



# BAYLOR

## Division of Student Life

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September Newsletter

### Message from Kevin:



### Indicators of Success in Working with Our Students

The fall semester is well underway and with it has come the infusion of energy and enthusiasm that over 15,000 Baylor Bears have brought to campus. If you attended our opening home football game, you witnessed what was arguably the largest Baylor Line in the history of this cherished tradition. Some described it as a sea of "liquid gold" streaming onto the field of Floyd Casey Stadium. We also experienced a historic moment following the 12th class day with news of a 2011 to 2012 first-to-second year retention rate of 86.6% - one full percentage point higher than the previous record. Although there are a number of variables that impact whether a student retains after their first year, rest assured that the work we do is integral to this positive outcome. Another positive outcome was reported in the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). Under the heading of Supportive Campus Environment, the aggregate scores for first-time students and seniors increased to their highest levels since the NSSE has been administered at Baylor. For first-time students, the increase was from a historic high of 67 in 2010 to 68 in 2012. For seniors, the aggregate score increased a full two points from the previous high of 64 (reported in 2008, 2010, and 2011) to 66 in 2012. This section of the NSSE includes student ratings on the following statements:

- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices

Obviously, these statements transcend any singular area's scope of responsibility which underscores the importance of collaboration—especially with our academic colleagues.

In closing, we cannot measure everything we do—nor should we. Learning, faith formation, and intra/interpersonal development are complex undertakings that are shaped by a vast number of dependent and independent variables. Yet, we must continually strive to create educational, spiritual, and developmental environments that transform our students' lives. In doing so, monitoring the results of university data, such as retention rates, and nationally administered survey reports, such as the NSSE, along with conducting our own forms of assessment will provide valuable insight into the impact we are making through the programs, services, and facilities we offer and the intentional interactions over time we provide to our students.

Based on these and other indicators, we are moving in a positive trajectory relative to transforming our students' lives. Thank you for your continued good work to this end, and here's to a great year!

Truly,  
Kevin



BAYLOR  
UNIVERSITY



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## Division of Student Life

### Peer Leader Training

The Office of the Dean for Student Learning and Engagement is pleased to welcome 49 students who have been selected to serve as Peer Leaders for the Fall 2012 semester. Launched in the Fall of 2011, the Peer Leader Program was instituted as part of the New Student Experience to provide new Baylor students, in an academic setting, with college-experienced peers who can help them successfully navigate their first semester year at Baylor. Peer Leaders serve as Welcome Week leaders, enroll in a three-credit-hour leadership course, assist with the facilitation of a new student experience course, and initiate meetings with first-year students.

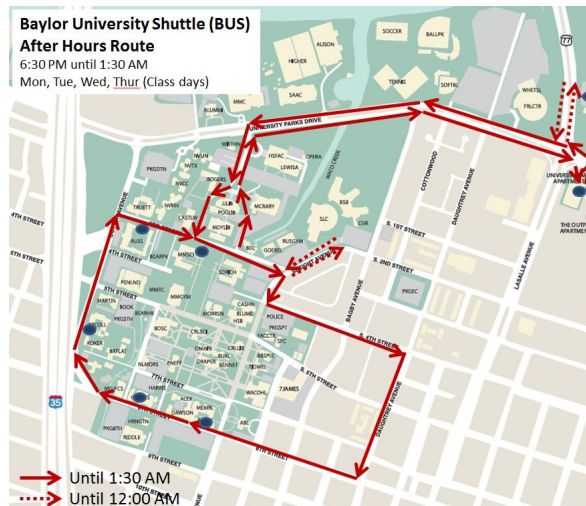


This year saw the introduction of two new Peer Leader training sessions. On August 13th the Peer Leaders spent the morning at the Eastland Lakes Challenge Course. There the Peer Leaders were able to build rapport, participate in team-building activities, brave a high element activity, and reflect on their experiences. On August 14th the Peer Leaders gathered for their second training session at the Bobo Spiritual Life Center. During this discussion-oriented session, Peer Leaders were able to address various topics including the importance of effectively collaborating with instructors, opportunities and challenges pertaining to working with students, resources available on campus, and opportunities for them to further their involvement. We look forward to seeing this talented group of students develop as leaders as they guide new Baylor students.

For more information about the Peer Leader Program please contact Jennie Massey or Scott Shepherd.

### After-Hours Bus

Several changes have been made regarding the red, blue, gold, and downtown area shuttle routes. In addition to their modification and extended service hours, an after-hours bus route is now available for students who remain on campus through the late evening and early morning hours. This new addition to the shuttle is a 20-minute service after-hours route. The route stops at University Parks Apartments, the intramural fields, Moody Library, Allen Hall, Collins Hall, Brooks College, Russell Hall, and then returns to Moody Library. The route runs Monday through Thursday from 6:30 p.m. until 1:30 a.m., so encourage your students to take advantage of this new opportunity to travel by bus at night safely and quickly.







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### Late Night Fall 2012

Over 6,400 incoming and returning students roamed campus in search of fun and games during this year's Late Night event on Friday, August 24! This year's program featured involvement opportunities in four different campus locations: McLane Student Life Center (SLC), Russell Gymnasium, Bobo Baptist Student Center, and the Bill Daniel Student Center (SUB). The inclusion of four locations allowed students to discover 185 different involvement opportunities, hold higher quality conversations regarding involvement, and create positive interactions within these facilities. Student artists associated with Uproar Records performed at the SLC throughout the evening, and a few special interest organizations also entertained the crowds through dance and spoken word in the SUB. The men and women of Baylor Chamber of Commerce also demonstrated their motto of "Anything for Baylor" by providing invaluable assistance throughout the event.

Many departments worked collaboratively to host the event this year: Campus Recreation, Multicultural Affairs, Spiritual Life, and Student Activities. Additionally, New Student Programs and Campus Living and Learning served to help train student leaders and advertise the program to students. By all indications this was a fantastic collaboration within the Division to provide pathways to involvement for our students!

### Labor Day Activities

The Campus Recreation Fitness Department kept students busy with the Labor Day weekend Zumba Jam. The event was a huge success!





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## Division of Student Life

### Ignite Leadership Series

This semester the Department of Student Activities offers the Ignite Leadership Series, a new leadership initiative for student organization officers. This nine-part series serves as the kindling for students' leadership development so that student organizations will be consumed by health, best practices, and accomplishments.

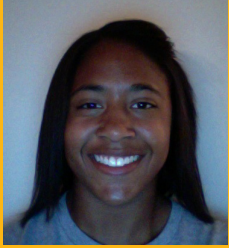
Through this series student leaders will be challenged by concepts relating to: officer transition, member recruitment, finances and budgeting, t-shirts and trademarks, service, fundraising, organizational health, retreat planning, and resume building.

Although geared towards student organization leaders and officers, these sessions will be open to all interested students. Sessions will be hosted from 4 – 4:45 p.m. on Tuesday afternoons in the Bill Daniel Student Center following the completion of Dr Pepper Hour.

Please encourage interested students to attend! Additional information is available online: <http://www.baylor.edu/studentactivities/organizations/index.php?id=91319>

### Student Life Spotlight

**Jade Webb**  
welcome week  
team leader



**Major**  
Biology, Pre-PA

**Hometown**  
Gilmer, Texas

**Favorite Verse**  
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11

### Great Students in the LEAD-LLC

The Leadership Living Learning Center (LEAD – LLC) is excited about this fall cohort of students. This class of students is extremely spectacular! It is also the largest class of leader the program has to date. To date the students have already tallied over 1,200 service hours in the Baylor and Waco communities. This group of students will take the Leadership Living-Learning Center to the next level as they continue to prepare our students for worldwide leadership and service.



### Jackson and Palacios Satellite Office

In an effort to be more accessible to students, Dr. Kevin Jackson, Vice President for Student Life, and Dr. Liz Palacios, Dean for Student Development, will be setting up a satellite office in Room 208 on the 2nd floor of the Bill Daniel Student Center. Dr. Jackson will be available every Wednesday, beginning September 26th, between the hours of 3-5 p.m. Dr. Palacios will be available every Tuesday between 1-5 p.m., beginning September 25th. Students should feel free to drop by during these times or make an appointment by contacting [Patilinn\\_Priest@baylor.edu](mailto:Patilinn_Priest@baylor.edu) to visit with Dr. Jackson or [Gretel\\_Hill@baylor.edu](mailto:Gretel_Hill@baylor.edu) to visit Dr. Palacios.





### East Village Continues to Rise!



This image is of the North Residential Building that is up through level 3 (foundation of 3rd residential floor). In the foreground is the Dining Commons steel going up.



The above image is the South Residential Building that is up through level 4 (the foundation of the 4th and highest residential floor).

Structural "top out" (completion of the concrete structure) of both residential buildings is targeted by the end of this month! There is a 5th/attic level that is a mechanical service level.

### Walk for the Homeless

The Department of Campus Recreation staff attended the annual Mission Waco's Walk for the Homeless event on Sunday, September 16th. Staff met up for homemade breakfast burritos prepared by Van Davis at 7 a.m. at the SLC, followed by car pooling to the Meyer's Center for the three-mile educational walk through eight local agencies that aid the homeless.



(front row left to right) Abby Garrett, A'mee Preston, Taylor Graves-Boswell, Becky Louber, Pastor Jimmy Dorrell, Sami Walters, Jenna Ables, Van Davis; (middle row left to right) Austun Ables, Allie Smith, Laurie Van Dyk, Daniel Ezell, Bekah Williams, John Bernhart, Ned Potithavoranant, Corey McConnell; (back row left to right) Andrew Sayers, John Brothers, Will Simmon

### LEAD Retreat

It was an epic test of wills as the LEAD – LLC students, participated in the Hunger Games LEAD edition. As one student put it, “We are all leaders, but the winners will be the team that understands following.” Going into the final day of competition, it was tight with every team within 10 points of the lead and winning.

Baylor’s Eastland Lakes was the site, and it’s known to be the toughest ropes course in Central Texas. Under the direction of Cody Schrank, assistant director for campus recreation - outdoor adventure and experiential programs, the teams battled for over five hours for the coveted prize pizza dinner.

The winning team for this year retreat was our red team. It was a great experience. Special thanks to Cody and his team for all the hard work and support!



### Assessment and Evaluation

Before I jump into content, let me introduce myself! My name is Tracey, and I am the new Coordinator of Student Assessment in Student Life. I am here to help you with all your assessment needs from planning a project all the way to using your results. I started my academic life as a teacher; but somewhere along the way, I became a researcher. Now, I use my research skills to help our Division meet the needs of the Baylor students. If you have a specific topic you would like me to include in a future column, just let me know. Since this is the first column, I chose to write about two topics that often confuse educators, researchers, and the general public: assessment and evaluation.

What is the difference between assessment and evaluation? The two terms are used interchangeably by most people and many of our professional organization have a commission or unit dedicated to evaluation AND assessment. With all the circumstantial evidence available, educators in Student Life may start to wonder if there is a difference between assessment and evaluation! Well, let’s define each term, so we can identify the differences. After we know what each term means, we can apply them to our practice.

First, let’s look at assessment, since we are called to practice “intentional assessment” in student life. An assessment provides feedback on a performance and is an on-going process. The goal of an assessment is identify current strengths and areas for improvement. When individuals refer to assessment, they often talk about the process of assessment, which includes gathering information, making sense of that information, and creating a plan for using the conclusions to make meaningful changes to practice. The process of assessment is cyclical because once you make changes to a program or practice, then you must gather more information and make sense of the new data to evaluate your changes.





### Assessment and Evaluation (*continued*)

Deciding whether or not your changes were helpful or successful is evaluation. Evaluation is the term we use when we are measuring some performance or change against an outside standard. If you think of departmental goals as an outside standard, the evaluation of your program should show you whether or not your program is meeting the departmental goals. An evaluation always includes some kind of value judgment, such as producing a score or a grade. When you think of the teaching evaluations we use at Baylor, each instructor receives a score that is reflective of the student feedback on instructor performance. For our projects, the information you will use to support the value judgment will come from your assessment process.

Now that we are familiar with the terms, let's see how assessment and evaluation could be used to improve practice in our Division. We can obviously use assessment to improve our existing programs or to provide the rationale for creating new programs. For example, some program in your department may be designed to promote civic responsibility. To assess the program, you could gather data from the students involved at three time points: before the program, during the program, and then after completing the program. The data collected could assume many different forms, but it will most likely be considered quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative data could be collected before and after the program with a survey of civic responsibility. In addition, a rubric could be used to quantify the students' performance in a task related to civic responsibility. Qualitative data could be collected through discussions, focus groups, interviews, journals, or reflective writings at any point during the program.

After collecting all the assessment data, you would sift through it to find the most valuable information. At that point, you are able to determine the strengths and areas for improvement in your civic responsibility program. The last phase of the assessment process involves deciding how to use the data to promote the strengths and improve the areas of weakness such that the program can better serve student needs. The evaluation occurs when you use this information to compare your program to the outside standard, or departmental goal, and make a value statement about the program. An evaluation could also occur when you compare the outcomes of the program to our new strategic plan, *Pro Futuris*. Value statements are important because they convey the worth or merit of a program.

I hope you find this discussion of assessment and evaluation helpful. Just remember assessment is the process you use to improve your practice, and evaluation is the process you use to evaluate the merit of a program. If you have any questions or confusion related to the assessment process or evaluation, feel free to come by my office in Student Learning and Engagement or email me. In addition, if you need assistance with any part of the assessment process, I would be happy to help! Thanks and happy assessing,

Tracey N. Sulak, Ph.D.  
Coordinator of Student Life Assessment  
[Tracey\\_Sulak@baylor.edu](mailto:Tracey_Sulak@baylor.edu)



### Minor in Leadership Studies: A New Program in Educational Administration

Baylor's School of Education is the academic home for a new undergraduate minor in leadership studies. In partnership with the Academy for Leadership Development, the leadership minor is designed to prepare students for leadership in their chosen vocation, whether that vocation is in education, science, business, or another discipline. The minor is dedicated to advancing the field of leadership by engaging students in theoretical and practical knowledge of the field. Students in the minor take 18 hours of courses that encourage them to think critically and analytically about their own understanding of leadership and to live a life of service in their chosen vocation.

At the national level, leadership education in higher education has been the focal point of much discussion. In 2000, a W.K. Kellogg Foundation report, *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*, called upon colleges and universities to do more to fight the erosion of leadership qualities in the United States. In particular, the report encourages higher education to find ways to nurture traits central to developing leadership, including: the ability to disagree respectfully, authenticity, collaboration, commitment to change, competence, empathy, self-knowledge, and shared purpose. The minor in leadership studies, therefore, draws on academic learning across the disciplines and emphasizes the importance of human institutions, an understanding of responsible participation in economic and social systems, and an ethic of citizenship and service to others.

"I have really enjoyed being a member of the leadership program at Baylor," says Chelsea Sanchez, a junior social work major and leadership studies minor. "I have gained insight into leadership that I never knew was possible, while also gaining insight about my role as a leader and a follower. The minor will also equip me with the knowledge and experiences necessary not only to help others, but also to teach them how to help themselves."

For more information about the leadership studies minor, please contact Dr. Rishi Sriram at [Rishi\\_Sriram@baylor.edu](mailto:Rishi_Sriram@baylor.edu).

### Temporary Administrative Assistant



**Pattilinn Priest** is a graduate from Baylor University, having earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education degree in 1989. She has spent the majority of her time over the last 16 years bookkeeping for the family cattle operation. She and her husband, Cory, and three children, Laramie, Dakota, and Steelie, live on their ranch outside of Lorena. Laramie is a freshman at Texas Tech, studying animal science and competing with the Livestock Judging Team. Dakota is a sophomore at Robinson, and Steelie is an 8th grader at Lorena. Patti is enjoying assisting the office of the Vice President for Student Life during this transitional time.



### New Staff



**Cheryl Mathis** graduated from Baylor in 2007 with a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication and a minor in music. After graduation, she stayed in Waco and directed the Baylor Religious Hour Choir. In August of 2008, Cheryl began the Higher Education and Student Affairs program at Baylor, and served as the graduate apprentice for Student Productions. In November of 2010, just a few months after completing the master's program, she began a new chapter of her life as coordinator of programming at the University of North Alabama in Florence, Alabama. Cheryl is incredibly excited to be back home in Texas and at Baylor in the position of **Assistant Director for Campus Programs in Student Activities**, supervising the productions of All-University Sing, Pigskin Revue, After Dark, Stompfest, and a few others. Student Productions is Cheryl's favorite part of Baylor, and she is looking forward to all the wonderful experiences these productions will offer.



**Amy Murphy**, Licensed Master Social Worker, is the part-time **Case Manager** working with the **Counseling Center**. Amy graduated from Baylor with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work in 2004 and a Master's of Social Work in 2005. Previous to Baylor, she worked for Communities In Schools of the Heart of Texas, a national dropout prevention non-profit. Amy is married to Lane Murphy, news editor for *Baylor Magazine* and part-time lecturer for the BU English department. Amy and Lane have a two-year old girl and are expecting another daughter in early October.



**Campus Living and Learning** is pleased to announce **Molly Wilmington** as the **Administrative Assistant** in the Honors Residential College. Molly is a graduate of Baylor University, having earned a Bachelors of Arts in English degree in 1994. She has also pursued course work at Duke University and Notre Dame University in Divinity and Ethics. She has worked part-time in other departments at Baylor in recent years and has a rich history of community service and civic engagement. Molly's husband David Wilmington is a Ph.D. student in the Religion Department; they have two children Luke (8) and Anna Grace (4). Their family has been involved in the life of the Honors Residential College in the past, and Molly is eager to serve and work with the students of this community.