



## OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

### Introduction

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Baylor University is approaching the completion of a ten-year plan that directed a period of significant growth and impacted all aspects of University life. In BAYLOR 2012, we asserted our intention to enter the top tier of American research universities while deepening our Christian commitment. By all indications, we have made remarkable progress. We have explored a multitude of ways to nurture our ability to lead faithful lives within the University community and to allow our faith to inform the work that we do. At the same time, we have demonstrated the institutional will to build the necessary infrastructure and

cultivate our faculty's expertise to participate fully in the community of scholars, as evidenced by the Carnegie reclassification of Baylor as a research university with high research activity. We celebrate the successes of the past decade. Yet we realize that our efforts to deepen our Christian commitment, by their very nature, should never cease, and we still have considerable work to do to position Baylor as a preeminent research university with very high research activity. Indeed, we are inspired as we continue to grow and be known as a national research university that resolutely embraces its Christian identity.

### Our Distinctive Role in Higher Education

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Baylor stands in a place occupied by few other institutions. While some colleges and universities proclaim, as Baylor does, a guiding set of Christian principles, and many universities, as Baylor does, strongly support scholarly research, Baylor is among a very few set apart by a Christian identity *and* a commitment to research. As stated in BAYLOR 2012, "We believe that the highest intellectual excellence is fully compatible with orthodox Christian devotion. Indeed, the two are not only compatible but mutually reinforcing." From this vantage point, we are able to contribute to the national conversation about important issues that are confronting the world—issues such as health care, economic growth, human rights, poverty, and sustainability—in a way that few others can.

The nineteenth- and twentieth-century diminishment and ultimate disappearance of Christian commitment from the elite

universities of the United States is well-documented. Yet we still believe that not only can a Baptist heritage inform a Protestant, free-church approach to life, it can also inform the life of the mind. The world needs a top-tier research university that not only is unapologetically Christian, but also demonstrates to the world that a Baptist or Protestant or Christian commitment does not imply a lack of scholarly research, but—to the contrary—requires scholarship at the highest levels of quality.

And it is not just the scholarship we produce that inspires or compels us. We strive to graduate students who go forth and want to make a difference in our world. Our nation is in desperate need of citizens and leaders who have the integrity and the life of faith to do what is right in the face of competing pressures. Thus, it is essential that our students not only engage fully in our academic enterprise—

learning to absorb, synthesize, critique, and produce knowledge—but that they also have a passion to apply that knowledge in the context of a commitment to achieve ends that transcend mere self-interest.

Baylor has long identified and stated its Mission, Foundational Assumptions, Core Convictions, and Unifying Academic Themes, which, collectively, comprise Baylor's Christian commitments. These commitments, together with Baylor's motto, *Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana*, continue to define Baylor's character, Baylor's purpose, and Baylor's exceptional vocation in the world of higher education. They motivated the very founding of Baylor, and they have guided the University at every point in our history.

These commitments direct the recruitment, hiring, and development of our faculty and staff, and they shape our students' educational experience. This experience transcends the lecture hall, the studio, and the laboratory because our duties do not end at the classroom door. A commitment to the whole student challenges us to incorporate the cultivation of the life of the mind with opportunities for spiritual formation and leadership development. Our faculty model and expect academic excellence. But they also nurture the spirit of the men and women

who honor us with their trust and time. Baylor University remains a place where the Lordship of Jesus Christ is recognized, studied, and celebrated in community. And that community is not limited to an academic building or bound by the class hour. Indeed, our community is inclusive, engaging students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and friends.

We love God with our heart and so we are compelled to care for one another and to care actively for our hurting world. We love God with our soul and so we are called to worship Him and to serve Him in building His church. We love God with our mind and so we are called to research, scholarship, and creative endeavors that truth may be discovered, new knowledge disseminated, and beauty revealed. We will continue to exercise care in hiring faculty and staff who embrace our mission and enthusiastically support these goals and whose lives of faith manifest integrity, moral strength, generosity of spirit, and humility (Colossians 3:12) to train students who will go out into the world with these same characteristics.

It is against this backdrop that we look back, giving thanks for all that Baylor has been, and look forward, with great expectation, to the promise – and purpose – that illuminate her destiny.

## Our New Strategic Plan

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OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN is a dynamic roadmap for our future, providing direction without dictating specific action—a living document that illuminates our destination but invites creativity in determining the paths by which we will arrive. At the highest level, our proposed plan includes six *aspirational statements*, all of which proceed directly from our Christian commitments. Within these, *areas of specification* codify our broader themes. Following the adoption of the plan, *acts of determination*, reflecting the aspiration and specification of our proposed plan and generated in all areas of the University, will take the form of a variety of original ideas that will illuminate our vision going forward. The present structure

enables everyone in our community to have the opportunity to contribute to the proposed plan and to University progress. Projects and initiatives already underway are mentioned in the document to demonstrate the bridge connecting BAYLOR 2012 and OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN. Some new initiatives will be implemented immediately, while others may be reworked as circumstances change or new ideas emerge. Still others will, of necessity, be implemented only as resources become available.

We launch OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN in humility but from a position of strength—strength measured in the form of traditional outputs, such as student ability and research productivity, as well as strength motivated

by a Biblical worldview reflected in the character of our people, our programs, and the nature of our investments. Our plan for the next decade will be characterized by renewed energy and creativity. Building on our standing as a national research university, we set as our goal the continued integration of faith and reason, cultivating wisdom that transforms the lives of our students, guides our work in the community, and enhances the contributions we make to address the significant challenges facing our world.

The work to which we are called is an undertaking of profound significance. Previous generations of Baylor graduates have embraced the responsibility to be salt and light in the world, and, in so doing, to “light the ways of time.” That clarion call rings true today. We know that when we impact the world from the distinctive space Baylor occupies at the crossroads of faith and academic excellence, we are acting out of conviction that this is what God has called us to do.

## ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENTS

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Our *aspirational statements* for the future serve a purpose akin to the Psalmist’s desire that God’s word be a “lamp unto our feet and a light to our path.” These aspirations illuminate a future filled with promise for promoting human flourishing and offering hope to the world.

Following the vision set forth by OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN and sustained by the generosity of alumni, parents and friends, Baylor will be a place...

**1** Where **academic excellence and transformational educational experiences ignite leadership potential**, increasing our students’ desire for wisdom, understanding of calling, and preparation for service in an interconnected global society;

**2** Where **research discoveries illuminate solutions** to significant challenges confronting our world and where **creative endeavors reflect the breadth of God’s creation**;

**3** Where our **Christian faith inspires a desire to address systemic problems facing our community**, both local and global;

**4** Where the **dedication of alumni and friends fuels an enthusiasm that advances Baylor** through continuing engagement and philanthropy;

**5** Where the **value generated by and derived from a Baylor experience** is supported through a diversity of revenues and judicious stewardship of our resources;

**6** Where **commitment to excellence in all things cultivates a university community dedicated to improvement of self and service to others, to stewardship of our physical spaces, and to demonstrating outstanding quality and character** in every area of university life.

# AREAS OF SPECIFICATION

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The *aspirational statements* are followed by explanatory paragraphs and *areas of specification*, noted by bullets, that will provide focus for the next decade.

**1 ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT ONE:** Baylor will be a place...where **academic excellence and transformational educational experiences ignite leadership potential**, increasing our students' desire for wisdom, understanding of calling, and preparation for service in an interconnected global society.

## Academic Programming

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Baylor has established a long tradition of excellence in undergraduate education in the liberal arts and in its professional schools. In addition, Baylor has made a significant impact in its areas of strength in graduate studies and post-baccalaureate professional education. During the last decade, we have enhanced academic opportunities for undergraduates in many ways, including the establishment of an Honors College, the creation of a School of Social Work, and the strengthening of our faculty ranks in size, breadth, and quality. Our graduate school has grown with the addition of forty-two PhD and masters programs, many of which already have achieved recognition with respect to research productivity and student placement. We are now in a position to build upon those strengths and to make significant new strides in the sciences and engineering. All of these pursuits must be undergirded by attention to the effective recruitment and retention of students, coupled with scrupulous care for the development of competencies that they will need to succeed and flourish in the twenty-first century. Therefore, in OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN, we aim to:

- Continue to attract, retain, and reward outstanding faculty who build on our

rich tradition of outstanding teaching, mentoring, scholarship, and service;

- Recruit, retain, and graduate an academically excellent and culturally diverse student body;
- Deepen our excellence in the liberal arts, enhance the undergraduate core curriculum, and expand our interdisciplinary opportunities;
- Continue to support and cultivate excellence in undergraduate and graduate professional programs;
- Enhance the integration of faith and learning in undergraduate and graduate educational experiences;
- Approve new graduate programs that strategically build on existing strengths within departments and schools;
- Emphasize academic programs within the health sciences;
- Increase our funding and support of academic programs in science and engineering; and
- Utilize technology strategically and selectively to enhance the University's learning environment and educational offerings.

## Leadership and Experiential Learning

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We understand leadership as one's ability to influence others while maintaining a commitment to doing what is right and what is best, even in the face of competing priorities. Over the course of our history, Baylor's graduates have held leadership

positions across a broad spectrum of fields including law, business, industry, the arts, education, religion, medicine, and public service. Other graduates have chosen to live out their calling in contexts that are not typically associated with leadership, but

for which the qualities possessed by strong leaders are still valuable and relevant. We will continue to graduate students who are prepared and committed to impact the world through intercultural understanding and ethical and compassionate service to others.

Our students' educational experiences must connect their academic and creative strengths to a world beyond the classroom. In particular, students should be inspired to connect their classroom learning to experiential opportunities that help them view their education as a whole that ties together reflection and action in a meaningful way. Experiential learning opportunities strengthen liberal and professional education; they also develop Baylor students into leaders who can resolve challenging problems in our state, nation, and world. To achieve these aims, we will:

- Build a robust and coordinated set of activities and programs that help all students navigate the path from matriculation to their initial and future vocations;
- Enhance programming to help students develop as ethical leaders;
- Increase opportunities for students to engage in research with faculty;
- Strengthen and support experiential learning programs that foster the development of the mind, body, and spirit (e.g., internships, service-learning courses, discipline-specific mission trips, and student organization involvement); and
- Increase opportunities for students to develop cultural competency through studying abroad and engaging locally.

## Student Life Programming

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The heart of the Baylor experience rests in the communion of ideas, experiences, and relationships that develop on campus. Student life has long been a vibrant part of the Baylor experience, and many developmental moments and fond memories for our alumni have occurred as a result of student life programming. The transformation that occurs in the residential facilities, on the intramural fields, and within student organizations is a fundamental component of the educational experience. This transformation promotes an interconnectedness through which friendships form, trust is cultivated, and understanding and respect transcend cultural and socioeconomic boundaries.

During the past decade, stronger, more coordinated ties between student life and academic affairs have been forged to create a more holistic experience for students. Perhaps most visible among our initiatives has been the creation of several living and learning communities and two residential colleges in which faculty live among students in a community that is bound together by academic, developmental, and spiritual pursuits. This initiative has yielded plans for the East Village, a multi-phase

residential community that will serve as a bridge project between BAYLOR 2012 and OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN. To reinforce the on-campus experience, we will:

- Further enhance engagement between students and faculty and between students and staff;
- Continue to increase the percentage of undergraduate students who live on campus and who participate in exemplary living and learning and residential college communities;
- Provide additional community-building opportunities for graduate and professional students;
- Enhance spiritual life programming to provide additional opportunities for students to explore and discern beliefs, convictions, and vocations;
- Create a coherent set of undergraduate learning experiences that foster student success, involvement, and completion;
- Improve the quality, convenience, and delivery of integrated learning and student support services through a focus on assessment and the use of technology; and



- Provide greater opportunities for students to learn from the rich cultural diversity of the student body and surrounding community.

**2 ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT TWO:** Baylor will be a place...where **research discoveries illuminate solutions** to significant challenges confronting our world and where **creative endeavors reflect the breadth** of God’s creation.

Baylor’s most distinctive characteristic is our identity as a research university with a strong Christian commitment. Faculty and students at Baylor are dedicated to joining with the national and international community of scholars and artists in exploring the manifold issues and creative possibilities at the forefront of human discovery. As we do so, we encounter multiple instances in which our Christian perspective offers unique insights into issues such as social responsibility, health care, economic growth, human rights, poverty, and, more fundamentally, our understanding of our identity as human beings within the created order. During the past decade, faculty scholarly productivity has increased in terms of publications and research grants. To support that scholarship, our libraries enhanced our electronic and physical collections through collaborative partnerships. We constructed a state-of-the-art science facility that has attracted faculty and students. We have begun to expand our research capabilities with the establishment of the Baylor Research and Innovation Collaborative (BRIC). But we have much work left to do in order to

position Baylor as a preeminent research university with very high research activity. With respect to this aspiration, we will:

- Support the pursuit of research and creative work at the highest level by providing opportunities for study and collaboration, as well as outstanding facilities and a supportive infrastructure;
- Involve students at all levels in the discovery process, and foster the connection between teaching and scholarship;
- Support creative endeavors that inspire consideration, celebration, and stewardship of God’s creation;
- Increase external research funding and forge new collaborations with industry through such strategies as the creation of select centers of excellence within the Baylor Research and Innovation Collaborative (BRIC); and
- Informed by our faith, scholarship, and call to service, participate in local, state, national, and international conversations regarding society’s greatest challenges.

**3 ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT THREE:** Baylor will be a place...where our **Christian faith inspires a desire to address systemic problems** facing our community, both local and global.

Baylor’s calling dictates that we engage in teaching, research, and innovation with full awareness of the needs of others. These fellow travelers might be residents of nearby neighborhoods with deep economic needs or members of a marginalized class in another hemisphere. As we encounter such situations, we must apply the resources within our

educational community to ease burdens and resolve fundamental inequities. In the last decade, we have increased our engagement in the local community through various activities, including our Family Practice Center Partnership, the School of Social Work Hunger Initiative, Campus Kitchen, the Baylor Interdisciplinary Poverty Initiative, Steppin’

Out, and engagement in local schools through placement of student teacher interns and as volunteers in school-sponsored programs. Through our libraries and digitization center, national collaborations such as the Black Gospel Music Restoration Project have provided access and preservation for rare materials that enhance our understanding of culture and history. And globally we have met needs through an increased number of mission trips, especially those that are discipline-specific, allowing students to use their intellectual and spiritual gifts to serve others while at the same time broadening students' understanding of the rich cultural diversity found throughout the world. In the

coming decade, our efforts need to be more coordinated and focused. Therefore, we should:

- Pursue academic partnerships with local, national, and global constituents that are focused on human flourishing;
- Form stronger, more strategic community partnerships that improve the quality of life for all Central Texans;
- Support local research that provides a foundation for effective solutions to community concerns;
- Integrate service into the fabric of campus life; and
- Create educational opportunities that benefit the community and Baylor alumni.

#### **4 ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT FOUR:** Baylor will be a place...where the **dedication of alumni and friends fuels an enthusiasm that advances Baylor through continuing engagement and philanthropy.**

The Baylor family is deeply committed to the mission of the institution, and we enjoy a productive fellowship based on this shared vision as well as the varying points of view that are presented by the individual members of the family. Moreover, this shared vision of our Christian commitment and love for Baylor compels us to extend and support the legacy of our University. During the past decade, we have reached out to the broader community of alumni and friends through enhanced electronic communications and social media. Further, we have strengthened connections with our roots through our work in Independence, and we have enhanced our student body's understanding of and commitment to Baylor tradition and spirit through the ongoing development of Line Camp and Homecoming. We need creative new methods for strengthening the Baylor community's support, and, in turn, providing support for alumni. Our alumni are a source of wisdom and expertise and we must do more to engage them in all aspects of University life. We also need to welcome others who share our values and support our progress

to join us as we grow. Therefore, we must:

- Engage all Baylor alumni in the life and aspirations of the University;
- Broaden Baylor's constituency base by engaging the global Christian community in the activities and programs of the University;
- Engage and expand Baylor's constituency base by fostering relationships and a culture of philanthropy in order to increase giving to the University in significant ways;
- Inspire today's students to become the committed donors of tomorrow;
- Launch and execute a comprehensive campaign that, through private philanthropy, will undergird, equip, and increasingly fund major components of our plans;
- Instill in the campus culture an understanding of and commitment to existing and new traditions that are hallmarks of the Baylor experience; and
- Sustain and build upon the rich tradition of Baylor's ties to its historic Baptist roots.

**5 ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT FIVE:** Baylor will be a place...where the **value generated by and derived from a Baylor experience** is supported through a diversity of revenues and judicious stewardship of our resources.

The value of a Baylor education is derived from the educational experiences that occur both inside and outside of the classroom. Excellent academic opportunities, close interactions with faculty and staff, residential programming that bridges living and learning, vibrant student organizations that provide meaningful student leadership experiences, and our strong commitment to the integration of faith and learning all contribute to this value. During the course of the last decade, we have enhanced existing programs and developed new ones to continue to increase the value of a Baylor degree. Yet we know that this transformational education depends upon the investment of extensive financial resources, and we must be mindful of the sacrifices being made by the students and their families to afford this educational opportunity. Baylor must therefore continue to be purposefully attentive to the broader market in which we compete for the best and brightest undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. We must also be ever-vigilant about monitoring our comparative position in terms of tuition, fees, and room

and board rates, as well as the educational debt our students accumulate. In the current economic environment, we are called to be accountable for the stewardship of our financial, physical, and human resources. To continue to deliver an educational experience that remains accessible to students and parents who share our definition of value, we must:

- Increase the degree to which the cost of a Baylor education is met by endowed scholarships;
- Discover new sources of program support and revenues;
- Expand the use of sustainable and renewable resources;
- Identify improvements in operational efficiencies without compromising educational quality;
- Further integrate assessment into the decision-making processes of the university; and
- Continue to be recognized by various media sources as an institution that is highly valued for the educational experiences we provide.

**6 ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT SIX:** Baylor will be a place...where **commitment to excellence in all things cultivates a university community dedicated to improvement of self and service to others, to stewardship of our physical spaces, and to demonstrating outstanding quality and character** in every area of university life.

In its broadest and most basic sense, our unique mission demands excellence in all things. The specific characteristics of life within our community contribute in profound ways to the transformation experienced by students—as well as by faculty and staff—during the time they spend at the University. Community is found in relationships among students, faculty, and staff; in our experiences together; and also in the physical environment in which we go about our work. In addition to building new and improving existing facilities during the past decade,

the university has nurtured community in a number of ways, including sponsoring symposia and retreats for faculty and staff, reinvigorating the Office of Spiritual Life, and establishing a common and cohesive New Student Experience that provides academic and spiritual programming, beginning with Welcome Week and extending into the semester. This tangible commitment to pursue excellence in all things, whether relational or physical, strengthens our community.. In order to realize as fully as possible the potential of this responsibility, we will:



- Continue to build a caring campus community grounded in biblical perspectives on inclusiveness and discernment;
- Encourage and support healthy lifestyles among faculty, staff, and students;
- Affirm our commitment to sponsoring an NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletic program in the Big 12 conference dedicated to academic and competitive integrity and excellence;
- Extend the functionality and augment the beauty of the physical campus according

to architecturally consistent and master-planned development guidelines; and

- Identify opportunities for donor-funded facilities that reflect the excellence of Baylor in academic, spiritual, and athletic life.

With these *aspirational statements* and related *areas of specification* as the backbone of OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN, we can be confident in our actions as we chart a path that honors our heritage, raises our sights, and spreads light to a world that needs what God has called and equipped us to offer.

## Invitation to Provide Feedback on the Draft Plan

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We invite you to provide feedback on the draft strategic plan by answering any or all of the six questions listed below. You may find it helpful to consider your responses in advance of following the provided link.

A Feedback Review Working Group (FRWG), drawn primarily from members of the Strategic Themes Committee, will examine all feedback submitted. During the course of their review, as well as upon completion of their work, they will meet with the Provost to share their findings. The FRWG will not produce a written summary report.

1. As you consider the institution that Baylor is now and how it might continue its upward trajectory over the next ten years, what areas of our draft plan do you consider most important?
2. What portions of our draft plan do you find most inspiring?
3. With the understanding that the new strategic plan is intended to be a “dynamic roadmap for our future, providing

direction without dictating specific action” please provide examples of concrete, specific, and descriptive language you believe would clarify or amplify any of the *aspirational statements*, explanatory paragraphs, or *areas of specification*.

4. Our draft plan envisions “*acts of determination*” as the action steps that will be taken by university entities as we implement our plan over the next ten years. Please suggest relevant examples of critical action steps related to any of the areas of specification identified within our aspirational statements that would help advance our goals in that particular area.
5. Based on your reading of the draft, by what name should Baylor identify this strategic plan?
6. Please use this space to provide any additional feedback you would like to offer concerning the draft plan.

**If you would like to provide feedback on the draft strategic plan, please visit [www.baylor.edu/strategicplan](http://www.baylor.edu/strategicplan).**