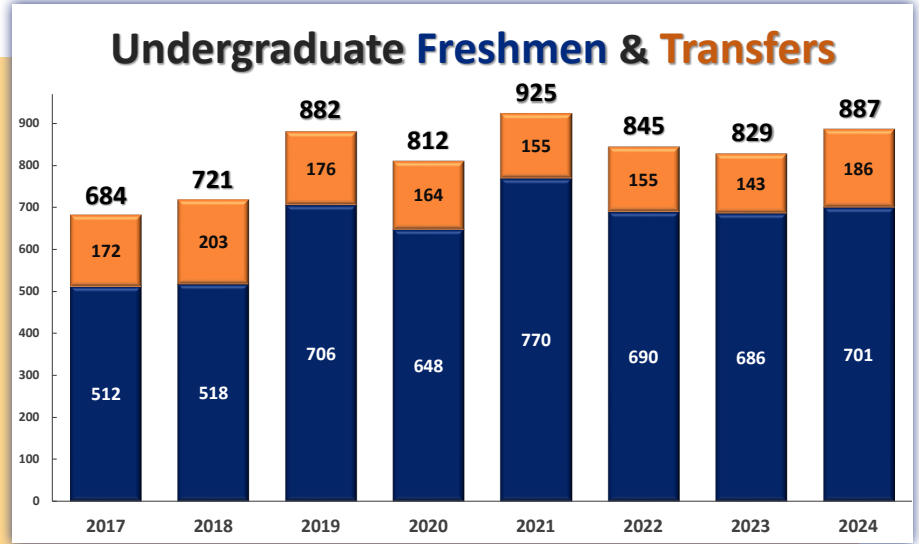
1,377

GRADUATE
STUDENTS

After a monumental year for enrollment at HCU, we've welcomed one of the largest freshman and transfer classes in the University's history – signaling significant progress toward achieving our 2030 enrollment goal.

UNDERGRADUATE

There are 701 new freshmen enrolled for fall 2024—the third largest freshman class in the history of HCU. Transfers were the big winner with 186 new transfers enrolled, which was 30% more than last year and represents the largest transfer class in the past six years.



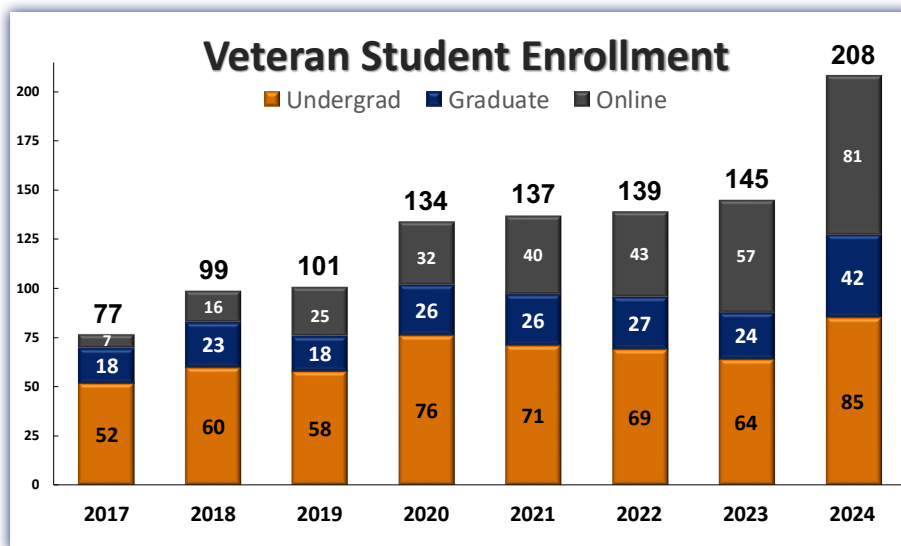
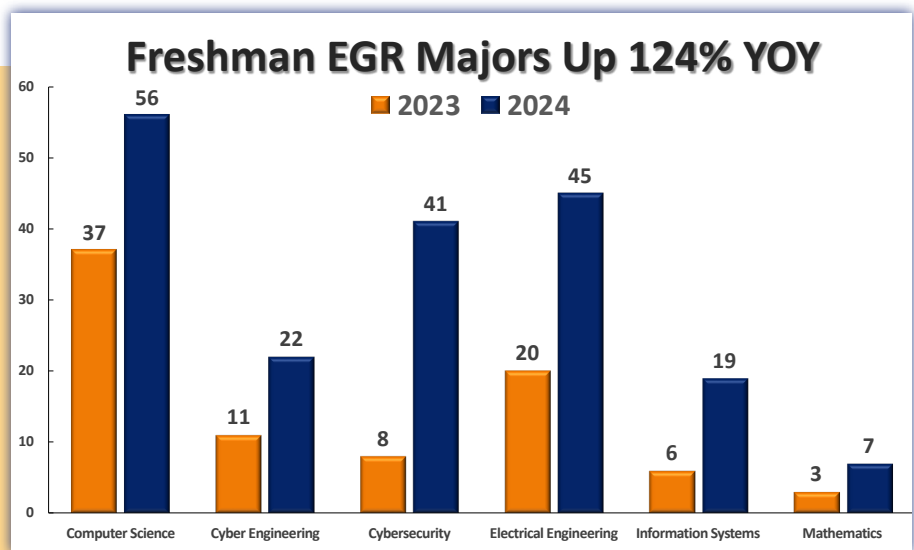
Fall-to-fall retention rates for the 2023 freshman cohort remained stable in terms of prior years, as did the return rates for continuing upperclassmen.

During Welcome Days 2024, freshman students participate in the Beanie Ceremony—a tradition that dates back to the University's second class of undergraduates.





The most significant increases in enrollment were in our engineering, computer science and mathematics programs because of the Grace Hopper Scholarship initiative. Funded by an anonymous donor's generous gift, Hopper Scholars majoring in one of six engineering or science programs receive up to full tuition. As a result, the number of new freshmen and transfers majoring in these programs is up a remarkable 125% over last year.



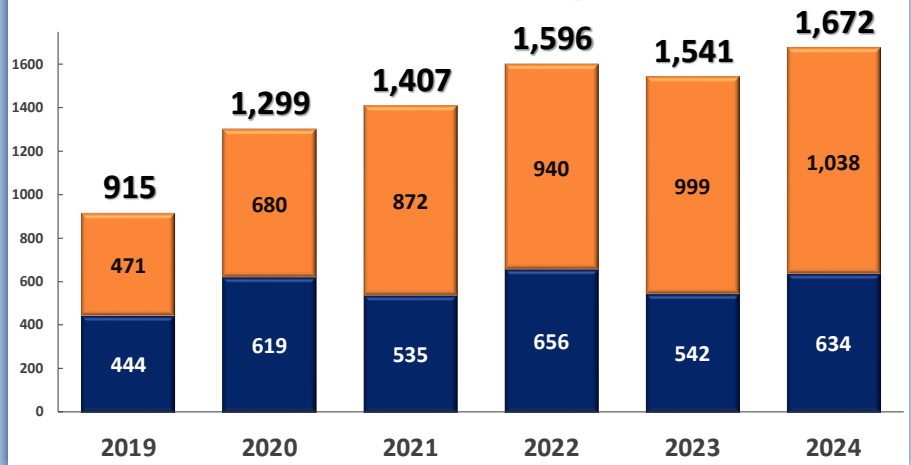
Another success story for Fall 2024 was a dramatic 43% increase in the number of veterans who enrolled as compared to prior years.



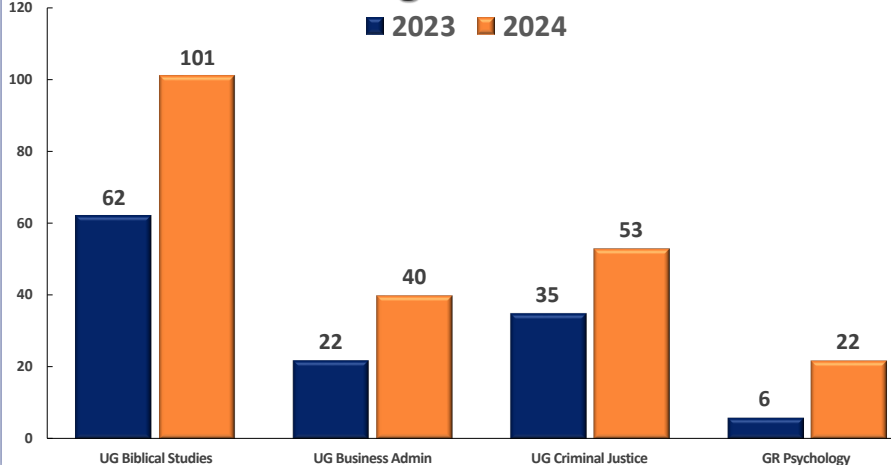
PAMPELL GLOBAL CAMPUS AND GRADUATE

Pampell Global Campus experienced a significant increase in year-to-date online enrollment for the 2024-25 academic year (AY25), reaching a record 1,667 students—a rise from the previous year’s enrollment of 1,541, demonstrating strong growth and interest in the University’s online offerings.

Online New & Returning Enrollment



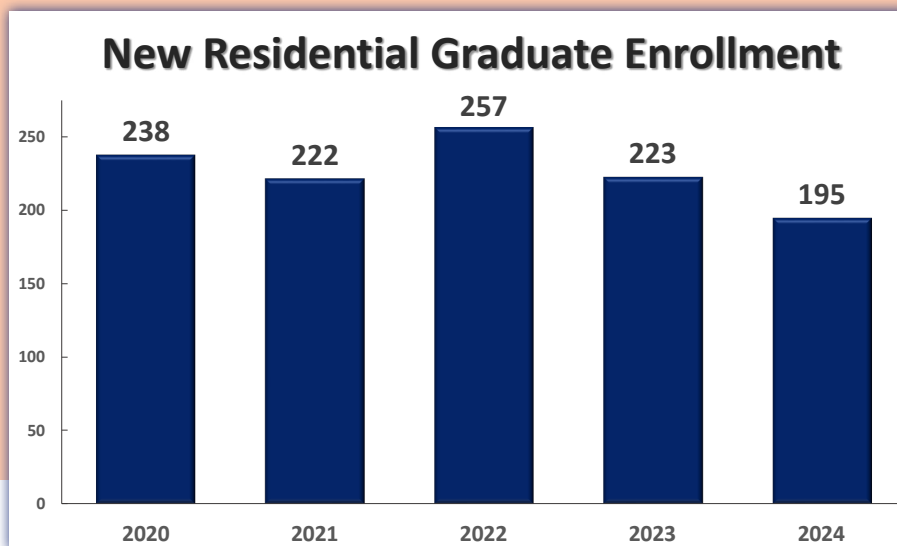
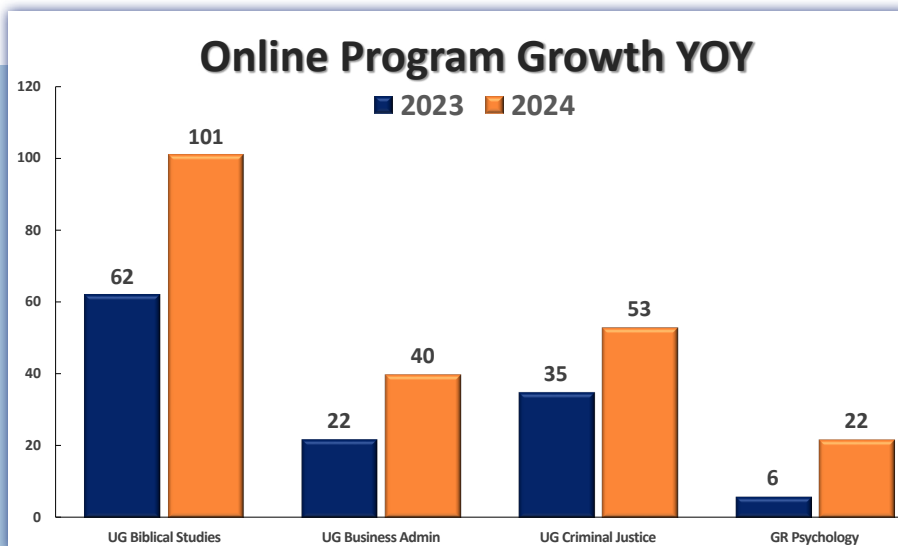
Online Program Growth YOY



Year-to-date online enrollment for AY25 has seen strong growth, with both new and returning students contributing to this increase. A total of 1,672 students are enrolled, with 1,038 returning students, an increase from 999 in AY24, and 634 new students, also up from 542 last year.

The most significant increases in program enrollment year over year can be seen in the undergraduate Biblical Studies program, which saw a substantial rise from around 60 students in Fall 2023 to over 100 students in Fall 2024. Undergraduate Business Administration also experienced

strong growth, with enrollment nearly doubling in the same period. The undergraduate Criminal Justice program and graduate Psychology program both saw increases as well, demonstrating continued interest and expansion across multiple areas of study.



NEW ENROLLMENT PARTNERSHIPS

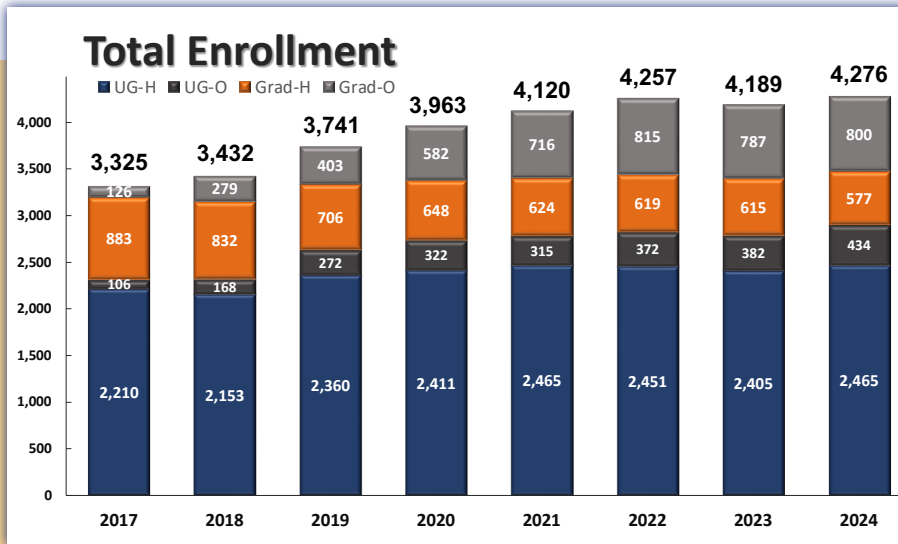
In January, HCU signed an articulation agreement with Blinn College—the community college system for the Brazos Valley. This agreement impacts all academic areas. Special emphases in computer science, electrical engineering and cyber engineering allow students to apply Blinn engineering and computer science classes directly to an HCU bachelor’s degree

while still at Blinn. Blinn’s academic transfer rate for four-year universities is the highest in the state of Texas and far exceeds the statewide average.

The University signed a similar agreement with Grand Valley State University in West Michigan to smooth the path towards master’s degrees in engineering and the sciences.

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

HCU enrolled a record number of 4,276 students for the Fall 2024 semester, the highest total enrollment in the University's history. The milestone enrollment figure was experienced despite unprecedented challenges with the FAFSA that colleges and universities across the U.S. experienced this past spring.



- UG-O: Undergraduate Online
- Grad-O: Graduate Online
- UG-H: Undergraduate Residential
- Grad-H: Graduate Residential

3,042
ON-CAMPUS
STUDENTS

1,234
ONLINE
STUDENTS



Financial *Health*

HCU continues to focus on opportunities for growth that will ensure the financial security of our University. As we look to sustain our current successes as an institution, we are also committed to investing resources toward greater expansion that will cement our future.



Belin Tower

Statement of Financial Position

As of Fiscal Year Ends 2024 and 2023

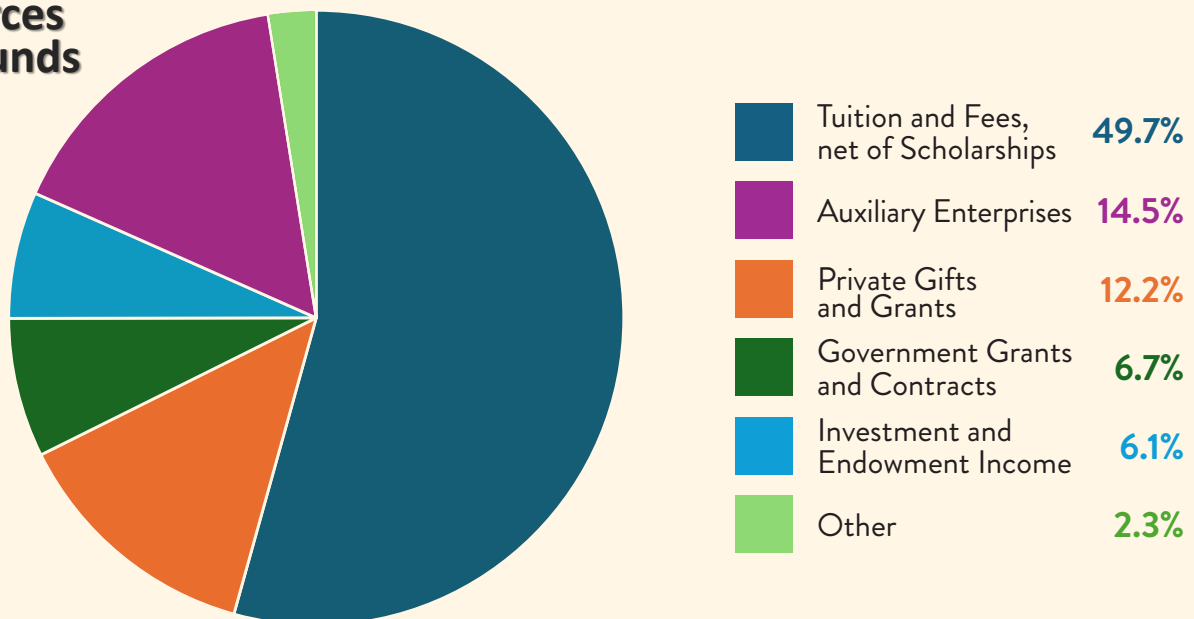
	2024	2023
ASSETS		
Current Assets	208,780,314	200,988,841
Non-Current Assets	146,856,539	144,143,119
Total Assets	355,636,853	345,131,960
LIABILITIES		
Current & Non-Current Liabilities	107,566,417	108,630,700
Total Liabilities	107,566,417	108,630,700
NET ASSETS		
Restricted Nonexpendable	76,082,305	74,147,614
Restricted Expendable	56,909,359	52,176,839
Unrestricted	115,078,772	110,176,807
Total Net Assets	248,070,436	236,501,260

Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

As of Fiscal Year Ends 2024 and 2023

	2024	2023
Revenues	91,450,657	94,033,255
Operating Expenses	90,091,793	90,187,815
Use of Funds for Operating Expenses	84,512,948	84,790,381
Depreciation	5,578,845	5,397,434
Increase in Fair Value of Investments	9,606,365	1,402,337
Other Non-Operating Income	603,947	103,753
Change in Net Assets	11,569,176	5,351,530
Beginning Net Assets	236,501,260	231,149,730
Ending Net Assets	248,070,436	236,501,260

Sources of Funds

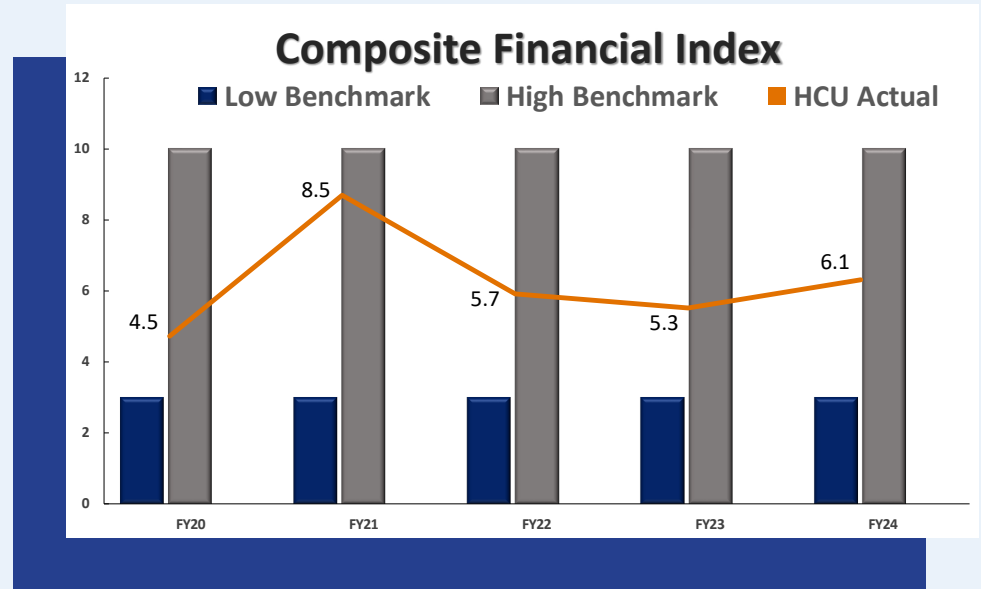


COMPOSITE FINANCIAL INDEX

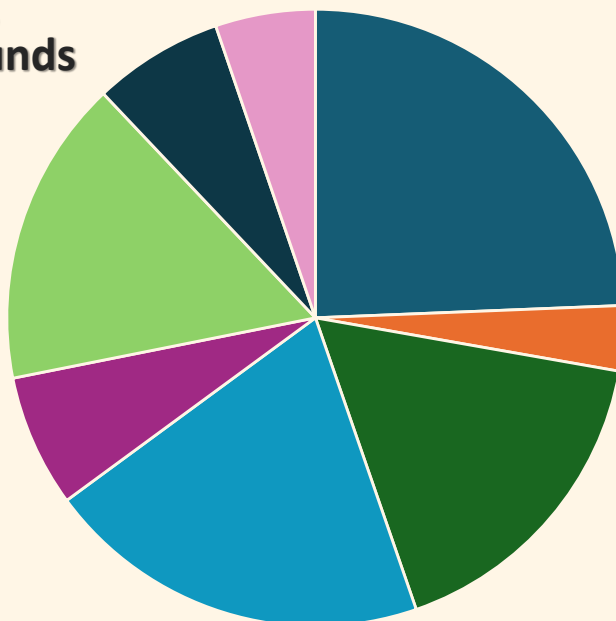
The Composite Financial Index (CFI) creates one overall financial measurement of the institution's health based on the four core ratios: Primary Reserve Ratio, Net Operating Revenues Ratio, Return on Net Position Ratio, and Viability Ratio. By blending these four key measures of financial health into a single number, a more balanced view of the state of the institution's finances is possible because a weakness in one measure may be offset by the strength of another measure.

HCU's FY24 CFI score of 6.1 indicates the institution is financially stable and secure. Institutional resources should be directed towards transformation and ensuring HCU remains competitive in the future, ever-changing and uncertain environment.

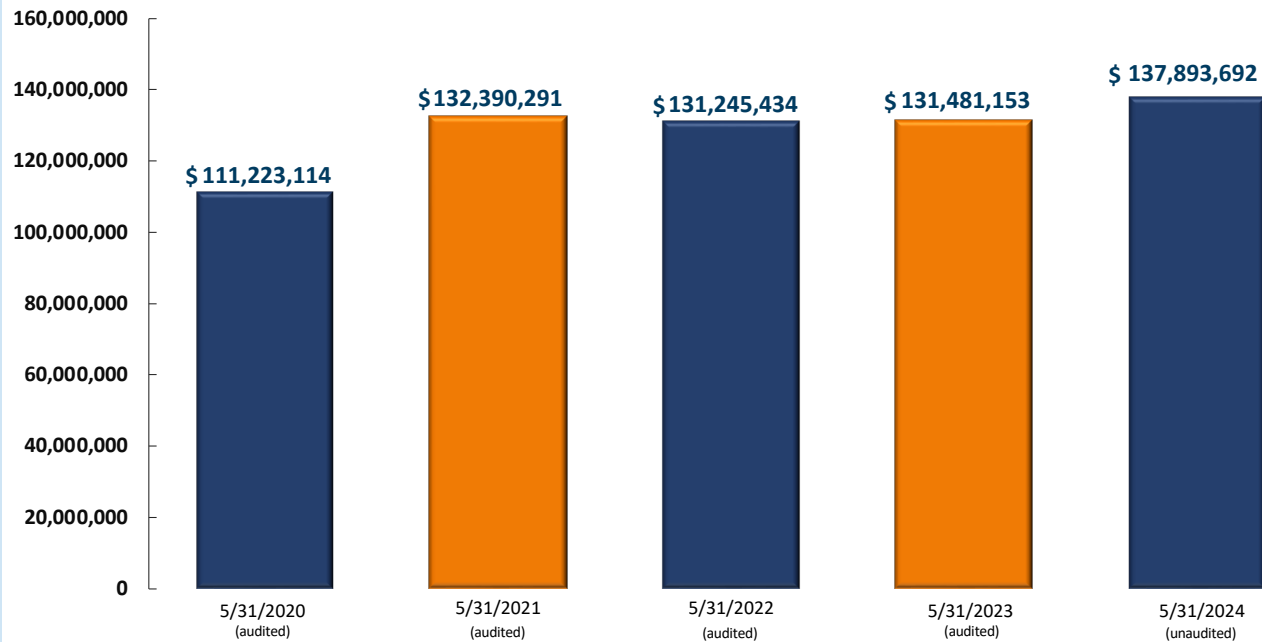
A score of 1.0 indicates very little financial health; 3, the low benchmark, represents a relatively stronger financial position; and 10 is the top of the scale.



Uses of Funds



Endowment Values



In Memoriam

Houston Christian University celebrated the life and legacy of Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr., who passed away on Monday, March 11, 2024 at the age of 104.

Dr. Morris was instrumental in the founding of Houston Baptist College in 1960. In the University's 60-plus year history, including its transition to Houston Baptist University, and now Houston Christian University, Dr. Morris was steadfast in supporting and helping sustain the University's growth and vision of serving as a beaconing light to students seeking a solid, faith-based education.

Former President of Stewart Title, Dr. Morris used his business acumen to help secure the funding that enabled Houston Baptist College to be established

and helped develop the core tenets on which the University was founded, standing firm in support of the College's Preamble through the years.

A man of character, vision and faith, Dr. Morris left an indelible imprint on the landscape of the University, including The Joella and Stewart Morris Cultural Arts Center, established through the generosity of Dr. Morris and his late wife, Joella. He was instrumental in bringing to life the Museum of Southern History and was the founding donor to the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty, a tribute to Independence Hall. Morris House, home to the University President, was named in Dr. Morris' honor.

Dr. Morris has been acknowledged for his lifelong commitment to Christian higher education at HCU and through his leadership has made an impact in the lives of more than 26,000 alumni who call the University their

Joella and Stewart Morris, Sr.



alma mater. He was the recipient of the University's top awards, including two Spirit of Excellence Awards, one along with his wife, Joella, and the President's Lifetime Achievement Award, honoring both him and his wife. He was also the recipient of the inaugural Founders Medal. Dr. Morris and the Joella and Stewart Morris Foundation were recognized with The Legacy Award, the University's most prestigious award, in appreciation of the generous support and contributions of the Morris Family.

The countless contributions of Dr. Morris are interwoven into the fabric of the University and will forever serve as a testament to his enduring legacy in shaping and sustaining the private, faith-based institution. 🏛️



*Statue of Dr. Morris just outside
the Morris Cultural Arts Center*

ALUM-A-GRAMS

1960s

John Gillespie '67 is the President of Gillespie Global Group. He recently published three works. These works include: "Betsuyaku Minoru's Artful Ambiguity," Asian Theatre Journal (Fall 2023): 233-250, Play translation: "Godot Came" (Japanese title "Yattekita Godot"), in Asian Theatre Journal (Fall 2023): 251-290, and "India-Japan Mutual Influences: The Case of Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin," in Geographies of Exchange between India and Japan, ed. by Sushila Narsimhan and Parul Bakshi. New Delhi and Ann Arbor: Kizuna India Japan Study Forum, 2024. pp. 152-172.



Henry Maxwell '67 retired IT QA analyst, is writing a book about growing up in Houston.

1970s

Dr. Sarah (Martin) Crippen '72 is a Field Supervisor for Austin Community College. In May 2023, she graduated from Bethel University with a DMin Degree in Congressional and Pastoral Care.



Ed Seay '73 is a Senior Pastor at Cleveland's First Baptist Church.

Rodney Puryear '76 recently accepted the position of Director of Missions for the Sulphur Springs Baptist Association in Dora, Alabama after 53 years in the ministry and 25 years as a Pastor of the Woods New Hope Baptist Church in Tenaha, Texas.



Dr. Ron Ellis '77 just celebrated 25 years as President of California Baptist University. Under his leadership, California Baptist College became California Baptist University in 1998 — and now features 11 colleges and professional schools, offering 150+ majors and minors with more than 30 master's and five doctoral programs.

Robert Keprta '78 has retired. In 2022, his book, "Homeland", was published by Christian Faith Publishing. It is a thrilling journey that finds an unsuspecting young man caught in the path of warring nations when forced into military service following what was meant as a reunion visit to a beloved homeland.

1980s

Nancy Brownlee '80 received her MSN from UT Houston in 2013 and then worked as a family nurse practitioner in Urology for almost 10 years. Recently, she became a legislative ambassador for the Texas Nurse Practitioner Association and the President-elect for the Galveston Coalition of Advance Practice Nurses Association for 2024. She completed her doctorate in nursing practice from Vanderbilt University in August 2024. In 2022, she came back to teach at HCU to give back to the University in the Linda Dunham School of Nursing. She is living proof of a life-long learner and a forever Husky fan!

David Stutts '81 was named Vice President and CFO at Star of Hope Mission. Star of Hope is a Christ-centered community dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless men, women and their children.

Dottie (Watassek) Kemp '81 and **Jon Kemp '80** are both retired and live in the Ft. Worth area.

Scott Talbert '86 is a Case Worker for Giddings State School.

Randy Elum MBA '89 owns his own business.

1990s

Diane (Fain) Hutchings '90 is celebrating a year as the CEO at Concierge Hospital in Sugar Land. She is also a Keller Williams Realtor and the grandmother to three grandchildren!



Dr. Brian Machart '90 is a dentist and owner of Fort Bend Dental Associates.

Tiffany (Martin) Robertson '90 is an Intake Specialist for the Fort Bend Women's Center.

Barbara (Bigford) Turner '90 is a Middle School Teacher at Killeen ISD.

Tony DiCamillo '95 was recently named SVP - Business Development for See Tickets - North America. See Tickets is a global event ticket software platform.

Dr. Timothy Hall '96 is the Pastor of Butterfield Community Bible Church. He just graduated from Asbury Theological Seminary with his Doctor of Ministry degree specializing in Preaching and Leadership. His dissertation is entitled, "Adult Learning Theory and Preaching: The Barriers to Applying Adult Learning Theory." While working on his degree, he was invited to join the International Society of Theta Phi — an honor society for theological students.

Carrie Hogue '97 is the owner and a practicing Physical Therapist at The Rock Physical Therapy.

Angela Stewart '97 was promoted at Schlumberger to SAP4U Change Lead.

Danielle Durocher '99 has returned to Houston as the Team Leader / CEO at Keller Williams Houston Central.

2000s

Damon Maddox '00, MBA '02 is the Company Owner of RPBLC Pizza.

Shobha Shukla '01 works for American International University West Africa as a Head Quality Assurance.

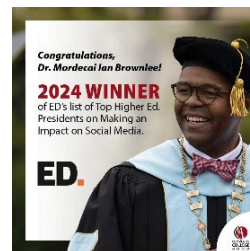
Melinda Hatten '02 recently moved to North Carolina and accepted the position of Business Office Coordinator of Campus Activities at Western Carolina University.

Crystal Streety '05 works for Moffat & Nichol. She took her ninth-grade son to the HCU H-Town Showcase, and she's hoping he may follow in her HCU Husky footsteps!

Dr. Rizwana Ashraf '08 is a resident in the Georgia South Psychiatry Residency Program. After attending HCU, she went on to Fort Hays State University and earned her Master's Degree in Public Health Administration, followed by her medical degree from Trinity School of Medicine.



Dr. Mordecai Brownlee '08, MSHRM '11, President of Community College of Aurora, was the 2024 winner of ED Marketing Agency's Top Higher Education Presidents on Making an Impact on social media.



Caleb Beames '09 was recognized as Lufkin High School's "Teacher of the Year" for the 2023-24 school year.

Lisa (McNerney) Treleven MA '09, EdD '22 opened a counseling private practice, Wellspring Counseling and Education, PLLC, serving clients with chronic illness as well as caregivers with online and in-person appointments in Montgomery, Texas.

2010s

Elizabeth (Zapach) Longoria '10, MBA '20 is the Director of Admissions Operations at Houston Christian University.

LaKeisha (McKenzie) Jones MSHRM '11 is the SVP Human Resources for Perry Homes.

Andrew Johnson '12 is a pastor at Faith Memorial.

Holly (Schellberg) Scott BBA, MA Acct. '12 was recently promoted to Tax Managing Director - Private Client Services at BDO USA.

Rachel Gardner MFA '14 has exhibited her work at Foltz Gallery as part of a group of 28 emerging and established Texas-based artists. Also included in the exhibit was **Brendan Flores '24**.



Vernon M. Lewis '14, MBA '16, ACPFIM, CPM, CTP-FMVA (candidate) was recently promoted to Director & Deputy Controller at City of Houston. He recently received the Juneteenth Hall of Fame Legacy Builder Award.



Charles Lee Jager '16 works at Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish as a Music Director.

Samantha Solis '16 works as an HR Analyst at Houston Methodist Hospital. She completed her MBA in May from Concordia University Texas.



Dr. Nemil Bhatt '17 just graduated with his PhD from the University of Texas Medical Branch where he serves as a Postdoctoral Fellow.

Tiffany (Jacobson) Yewens '17 is tackling a new endeavor as the first Sector Manager for the Civic / Community / Culture Market Sector at Page — a prolific and interdisciplinary design firm. This national role has allowed her to connect with a wider network of professionals, further promoting the thoughtful designs and community impact that results from Page projects. Her professional background is supported by a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Marketing from Houston Christian University, in addition to various certifications and continued education. The remainder of her free time is spent on her mile-long list of books to read and documentaries to watch, or by spending quality time with her husband and their pets. They love to travel to experience new regions, architecture, landmarks, food and culture.



Jonathan Fahl '19 began working in May as a Family Pastor at New Faith Baptist Church in Aledo, Tx.

Kaity (Cummings) Kent '19 is the Women's Golf Coach and Advisor at McLennan Community College.

Gary Russell MA '19 is a Mental Health Counselor at Real Impact Counseling.

2020s

Tracie Huynh '20 just graduated from Paul L. Foster School of Medicine Texas Tech Health El Paso. She will be starting her residency in Pediatrics at UT Health San Antonio.



Ashtyn Richey '20 is a Teacher and Coach at Lovejoy High School.

Kevin Roberts MBA '20 is the Executive Director/ COO at Lanier Law Firm. He is also currently serving on the HCU Board of Trustees.

Angelina Marie Babineaux-Breaux '21, MBA '24 works as Premier Support for Direct TV.

Tyess Korsmo '21 launched a free hyperlocal news website for the Sharpstown area of Southwest Houston (HCU and the surrounding neighborhood) in June 2023. Folks can stay up to date with the latest community happenings at "thesharpener.org."



Megan Vasquez '21 began her master's degree coursework in 2023 for Behavior Analysis at UHCL to become a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst.

Riz Crescini '22 became the Director for the Inaugural C.S. Lewis Institute Japan (CSLI). During the summer they started the first CSLI Fellows Program, which is a year-long intensive discipleship training where each person trained in discipleship should be equipped and encouraged to reproduce disciples in their homes, neighborhoods, places of work and in their churches.

Ashley (Cardenas) Fuentes '22 is a Registered Nurse at Harris Health.

Kristen (Kleymeyer) Horner '22 is an Area Representative for Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Boulder, CO.

Iliah (Racine) Koontz '22 is a self-employed Photographer.

Maleena Bennett '23 is starting her first year of teaching in the fall! She was hired in Fort Bend ISD as a Special Education Resource Teacher at Barrington Place Elementary.

Alfred Curtis '23 is a Teacher in Spring Branch ISD.

Teresena Catron-Wright '23 is an Educator at Word of Faith Christian Academy.

Thaddeus Andrus '24 is the Senior Pastor at Mount Calvary Baptist Church of New Iberia.

Deanna Braghini '24 is the LSSP for Brazosport ISD.

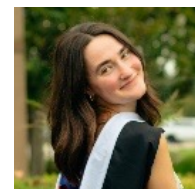
Anita (Kelly) Jackson '24 is a Teacher at Lamar CISD.

Angie (Banda) Endsley '24 is a Unification Specialist for The Providencia Group.

Danielle (Fisher) Perrin '24 is a Trauma Focused Counselor for Brazoria County Alliance for Children. After completing her master's and obtaining a license, Danielle is now providing free counseling to children who have disclosed abuse at the child advocacy center, Brazoria County Alliance for Children. Her MA has allowed for the opportunity to not only fulfill a dream of providing affordable/free counseling, but she is actively providing healing and raising awareness to eradicate child abuse.

Valerie Petricolet '24 works at Better Business Bureau as an Information Specialist.

Kennedy (Wilson) Posey '24 is a Teacher in Fort Bend ISD.



David Rogers MA '24 and his wife have returned to their field of ministry. They have served in Santiago, Chile since 1984 and continue training leadership in Chile. In July 2023, he began working with his mission agency to write and teach a one-day seminar to prepare Christians to reach atheists, called a "Heart/Mind/Soul: Atheism" outreach seminar. In a different field of study, he published his first book in 2023. The title is "Spiritual Gifts, Identify and Use them through the P.R.I.Z.M. of God's Grace" published by West Bow Press.



IN MEMORIAM



James "Jimmy" Hubert Fellers '69, passed away on Nov. 16, 2021. After 34 years of teaching music and computer programming, he retired in 2007.



Susan Jones Gandy '72 passed away on Feb. 20, 2024, after losing her fight with cancer.



Gary Dill '69 passed away on March 20, 2024. He worked for many years in higher education, most notably as President of McPherson College and University of the Southwest.



University Friend and Guild member, **Barbara Boek**, left this earthly home and entered her Heavenly Glory on April 14, 2024. Barbara and her late husband, Buddy, were Endowed Scholarship donors.



University friend and Guild member, **Sara Lou Pipkin**, 92, passed away peacefully on April 29, 2024.



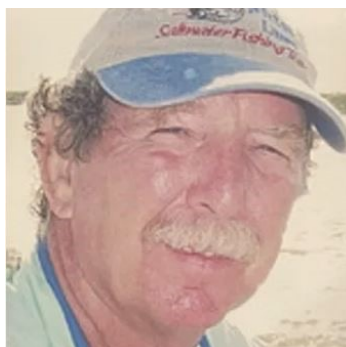
University friend and Guild member, **Rita Ann Mesec**, 91, passed away peacefully on May 2, 2024.



Lucy Lee Murray '72 passed away on May 11, 2024, in Boerne, TX. Lucy had a career as a teacher and administrator in various Texas ISDs.



Beverly Terrell passed away on May 18, 2024. She served HCU as an Associate Professor of Voice.



Raymond Denson '74 passed away peacefully on July 2, 2024, after a courageous battle with dementia. Raymond was awarded the 2004 Distinguished Alumnus Award for his career in social work at Deer Park Hospital in Houston, eventually working his way to being a clinical director, a hospital administrator, and Sr. Vice President of Operations at Vanguard Health Systems.



Dr. Harold Raley, former Dean of Humanities and Distinguished Professor, passed away on August 24, 2024. Following retirement, Dr. Raley and his wife Vicky have continued to be involved in university activities.



Eileen Crowell MSHRM '03 passed away on August 27, 2024, after a battle with colon cancer. In addition to being an alumna and a gifted musician, Eileen worked in HR at the University for a brief time and later worked with Churchworx who is providing construction management for the building of Founders Hall II.



Dr. Joan DeRooy, former Vice President for Advancement, passed away on September 9, 2024. After her retirement in 2001, she was an engaged member of the HCU Retirees Association.



Richard Meek '71 passed away on September 13, 2024. After graduation, he remained faithful to the Alumni Association, serving as the Chair of the Alumni Association Advisory Board in 1997 and volunteered as part of the Awards Committee. He loved HCU Athletics, chaired the Basketball Tip-off Club, and was a Football Founder and season ticket holder. In 2021 he joined the Golden Circle, a very special group of alumni, celebrating 50 years since graduation from the University. Richard was truly an HCU Husky and was known for his gentle nature and engaging smile.



FORMER DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI & MERITORIOUS SERVICE ALUMNA

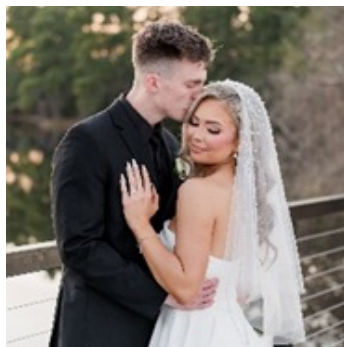
Vivian Camacho Winslow '91 passed away on September 25, 2024. Her professional career reflected her love of education, service, writing, and learning. At Houston Christian University, Vivian held various roles, including Director of Marketing & Communications and Director of Alumni & Advancement. After more than 15 years at HCU, she left in 2012 and ended her career as Vice President of Marketing & Communications at Star of Hope Mission. She was the 2003 Meritorious Service Alumna Award recipient in large part for co-founding the Husky Hustle 5K that is still raising funds for scholarships at HCU 23 years later! Additionally, she was a longtime member of The Guild. As soon as alumni heard of Vivian's passing, the University received the most wonderful messages of remembrance ... "beautiful inside and out," "heart of gold," "contagious laugh," "welcoming smile," "nothing but class and kindness," "a mentor to many who leaves behind an amazing legacy," and "She was my person when I was a student at HCU. I depended on her wisdom and encouragement." She loved well, and her investment in the people of HCU has created a lasting legacy. Houston Christian University was blessed by her leadership and her love for her alma mater.

FORMER STUDENT



Nena (Brannon) Wilkinson '83 recently started working in marketing with the company Tranont, after trying their health and wellness products. In the past, her health was deteriorating rapidly and now Nena's labs have improved and she has more energy to do the things she loves. It is a Christian company, so it is a perfect fit.

WEDDINGS

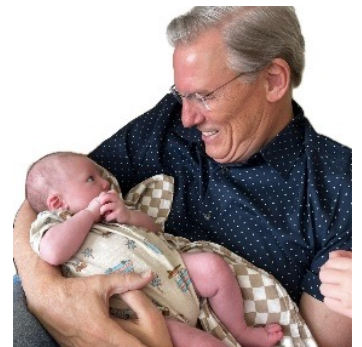


Olivia (Estes) Rambo '22 married her best friend, Landon Rambo, on Jan. 25, 2024! They had a beautiful wedding in Atascocita, TX, surrounded by family and friends. In the fall, she will begin a position in Katy ISD at Jordan High School as a Special Education Teacher and cheerleading coach.



Ashley (Kiker) Shantharaj '13 MA'18 married Brian Shantharaj in June 2024. There were several alums in attendance and in the wedding party. The officiant and pastor was fellow alumnus, **Andrew Johnson '12**. Ashley is a Clinical Therapist at a new comprehensive counseling center serving foster and adoptive families in Houston.

HUSKY GRAND PUP



Rick Wilcox '82 and the family welcomed a new grandson named Luke Charles Wilcox on April 4, 2024.

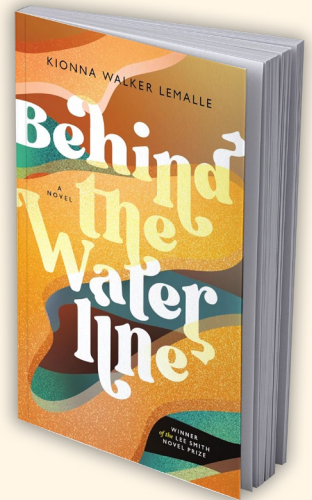
Behind the Water Line

KIONNA WALKER LEMALLE

Winner of the Lee Smith Novel Prize, “Behind the Waterline” takes readers to the home of a teenager and his grandmother in a New Orleans neighborhood on the eve of Katrina, where there are few resources and little warning of what is about to happen, in this novel that mixes magical realism with reality.

When Hurricane Katrina approaches New Orleans, teenaged Eric and his grandmother and many of their neighbors decide to ride out the storm. Kionna Walker LeMalle’s masterful debut novel brings her readers, like the rising water, onto Eric’s street in the Third Ward, where stranded dogs bark for a time, where neighbors are floating on doors, and where Eric and his grandmother must take refuge in his second floor bedroom. After days of heat, dwindling supplies, and relentless rising water, neighbors begin to disappear and Eric’s grandmother, already known as an eccentric, begins to falter. It is then that Eric—in a dream, a hallucination, or something else—discovers a room beyond his closet wall, a place he has never seen. What he discovers inside will send him on a path to discover secrets to survival, bitter progress, and, ultimately, the history of his own people—those he sorely misses and those he never even knew.

Available by pre-order on Amazon and Blairpub.com



Absolute Basics: Christian Theology for Ordinary People (The Absolute Basics of the Christian Faith)

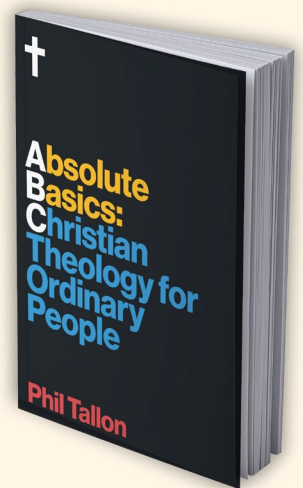
DR. PHILIP TALLON

“Absolute Basics: Christian Theology for Ordinary People (and The Absolute Basics of the Christian Faith)” is a visual introduction to the core beliefs of the Christian faith. Following the pattern of the Nicene Creed, Absolute Basics explains the essential teachings of the church in plain language, with accompanying illustrations and Bible verses.

Original version: <https://my.seedbed.com/product/the-absolute-basics-of-the-christian-faith/>

Revised version: The revised version for adults is forthcoming from Seedbed.

<https://my.seedbed.com/product/the-absolute-basics-of-the-christian-faith/>

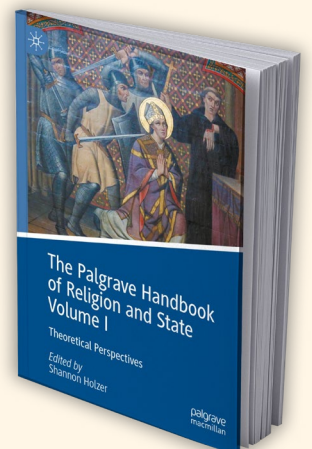


The Palgrave Handbook of Religion and State Volume I: Theoretical Perspectives 1st ed. 2023 Edition

SHANNON HOLZER (EDITOR)

The Palgrave Handbook of Religion and State Volume I: Theoretical Perspective deals with the relationship between Religion and its long history that has played out throughout time and across the globe. Countries in Africa, the Middle East and Europe approach the subject of religion and the state in various ways. While the word religion to westerners usually brings Christianity to mind, in Japan it is Shintoism and Buddhism. Volume II offers chapters on the relationship of both Shintoism and Buddhism to the Japanese state. It is very easy to see how the deeply traditional Japanese citizens may come into conflict with the strictly secular Japanese state. It also contains chapters about mosque and state as well as synagogue and state.

Available on Amazon



HCU hosts Topping Off Ceremony for Founders Hall II

Houston Christian University (HCU) hosted a special Topping Off Ceremony for Founders Hall II on Friday, June 28. The event signified completion of the structural phase of the final building in the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty complex.

On behalf of HCU President Robert Sloan, Sandy Mooney, HCU Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer, welcomed special guests and a selection of HCU administrators, board members, faculty and staff along with members of the construction teams.

“Many of you here today have played an important role in this journey, but I want to especially honor our founding father, the late Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr. Dr. Morris loved this country. He loved this University, and his commitment and vision were key in this complex becoming a reality. We feel his spirit and vision with us here today,” said Mooney.

Special thanks were extended to Lisa Morris Simon '76 and Stewart Morris, Jr. for their past and continued support and commitment to the University, as well as other individuals who contributed their support to the project.

David Hatton of ChurchWorx introduced members of the ChurchWorx and Brookstone Construction teams, Jackson & Ryan Architects and the project's foreman, and expressed appreciation to each for working collaboratively to meet the target deadline despite weather delays.

HCU Board of Trustees Chair Rev. Garry Blackmon offered a dedicatory prayer to bless the special occasion. “Father, we ask and pray that your good work and labor that has begun in them may be brought to completion with great thanksgiving. And Father, as we lift this beam today, we dedicate it to your honor and to the honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was lifted up high on a beam

and died for the sins of the world,” said Rev. Blackmon.

Blackmon also expressed appreciation for the life and legacy of HCU's Founding Father, the late Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr. and members of his family for their gracious and generous spirits.

Following celebratory remarks, attendees were invited to sign the final structural beam (topped with an evergreen tree in accordance with a Scandinavian tradition dating back to 700 A.D.) to complete the building's frame. Guests were then treated to lunch to celebrate the construction milestone before the beam was hoisted atop the structure.

Founders Hall II, the second, ancillary building in the MFCLL complex, will house academic classrooms and faculty offices to provide additional space to support HCU's Institutional Strategic Plan (“Husky 2030”).

The building is slated to open in early 2025. 🏗️

Sandy Mooney, Rev. Garry Blackmon, Stewart Morris, Jr., Lisa Morris Simon '76, Dr. Chris Hammons, Dr. John Tyler, Sharon Saunders and Charles Bacarisse



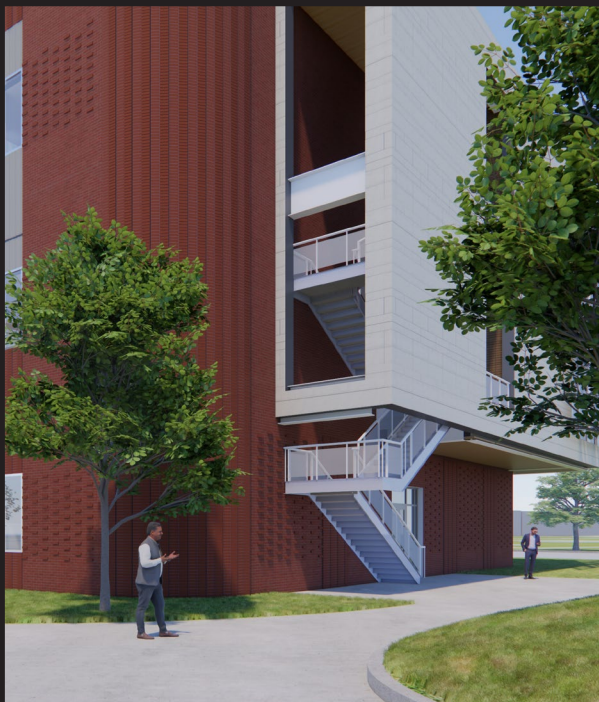


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