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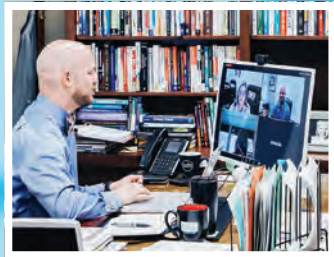
Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.



Effective remote learning
Making connections contributes to success



Considering seminary?
Four things you should know before you go

Spotlight on Christian

Higher Education

Resources and stories to help students succeed in their pursuit of a college or seminary degree.



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TAB Media

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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 25.

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash

President and Editor-in-Chief



jrash@thealabamabaptist.org
@RashionalThts

Theological training, networking opportunities widely available

My friend Kristen's advice to upcoming seminary students is:

Don't choose a seminary on "who will get me where I want to go fastest and cheapest," but rather on "what kind of person and minister will I become as a result of its professors and seminary ethos?"

"Your teachers will shape you. You will shape your congregation. There's a ripple effect," she explains.

"Resist shopping for seminary like an American consumer, for a place that simply gives you information. Instead, prayerfully choose a seminary based on the quality of formation and information."

Kristen is manager of marketing and communications for Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham and director of The Center for Women in Ministry at Beeson.

She's also a Beeson alumna. Our paths crossed during my own studies at Beeson, and we've worked together in various ways ever since.

Kristen admittedly had her marketing hat on while sharing about choosing a seminary, but her words reminded me how important it is for those teaching

God's word to have appropriate training.

Not everyone will have the opportunity to complete a master of divinity or other type of seminary degree and many will never get to attend seminary at all, but that doesn't mean theological training isn't available.

If you live near Samford, University of Mobile, Judson College in Marion or another Christian college campus, then talk to the dean of the religion and/or Christian studies department about auditing classes.

You might also explore where extension centers of our six Southern Baptist seminaries are located and see if the drive is manageable for you to take classes from time to time.

Samford also continues its longtime extension center-type classes with the Ministry Training Institute, offering local classes scattered across the state as well as online opportunities.

I've taken a few classes through MTI and highly recommend checking them out.

"The call to teach and expound on God's word is a high calling. And one that deserves your very best preparation."

Kristen Padilla
Beeson Divinity School

Our friend Kevin Blackwell oversees the effort and works with seminary-trained leaders across the state to teach the classes.

TAB Media staff and board members also have served as teachers through the years, including TAB staff member and ordained minister Richard Madrox teaching classes this spring.

See page 25 for more information on MTI.

Another friend, Morris Murray Jr. of Jasper, shared recently about the tremendous experience he has had with the Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute at Beeson, under the direction of Mike Pasquarello.

"For the past two years, I have been facilitating a group for Walker County," Murray noted. "It has been a very meaningful project.

"In a nutshell, one facet of its ministry is the formation of preaching peer groups which consist of 5 to 12 preachers who meet once a month to receive encouragement, direction and

support organized around three primary areas — learning, devotion and formation — and the practice of preaching."

Beeson also offers the Thriving Pastor Initiative, which serves to connect congregational leaders with one another and with other sources of support and encouragement to help them thrive, both personally and pastorally.

Beeson Associate Dean Thomas L. Fuller directs this effort, and Stephen M. Johnson serves as associate director.

I share these examples to demonstrate the endless opportunities available to ministers, Bible study leaders and Sunday School teachers no matter where you live or what schedule you keep.

Congregations, encourage your ministers to use some of their church work time to take advantage of these continuing education opportunities and cover the expenses for them.

Pastors and education ministers, challenge those who teach in your church to participate in theological training and provide the resources to make that happen for them.

As my friend Kristen says, "The call to teach and expound on God's word is a high calling. And one that deserves your very best preparation."✝

Your Voice



Share your comments, letters to the editor, blog excerpts, social media posts

Myriad of opportunities on campus to grow faith

By Daniel Green
Junior, University of North Alabama

As a graduating high school senior, it seemed like I had been waiting my entire life to go to college.

Being homeschooled in a small town in southwest Alabama doesn't provide a whole lot of social interaction for someone who thrives off of community and fellowship.

As graduation day approached and I narrowed my college choices, I finally settled on the University of North Alabama. During my campus tour of UNA, an insurmountable peace came over me that I had not felt on any other college campus.

But even after the decision was made, I had a lingering question: How was I going to live out a life of spiritual maturity in a world that is often sinful?

Finding a church home

When I first got to UNA, my biggest struggle was finding the church that the Lord wanted me to be at during my collegiate years.

I visited many churches throughout that first semester, but it wasn't until I started asking the Lord for discernment that I found First Baptist Church, Florence.

The people here reminded me of my own family — caring, spiritually mature — and they always want to feed college kids lunch!

Here at First Baptist I would find many answered prayers through the church's leadership. My music minister, Scott Underwood, gave

me the opportunity to serve as part of the worship band on Sundays.

My college minister, Jake Denison, gave me time every week to be poured into, both in small group discipleship as well as one-on-one.

Praying for discernment to make this church decision was one of the first steps in maturing my faith throughout my college experience.

Baptist Campus Ministries

Freshman year, I met an older student in my academic department, Entertainment Industry. He brought me to Baptist Campus Ministries, which quickly became a magnet for me.

Our Baptist campus minister, Matt Daniels, creates opportunities for students to lead as well as grow as disciples together. I now lead worship on Monday nights for our service that we call "The Big Room."

I have always known that the Lord blessed me with the gift of music, but I struggled throughout high school to know exactly where He wanted me to use this gift.

Through BCM, the Lord has taught me to continually pray for opportunities and to expect that they will come abundantly on His time.

Christian fraternity

After getting involved at First Baptist and BCM, I started to notice a handful of guys living out their faith in Greek life, which was new to me.

I loved the idea of the camaraderie of a team and the closeness of a band of brothers, so I decided to find out more about Lambda Sigma Phi. If ever there was a group of guys that lived out Proverbs 27:17, I have found them.

Lambda Sig lives by a simple motto: "Love the Brotherhood, Serve others, Praise the King."

After being a member for three years and now serving as vice president, I can say that this experience the Lord has brought into my life has been the greatest gift in my college experience.

Not only have I been held accountable throughout my walk, but I have also had the chance to be poured into every day by my brothers. In this gift from the Lord, I have learned how to pray and surrender my will to Him, so He can show me things I would have otherwise missed.

Advice for new students

If I could leave my freshman self with any advice, it would be these three things:

- ▶ Learn how to seek discernment from the Lord and see what He is already trying to show you.
- ▶ Learn how to pray for and expect opportunities, even when it feels as if your avenues are uncertain.
- ▶ Learn how to surrender to His will above all other things because what you create for yourself will never amount to the gracious gifts He gives.

An observation from someone who spends a lot of time with men and women 18–25 who are passionate about the local church and reaching their neighbors and nations with the gospel:

These young adults are passionate ... and have a robust theology of the Imago Dei teachings of the Bible and the sanctity of all aspects of life.

They aren't afraid to engage in change when they catch the "why" behind it. They also have a keen sense of biblical ethics that leads them to see events, injustices and sin and say "this isn't right."

Recently, they find themselves politically homeless and feel caught in the crossfire, which has led to them yearning to be change agents but unable to process how.

I am thankful that the local church is a place that can exist as a Kingdom outpost with a big tent that welcomes in all people. Brothers and sisters in the Church: continue fighting for the big tent.

The welcoming local church continues to have the potential to serve as salt and light and bridge divides.

Let's keep contending for the church to be a safe, bridge-building place where different people can exist in community together.

Will Spivey
College pastor
First Baptist Church
Opelika

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“The life of a Christian is an education for a higher service. God is training you for something.”

CORRIE TEN BOOM

Dutch Christian author whose family became famous for its heroic efforts during the Holocaust

Theological education is an investment with eternal returns.
SBTS Admissions Office
via Twitter

To build your life around God's word (Jesus' teaching + the rest of the Bible) is to build your life on a firm foundation. Christianity is a worldview; its truth has applications for every area of your life. Putting Jesus in a compartment is not really an option.

Alex Chediak, Author
“Thriving at College: Make Great Friends, Keep Your Faith, and Get Ready for the Real World!”

We talk about “finding the will of God.” In reality, it's never been lost! It's spelled out right there in [2 Peter

3:9]. God wants every person alive to hear the gospel, and He uses His church to make that happen.

J.D. Greear, Author
“What Are You Going to Do with Your Life?”

In the biblical understanding of giftedness, gifts are never really ours or for ourselves. We have nothing that was not given us. Our gifts are ultimately God's, and we are only “stewards.”

Os Guinness, Author
“The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life”

“So the Lord must wait for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those

who wait for his help” (Isa. 30:18).

I read this verse this morning, and I sent it to my daughter who will be graduating college in less than four months. This is a milestone in her life with many emotions as she transitions from being a student for the last 17 years to working full time (we hope).

It's not easy to lay aside all our great plans and trust God. Or maybe we don't have any plans and are struggling to figure out what to do. God is faithful, loves each of us so much and is ready to help us. But we must come to Him and trust Him.

Beth Gardner
Baptist Campus Minister
Metro Mobile Baptist Campus Ministries

Giftedness and discipline

As an interim pastor, I worked in college ministry with Huntingdon students — most of whom were music majors — for a few years.

It was a privilege to hear corporate worship being blessed by brass, woodwind and vocal instruments wielded by instrumentalists with determination and excellence.

Sometimes when leading corporate prayer, I would thank God for the giftedness of these young adult musicians.

But in expressing this gratitude, at some point I realized that my prayers were incomplete. I needed simultaneously to express thanks for the students' discipline.

It's one thing to have giftedness, but it must also be developed through discipline — in other words, practice — to achieve true musical excellence.

This is part of what stewardship is all about: being faithful to use and develop what God has placed in your life for His glory — hopefully aiming to maximize one's gifts, possessions and life circumstances for the sake of God's kingdom.

First Corinthians 9:24 exhorts: “Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize.”

Each of us should strive for excellence and stewardship in the living of the Christian life in order to glorify God.

Keith Hinson
Office of Communications
and Cooperative Program
State Board of Missions

From the *Twitterverse*

@MattDanielsBCM

About to break open the bread of life with a group of athletes! Can't wait to see how the Lord moves in these men.

@DannyAkin

The coming of Jesus Christ was nothing less than an invasion of sinful planet earth for the salvation of the world! @ronjourlocke @SEBTS #sechapel

@NOBTS

Even though the start of this semester will be different than most, we're still excited for classes to begin! Shoutout to our professors & students for their commitment to their classes & flexibility during unprecedented times. What you guys are doing is incredible.

@DrPaulChitwood

As another class of @SBCCP

seminary students earn terminal degrees, @IMB_SBC needs theological educators all over [our] world. Is God calling you to teach among the nations?

@GatewaySeminary

“Rejecting secular positions as foundational to our curriculum does not mean we do not address the problems raised by those viewpoints.” — @Jeff_Iorg

@SEBTS

But as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving. I will fulfill what I have vowed. Salvation belongs to the Lord. — Jonah 2:9

@SamfordU

Despite the various challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic, Samford University graduates continue to transition into the workforce successfully. 95% of

the May 2020 graduating class are either employed or continuing their education in graduate school.

@SWBTS

“As you choose songs for your church to sing, don't forget the hymnal. Used knowledgeably, a good hymnal can be a valuable resource to help you find biblically rich songs, rooted in church history and edifying for your congregation.” —@ScottAniol

@WVTM13

University of Mobile graduate will make history as the first female to officiate the Super Bowl.

@AdamGreenway

“Your dissertation is your last paper, not your first book.” —@SWBTS interim provost @davidsdockery's wisdom for research doctoral students #PointToPonder @rdsswbts

Where do I go?

By Dianna L. Cagle
TAB Media

Though finances, family considerations, location and career path must be considered, the college decision should be a prayerful one

Students deciding on a college, graduate school or seminary face a daunting task.

“The college experience can vary greatly depending on which school you decide to attend,” said Brian Kennedy, assistant dean in the office of admission at Samford University in Birmingham.

One of the major decisions for students and parents involves the worldview of the college.

“College is no small decision, and there are many factors at play (finances, desire, location, etc.). It should be prayerfully considered,” said Sam Morris, director of admissions for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

“We want students at The College at Southeastern to know that they are work-

ing toward a greater, shared mission.

“Sometimes that is going to a secular college and using those skills to advance the mission. Other times it is going to a Christian college and using those skills to advance the mission.”

Students also are likely to make their most influential friendships, solidify values and possibly meet their spouse in college.

Ask questions

“Every family is different, and the things they are looking for in higher education vary dramatically,” said Faith Baker, University of Mobile’s assistant director of admissions. “Ask the questions that matter to you and your family the most.

“Whichever way the decision is made, one thing is certain: the chosen school will send ripple-effects through the rest of the stu-



Photo by Mary Amelia Taylor

Judson College students attend their first day of spring 2021 classes in the Thomas Choral Room.

dent’s life,” Baker said.

College is the first time many will be on their own.

“(It) is a testing ground for many students and their faith,” Morris acknowledged.

He encouraged students to consider local churches as well as “the culture of Christian accountability, mentorship and spiritual formation” when deciding on a school.

Baker said that, while “choosing a college can be scary,” UM assigns a personal enrollment counselor to each student.

“These counselors will help navigate the confusion of the application process

and truly work to help each student determine if UM is the place where God is calling them,” she continued.

“We do everything we can to assist families through that process, and the final decision, no matter the decision, is one we celebrate with the families.”

Kennedy believes the college experience means more than taking courses and earning a degree.

“A Christian worldview promotes the development of the whole person,” he explained, “not just academically, but professionally, socially and spiritually as well.

“The irrepressible hope

found in Christ is the primary motivational factor for what we do at Samford. The goal is that their college experience would be described as a transformational one.”

All the college leaders said each decision should be made with prayer.

Count the cost

While there are many facets of the process, financial cost weighs on everyone’s mind.

Along with out-of-pocket expenses, students need to find out how much financial help they might receive, whether scholarships, grants, work-study or loans, and

“A Christian worldview promotes the development of the whole person.”

BRIAN KENNEDY

assistant dean in the office of admission, Samford University

consider the cost of fees, housing and food.

“The financial consideration is a major stress point for most families and often the deciding factor for many students in their consideration of a Christian and secular institution,” Morris noted.

Many graduate from college “saddled with debt” and unable to pursue their calling because of it.

“It is always wise to consider the practical implications of costs,” he said.

Many times enrollment counselors work with families to get out-of-pocket cost down to what they would pay for a public, secular school, Baker said.

Students need to think about how much debt they are willing to bear and pray about “what is most appealing and even God-honoring,” said Dustin Bruce, dean of Boyce College, on Southern Baptist Theological Seminary’s campus in Louisville, Kentucky.

“Sometimes there are great scholarships at private colleges that make it just as affordable,” he noted, adding that the six Southern



Southern Baptist Theological Seminary photo
During a rainy fall semester move-in day at Boyce College, returning students help first-year freshmen unload their possessions and get settled into their new campus homes.

Baptist seminaries have discounts for members of Southern Baptist churches.

Michael Wang, director of admissions for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, added, “If a student is called to the ministry and will want to complete a seminary degree, a Christian college will help them be prepared for the seminary education.”

Combined degrees

Morris said The College at Southeastern prepares students with a “rigorous liberal arts education”

as well as urging them to “think critically and communicate effectively.”

Leavell College and NOBTS offer a bachelor/master of divinity degree combination that can be finished in five years.

“This would save them a lot of money in pursuit of higher education,” Wang noted. “The college students on our campus are propelled through our seminary because of such programs that allow our students to use their undergraduate work towards their graduate degree.”

Martin first to complete new NOBTS post-doctoral program

On Dec. 19, Charlie Martin, worship pastor at NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, became the first person to earn a post-doctoral certificate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Martin earned his doctorate of educational ministry with a specialization in worship studies from NOBTS in 2017, then began to look into the possibility of getting another doctorate in 2019.

“But after talking with administration, the short-term Post Doctorate Certificate Program was a much shorter program and would give me a second specialization in order to be able to teach classes on a college level in multiple areas,” he said. “This second specialization in discipleship and spiritual formation also helps me to fulfill my strong passion for making disciples and developing leaders and hopefully

will open other doors of opportunity for me in the future.”

Randy L. Stone, director of NOBTS’ doctor of educational ministry and doctor of education programs, said the certificate is available to all their professional doctoral graduates.

“The nine-hour certificate requires three seminars but no summative project,” he said. “The additional work allows students to complete a second (or third) specialization. Many of our students find the collegial learning



MARTIN

environment academically, relationally and professionally rewarding. Some students are pursuing additional

For more information, visit nobts.edu/cme/degree-programs/post-doctoral-certificate.html.

credentials for teaching or leading in specific areas of ministry.”

Other specializations include Christian apologetics,

church revitalization or strategic leadership, or students can customize their topic with advising from the program director. (Grace Thornton)



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“ [It] helps me to fulfill my strong passion for making disciples and developing leaders. ”

CHARLIE MARTIN

worship pastor, NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville

Constructive campus visits

By **Connie Pearson**
TAB Media

Pandemic complicates, limits college visits but they remain an important part of the decision-making process

Keeagan Zanda, a senior at Hartselle High School and a member of First Baptist Church, Hartselle, recently accepted a scholarship to play soccer at the University of Mobile in the fall. His campus visit was made virtually, and his scholarship was offered by way of films submitted to the coaches.

During an in-person visit to a different university, Keegan's mother said only two students with their parents were on the tour, many buildings were off-limits and students weren't allowed in the dorms at all.

To her, the experience was "like buying a \$40,000 mystery box."

Baptist colleges and universities are doing their best to avoid that "mystery



University of Mobile photo

Prior to her enrollment, UM student-athlete Isabel Valenzuela (center) takes a campus tour with Andy Canegitta (left), UM track and field coach, and Victoria Carroll, an admissions counselor.

box" feeling. They are endeavoring to follow CDC guidelines to keep current students safe while providing an adequate and realistic overview of the life and offerings on their campuses to prospective students.

Answering all the ques-

tions and allaying the fears involved in making a college choice are formidable challenges, but they have led to creative thinking and crucial implementation of technology by admissions offices.

Campus tours typically include just that — a tour of

campus facilities, including academic buildings, housing/dorms, dining facilities and spots with historical significance.

Some colleges plan additional activities, such as meetings with faculty, the opportunity to sit in on a class or lecture and/or information sessions on financial aid, specific majors or other relevant topics. Expect a campus visit to last a minimum of a couple of hours.

Ideally, allow some extra time to visit the community surrounding the campus too. Most college towns have numerous hotel and restaurant options, along with recreational and tourist sites to enjoy while you're there.

University of Mobile

At the University of Mobile, UM Day is scheduled for March 19 with two dif-

ferent sessions. According to Hali Givens, assistant vice president for enrollment, the number is limited to 50 students and two guests per student.

Chairs will be grouped and socially distanced, with all guests symptom- and temperature-checked. Masks are required.

Individually wrapped snacks and breakfast items will be available, and lunch will be served by the cafeteria staff, with students sitting spaced throughout.

UM is particularly careful about dorm tours and only shows a sample room rather than actual student rooms. Pre-COVID, students could sit in on classes, but now that is very limited. No on-campus accommodations are available for guests.

Foosackly's is the local go-to for students eating off

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campus. Nova Espresso on Saint Andrew Drive also is a favorite, with Waffle House popular for late-night dinner runs.

UM students are fortunate to have the beach nearby. Dauphin Island is about a 45-minute drive, and Gulf Shores is only an hour and 15 minutes away. Walking around downtown Mobile, riding scooters and playing disc golf are popular student activities.

Samford University

Samford University offers virtual visits on Thursdays at 6 p.m. and virtual faculty appointments. In addition, a 30-minute, in-person visit with faculty and a one-hour campus tour conducted on a golf cart can be arranged.

These visits also allow for an opportunity to connect with a faculty member within the student's academic interest, schedule permitting.

According to Samford's dean of admission, Jason Black, Samford is hosting

Choose Samford days for high school seniors on Fridays throughout the spring.

The number of participants is limited, and all CDC guidelines will be followed.

Neither meals nor overnight accommodations are available on campus currently. Brian Kennedy, assistant dean in the office of admission, added, "Providing engaging experiences for prospective students and their families requires a collaborative effort across campus, and we are very grateful to our faculty and staff for continuing to partner with the office of admission to introduce the very best part of Samford; our people."

Samford University's location in Birmingham means endless choices for off-campus dining, shopping and entertainment. The bloggers who contribute to SamfordStories.com have pointed out many of those with student appeal,



Samford University photo

Mr. Beeson, a life-size statue of Samford benefactor Ralph Waldo Beeson, greets every visitor to Samford's campus. This year, he reminds visitors to wear their masks for a safer visit.

including special places to satisfy a sugar craving and get started on adding the infamous "Freshman 15."

Ambria Underwood, a blogger on the site, says Continental Bakery in Mountain Brook is her favorite, with its French music and cinnamon rolls "the size of your face."

She also discovered The Heavenly Donut Company in Vestavia, Cookie Fix in

Homewood, Magic Muffins in Mountain Brook and Emily's Heirloom Pound Cakes, also in Homewood.

To work off some of those delicious calories, Oak Mountain State Park is nearby with its hiking/biking trails. Birmingham Botanical Gardens or the Shades Creek Greenway — just across the street from campus — also are great places to stroll and exercise. There

are dozens of hotels within an easy drive of Samford.

Judson College

Judson College in Marion has preview days scheduled Feb. 18, March 27 and May 15.

Prospective students and their guests also may schedule a private tour of the campus by contacting the admissions office.

According to Beverly Cox Keyton, a 2012 graduate, Perry Lakes Park with its hiking trails and birding tower is a local asset, along with Barton's Beach on the Cahaba River.

The Social is a relatively new ice cream parlor, and Lottie's Restaurant is considered "the fanciest place in town." Keyton fondly remembers Whillard's Original BBQ & Grill on Highway 5, Lotus Garden and The Shack.

Visitors to Judson will find a couple of hotels in Marion but might need to stay in Demopolis or Selma. 🇺🇸



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EFFECTIVE REMOTE LEARNING

By Lanell Downs Smith

TAB Media

Helping students succeed, connect with others in the online classroom

All through high school, Hannah Gibson looked forward to a traditional college experience — one that included dorm life, late-night study sessions with friends and the chance to build relationships with faculty members.

She found that at Judson College in Marion. As a Judson freshman, Gibson loved living on campus and learning in a classroom with her peers and professors. Then the coronavirus hit in March 2020, and students were sent home to complete the spring semester online.

“As was true for many, 2020 was a challenging year that disrupted my ‘normal,’” Gibson recalled. “Change is difficult for me anyway, but the biggest loss was having to leave Judson and adjust

to online learning. Trying to recreate our Judson community through a screen was difficult.”

Interaction

She missed her friends and often felt isolated and alone after the Judson campus closed for the semester, just before Alabama’s stay-at-home order went into effect in early April.

But Gibson eventually adjusted, connecting with peers via FaceTime and interacting with professors and classmates through Zoom.

Since last year, pandemic-related restrictions have impacted the college experiences of countless students like Gibson. At the same time, those restrictions have led many universities to adapt their programs to meet the growing need for remote learning.

According to Michael Bergman, director of distance learning at Judson College, increased stress among students, including concerns about coming to a campus or about leaving their home, now makes online classes a more attractive option.

But remote learning is not without challenges. Learners accustomed to a traditional classroom, with real-time

communication, classroom structure and a regular class schedule, can sometimes struggle in a smaller, less synchronous remote experience, Bergman noted.

Judson College offered flexible distance-learning options for classes and scheduling even before the pandemic.

To address the needs of students adjusting to remote learning, Bergman said

many Judson instructors are offering more options to connect, including increased office hours, virtual classes and prerecorded videos.

They also have offered more group meetings, projects and other methods to help students work through remote-learning challenges.

Support

“Our departmental approach has always been to provide support, advice and

Treating an online class like an in-person experience is important.

MICHAEL BERGMAN
director of distance learning, Judson College




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University of Mobile photo

Todd Greer, vice president for academic affairs at the University of Mobile, meets via Zoom with students enrolled in the university's new master of science in leadership and communication program.

classrooms which hold 30 students now are limited to 15 (50% capacity) by CDC social-distancing guidelines. On Mondays, 15 students might attend class in person while another 15 participate by Zoom. On Wednesdays, the students switch places, so everyone has an opportunity to be in the physical classroom.

What are UM's flexible-learning options like for students?

Last fall, freshman Molly Grace Watkins took voice lessons online instead of in person and participated in classes via Zoom because of pandemic-related concerns.

"Singing in front of somebody on a Zoom camera is, of course, different than being in person," she said. But the ability to interact through Zoom helped her develop a good relationship with her instructor and led to a positive classroom experience.

According to Todd Greer, vice president for academic

affairs, live instruction — either in person or online — has allowed UM faculty to engage students and to help them avoid falling behind.

"Given the parameters of how COVID-19 has forced higher education to adapt, the University of Mobile has embraced the opportunity but also shown the humanity and grace of a Christian institution by working to support students as they struggle through this very challenging time," Greer said.

Students can take measures themselves to ensure a successful experience and to mitigate common remote-learning challenges.

Dedication

Treating an online class like an in-person experience is important, Bergman noted. Dedication and commitment to the class and striking the right "home-class" balance are also needed, he said.

Procrastination can be a

hindrance for some online learners. Research shows that more than 70% of college students procrastinate, a behavior that can lower a learner's grades.

Communication

And while social distancing makes it harder for college students and faculty to interact, Watkins noted the importance of students communicating with their instructors.

"If you communicate [with professors,] then they know that you really do care," she said. "It's hard to talk to people [because of the pandemic's restrictions]. You feel like you can't because you want to be safe and you want to be conscientious of the other person and how they feel. But if you do have a question or concern, make that known to your professors. They will understand and they will want to communicate back to you because it's evident that you care."✝

guidance for students. We are still offering advising sessions and other opportunities for students to get help and to express their concerns," Bergman said.

Meanwhile, the University of Mobile and some other colleges across the nation have adopted a hybrid-flexible (HyFlex for short) course model, giving stu-

dents options on how they learn by combining Zoom and synchronous learning with in-class instruction and alternating between those experiences.

Kathy Dean, assistant vice president for university communications at UM, said flexibility has been key during the pandemic.

At UM, for example,



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Succeed online

By Lanell Downs Smith
TAB Media

10 tips to achieve success in remote learning

There are a number of practical steps students can take to ensure a successful remote learning experience. Here are a few tips compiled by University of Mobile staff members Anna Meherg, student support services coordinator, and Shanoa Reed, student success coordinator in charge of first- and second-year programs at UM's Student Success Center:

1. Set up a designated, distraction-free study space for class participation and completing assignments. Develop a system to let family mem-

bers or roommates know you are "in class" and cannot be disturbed.

2. Evaluate and confirm internet access. Develop a plan to complete coursework using other available network connections when necessary. Always have a backup plan to use during an outage.

3. Stay connected to classmates and peers. Develop study groups and plan time to socialize. Be creative. Use a virtual meeting platform to host study sessions and connect with other students.

4. Have the appropriate tools to participate in online classes. These

should include a working laptop, webcam, microphone and headphones.

5. Become a self-advocate. Speak up if problems arise or something isn't clear. Be proactive. Seek help early and often. Use campus resources.

6. Be organized. Establish a routine. Outline the semester schedule and review course requirements for all classes weekly. Check the calendar daily for assignments.

7. Manage time effectively. Avoid procrastination. Plan to spend 8 to 10 hours each week per course.

Break down large assignments into manageable chunks rather than attempting to complete everything at one time.

8. Communicate and develop a relationship with professors. Send an email or make a virtual appointment during their office hours.

9. Schedule downtime. Take breaks and spend time with friends and family. Identify campus resources available for mental health.

10. Be on time for class, logging in before live courses begin. Allow time to resolve any connection or technology issues.✝

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Dual enrollment helps students get head start on college

By Grace Thornton

TAB Media

As soon-to-be college students consider their options for the future, an early start on college classes might make sense for some. Let's take a look at the possibility of dual enrollment — what it is and how to consider if it's right for you.

Dual enrollment courses allow a student to earn college credit alongside high school classes.

It's different from Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes, which have end-of-course tests that colleges use to determine whether any credit will be granted.

Upon completing a dual enrollment course, the student is given a letter grade which, upon transfer, usually counts in the student's GPA.

Locations vary

Dual enrollment looks different from college to college. Sometimes classes are offered on the high school campus. Other times, classes are offered at the college or online. Some colleges have a specific course schedule for dual enrollment students.

You can find out more about dual enrollment options offered at different

colleges and universities and the specifics of each program by visiting their websites or talking with your high school guidance counselor.

When weighing the value of dual enrollment classes, consider the following:

- ▶ If you already know which college or university you are planning to attend, start there. That way you can find out if the college offers dual enrollment classes, whether they accept transfer credits from another college and which transfer credits they might accept.

- ▶ If you don't know which college or university



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you're planning to attend, look at a range of places you might be considering and decide how many credits you think might be worth your time and money. Some institutions offer financial aid to take dual enrollment; others offer the classes at a reduced rate. Some accept more transfer credits from other institutions, some accept less.

- ▶ If you're feeling ambitious, and you're interested in earning an associate's degree, some colleges and

universities offer the option to take enough credits to earn an associate's degree before you ever graduate from high school. You can read more about that at the Alabama Community College System's website, www.accs.edu/academics/dual-enrollment.

More information

Find a summary of Alabama Baptist colleges' dual enrollment options and policies at tabonline.org/dual-enrollment. 🌟



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Virtual visits

By Dianna L. Cagle
TAB Media

Making the most of online campus tours amid pandemic restrictions

For prospective college students, campus visits remain an important part of the decision-making process. However, COVID-19 has forced many campuses to limit visitors and offer more virtual tours instead.

For example, Judson College in Marion launched a custom 360-degree immersive virtual tour last summer.

Though in-person tours have resumed, “given the realities of the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s more important than ever that prospective students and their families have a way to ‘visit’ our campus with-

out physically coming to Marion,” said Mary Amelia Taylor, associate vice president for marketing and communications.

Limit distractions

How can students and their families make the most of online visits?

Faith Baker, assistant director of admissions at University of Mobile, says students who are visiting virtually should limit distractions.

“We recommend setting aside that time to be able to focus on the tour,” Baker said. “Our enrollment counselors tailor the visit to your

interests and if you are multitasking through a virtual visit, you may miss valuable information.”

She also suggested meeting with an enrollment counselor to talk about specific interests so a tour can be catered to the student.

For instance, Baker said meeting with instructors in one’s potential major could prove invaluable when a student arrives on campus.

“These are relationships that develop into mentorships and have helped propel past students into the next phase of their career,” she explained.

Baker encourages students

and parents to ask questions.

“The most common questions we receive are things relating to scholarships, ACT scores, housing options and dining plans,” she said. “Every school has a different process, and the only way a family will be fully informed is by discussing any concern or confusion with their counselor.”

Important questions

Brian Kennedy, assistant dean in the office of admission at Samford University in Birmingham, said learning about the application and scholarship process is important. Ask questions like:

- ▶ How do you apply?
- ▶ What are the requirements?
- ▶ What are the deadlines?
- ▶ What are the scholarship opportunities?

“Take advantage of the opportunities you have to connect with the admission office and most importantly, your admission counselor,” Kennedy said. “Virtual tours can be a great way to give you a taste of what a school might be like, but you can’t really know an institution just by what you see on a website.”

Sam Morris, director of admissions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, said students should ask about the difficult parts of living on campus or what the representative they are talking with likes least about the institution.

“Seeing how they handle

these will help you get a better picture of the school,” he suggested.

He also noted the helpfulness of one-on-one meetings with financial aid counselors. Aid information changes frequently, he said, but students also can learn about paying tuition, payment plans and more.

Lucas Hahn, associate director of admissions at Boyce College on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, said in general, admissions questions fall into two categories — degree-related and institution-related.

For those considering a Christian college, asking which statements of faith faculty members sign can reveal the basic character of the institution, he said.

Hahn suggested students ask about faculty, what they are going to be learning in particular classes or majors and even about recent graduates’ success at finding jobs.

Parents usually ask safety questions about “blue box” phones on campus, campus police and the availability of a health center, Hahn said.

See for yourself

Before making a final decision, go to campus in person if at all possible, Kennedy said. Hahn agreed.

“A campus visit is going to be by far the most impactful,” Hahn said. “Virtual visits are also very helpful; they end up being the secondary visit experience.”

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CAREER CENTERS

By Martha Simmons

TAB Media

Free campus resource helps students find jobs, hone application and resumé, prepare for interviews

Earning a college degree is a worthy accomplishment on its own, but at some point down the road, each student is going to have to get a job and pay for those student loans.

In the following Q&A with The Alabama Baptist, Lawrence Mason, career services coordinator in the Student Success Center at the University of Mobile, describes how a college career center can significantly enhance a student's job prospects.

Q: What's the mission of UM's career center?

A: The Office of Career Services provides students with concrete strategies to facilitate the discovery of their calling, identify a career and discern the community in which they are to serve.

Q: Most students don't enter college knowing exactly what kind of job they want when they graduate — or they change their minds several times along the way. How does UM Career Services help students develop professional goals?

A: Career Services assists students, first by prayer and

presenting to them the idea that God is the first worker, and by Him all occupations exist for His glory and for the good of all mankind.

We also give assessments to students as part of their required freshman seminar class. The results of these and other tools help them decide on a major, acquire an internship or externship to test out their interest in a career, take a class that interests them and finally decide on a professional calling.

Q: How do you link students with jobs and internships?

A: Career Services connects students with jobs, internships and volunteer opportunities through Handshake, a career platform designed specifically for college students and recent graduates who are seeking entry-level jobs, internships and other opportunities. Handshake helps them highlight the "hard skills" they have learned in class and practice "soft skills" such as communication and listening, etiquette and getting along with other people. Handshake also allows us to receive and share career and professional development

opportunities with faculty and staff that will benefit our students. We also post career opportunities to our social media platforms and reach out to students who are looking for professional development opportunities when we learn of them.


Q: Does the career center help students learn inter-

viewing skills and resume-writing?

A: Yes! We offer group training as well as individual meetings with student workers to discuss soft skills needed in their role, any skills that need improving and ways to discuss these learning goals and objectives with their current supervisor. I also offer a com-

munication skills workshop for students who need a little extra help in that area.

We also help students identify the types of career development opportunities that will help them acquire or improve their soft skills; and offer in-person and virtual workshops to help students and recent graduates with resumé writing,



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University of Mobile photo

University of Mobile sophomore Hannah Colson, a creative writing major, uses the Handshake platform, a career platform designed specifically for college students and recent graduates.

will do a great job for them. I also recommend students for positions when appropriate and connect them with the prospective employer.

Q: Describe some of the career events UM hosts and any adjustments you've had to make due to the pandemic.

A: Career Services hosts our UM Campus Career & Seminary Week during the fall semester, and our UM Campus Career & Grad School Week during the spring semester. These events are campuswide initiatives in which students, faculty, administration and staff assist and participate in myriad ways. Typically, we have guest speakers, company representatives, graduate school admissions representatives, seminary recruiters and local professionals who interact with students.

Since COVID-19, all career, grad school and seminary fairs have had to move to virtual events in which

we offer group and one-on-one sessions for students to meet employers and recruiters. And the faculty's guest professionals interact with our students in a virtual format as well.

Q: At what point should students start using the career center?

A: I encourage students to begin right after attending a preview day of the college of their choice. Become acquainted with the career

counselor and stay in touch with him/her. At UM, career services and the work-study program are connected, and you may be the first student who comes to mind when a job comes open.

I also recommend that students visit their career services office at least once per year until they graduate to stay on track with career planning. Maintaining an updated resumé and Handshake profile are key to a successful job search.✚

interview skills, preparation for an internship/externship and negotiating a salary for their first job offer.

Q: How do UM's career services dovetail with employer needs, especially in the local community?

A: We work to maintain relationships with our employer partners in the Mobile area to meet their needs by approving Handshake job

postings, if applicable, to the majors and areas of study we offer. We participate in networking events, talk through duties and requirements of positions and determine which soft skills and hard skills are a must-have and which can be learned on the job. We can help employers develop a job description and network with faculty who may know of a student who fits the bill and

“Career Services connects students with jobs, internships and volunteer opportunities.”

LAWRENCINE MASON
career services coordinator, University of Mobile



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Kim Andrews
University of Alabama
Shelton State Community College
kandrews@alsbom.org



Zach Beasley
Alabama State University
zbeasley@alsbom.org



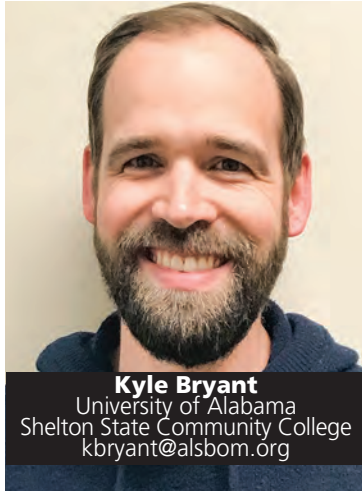
Brad Bensinger
Troy University
bbensinger@alsbom.org



Gary Brittain
Jacksonville State University
gbrittain@alsbom.org



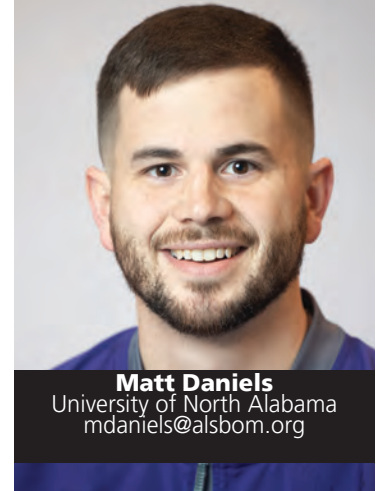
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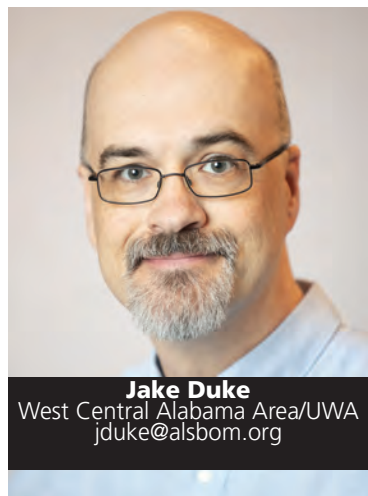
Kyle Bryant
University of Alabama
Shelton State Community College
kbryant@alsbom.org



Ben Crocker
Auburn University Montgomery
bcrocker@alsbom.org



Matt Daniels
University of North Alabama
mdaniels@alsbom.org



Jake Duke
West Central Alabama Area/UWA
jduke@alsbom.org



Jacob Freeman
University of Montevallo
Jefferson State Community College
Shelby Campus
jfreeman@alsbom.org



Beth Gardner
University of South Alabama
egardner@alsbom.org



Craig Hawkins
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Birmingham Southern College
chawkins@alsbom.org



Edwin Hocutt
University of Alabama in Huntsville
Calhoun State Community College
Huntsville
ehocutt@alsbom.org



Bill Morrison
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Alabama School of
Medicine
bmorrison@alsbom.org



Steve Thompson
Auburn University
Southern Union State
Community College
sthompson@alsbom.org



Sean Thornton
Auburn University
sthornton@alsbom.org



Chase Williams (Interim)
Alabama A&M University
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Engagement

By Dianna L. Cagle
TAB Media

Nurturing student development a priority among universities, not only professionally, but personally and spiritually

In 2021, The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education College Rankings listed Samford University second nationally for student engagement.

The ranking recognizes the broad range of student organizations, global study opportunities and courses offered to Samford students, as well as elements of cam-

pus life such as worship, convocation programming, faith enrichment events and global missions.

Brian Kennedy, assistant dean in Samford's office of admission, called studying at Samford "a highly tailored educational experience that results in consistently high employment and graduate school acceptance rates."

But Samford isn't alone among Christian colleges seeking to engage students in a broad range of academic, personal and spiritual growth opportunities.

"At the University of Mobile, we consider student engagement to be of utmost importance to success," said Shirley Sutterfield, UM executive director of student success. "It includes the student being actively involved in academics, student life, spiritual life and their calling and career."

The mission of UM is to help students grow academically, spiritually, socially, emotionally and professionally, Sutterfield said.

While graduation rates are important, UM wants its students to "thrive" not only in school but beyond, she added.

"The more actively involved they are in all areas, the better understanding they will have of themselves, their future and career, the God we serve and the kingdom of God we seek to advance," she explained. "It is important for students to identify their calling, as well as their gifts, strengths and talents, and know how to utilize these as they engage in academics."

Students should be attentive to their studies, but engagement is much more than just academic, said Chris Lee, student success coordi-



Photo by Katlin Bailey

Judson College students talk with representatives at last year's Summer Missions Expo on the front lawn of Jewett Hall.



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nator at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, home of The College at Southeastern, in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

"Engagement can be multidimensional — including cognitive, emotional, behavioral and communal dimensions — and involves the student's relationship to their professors and peers, along with institutional curriculum, community and culture," Lee said.

Role of local church

For students who are Christians, engagement also includes being part of a local church, according to Dustin Bruce, dean of Boyce College at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Discipleship and mentoring should be part of each student's growth, Bruce said.

An engaged student resembles Christ, he said. Using programming and unstructured discipleship, as well as worship services with the college and seminary, Bruce said the school tries to create an "organic" process of discipleship. Part of that is assigning older and younger students to live together, learning from and helping one another.

Lee said each student's engagement will vary from semester to semester and may depend on whether the student finds a topic or professor interesting.

But engagement is critical to a student's long-term success, he said.

"Student engagement is important because the engaged student will be more likely to excel in their studies and successfully complete their program." ✝

Considering seminary?

By Margaret Colson
TAB Media

Four things to know before you go: costs, locations, denominations, programs

For several years, the energetic and personable 21-year-old college senior has sensed God calling him to be an international missionary. As soon as he graduates he plans to enroll in seminary.

The stay-at-home mom had never thought about God's call on her life until after her children were born. Now, she is dreaming about how God could use her in children's ministry. She knows a seminary education would help equip her to follow her dream.

The experienced pastor of a rural church realizes his aging congregation isn't attracting young families and seems to be in a downward spiral. He is considering earning a seminary doctoral degree to be better prepared to lead his church to revitalization.

Thinking about seminary? You're not alone.

Close to 9,000 Southern Baptist students were enrolled in one of the Southern Baptist Convention's six theological seminaries during the 2018–2019 academic year, the 2020 Southern Baptist Convention Annual reported. When you add in

the total number of students, including Southern Baptists and non-Southern Baptists, who were registered in a Southern Baptist seminary for one credit hour or more in 2018–2019, that number catapults to nearly 24,000.

These students are a cross-section of society — men and women of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds.

"I believe every God-called man and woman can benefit from a seminary education," said Norris Grubbs, provost at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. "Time spent preparing for ministry is not wasted time. God will use this time of sharpening to enhance future ministry."

Theological education has long been a hallmark of who Southern Baptists are, evidenced by the fact that half of the 10 largest seminaries accredited by the Association of Theological Schools are Southern Baptist, as reported by Christianity Today.

Is seminary right for you? Only you can answer that question, but here are a few considerations to get you on the right track to finding the answer.

"The main thing to con-

sider about seminary is the calling. Has God called you to seminary?" said Michael Wang, NOBTS director of admissions.

While "the basic call is to Christ as Lord and Savior ... there are further callings to special ministries," explains J.A. Reynolds in the "Holman Bible Dictionary." Seminary can offer the necessary education to equip and prepare men and women called to such ministries.

In a 2020–2021 survey by the Association of Theological Schools, more than 5,000 students entering seminary ranked three factors highest on an individual decision to pursue theological education: experiencing a call from God, desiring to serve others and opportunities for study and growth.

"Once you've discerned the call to seminary, then you have the logistics to get in order," Wang noted.

Where?

Southern Baptists' six seminaries have a long track record of theological soundness and educational excellence. They are: Gateway, Midwestern, New Orleans, Southeastern, Southern and Southwestern.

Since Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptists' oldest, was launched in 1859, much has changed about graduate-level education. But the overall guiding mission of Southern Baptist seminaries has remained constant. Even

with challenges related to COVID-19, Albert Mohler, president of Southern Seminary, told Christianity Today that the purpose of theological education, training up leaders to serve Christ's church, remains "worth fighting for" and "worth dedicating your life to."

Faithful to mission

He prays, he said, that "our sister schools ... will be able to survive, thrive and be faithful to their mission."

In looking beyond Southern Baptist seminaries, the ATS has a membership of 270 graduate schools in both

the Christian and Jewish faiths. Those ranks include a full range of Christian denominations, as well as multidenominational and nondenominational schools.

Beeson Divinity School, an interdenominational, evangelical theological seminary established in 1988 in Birmingham, is one of them.

In selecting a seminary, students should note several factors. According to the ATS survey, the top four are: curriculum, quality of the faculty, academic reputation and comfort with the doctrinal position/theological perspective. Additionally,



New Orleans Seminary photo
NOBTS students can take classes on campus, online and at extension centers, including four in Alabama.



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students should consider the seminary's location, programs of study and costs.

It's a weighty decision, and it's a personal one. Wang suggested seeking guidance from church leaders and trusted friends.

"Let God direct your path. Bathe every decision in prayer," he urged.

How much?

Tuition and fees for seminary classes vary widely, even among Southern Baptist institutions. For a Southern Baptist seminary student at NOBTS or Gateway, the cost was \$275 per credit hour in 2019–2020, compared to \$324 per credit hour at Southern, according to the 2020 SBC Annual.

On-campus students have to factor in additional costs such as housing. The 2019–2020 annual housing cost per student at a Southern Baptist seminary in 2019 ranged from a low of \$12,840 at Southwestern to a high of \$28,840 at Gateway.

Those costs can be daunting. Seminary students often are cautioned to avoid incurring large amounts of debt.

The good news is that scholarships abound.

In April 2020, Gateway Seminary announced a \$250,000 gift to assist with student scholarships in the midst of the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other scholarships are available, including several offered through The Baptist Foundation of Alabama. The Foundation's 2021 scholarship process opened Jan. 1 and closes March 31 (tbfa.org/scholarships).

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions administers several scholarship programs for students who are preparing for church-related vocations through the Board of Aid (alsbom.org/scholarships/).

Beeson Divinity School offers scholarships to 100% of its full-time master's level students.



Samford University photo

Scholarships help many seminary students afford the cost of tuition and fees. For example, Beeson Divinity School offers scholarships to 100% of its full-time master's level students.

Can't relocate?

Unable to relocate for a theological education? There are options.

While some seminaries still require residency to earn theological degrees, many, including Southern Baptist seminaries, offer remote and online learning options.

Some seminaries offer a hybrid program, in which

students take most of their classes virtually or at an extension center with occasional required visits to campus. NOBTS offers extension centers in four Alabama locations: Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa.

Tom Tanner, director of accreditation for the ATS Commission on Accrediting, said the hybrid option is "the best of both worlds."

Students are not uprooted from their context. It's much less expensive, and coming to campus and meeting with students and faculty is still viewed as a positive thing."

Such options are welcomed by many students.

"Tuition costs are a driving force, but a bigger driver is life," said Chris Meinzer, senior director of administration and chief operating officer at ATS. "Many of our students are second-career age. They're not just packing up and going someplace else."

Wang ties the decision to learn on campus or in an adapted model into a person's call.

"Everyone's call is different," he said. "Some are called to uproot life and move to [campus]. Others are called to be a faithful local church leader and use [remote options] to enhance their skills to be a better minister of the gospel." (RNS contributed)✝



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FINDING COMMUNITY

By Martha Simmons

TAB Media

Residential learning communities offer students feeling of home, provide support and encouragement during an ever-changing season of life

For anyone familiar with British education, the idea of a house system is common — in everything from boarding schools to universities.

House systems are increasingly available at U.S. institutions as well. At some universities, students apply for the housing program they prefer, while in others they are automatically assigned to a house.

Also called “living-learning communities,” U.S. house systems typically offer students the opportunity to live in special dorms (sometimes required for at least the first year). Other features of LLCs include dedicated academic staff, smaller classes and special emphasis classes.

In religious colleges and universities, house systems also offer unique opportunities for intensive pastoral care and discipleship.

‘Look like Jesus’

At Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, for instance, all incoming and unmarried students ages 18–24 accepted into The College at Southeastern are automatically placed in one of four houses.



Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary photo

Most incoming students at The College at Southeastern are placed into a house. The system provides intentional opportunities for academic, spiritual, professional and social development.

“We seek to raise up students who are excellent in everything they do and look like Jesus in every aspect of their lives,” the college’s website explains. “We do this purposefully through the house system. From the moment a student steps on campus, they are being pursued by students in house system leadership who are intentional in community and accountability.”

New Orleans Baptist

Theological Seminary launched its own house system last fall in an effort to promote fellowship and foster spiritual growth among undergrad students at Leavell College.

“One of the exciting opportunities provided by the house system is the ability to connect with others,” dean Thomas Strong III said in announcing the initiative. “Members of the house will have the op-

portunity to grow closer. Through this process, I am convinced they will grow in their relationship with Christ and ... grow closer in community. This becomes the pattern for the remainder of life.”

Common interests

In secular universities, students may be accepted into an LLC according to their academic capabilities, gender or race, among other

categories. For example, students in a university’s Honors College often live in the same dorm and have opportunities to participate in special social and faculty interaction events throughout the year.

At Auburn University, first-year engineering students may join the Engineered For Success cohort.

College to career

At Jacksonville State University, the International House Program brings 20 American students and 20 international students together each year to focus on greater cultural understanding. JSU also offers the Leadership House for Women, an LLC comprised of 15 women focused on leadership development.

Regardless of its theme, the goal of any LLC is to enhance the student’s overall campus experience, residence life directors say.

A 2010 study by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that students who participate in an LLC have a higher academic success rate, higher college graduation rates, higher levels of satisfaction with their college experience, and an



Blount Scholars Program Facebook photo

Students in the Blount Scholars Program, a living-learning community at the University of Alabama, utilize study and social spaces in Tuomey Hall (above) and Oliver-Barnard Hall.

easier time connecting with their peers.

Elements of an LLC, such as mentorships and professional development workshops, also can help students move successfully from college to career.

At the University of Alabama, the Blount Scholars Program, a selective, four-year, living-learning community, prides itself on small classes and intensive interaction with faculty.

First-year students must live in the Blount dorm and may remain there, if they choose, as they complete their undergraduate degree.

Those students also have exclusive use of facilities in two other buildings on campus.

Welcoming attitude

“Generally, big colleges and universities are beginning to awaken to the fact that it’s useful to break your housing down into smaller units,” said associate professor Fred Whiting, who directs the program. “Blount offers social containment in the sea of some

36,000 students here at UA,” he said. “Parents are comforted about that. We’re welcoming, not cliquey.”

However it is designed and coordinated, an LLC’s purpose is to create community among students, faculty and others who can speak into students’ lives and help them succeed on campus and in life.

Lasting friendships

Rebecca Thrash, who now teaches in the math/science specialty department at the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham, said her first year at the university would have been more lonely and challenging had she not been part of Blount’s house system.

“I truly found my community being in Blount, where the creative and interesting people I met were as enthusiastic about learning as I was,” she said. “I also started some of the best friendships I’ve had during that first year.” (Carrie Brown McWhorter contributed)✚

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Place a classified ad for \$1 per word. For more information call 205-870-4720, ext. 102, or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org.

CHURCH POSITIONS

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Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama, is seeking a minister of missions and outreach to help lead our church in reaching our community and our world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Interested applicants may obtain more information about the position through our web page at [Mount Zion Baptist Church \(mzbc.net\)](http://MountZionBaptistChurch(mzbc.net)) and send resúmes to: mountzion@mzbc.net, ATTN: Job Search.

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York Bluff Baptist Church in Sheffield, Alabama, is seeking a

bivocational children’s minister. This person should be a creative, organized, self motivated/disciplined young adult. This person should be team oriented and good with children. Resúmes may be emailed to: kim@yorkbluffbaptist.com. The deadline to receive resúmes is Feb. 28.

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In addition to the print edition The Alabama Baptist also releases a weekly digital edition of the newspaper to every subscribers’ email. The digital edition now comes with all subscriptions. To update your email address contact subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org.

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TAB Preview provides a sneak preview of the weekly stories featured in The Alabama Baptist to the church leadership of 2,000 churches across the state. The weekly newsletter is distributed by email. It is interactive with links to stories and easy access to The Alabama Baptist’s social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. It also features ads that are clickable and link directly to websites. To sign up email news@thealabamabaptist.org. For ad information, email ads@thealabamabaptist.org.

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GIVING BREAD TO THE HUNGRY

By Grace Thornton (Special to the State Board of Missions)

 Alabama Hunger Offering
Global Hunger
bread for life. SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21

All photos by Grace Thornton

Rick Nabors knows what it's like to have someone meet you at your point of need. About 30 years ago, an evangelism team from Mount Zion Baptist Church,

Alexandria, knocked on the door of his home, and his life has never been the same.

"I knew them from the community and knew that they were good people, church people," Nabors said. "From that visit, my wife and I received that gift of eternal life, and our lives changed."

These days, Nabors thinks about that every time he walks out to someone's car at Baptist Service Center North in Anniston. As he talks with them and hears about their family's need for food, he knows the food he can give them shows them that the volunteers love them and want to help in the name of Jesus.

"When we give this food, it's giving us an opportunity to present the Gospel," said Nabors, who served on staff at Mount Zion Baptist for years before retiring and moving to Leatherwood Baptist Church, Anniston.

The center — a ministry of Calhoun Baptist Association — is able to meet the community's immediate need for food with help from Hunger Offering funds. It's one of 52 ministry centers around the state that use funds from the Hunger Offering, according to state missionary Kristy Kennedy.

"Ministries that receive funds through the offering help feed people in their community who are food insecure," Kennedy said. "Ultimately our goal is to meet the physical need people have while meeting their spiritual need for the bread of life."

For Baptist Service Center North, the need has only intensified during COVID-19, said Janice Scheitlin, who directs the association's three service centers.

"This year has been such an unusual year," she observed. "We have seen people we've never seen here before."

They've seen many grandparents taking in children and grandchildren who can't afford food or rent. They've also met people looking for

food to help them stretch their limited income as far as they can. Those same people are asking for help finding jobs.

Nabors said he remembers one woman in particular who pulled into their parking lot soon after businesses shut down last year.

"She had tears in her eyes," he said. "I knew her. I knew where she worked. It wasn't a glamorous job, but she could pay her bills. And that had been taken away."



Larry Thomas and his wife, Gail, members of Westwood Baptist Church, Alexandria, fill a grocery cart with food for a local family.

She wept, and Nabors assured her they could help.

Scheitlin said that's what they want to



Center director Janice Scheitlin pulls food items to fill a family's request for food.

continue to do, but in moments where funds are down and the need is great, the shelves get bare and they can only offer limited help. They want to do more, because not only does it help people who are

hungry, it also offers a chance to reach people with the Gospel when they're more open to listening.

"Oftentimes when things are going well, people have a shield up," she said. "But when difficulties come, they realize their need for God, and that's the first time they will allow you to share the Gospel. We need to take every opportunity fully because we don't know if we'll see them again."

That's what Nabors did that day with the woman he recognized as other volunteers bagged up food for her from inside the service center.

"I said, 'What we're going to give you will last you for a few days, but there's a story that I want to share with you that will last forever. It's changed my life, and I believe it can change yours as well,'" he said.

Jim Jones, another center volunteer from Leatherwood Baptist, said he's humbled every time he gets to share that same story through a rolled-down car window in the parking lot.

"Nobody's here by accident; God leads them here," he said. "The physical needs have to be met first, and after that, some will receive Christ."

One day, as Jones was walking one woman through the story of redemption, he got to the part about Jesus' crucifixion, and a young girl in the back seat rolled down the window and listened intently.

He was able to pray with her and get her a Bible for tween girls.

"Our responsibility is to sow the seeds, and God gives the increase," he said. "God draws people here."

The suggested date for the Hunger Offering is Sunday, February 21. For more information and promotional resources to assist you with collecting the Hunger Offering in your church, contact Ministry Assistant Lori Lockett at



(From left) Rick Robins, Katherine Brown and Tony Haver, members of Westwood Baptist Church, Alexandria, pray for those they'll be ministering to through the center.

(334) 613-2304, llockett@alsbom.org, or visit alsbom.org/hunger.

Digging deeper

By **Dianna L. Cagle**
TAB Media

Ministry Training Institute offers biblical education without seminary price tag

For pastors, lay leaders and others seeking sound biblical education, Samford University's Ministry Training Institute provides an affordable local option.

MTI offers certificate programs in disciple making, pastoral leadership, women's leadership, worship administration and worship leadership, as well as extension classes for those interested in learning more about a particular ministry or

digging deeper into a single book of the Bible.

MTI classes are held locally in many Alabama Baptist associations. Spring B term classes begin in March. Many of the classes are available online (WebEx or Zoom) or with social distancing parameters in place due to COVID-19 concerns.

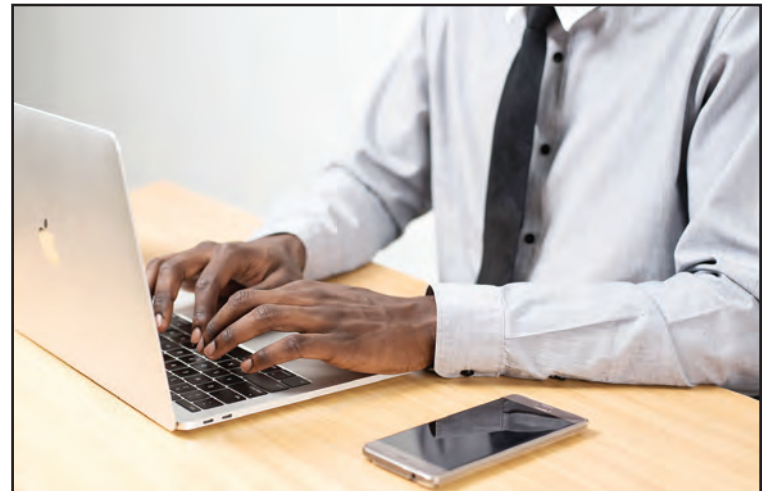
Classes can be taken in any order and based on interest, but three program tracks are available:

► **Certificate:** Each cer-

tificate track consists of four classes. Students may pay for each class separately or pay a one-time discounted rate for all four classes.

► **Extension:** Extension courses last 6 weeks and cover a range of topics from Christian leadership to studies of individual books of the Bible. Students pay a per-course fee and purchase their own textbooks. Financial aid may be available for Southern Baptists, licensed or ordained ministers, spouses of ministers and approved church lay leaders.

► **Diploma:** Students may work toward a diploma in biblical studies, an advanced



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diploma and the biblical studies diploma of distinction. A student is awarded the diploma in biblical studies after completing eight courses from the 24-course

curriculum. The advanced diploma is awarded upon completion of 16 courses, and the diploma of distinction after completion of 24 courses.✝

For more information, visit samford.edu/programs/ministry-training-institute/ or email mti@samford.edu.

Christian Crossword

By Diana Rowland Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

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Across

- Among all nations, for his _____. (Rom. 1:5)
- Concerning his _____ Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 1:3)
- _____ a servant of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 1:1)
- Is become like the garden of _____. (Ezek. 36:35)
- _____ deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, _____, an horror. (Gen. 15:12)
- Son of Helem. (1 Chron. 7:35)
- The woman which hath _____ husband is bound. (Rom. 7:2)
- For I _____ in the law of God. (Rom. 7:22)
- And be not conformed _____ this world. (Rom. 12:2)
- So they _____ both together. (John 20:4)
- Favorite name for a dog. (abbr.)
- Disk Operating System. (abbr.)
- For Christ _____ the end of the law. (Rom. 10:4)
- And when he _____ with us at Assos. (Acts 20:14)
- Who also were in Christ before _____. (Rom. 16:7)
- They _____ fools. (Rom. 1:22)
- I know both how to be _____. (Phil. 4:12)

- And when king _____ And Israel vowed _____ vow. (Num. 21:1, 2)
- Drive out the inhabitants of _____. (Judg. 1:31)
- Two _____ shall there be in one board. (Ex. 26:17)
- _____ if _____ be found _____ his hand. (Ex. 21:16)
- Who are _____ note among the apostles. (Rom. 16:7)
- To point carefully.
- Wert graffed _____ among them. (Rom. 11:17)
- The night is _____ spent. (Rom. 13:12)
- By a foolish nation I will _____ you. (Rom. 10:19)
- For a voice declareth from _____. (Jer. 4:15)
- So, as much _____ in me. (Rom. 1:15)
- I have _____ my cause. (Job 13:18)
- Do, re, mi, fa, so, _____, ti, do.
- He received the _____ of circumcision. (Rom. 4:11)
- Put _____ stumbling block or _____ occasion. (Rom. 14:13)
- And _____, and Tekoa. (2 Chron. 11:6)
- Neither could any man _____ him. (Mark 5:4)
- Then said _____, _____, I come. (Ps. 40:7)

- The rings, and _____ jewels. (Isa. 3:21)

Down

- Let us draw _____ with a true heart. (Heb. 10:22)
- _____, and Chelal, Benaiah. (Ezra 10:30)
- But sin that dwelleth in _____. (Rom. 7:17)
- And the _____ everlasting life. (Rom. 6:22)
- And _____, had bought sweetspices. (Mark 16:1)
- Being a wild _____ tree. (Rom. 11:17)
- Make _____ friendship ... and _____ snare to thy soul. (Prov. 22:24-25)
- Out of the _____ wherein is no water. (Zech. 9:11)
- I _____ a debtor. (Rom. 1:14)
- Sing _____ thy name. (Rom. 15:9)
- Country in Southeast Asia.
- Sons of Judah. (Num. 26:19)
- _____, Haldeman, Nixon aide.
- Prochorus, and _____, and Timon. (Acts 6:5)
- Who shall _____ into the deep? (Rom. 10:7)
- Why is thy countenance _____ but sorrow _____ heart. (Neh. 2:2)
- Geuel the son of _____. (Num. 13:15)
- And the lapwing, and the _____. (Deut. 14:18)
- Sir, come down _____ my child die. (John 4:49)
- And thinkest thou this, O _____. (Rom. 2:3)
- I will break also the _____ of Damascus. (Amos 1:5)
- Naaman, _____, and Rosh. (Gen. 46:21)
- Nickname for Donald.
- Above the _____ of the seas young men _____ spoiler at noonday: _____ have. (Jer. 15:8)
- Mete it with an _____ ... had _____ lack. (Ex. 16:18)
- Hattush, and _____, and Bariah. (1 Chron. 3:22)
- Stand _____ therefore in the liberty. (Gal. 5:1)
- The churches of _____ salute you. (1 Cor. 16:19)
- Thou art to pass over through _____. (Deut. 2:18)
- Do, _____, mi.
- And said, _____, master! (2 Kings 6:5)
- For whosoever shall call upon the _____ of the Lord. (Rom. 10:13)
- So we, being many, are _____ body. (Rom. 12:5)
- Into the _____ of lions. (Dan. 6:7)
- General Motors. (abbr.)
- No man dieth _____ himself. (Rom. 14:7)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For February 14

Explore the Bible

By Douglas K. Wilson, Ph.D.
Dean of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



REIGNS Luke 6:1–11

Jesus reigns. He is Lord of time, including our work and our weekend, our labors and our laziness, our vocations and our vacations. As such, He demonstrates His oneness with the Father, who modeled six days of work and a day of ceasing His labors (Gen. 2:1–3).

After six days of creating, God stopped. God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. He established the Sabbath for men and women, their children, their household workers and their out-of-town guests. Even their domesticated work animals benefited from the Sabbath rest (Ex. 20:8–11).

Work on the Sabbath? (1–2)

Jesus and His disciples walked through a grain field, took some of the grain, removed the husks by rolling the grain between their hands, blew away the husks and ate the grain. One might be concerned the Master and His followers were stealing, but this is not the case. Mosaic law allows for sojourners to take grain to eat (Deut. 23:25), just as it allows for those who own no land to glean behind harvesters of landowners (Lev. 19:9–10; Deut. 24:19–22).

The Torah certainly limits the activities which can be done on the seventh day. Traveling was limited to approximately 1,000 yards (Ex. 16:29 and Num. 35:5). Manna was not to be collected on the Sabbath nor were they to cook food (Ex. 16:23–30). A man who collected firewood on the Sabbath was executed for his crime (Num. 15:32–36). Breaking Sabbath was potentially a capital offense.

Pharisees measured actions by the letter of the law rather than by the spirit of the law. They developed an entire system of 39 categories of oral Sabbath laws that prohibited certain activities. In this instance, the lawyers may have accused Jesus of reaping, threshing, winnowing and carrying grain on the Sabbath.

Lord of the Sabbath (3–5)

Jesus was sometimes brutal in His responses, especially to self-

righteous people. This time was no exception. The Master asked them: “Haven’t you read ... ?” While this may seem like a simple question, it was actually a serious rebuke. When reading through the Gospel accounts, a careful Bible student will find multiple instances in which Jesus silenced the scribes and lawyers with this question, followed by quotations from or allusions to Scripture.

In this instance, Jesus directed their attention to David, ancestor of the Messiah. David and his companions ate bread that had been consecrated for priests alone (1 Sam. 21:1–6). While this seems to be unlawful, the priest Ahimelech actually offered them the day-old bread which was to be replaced with fresh Bread of the Presence. The grain that Jesus and His disciples ate that day would ultimately be replaced by the Bread of Life — Jesus Himself!

“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” In this short statement, Jesus is affirming that He has authority over the Sabbath day. Only God has that authority, and only God has the authority to forgive sin. Jesus’ statement here is just as powerful as “your sins are forgiven” from our last lesson (Luke 5:20). The Son of Man is Lord of creation.

Do Good on the Sabbath? (6–11)

Jesus attended a Sabbath service where a man with a deformed hand was present. Pharisees in attendance were more concerned about watching for Jesus to break Sabbath than focusing on the God of Israel — who created them, who gave them Torah and who was to be the object of their worship. Jesus asked them: “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm?” Then He healed the man. The Pharisees were furious Jesus healed on the Sabbath.

God’s intention for the seventh day was Sabbath rest. Christians worship on Sunday to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week. May we be careful to do good on Saturday, Sunday and every day.✝

Bible Studies for Life

By Will Kynes, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



MAINTAINING FOCUS ON GOD Daniel 9:1–7, 17–19

How often do we think only of our own interests in our prayers as we carve mere distracted moments from our busy lives to toss them toward the heavens?

Daniel provides an example of prayer focused through fasting on God’s character and His glory, which provides bold hope to a repentant people in their suffering.

His urgency and honesty reflect his deep understanding of the character of both his people and the God they serve. If our prayers are less urgent and honest, this may reflect our failure, encouraged by our performance-oriented culture, to comprehend who we truly are before a holy and yet gracious God.

Fasting helps us focus on greater things than just our physical needs. (1–4)

To punish His people for their disobedience, the Lord had allowed the Babylonians (or Chaldeans) to tear down the walls of Jerusalem, His holy city; destroy the temple, where He dwelled; and take them into exile. As a result of these “desolations of Jerusalem,” Daniel now resides in a foreign land, where he longs for God to restore His people.

This restoration would be more than just a physical return to a lost homeland. It would make manifest the reconciliation between God and His chosen people.

To express the urgency of his prayer to God, Daniel denies himself food, dons coarse sackcloth and dirties his face with ashes. These external, physical expressions of his internal, spiritual turmoil help him focus on his prayers.

Though the Bible never provides explicit directions for proper fasting, it commonly appears, accompanying urgent petitionary or repentant prayer. In the New Testament, for example, Jesus fasts for 40 days before His temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–2), and the church fasts and prays before selecting leaders (Acts 13:1–3; 14:21–23).

Though Jesus assumes that His followers will fast in the Sermon

on the Mount, He warns against the showy fasting of the Pharisees (Matt. 6:16–18).

For further guidance on this oft-neglected spiritual discipline, see “A Hunger for God” by John Piper.

Confession draws our focus to God who forgives. (5–7)

After praising God for His majesty and covenant love for His people, Daniel confesses their collective sin. They have disobeyed God’s commands, disregarded His prophets and descended into shameful rebellion.

And yet, Daniel affirms, “the Lord our God is merciful and forgiving” (v. 9). A reconciled relationship with God, Daniel recognizes, requires acknowledging how we have sinned against Him, and yet how His mercy is greater than our shame.

Prayer and fasting draw our focus to God who answers. (17–19)

On the basis of God’s character, which God Himself describes as “compassionate and gracious ..., slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin” (Ex. 34:6–7), Daniel boldly commands God to listen, forgive and act.

In prayer and fasting, he has expressed his faith in God’s character and confessed the people’s sin. His petition does not rely on human righteousness, but on God’s mercy.

It is for the Lord’s own sake, because this people bear His name and long to worship Him in His sanctuary, that Daniel claims the Lord should answer his request.✝

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RESOURCES

By **Dianna L. Cagle**

TAB Media

The Call: Finding and Fulfilling God's Purpose For Your Life (anniversary edition)

By *Os Guinness*. Thomas Nelson, 2018.

This 20th anniversary edition of "The Call" adds a new foreword and four new chapters. Originally published in 1997, Guinness shares divine direction he received and challenges the reader to explore their reason for being and how to determine God's call.

Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will

By *Kevin DeYoung*. Moody Publishers, 2009.

DeYoung urges the reader to never give up the search for God's perfect will, encouraging them to obey God with their whole heart. He looks at the frustration of "waiting games," and urges the reader to "just do something." There also is an eight-session study guide.



Do More Better: A Practical Guide to Productivity

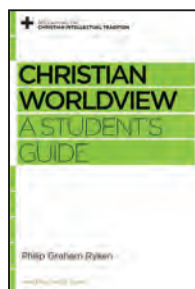
By *Tim Challies*. Cruciform Press, 2015.

As a husband, father, writer and church leader, Tim Challies shares some common obstacles to productivity and essential tools for getting things done. The book promises to help the reader do the most good, to the glory of God.

Christian Worldview: A Student's Guide

By *Philip Graham Ryken*. Crossway, 2013.

A person's worldview reflects everything they think, say and do. This book distinguishes the marks of a Christian worldview and provides help in engaging with pluralistic society.



Christian Worldview Handbook

Edited by *David S. Dockery and Trevin K. Wax*. Holman Reference, 2019.

David Dockery and Trevin Wax assemble more than 100 articles by Christian scholars to help readers discuss and defend Christian beliefs as well as share the truth, hope and practical compatibility of Christianity in daily life.

Thriving at College: Make Great Friends, Keep Your Faith, and Get Ready for the Real World!

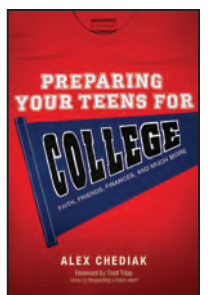
By *Alex Chediak*. Tyndale House, 2011.

Chediak offers advice to students who might be overwhelmed with academics and relationships. He helps with choosing a major, discerning a vocation, balancing academics with fun and more.

Preparing Your Teens for College: Faith, Friends, Finances, and Much More

By *Alex Chediak*. Tyndale House Publishers, 2014.

Parents and students wonder whether faith will withstand the tests of college. With the costs rising, too many students fail to complete a four-year degree within even six years. Chediak covers several hot-button issues — dating, premarital sex, roommates, grades, career guidance, God and more — and discusses the character needed to survive college. Ideally, he says, while at home students should be learning character, strong faith and a willingness to delay gratification.



Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World (Kindle Edition) – only on kindle

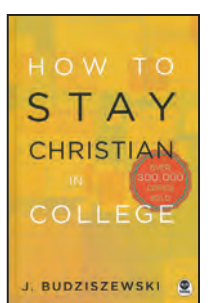
By *Cal Newport*. Grand Central Publishing, 2016.

For Newport, "deep work" is the ability to quickly master complicated information and produce better results in less time. He suggests quitting social media in order to hone skills. This is not a Christian book but instead offers four "rules" — work deeply, embrace boredom, quit social media and drain the shallows — to move toward deeper work in everyday life. Not just for students!

How to Stay Christian in College, Revised Edition

By *J. Budziszewski*. Navpress, 2014.

As students leave the nest of family, this book offers an idea of what to expect, including an examination of worldviews they might encounter. Budziszewski writes about the foundations of the Christian faith, warning not only of dangers ahead but offering advice to help students conquer them.



Full Focus Planner

Michael Hyatt. Available on Amazon

Hyatt offers a quarterly planner to help students and professionals set goals and priorities for the day, week, month, etc. There are a variety of options in a variety of colors.✚

EDITOR'S NOTE

The resources listed on this page were compiled during interviews and research done for this special issue. Most were recommended by sources interviewed, but being listed as available resources does not indicate an endorsement by the writer or TAB Media.

FROM THE CONVERSATION . COM NETWORK

Financial aid

By Robert Kelchen

Associate Professor of Higher Education, Seton Hall University

Federal financial aid for college easier to apply for – and a bit more generous

EDITOR'S NOTE — *The Free Application for Federal Student Aid — better known as FAFSA — is being simplified through the omnibus spending bill that became law in December. The FAFSA is what students must fill out to receive Pell Grants, student loans and many other types of financial aid from states and colleges. Here, Robert Kelchen, an expert on higher education policy, explains what the simplification and other changes mean for students and families.*

Q: How is applying for federal student financial aid about to change?

A: The good news is the FAFSA will go from having 108 questions to 36 questions, and most students will only have to answer a smaller set of questions about family income and household size. The not-so-good news is that this simplified form will not be available to students until October 2022 to determine aid for the 2023–24 academic year.

Also, students with family incomes below 175% or 225% of the federal poverty line (which one depends on their family circumstances) will automatically qualify for the maximum Pell Grant, which is the main federal grant given to students from low- to middle-income families as of 2023.

For example, a high school senior in a family of three led by a single parent would receive the maximum Pell Grant if parental income is below about \$50,000 per year. Currently, only about 1 in 5 students with

family incomes around \$50,000 per year gets the maximum Pell Grant. Currently, most students have to file the FAFSA to know the size of their Pell Grant.

Automatic qualification will make it easier for students to know how much federal financial aid they can count on getting well in advance of going to college.

Q: Are any new people eligible who weren't before?

A: The new law also gets rid of a 1994 ban on Pell Grants for incarcerated individuals. This change means that people can get financial help to begin to earn college degrees while they are still behind bars instead of having to wait until their release. This change will benefit everyone, as receiving education while in prison helps reduce the chances that someone will return to prison.

Also, Pell Grant eligibility is being reset for students who went to colleges that closed while they attended. This means these students can finish their studies elsewhere. Without this change, anyone who had exhausted their Pell eligibility after 12 semesters would likely struggle to find the money they

need to finish their degree at another college.

Q: Is the 'expected family contribution' a thing of the past?

A: Yes — sort of. Ever since 1992, the FAFSA has generated an "expected family contribution." This number determines how much

money students and their families can receive in federal financial aid. It is based on how much money the federal government expects students and their families to contribute toward the price of their education.

However, families are often unable or unwilling to pay this amount of money. The formula has also been adjusted over the years to decrease the number of students who receive the maximum Pell Grant, requiring families to pay more for college. In reality, the expected

family contribution provides a rough ranking of families' resources to help the federal government and others give out limited aid dollars.

Beginning in October 2022, the government will ditch the term "expected family contribution." It will instead rely on a "student aid index," the same term that had been used

before 1992, that more accurately reflects how the FAFSA is used to determine financial aid. The index also does not send the message that students have to contribute a certain amount.

But in reality, the student aid index is still the amount that the federal government will expect students and families to pay for college.

In good news for students and their families, the law allows for the student aid index to be as low as -\$1,500 instead of being limited to zero. This is something I have called for in my research because it allows students to get more financial aid and helps colleges and states identify students with the greatest financial need. The change in the student aid index will not give students more financial aid from the federal government, but it will allow them to obtain up to \$1,500 more in grants, loans and financial aid from other sources.

Q: Is the government increasing federal student financial aid in any way?

A: The government is also increasing the maximum Pell Grant to \$6,495, a \$150 increase, in the 2021–22 academic year. This is basically enough to keep up with inflation. A bigger change is that more students will qualify for the maximum Pell Grant because of increases to the income limits for receiving the grant. While more students will receive federal grants, students with the greatest financial need will not see increases in their Pell Grants other than to keep up with inflation.