

FIFTY YEARS OF BAYLOR'S GRADUATE PROGRAM IN RELIGION

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to current and retired faculty, administrators, current students, graduates of the program and other guests.

My task in this paper is to reflect on the 50th anniversary celebration of the Ph.D. program in Religion at Baylor. I will sketch the beginning of the program, its growth, and more recent trends.

I am indebted to many who have offered their observations and especially to retired Religion Department chairman, Dr. Glenn Hilburn, as well as long-time faculty members Drs. Keathley, Bellinger, Parsons, and current graduate director Dr. Nogalski. Andrew Kim has provided much research support.

The cultural landscape has, of course, influenced us. From the 1960s to the present we have seen major shifts in the life of the nation, in American religion, in the Baptist denomination and at Baylor as well. I will occasionally refer to the changing context as well as to the program itself. We have had 500 graduates of this program (153 M.A.s and 347 Ph.D.s).¹ How did it begin?

I. ORIGINS (1954-1974)

A. Introduction

The impetus for creating a graduate program in Religion at Baylor University derived from the perceived need to prepare Religion professors for teaching at colleges and particularly to fill needs at denominational schools.² Discussions for establishing the program began in the 1950s. The department hired Bernard Ramm in 1954 with the idea of structuring a graduate program. Ramm had published and had achieved a relatively high profile among Baptists. After teaching at Baylor for only four years, he moved on to American Baptist Seminary of the West. Nevertheless, he had laid a foundation for the program by doubling the number of courses and organizing the curriculum into the three areas of Bible, Theology, and History.

B. Preparing for a Graduate Program

1. The Faculty:

In 1959 Eddie Dwyer (New Testament) served as the interim chairman of the Religion Department. He and faculty members Wally Christian (Theology), John Davidson (Psychology of Religion), and James Wood (Church and State; History of Religion) would all contribute to graduate studies over the next two decades. The faculty decided that they needed to recruit additional faculty. In 1961, they hired Glenn Hilburn (History of Christianity) and Bob Patterson (Theology).

¹ The Department of Religion holds printed copies of most theses and dissertations.

² Ray Summers, "Oral Memoirs," interview by Daniel B. McGee, 28 August 1980, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, vol. 2, interview 15: 494-95. Summers noted that deans and presidents, following the lead of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, preferred to hire professors with the Ph.D. rather than those with the Th.D.

Baylor hired Ray Summers in 1963, who came from Southern Seminary to chair the department and lead the new Ph.D. program. He was well known for his publications—especially his Introduction to New Testament Greek and *Worthy Is the Lamb*, a study of the book of Revelation. In 1966, the department added Daniel McGee (Ethics), Bruce Cresson (Old Testament), and Ed Dalglish (Old Testament). All three extended the influence of the department into other areas of the university in notable ways: Dalglish in library acquisitions, Cresson in archeology, and McGee in business and medical ethics, gerontology and environmental studies.³

2. Shaping a Program: Seeking Guidelines:

Ray Summers decided to explore well-established graduate programs in Religion. He reported that he visited every Ph.D. program east of the Mississippi in the summer of 1965.⁴ The basic question he asked was, “If you were starting a new Ph.D. program in Religion, what would you do?” He took copious notes and wrote a position paper on the program. The information provided direction for several areas of program structure. The faculty met two to three hours each week during the planning stage to discuss the program.

3. Program Structure:

Hilburn was planning to participate in the Baptist Jubilee Advance meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and Summers asked him to arrange to visit Princeton as well and seek their advice on the program.⁵ Hilburn discussed the programs with Horton Davies. Davies had just received a letter from a former student who was being terminated at his school because his preparation proved to be too specialized. The student had trained in church history but was not equipped to teach basic surveys of the Old Testament or New Testament. With this letter fresh on his mind, Davies’s counsel was that Baylor train students broadly so that they could teach multiple basic religion courses offered in college. Second, he suggested that students take courses outside the department in related fields such as history and philosophy, giving candidates a greater range of knowledge, perhaps preparing them for an additional teaching area. Hilburn recalled, “So we factored that information into the planning of our Ph.D. program; we were intent in preparing university professors well equipped to teach and to make a living.”⁶ The structure of the program was guided by Davies’s pragmatic counsel. Students could major in Old Testament and Archaeology, New Testament, Church History and World Religions, or Theology (Systematic, Historical and Ethical). In addition to the study of a major field, students took an internal minor in another area of the religion department and an external minor (in another department). Moreover, they took six preliminary examinations during the period of two weeks—three in their major area, two in other divisions of Religion and one in their outside minor. And of course each Ph.D. student wrote a dissertation in a field of interest.

4. Building Library Resources

The department also recognized that they would have to build stronger library holdings in order to support a doctoral program. They secured a master list of key titles in Religion from

³ Summers, “Oral Memoirs,” interview by Daniel B. McGee, 28 August 1980, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, vol. 2, interview 16: 506-16.

⁴ Summers, “Oral Memoirs,” interview 16: 455-457. He names eleven programs: Union Seminary, Drew, Harvard, Yale, Brown, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Duke, North Carolina, Emory, and Vanderbilt.

⁵ Glenn Hilburn, oral interview by Bill Pitts, 13 May 2015.

⁶ Hilburn, oral interview by Pitts.

Yale University and began adding to the Baylor library collection. The windfall came when Ed Dalglish learned that the Crozier Library was going to be sold, and he arranged for Baylor to buy this treasure.⁷ Truckloads of volumes were delivered to the library. Hilburn reports that the purchase worked out to \$1.25 per volume.⁸

C. Recruitment and Admissions

Founders set the bar high. The faculty created an elaborate battery of exams consisting of essays and over 1000 objective questions administered over three six-hour periods. As part of the early review of the program for accreditation J. Phillip Hyatt, Baptist Old Testament professor at Vanderbilt Divinity School, was very encouraging to the faculty, but pointed out that the entrance exam was far more demanding than other programs, and it was soon dropped.

When it came to Recruitment and Admissions, the Ph.D. program looked to Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries. In addition, denominations with small or no graduate programs sent their students to Baylor to earn their degrees—including students from Churches of Christ, Holiness, Pentecostal, and Adventist denominations as well as some from mainline institutions—Methodist, Presbyterian and Catholic. All were welcome. Early in the program's history both master's and doctoral degree programs thrived.

D. Launching the Program, 1966

The *Lariat* reported in April 1966 that Dr. Ray Summers had announced, “Baylor this fall will become the only Baptist university in the world to offer the doctor of philosophy degree in religion.”⁹

1. Leadership

The program opened with Summers as the chair and ten full-time faculty members. Jack Flanders was soon hired in New Testament, and later served as department chair after Summers retired in 1980. Under the leadership of Abner McCall, the university grew in virtually every category—size, buildings, finances, and programs. McCall was deeply sympathetic to Baptist convictions, and the department had his full support. However, when the department asked for a reduced teaching load from four to three courses, McCall declined the request. Wally Christian recalled that the original department workload was 4/4, and he and Patterson regularly taught two seminars during the fall and spring semesters plus two freshman courses and one seminar in the summer. He said that load was “killing us.”¹⁰ On the other hand, Christian had the highest praise for the collegiality of the department.¹¹ When Hilburn became chair in 1983, he quietly reduced the graduate faculty load from 4/4 to 3/3, commenting, “I think I can just do this.”¹² This was a great help for faculty who were directing as many as five dissertations.

2. Students

⁷ Summers, “Oral Memoirs,” vol. 2, interview 16: 506-509.

⁸ Hilburn, interview by Pitts.

⁹ The *Baylor Lariat*, Thursday, April 6, 1966, The Digital Collection database of *Baylor Lariat*, Vol. 67, No. 105, Thursday, April 7, 1966, (see digital collections.baylor.edu/cdm/ref/collection/lariat/id/17880), accessed 28 August, 2015. The announcement also appears in the Baptist Press on April 8, 1966.

¹⁰ C. Wallace Christian, “Oral Memoirs,” interview by Lois E. Myers, 26 October 1998, transcript, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, interview 11: 6.

¹¹ Christian, “Oral Memoirs,” interview 16: 14, and interview 11: 20.

¹² Hilburn, interview by Pitts.

The first graduate of the program was Wayne Denton, a gifted linguist who wrote on the influence of Christian humanism on Latin American legal codes. Denton graduated in 1971 and taught church history at the Catholic Christian Brothers College in Memphis, Tennessee.

Summers reported in 1980 that the department had opened in 1966 with ten admissions, and that all but one of the students had completed the program.¹³

II. GROWTH (1974-2000)

A. New Faculty

The Department added new faculty members in the era 1974-2000, including Jim Breckenridge (History of Religions) and Bill Pitts (History of Christianity) in the 1970s, and Naymond Keathley (New Testament), Bill Bellinger (Old Testament), Rosalie Beck (History of Christianity), Mike Parsons (New Testament), Jim Kennedy (Old Testament), and Barry Harvey (Theology) in the 1980s. Randall O'Brien (Old Testament) and John Jonsson (History of Religions) came in 1991. Eventually, Parsons's teacher, Alan Culpepper (New Testament) joined the faculty. Because of his stature in New Testament studies, Bellinger sees Culpepper's arrival as a turning point in the visibility and credibility of the program. When Culpepper left to be the founding Dean of McAfee, the New Testament faculty again asked, "Who is the best Baptist New Testament scholar in the country?" And they persuaded Charles Talbert (New Testament) to join the faculty in 1996. Ralph Wood joined in theology and literature in 1998, and Bill Brackney (History of Christianity) was hired as department chair in 1999.

B. Administrative Support

The program enjoyed strong administrative support from leaders such as Arts and Sciences Deans Bill Cooper and Wallace Daniel, Graduate Deans Robert Collmer, Henry Wallbesser and Larry Lyon, and from Department Chairs Summers, Flanders, Hilburn and Bellinger. The Department instituted the position of Director of Graduate Studies in 1983. Directors have included McGee, Pitts, Bellinger, Patterson and Nogalski.

C. Relation with Other Baylor University Graduate Programs

For many years the program also enjoyed close association with the Institute for Church and State Studies, directed by James Wood and James Leo Garrett.

The department has also collaborated with other disciplines by cross-listing courses. Faculty members have served on Ph.D. examining committees and dissertation committees in many departments.

The department has provided initiative in creating new programs such as environmental studies and medical humanities.

And the department has cooperated with other divisions of the university devoted to the study of religion, including sponsoring lectures with Truett Seminary, the Institute for the Study of Religion, and the Institute for Faith and Learning.

D. A Flourishing Program

At the time of his retirement in 1980, Ray Summers noted that the demand for the program remained strong. He reported that the program had approved about fifteen new students for graduate work each fall and the average number in the program remained around eighty,

¹³ Summers, "Oral Memoirs," Vol. 2, interview 15: 491. This student also eventually finished the degree.

representing some twenty denominations. By 1980 the program had graduated sixty-three students, and fifty-three of these held college teaching positions.¹⁴

E. Conflict in the 1980s and 1990s

During the 1980s, Fundamentalists took over the Southern Baptist Convention. The Baylor Religion Department was a target of intense criticism during this era. Much controversy centered on Jack Flanders's Old Testament textbook, *People of the Covenant*. Undergraduates came to class armed with tape recorders to catch a heretical statement. President Reynolds was a very outspoken defender of the department. He engineered a charter change in 1990 to shield Baylor from Fundamentalists, should they take over the BGCT. That did not happen, and the Baptist General Convention of Texas has remained a great friend to Baylor.

The Department of Religion sought to reflect national academic trends over against the perceived growing insularity of the six Southern Baptist seminaries. As such, the department continued to be able to offer a credible degree, preparing future professors.

III. A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY (2000-2015)

The years since 2000 represent the beginning of Baylor's quest to become a research university.

A. The Nature of a University

1. What is the purpose of a university? Edwin Gaustad summarized in two points:

- a. To transmit knowledge and culture through teaching
- b. To discover new knowledge/ideas through research

2. In his *Re-examination of the Idea of a University* (1992), Yale scholar Jaroslav Pelikan identified four legs on which a university stands:

- (1) teaching, (2) research, (3) library collections, and (4) university press.

Before 2000, Baylor really qualified on only one point; since then the university has sought to make strides in the other three areas.

3. A major narrative in Baylor's recent history is the emphasis on creating a research university.

B. Teaching/Research Models at Baylor

A historical model may help to conceptualize the shift we are experiencing.

President Abner McCall emphasized teaching during his tenure. Every year at the fall faculty meeting, he made a point of emphasizing that Baylor does not have a "publish or perish" policy, but rather a "teach or perish" policy. He seemed to understand professional meetings as mini-vacations, and he funded trips to these meetings only once every three years. He cherished excellence in teaching.

Despite his views, some members of the Religion Department published extensively. In 1974, Vice President Reynolds asked Ray Summers to prepare a list of Religion faculty

¹⁴ Summers, "Oral Memoirs," vol. 2, interview 15: 493-95.

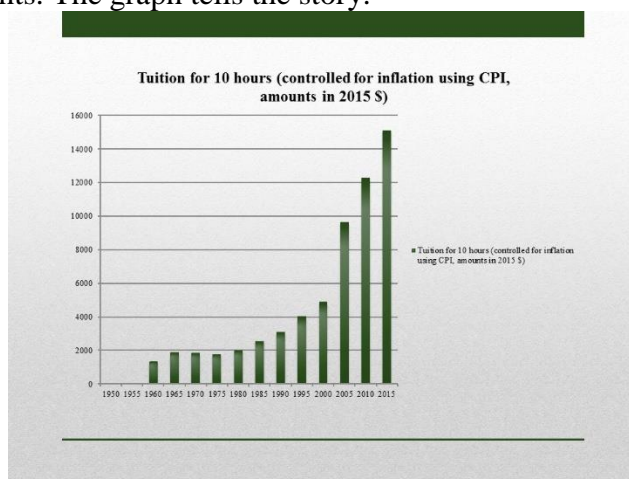
publications. Summers reported that the Department's publication rate matched that of the Baptist seminaries where he had taught for twenty-six years.¹⁵

Herbert Reynolds' position regarding research was that "we do not require it, but we encourage it." The encouragement was mostly verbal. Incentives for increased pay were discussed, but apparently there was little notable change in contracts based on publications. He encouraged the use of summer sabbaticals to promote research and publications.

Robert Sloan moved to require research for tenure at Baylor. This shift was associated with the stated goal of becoming a Tier One university. A planning document, called Vision 2012, set forth this and other goals for the university. In order to pursue this goal, publication output would have to be dramatically increased. One strategy was to hire professors who were already well published. Another strategy was to increase publication requirements for tenure and promotion.

The fall-out from this change had a noticeable impact on faculty, students and administration.

- a. The faculty work-load shifted. The teaching load for research faculty dropped significantly, while the publications level increased noticeably. Library support also increased noticeably. OSO Fast offers to retrieve and deliver books from our library and the interlibrary system, facilitating our research. This service is a great favorite of the faculty.
- b. This move forced the university to raise tuition drastically. This of course had a direct impact on students. The graph tells the story.¹⁶



Ken Starr, who has just celebrated his fifth anniversary as President of Baylor, has notably endeavored to offset the tuition increase by raising scholarship funds.

¹⁵ Summers, "Oral Memoirs," interview 16: 526-528. This is an impressive report, considering the fact that seminaries offered sabbaticals to faculty every seven years.

¹⁶ From 1960 to 1995, a 35 year span, tuition for 10 hours rose from \$1330 to \$4040, which, controlled for inflation, was a 3.2% increase per year. From 1995 to 2005, tuition rose from \$4040 to \$9702, which, controlled for inflation, was a 9.2% increase per year, or almost triple that of the previous 35 year period. Since 2005, this has slowed somewhat as tuition has increased from \$9702 to \$15150, which, controlled for inflation, is a 4.6% increase per year. (This computation was prepared by Andrew Kim.)

- c. Adoption of this new course profoundly affected Baylor administration as well. The actual implementation of the shift contributed to serious faculty discontent and likely to the early departure of two presidents of the university.
- d. These three examples illustrate the magnitude of the changes that have transpired at Baylor during the past decade.

IV. CURRENT TRENDS 2000—PRESENT

A. What are the current trends in the Department? We begin with the Faculty.

1. First, the faculty:

a. The graduate program influences hiring faculty in the Department of Religion.

When adding new tenure-track faculty members, a central consideration is “How can you strengthen the Graduate Program?” Thus the graduate program has increasingly shaped new faculty additions. Since 2000, we have added many new faculty members including Joel Burnett (Old Testament), Dan Williams (Patristics), Doug Weaver (History of Christianity), Paul Martens (Theology), and Jonathan Tran (Theology). James Nogalski (Old Testament), currently director of the graduate program joined the faculty in 2007. Lidija Novakovic (New Testament), Bruce Longenecker (New Testament), Kelly Iverson (New Testament), and Natalie Carnes (Theology) have also joined us. We currently have seventeen graduate faculty professors in Religion.¹⁷

b. The most important change for us in hiring is the flexibility provided by allowing the department to hire non-Baptists—at last! Welcome Beverly Gaventa in New Testament and David Whitford in History of Christianity.

c. Our focus today is celebrating the graduate program, but I hasten to say that this graduate faculty represents only half of a superb religion faculty who are serving the university.

2. Faculty Standards

The requirements for tenure in the faculty may be seen here in the slide.

Requirements for Tenure

During first six years:

1. Publication of a book
2. Three refereed articles

or, Nine articles publishes in refereed journals

Regular review required from within the department by the Dean's Office of the College of Arts and Science

Evaluation by outside reviewers and its own university tenure committee.

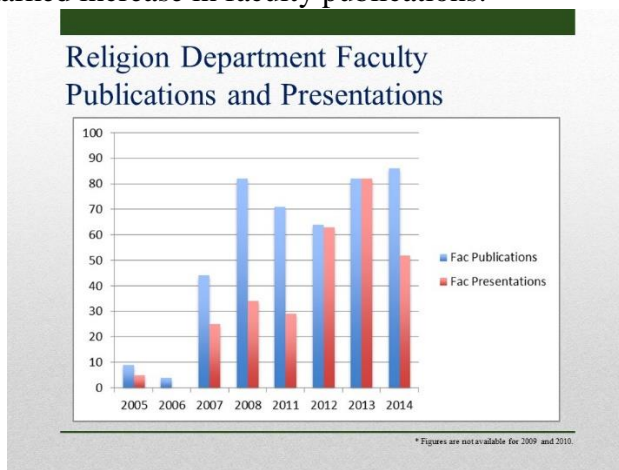
CURRENT TRENDS
(2000-Present)
Faculty Standards

3. Publications by the Department

¹⁷ Deirdre Fulton (Old Testament and Archaeology) is on course to join the gradate faculty, likely next year.

The rate of publication by Baylor faculty and our department has risen dramatically under new initiatives emphasizing research.

This graph shows the marked increase in faculty publications.



Statistics are meager for earlier years, but some scholars such as A.H. Newman, Bernard Ramm, and Ray Summers published widely recognized works.

B. Moving to Trends among Graduate Students

1. University Teaching

One change brought about by increased emphasis on faculty publication was to shift a substantial part of the load of teaching introductory courses to graduate students. When applying and interviewing for a job, graduate students can now report their experience in the classroom. From syllabus to student evaluations they are teachers of record for the two introductory courses at Baylor.

2. Pedagogy Program

With the opportunity for graduate students to teach Baylor survey courses the need for focused instruction on teaching became more apparent. In 2000 Bellinger and Parsons presented a proposal to the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion to fund a permanent teaching program for our graduate students. Wabash approved the \$50,000 proposal, and the Pedagogy program has been in place since that time.

The program began in 2001 with RosalieBeck as the director. She organized the program to cover many practical essentials related to university teaching, such as preparing a syllabus, legal issues, writing exams and so forth. During their actual classroom teaching, experienced lecturers observe graduate students' teaching and meet with them to discuss problems as they arise throughout each semester. In 2014 Parsons assumed responsibility as director. The pedagogy program has significantly strengthened the teaching component of our Ph.D. program.

3. Financing the Program

A constant problem in establishing new Ph.D. programs is cost.

Seminars of 8 obviously do not generate the tuition of a class of 60. Administrators must be willing to finance graduate programs, and Baylor has gradually increased its commitment to graduate work, including establishment of new programs.

For Religion, we have had donors who established funds that have helped pay stipends for some students, including funds in the names of Dwyer, Phillips, Sheppard, and Bowden. Also Bob Patterson negotiated with the BGCT to fund additional Ph.D. stipends.

However, the bulk of the expense has been borne by the University, which has been generous.

For many years, we had a stipend for only three years and were delighted to add a fourth year in the early 2000s. In 2011, we moved to five-year stipends, and we have done so by admitting fewer students.

The Dean of the Graduate School has his own funds, and he supplements our annual stipend (of \$18,000) with \$1000 to \$8000 per year, based on the scores, G.P.A. record, and the quality of the master's program of each new student. The Dean has also added health insurance for all incoming graduate students. These resources allow us to compete with other leading programs.

4. The Hilburn Fund

At the time of his retirement in 2002, Glenn Hilburn's family provided a \$50,000 research fund for graduate students. Additional donations brought the fund to \$100,000. The interest from the fund is used to support travel for archival or library dissertation research. For example, Chris Moore used the fund this summer (2015) to support his dissertation research on religion in the South at archives in Richmond and Louisville.

5. Two Degree Programs

Early in the program, the Master's degree was fairly popular. However, we generally encouraged students to attend seminary for their master's degrees. Reynolds occasionally remarked that a university's name was not established by its master's degree, but by its Ph.D. programs.

In practice, we have recently abandoned offering the master's degree in order to increase stipends for Ph.D. students.

6. The Graduate Student Profile

a. Student Interests

The students attracted to the program have generally had backgrounds that combine strong religious commitment and solid academic experience, themes commonly repeated in autobiographical essays submitted by all applicants. Many express the desire to serve both the church and the academy.

The number of enrolled students in the program at any time has been in the 60-70 range for over a decade.

b. Diversity:

Early on we sought students from abroad, often products of Baptist missionary work, who intended to return to their home countries to teach. Many decided to remain in the U.S.—often for the sake of their children. Caleb Oladipo is a good example. He teaches at the Baptist

seminary in Richmond. Some, like Eiko Kanamara of Japan and Robert Wattimury of Indonesia, returned to their home countries to teach. .

Our first African-American graduate was Dan McGee's M.A. student Cleophus LaRue, who went on to teach homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary. Graduate Javier Elizondo is Executive Vice-President and Provost of Baptist University of the Americas.

We have had numerous women graduate from the program. This is a notable shift in the graduate student profile from the beginning of the program which was all male in 1966. Rosalie Beck was not only the first female graduate of our program, but was also the first woman hired by the department. As a department we support women in ministry and in the academy. In short, reflecting national trends, we have sought to be a diverse department.

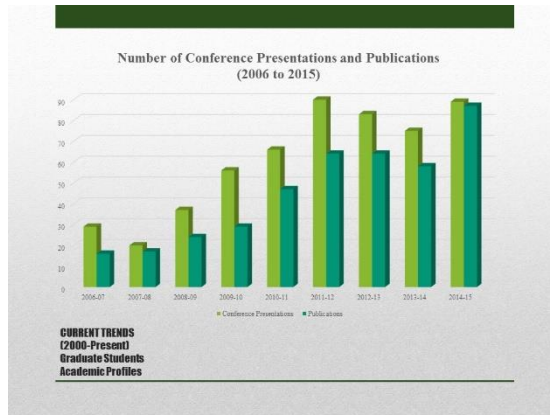
c. Academic Profiles

Applications to the program range from 60 to 90 each year. The competition for admission has increased. We are attracting applicants from leading programs in the country, including Princeton and Duke. Adding a Preview Weekend has allowed us to evaluate students' fit for our program.

Well before 2000, we had students who published scholarly works. Recall, for example, Watson Mills, Richard Walsh, and Nancy L. DeClasse-Walford. Students today not only work to excel in seminars. Reflecting the increased emphasis on publishing in the academy and at Baylor, the students begin early to build their CVs with presentations at academic conferences and publications. Paul Martens gathered and published this information in the first *Initiations* in 2006-07. In that year students reported twenty-nine (29) conference presentations, and sixteen (16) publications. By 2014-2015 the number had risen to eighty-nine (89) conference presentations and eighty-seven (87) publications.

Year	Conference Presentations	Publications
2006-07	29	16
2007-08	20	17
2008-09	37	24
2009-10	56	29
2010-11	66	47
2011-12	90	64
2012-13	83	64
2013-14	75	58
2014-15	89	87

CURRENT TRENDS (2000-Present)
Graduate Students
Academic Profiles



Budgets in both the Graduate School and the Religion Department support student participation in academic conferences, both regional and national.

Moreover, an increasing number of students are publishing their dissertations. They are all keenly aware of the importance of taking this step.

d. Religious Profile: Baptists to Evangelicals

The most obvious change in student religious identity is the shift from predominantly Baptist culture to predominantly Evangelical culture. A variety of factors have gone into this shift. Formerly, we attracted many of our students from the six Southern Baptist seminaries. Now we get almost none from these institutions. The media perception of Baptists is

increasingly negative, and the name is often dropped from individual churches. Moreover, the growing trend to affirm spirituality while rejecting institutional religion is working against established denominations. Because Baylor markets itself as both Christian and academic, the program thereby attracts highly qualified evangelical students from many different denominational backgrounds.

e. Placement

We have been fortunate with our placement record to this point. Most are gainfully employed in service vocations.



f. Student Relationships

Baylor Ph.D. students help one another in countless ways. The Graduate Theological Fellowship promotes numerous social and academic events. But informal conversations and friendships formed have had an even more powerful impact. The sense of community is one of the finest features of our program.

V. PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

A. Faculty

1. Faculty in the Academy:

Faculty serve actively in the academic guild—AAR/SBL and specialized academic organizations—as they give presentations, moderate sessions and accept leadership positions as officers.

2. Academic Journals at Baylor:

The department has been closely associated with production of academic journals.

Journal of Church and State – the oldest; begun by James Wood in 1959

Journal of Texas Baptist History—edited for 20 years by Bill Pitts

Perspectives in Religious Studies –edited by Mikeal Parsons

Sixteenth Century Journal –edited by David Whitford

3. Baptist Studies:

This is still the most viable place to earn a Ph.D. in Baptist studies—and will likely continue to be. Faculty are active in the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion and in the Baptist History and Heritage Society. Despite change in the American religious

landscape, Nogalski found in a recent year that 39% of graduate students were Baptist. Weaver is leading Baptist studies at Baylor.

4. Ranking:

In terms of ranking,

(1) Campus: Dean Lyon regularly praises our program as a leading program at Baylor.

(2) Regional: At the SWCRS, each year Baylor Graduate students present more papers than any other group.

(3) National: A decade ago we saw the program's ranking shift from somewhere in the top 30s to the top 20s. Graduate Dean Larry Lyon, citing Academic Analytics, which focuses on books published, now ranks Baylor's graduate religion program number 6 in the nation, which is the highest national ranking of any Baylor graduate program.¹⁸

B. Student Successes

How have our students fared? Quite well, we think. We cannot begin to list all of our students and their places of work. We briefly note the diversity of their professional work with an example or two.

1. Many have entered university administration, including Royce Money who served as President of Abilene Christian University for nineteen years, and John Vassar, Provost at L.S.U. in Shreveport.

2. Many serve as pastors, some in leading churches of the nation, including Amy Butler at Riverside Church in New York City, as well as Duane Brooks, Gary Furr, and now retired Brian Harbour.

3. Some have become denominational leaders, such as Pam Durso who leads Baptist Women in Ministry.

4. Some, like Derek Hogan and Rob Krapohl, are librarians.

5.. Others have worked as chaplains, journalists, counselors, and missionaries, and some have served in organizations devoted to Christian ethics.

6. And finally, most of our graduates, such as Curtis Freeman, Jan Quesada, Joel Gregory, Andy Arterbury and Robert Creech are professors. All of them have devoted much of their time and energies to teaching undergraduates and seminary students.

CONCLUSION

We have much to celebrate in the half century of our graduate program in religion— thanks to the dedicated work of both faculty and students and the support of the university and its administration.

We have responded to a variety of challenges in American culture, to denominational crises, and to university demands.

¹⁸ Larry Lyon, e-mail to Bill Pitts, Thursday, 27 August 2015.

As we look toward the future we have a solid tradition from which to draw. Academic and religious structures will doubtless continue to change, and we will need to respond accordingly. I think we are in an excellent position to do so in the years ahead.

We now conclude with a brief video.