

Dear Colleagues:

Our mission statement holds high the pursuit of Christian academic life within a “caring community.” Have you thought about the meaning of those two words recently?

If through them we adopt a minimalist ethic of “Baylor nice,” we do ourselves no favors. A culture of superficial politeness can squelch spirited disagreement and silence critical voices, depriving us of resources for reflective judgment. Indeed, *mere* niceness is, often as not, a substitute for real engagement with others in pursuit of the difficult good.

Granting that Baylor nice doesn’t do justice to the kind of community to which we’re called, what does a caring community look like?

In a caring community we honor one another, for our colleagues were made by God for God, are intended for a greatness we scarcely can conceive, and deserve our humble service.

It is the part of a caring community to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep. A caring community celebrates new babies, new colleagues, new books, the newly tenured, and the newly retired. A caring community grieves alongside those distressed by sick children, estranged family members, and dying parents.

Within a caring community, our failures always occasion, first, our own sorrow for letting down others who count on us, and second, our colleagues’ forbearance at frailties from which none of us is immune. In a caring community we seek forgiveness for mistaken judgments or harsh words, even as we also extend pardon and restored friendship to those who disappoint us.

A caring community entertains hard questions. Such a community recognizes that the best way to address difficult issues is by candid conversation characterized by sympathetic imagination, good will, and patience. In a caring community, hard answers are also permitted, for it is no part of caring for others to deny realities. Aristotle loves both truth and friends, but says it is our duty to honor truth more highly. St. Paul calls us to speak the truth, binding such speech together with love. St. Augustine writes of happiness as shared joy in the truth, revealed to us through Christ. A caring Christian community seeks and professes the truth to one another.

Caring communities shy away from insularity and reject inner rings. Instead, they practice hospitality and bring those from the margins into the middle of the community’s life.

A caring community understood in the light of Christ undertakes all of these things, and plenty more, not because it aims to be nice, but because it longs to be faithful and obedient and good in the way Scripture enjoins in Philippians 2.

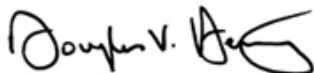
For the sake of a caring community, here are a few noteworthy items:

- Congratulations are well-deserved for **Paul Carron**, assistant professor of philosophy in the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, and for **Davide Zori**, assistant professor of history and archaeology in the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, on recent news of their tenure and

promotion to the rank of associate professor. We are proud of you, grateful for your service, and happy to anticipate many years of future contribution from you!

- Wonderfully generous benefactors are helping our students with two new endowed scholarship funds. **Sarah and Brad Gahm** have established a scholarship for Honors College students pursuing a premedical program of study. [Sarah](#) (B.S. '84) is a member of the Board of Regents and a senior-level administrator with Baylor Scott & White Health. **Mark and Alma Klauber** have established a scholarship for the benefit of Honors College students in the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core. Their two daughters, Ceci and Courtenay, attended Baylor, and Courtenay both graduated from and worked for BIC before graduate study at North Carolina State University, where she now serves international students. With five new scholarships established this year and others in the works, we're on track for a record-setting number of new donors supporting Honors College students through permanently endowed scholarship funds.
- The Honors Program has concluded its search for a clinical professor responsible for teaching and mentoring pre-health and pre-medical students. Joining us in the fall will be Colonel (Dr.) [Walter M. "Sparky" Matthews](#) (B.A. '92), Surgeon General of the United States Space Force. Under the mentoring of storied Baylor professors like Bill Hillis, David Pennington, and Ray Wilson, Col. Matthews discovered his love of medicine, went on to Baylor College of Medicine, and pursued a decorated career as an Air Force doctor. He will retire from active duty in a few months and begin a second career teaching for us in the Honors College, following in the exemplary steps of **Bill Neilson**, who plans to retire in May. (More about Bill later this spring.)
- **Anne-Marie Schultz**, professor of philosophy and director of the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, has just published [Plato's Socrates on Socrates: Socratic Self-Disclosure and the Public Practice of Philosophy](#) (Lexington). In the book, Anne explores the relation of Socratic self-understanding, self-disclosure, philosophical practice, and public engagement, shedding light on overlooked aspects of Plato's dialogues and pointing toward implications for public philosophy in our time. Reviewers praise it as "a moving, revelatory book" that has the "potential to change our readings, our pedagogy, and our commitments to social justice"; a "deeply philosophical exploration of what it means to tell stories" and an aid to help us "better live out our concrete, enacted lives"; and an illustration of "the transformative power of engaging others in dialogue." Great work, Anne!

All the best,



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