



NELSON UNIVERSITY

A SEASON OF

STRENGTH



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2025



HOMECOMING
25 NELSON
lions
FAMILY WEEKEND

SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, NOV. 6

7pm MEN'S BASKETBALL GAME

FRIDAY, NOV. 7

8am MEMORIES BREAKFAST

10:15am HOMECOMING CHAPEL:

GUEST SPEAKER SAM RIJFKOGEL & PG NELSON AWARDS

11:15am FAMILY PHOTOS WITH JUDAH

11:30am ALUMNI LUNCH PARTY

2pm ALUMNI SOFTBALL GAME

2pm KIDS SPORT CAMP

5pm NELSON U BBQ:

GUEST HOST DR. DENNIS SWANBERG & ALUMNI AWARDS

7pm VOLLEYBALL GAME

7-10pm COLLINSTOCK

SATURDAY, NOV. 8

8am COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGY:

CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINAR

9am WOMEN'S ALLIANCE BRUNCH

1pm VOLLEYBALL GAME

1pm TAILGATE PARTY & ENTREPRENEUR FAIR

4pm HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME

PRICING

EARLY BIRD PRICING THROUGH OCT. 6, 2025.

TO REGISTER GO TO, WWW.NELSON.EDU/HOMECOMING

USE CODE "EARLYBIRD"



SPORT ACTIVITIES



ALUMNI CONNECTIONS



TAILGATE TRADITIONS

For tickets, hotel reservations, and schedule go to:
www.nelson.edu/homecoming
 For more info contact: alumni@nelson.edu / 972-825-4639

Fall 2025

Nelson Today and the President's Report are publications of Nelson University, a Christian, non-profit institution of higher learning.

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Nelson University is to prepare undergraduate and graduate students spiritually, academically, professionally and cross-culturally so as to successfully fill evangelistic, missionary and church ministry roles and to provide quality educational and professional Christian service wherever needed throughout the world.

Nelson University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees. Contact the SACSCOC at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Nelson University.

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 Hear our Roar!

Building for a better tomorrow.

Expanded facility coming in 2026.

We're enhancing our facility to expand our care and better meet the needs of our community. Thank you for your patience as we grow for the future.

Baylor Scott & White | **MEDICAL CENTER WAXAHACHIE**

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A Quarter Century of Vision and Commitment

Honoring Dr. Kermit Bridges' 25 years of Presidency



25 YEARS

Nelson University proudly celebrates 25 years of leadership under Dr. Kermit Bridges, the longest-serving president in the University's history.

Dr. Bridges' tenure has been marked by his unwavering dedication to the rich heritage and educational mission of this Kingdom institution.

Bridges' service to the University began in 1994 when he joined Nelson as Vice President for University Advancement. As such, Bridges played a key role in shaping institutional development and donor relations. In 2000, he was named president of the University, succeeding his mentor, Dr. Delmer R. Guynes (President Emeritus).

President Bridges' deep love and connection to the University comes naturally. At the age of 8 years old he moved to Waxahachie with his parents, James and Joyce Bridges. James pastored University Assembly of God Church and for 3 years served as Vice President at what was then, Southwestern Assemblies of God College (SAGC). James would later serve as Chairman of the Board of Regents. Kermit was a third-generation

alumnus when he enrolled as a freshman at SAGC. His deep understanding of the history and potential of the university has been evident throughout the last quarter century as he has led the institution through seasons of scarcity and plenty.

An obvious example of how Dr. Bridges leadership has impacted the Nelson campus is the physical expansion of facilities.

- Over half the University's under-roof square feet has been constructed during his tenure
- Enrollment has increased and academic programs have broadened
- University's influence has expanded beyond its Waxahachie campus

Yet President Bridges will be the first to attribute any success achieved to the dedicated faculty and staff who serve with excellence and a devotion to our mission.

In addition, Bridges never loses sight of the spiritual giants who served before us and on whose shoulders this generation stands. He views his assignment as that of a

steward, responsible to faithfully pass on to the next generation what amazing spiritual leaders like Delmer Guynes, LeRoy Bartel, John Wyckoff, Mary Campbell, James Barnes, J. Paul Savell, H.A. Brummett, and Blake Farmer passed on to our generation.

Throughout his time in leadership, Dr. Bridges' family has been a constant and visible presence on campus. Their love and dedication for Nelson University is very much a family calling. Dr. Bridges' wife, Jan Quistad Bridges, has played a significant role in that legacy. A Minnesota native and lifelong educator, Mrs. Bridges has

taught in both public and Christian schools, served in educational leadership, and invested directly in Nelson students as a faculty member. Her heart for service and steady presence alongside her husband has quietly shaped the fabric of campus life for decades.

Having grown up immersed in campus life, the Bridges' sons, James and Forrest, eventually attended Nelson and graduated with bachelor's degrees. James now lives in Oklahoma with his wife, Brinkley, and daughter Blythe, while Forrest and his wife, KeeLee, and their daughter, Maeve, reside in the DFW area.

Their journeys reflect the same heart for service and faith-filled leadership modeled by their parents, and together, their family has left and continues to leave a lasting imprint on generations of students.

Nelson University celebrates this 25-year milestone of a man who has given his life to Nelson University and has sown seeds of faith and steady leadership throughout the decades, equipping countless others to do the same.

A GIFT OF FAITH:

GRAPER FAMILY'S HISTORIC DONATION HELPS SHAPE THE FUTURE AT NELSON UNIVERSITY

An exciting new chapter is beginning here at Nelson University, thanks to the incredible generosity of the Graper family.

The late Robert and Sandra Graper set a record as the largest donors in the university's history with a transformational gift of **\$18.1 million**. With a designated amount of **\$12.5M** going to scholarships, this act of generosity established the Graper Scholarship Fund, which will provide annual scholarships of **\$10,000** to students studying Church Ministries. This gift will help equip future pastors, missionaries, youth leaders, and worship ministers to pursue their callings with lighter financial burdens and greater freedom to serve.

Robert and Sandra lived lives marked by generosity, service, and a deep commitment to the gospel. Throughout their lifetimes, they faithfully supported churches, missionaries, charitable organizations, nonprofits, and higher education institutions. Their passion for equipping others to share the good news of Christ continues through this scholarship fund, which now stands as the largest in Nelson University's history.

In 2019 Mr. Robert Graper reached out to inquire about donating a \$1 million scholarship to support students enrolled in Church Ministry programs. He and his wife Sandra were committed to helping students who were called into church-related ministry have less of a financial burden after they graduated. That \$1 million turned into way more than their initial commitment.

"We are so grateful for their investment in Nelson University in this way," shared Rick Bowles, Former VP for Advancement. Each year, at least five students will receive scholarships,

and if investment returns meet expectations, that number could increase to as many as **50 students annually**.

In addition, the Graper family designated **\$5.6 million** in unrestricted support to advance the university's growth and development. These funds will play a pivotal role in launching new health science programs and enhancing academic offerings, ensuring that Nelson University continues to thrive.

"What started as one family's act of faith has the potential to inspire an entire generation of leaders in the Christian community," said Dr. Kermit Bridges.

"Robert and Sandra's generosity reflects not only their commitment to God, but also their desire to help students prepare for a life of service. Their legacy is extraordinary."

Jay Trewern, VP of Business and Finance emphasized the impact: "This is the most generous gift in our 98-year history. The Graper Scholarship Fund will provide the largest scholarships Nelson University has ever awarded, helping dozens of students each year pursue ministry without the weight of

debt. It is a transformational investment in our students and in the future of the Church."

At Nelson University, contributions like this enable the institution to **provide financial aid to more than 90% of first-time, on-campus students**. This gift further solidifies our mission of making a Christ-centered education both accessible and affordable.

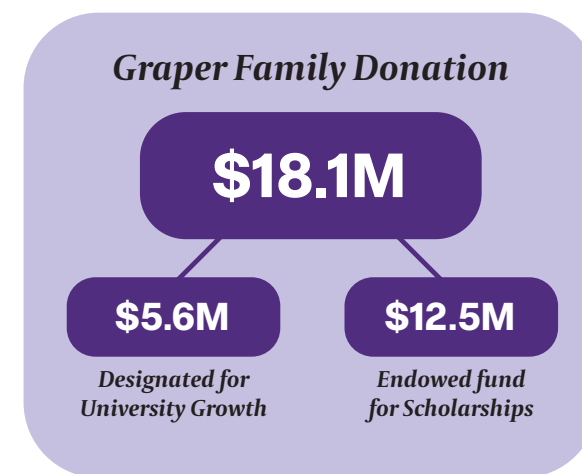
As the university approaches its 100th anniversary, the timing of this donation feels divinely inspired.



WHAT STARTED AS ONE FAMILY'S ACT OF FAITH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO INSPIRE AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF LEADERS IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

Robert and Sandra Graper's faith-driven investment will impact generations of Nelson students. Every graduate who steps into ministry debt-free—or with far fewer financial burdens—will carry forward the Graper family's vision: to serve God's kingdom with strength, freedom, and unwavering faith.

For more information about scholarships or ways to support Nelson University, please reach out to: advancementoffice@nelson.edu.



HOW YOU CAN GIVE

"AND LET US RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE THE RACE MARKED OUT FOR US." - HEBREWS 12:1

The Graper Scholarship Fund is lifting financial burdens so future pastors, missionaries, youth leaders, and worship ministers can run their race with focus and faith.

When you give, you become part of their journey, helping them prepare for ministry without the weight of overwhelming debt. Your generosity makes room for God's calling to flourish in their lives.



WAYS TO GIVE:

Online: nelson.edu/give

By Mail: Nelson University Advancement Office,
1200 Sycamore Street, Waxahachie, TX 75165

By Phone: 972-825-4639

Email: advancementoffice@nelson.edu

LET'S CARRY THIS TOGETHER, SO THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS CAN SERVE WITH STRENGTH AND FREEDOM.

NELSON UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES DUAL ACCREDITATIONS IN MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING AND SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS

Nelson University proudly announces two significant milestones in its Behavioral Sciences and Community Services Department: the initial accreditation of its Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the reaffirmation of accreditation for its Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING PROGRAM EARNS PRESTIGIOUS CACREP ACCREDITATION

Nelson University's M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program has officially earned accreditation from CACREP, marking a major step forward in the university's mission to prepare compassionate, ethically grounded professionals for meaningful work in the mental health field.

"This accomplishment reflects the dedication of our faculty, staff, and students in striving for excellence," said Dr. Nolan Jones, Program Coordinator. "Our graduates are equipped to provide evidence-based care grounded in a Christian worldview that values the dignity and worth of every person."

The rigorous CACREP review evaluated the program's curriculum, faculty, and learning outcomes to ensure alignment with national best practices. Graduates will now be eligible for professional licensure in most states across the U.S., opening doors to careers in private practice, schools, hospitals, community agencies, and more.

The program offers both full-time and part-time pathways in an accessible online format.



SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM REAFFIRMED BY CSWE

In addition, Nelson University's Bachelor of Social Work program has received reaffirmation of accreditation from CSWE, affirming the program's academic integrity, ethical rigor, and strong foundation in cultural competence and Christian values.

"This reaffirmation ensures our students receive a high-quality education that prepares them to impact individuals, families, and communities," said Dr. John Savell, Department Chair. "From mental

health and advocacy to congregational social work and community development, our program helps students develop the skills needed to make a difference."

A key benefit of CSWE accreditation is that Nelson graduates are eligible to apply for Advanced Standing in a CSWE-accredited Master of Social Work (MSW) program, allowing them to complete an MSW in as little as one year.

Together, these achievements highlight Nelson University's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, faith integration, and community impact in the helping professions

To learn more about the CMHC and BSW programs, or to apply, visit www.nelson.edu or contact our admissions office at 1-888-937-7248.

ACADEMIC COMMITMENT

Building for a better tomorrow.

Expanded facility coming in 2026.

We're enhancing our facility to expand our care and better meet the needs of our community. Thank you for your patience as we grow for the future.

 **Baylor Scott & White** | **MEDICAL CENTER WAXAHACHIE**

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AT A GLANCE

A view of Nelson University by the numbers. We have experienced unprecedented growth and want to celebrate with you all that God is doing!

1,902 Total Enrollment as of Fall 2025

15:1 Student-to-Faculty Ratio

75+ Degree Programs

62% Retention Previous Freshman Class

70% Full-time Faculty with Terminal Degrees

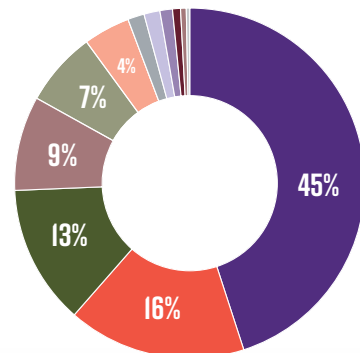
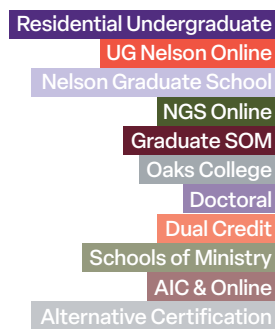
Enrollment by Level



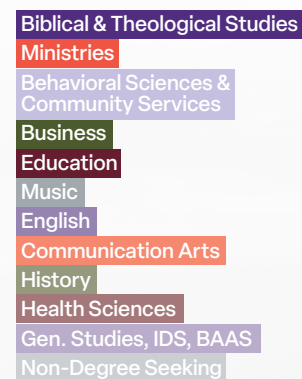
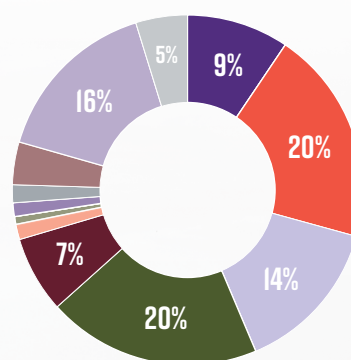
By Gender



By Delivery



Undergraduate Programs



TOTAL REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$141 MILLION

\$62M

Direct Spending

The amount of money spent directly by institutions and their employees, students, and visitors.



Employee Spending
\$15 million



Student Spending
\$25 million



Visitor Spending
\$3 million



University Purchases
\$17 million



Capital Expenditures
\$2 million

\$73M

Indirect & Induced Spending

The outcome of additional employment and expenditures by local businesses resulting from an institution's direct spending.



1,587 Alumni Impact
Recent Alumni from the Institution

\$5M generated by the **38%** of alumni who stayed in the region

An additional **\$5 MILLION** generated by the **75%** of alumni who stayed in Texas



1,076
Total jobs created*

*total economic impact equivalent to creating Texas jobs



Source: The Economic Impact of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas report, 2024.

FROM FOUNDING TO FUTURE: A TIMELINE OF NELSON UNIVERSITY

The first ten years of what would eventually become Nelson University were marked by sacrifice and a vision deeply rooted in the power of the Gospel. From 1927 to 1937, the university existed as three separate schools, established independently across Texas and Oklahoma, each driven by founders with a shared mission: to train ministers to carry the message of Christ into churches, homes, workplaces, and throughout the world.

1927

THE VISION BEGINS: SOUTHWESTERN BIBLE SCHOOL

The story begins in Enid, Oklahoma, where Rev. Peter Christopher (P.C.) Nelson founded Southwestern Bible School. Supported by his congregation at Enid Gospel Tabernacle, Nelson acquired the former Roosevelt Central High School building at 316 Cherokee St.

Nelson, a Danish-born theologian renowned for his brilliance and deep faith, envisioned a school “to give men and women a better knowledge of the Word of God and to bring them into closer fellowship with Christ.” Known for his ability to read in over 20 languages and fluent in Greek and Hebrew, Nelson’s scholarly approach was complemented by passionate Pentecostal beliefs. After a personal encounter with divine healing and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he dedicated himself to raising up young ministers through biblical education.



SOUTHERN BIBLE INSTITUTE AND SHIELD OF FAITH BIBLE INSTITUTE FOUNDED

In Goose Creek, Texas, J.T. Little established Southern Bible Institute (SBI), which trained 39 students in its first class. The institute moved to Houston by 1935, growing in size and significance. Eli Richey later succeeded Little as president, guiding the school’s spiritual and academic development.

Meanwhile, in Amarillo, evangelist Guy Shields felt called to establish Shield of Faith Bible Institute. He purchased land across from his church and physically helped construct the school himself, focusing on hands-on discipleship and ministry training. Shield of Faith officially opened its doors in 1931 and relocated to Fort Worth in 1935.

1931

1930s

FAITH IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

The Great Depression and Dust Bowl left few untouched, including the students of these schools. As economic hardship swept through the Southwest, many aspiring ministers made significant personal sacrifices to pursue their calling.

One student, Ruthie M. Smith, recounted hitching a ride with strangers hauling fence posts to reach the Fort Worth campus of Shield of Faith. She worked for room and board, determined to complete her education despite financial barriers. Ruthie vividly remembered the challenges of removing piles of dust from dugout buildings and hauling dirt with tubs and shovels just to keep classrooms functional. She later graduated as Valedictorian in 1939, grateful for the training and spiritual growth she had received.



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR UNIFICATION

Though these schools operated independently throughout the 1930s, their founders shared a unifying vision: to develop biblically grounded, Spirit-empowered leaders. Their official merger would not occur until 1940, however, the seeds planted during this first decade made that merger possible.

As Rev. P.C. Nelson once said to his students, “Children, do you know what you are doing here on this hill? You are building an institution.” He was right. The foundation laid between 1927 and 1937 would shape generations of Kingdom-minded leaders for decades to come.

1927-1937



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

A LIFELONG MISSION TO REACH THE NEXT GENERATION BRENT AND SHELLEY TEAGUE

Brent and Shelley Teague have dedicated their lives to global ministry, faithfully serving as AGWM missionaries since 1994. With a passion for evangelism and discipleship, especially among children and youth, their work has left a lasting impact across West Africa.

Their journey began in Niger, where they served for 15 years. During their time there, they were instrumental in planting several churches and launching Sunday schools and Bible Clubs in each new congregation. Their ministry also expanded into children's evangelism, youth and children's camping programs, training of children's ministry workers, and building tabernacles to provide places of worship for growing congregations.

In 2010, Brent and Shelley followed God's call to serve in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), where their mission to reach children

with the gospel has only grown. Their ministry includes open-air evangelistic meetings, vacation Bible schools (VBS), children's camps, school-based outreach, and continued tabernacle construction to support local churches.

Additionally, their compassionate outreach to street children through dedicated centers brings hope to some of the most vulnerable in society.

Shelley plays a vital role in expanding the ministry's reach by traveling across Côte d'Ivoire to train children's workers, equipping them with the tools and biblical knowledge needed to effectively minister to the next generation.

In recognition of their faithful service and leadership, Brent and Shelley were recently appointed as Area Directors for West Africa. In this new role, they will oversee and support missionaries across the region, helping to strengthen and expand the Assemblies of God's mission efforts throughout West Africa.

SERVING UKRAINE ON TWO FRONTS GERALD & JANE DOLLAR

When war broke out in Ukraine in February 2022, Nelson University alumnus Gerald Dollar faced a decision: evacuate to safety or remain and serve. He chose to stay.

As a missionary, Gerald remained in the capital even as rocket fire hit nearby. Partnering with local pastors, he coordinated food deliveries, generators, wood-burning stoves, and other essentials to villages affected by the conflict.

"YOU CAN'T JUST SAY, 'I LOVE YOU' AND THEN WALK AWAY WHEN TIMES GET TOUGH,"

GERALD SAID, SPEAKING OF HIS DEEP COMMITMENT TO UKRAINE

Behind the scenes, Gerald became a vital link between U.S. donors and Ukrainian churches. His wife, Jane, played a critical role on the other side of the border. After relocating with their daughter to Poland, Jane helped establish a three-story refugee center in Katowice, where she and her team assisted over 800 families fleeing the war. In addition to offering spiritual and emotional support, Jane helped refugees with legal documents and finding safe housing.



A LIFETIME OF MISSION IN CENTRAL & SOUTHERN AFRICA BILLY & SUE BURR

When Billy Burr answered God's call to ministry in 1960, he transferred from the University of Texas at Arlington to Southwestern Bible Institute (SBI) to pursue a degree in missions, with a heart set on Africa. That same fall, Sue, a freshman from Ohio, arrived on campus. The two met shortly after the semester began, and a partnership rooted in shared calling quickly blossomed.

In December 1961, they married in Ohio during a beautiful winter snowstorm, marking the beginning of more than five decades of life and ministry together.

Their commitment to God's calling took tangible form early. In 1962, Billy, alongside fellow visionary Howard Foltz, launched a youth outreach ministry in Dallas, Texas. A year later, they established the first Teen Challenge Center in Dallas, providing support and spiritual guidance to young people in crisis. Many Nelson University students joined in the effort, and the Burrs' pioneering approach to youth outreach

and urban ministry would prove fundamental to their lifelong service.

In 1966, Billy and Sue were appointed as missionaries to Africa. The following year, they moved to Liberia with their two young children, Bryan, age 2, and Kim, just 6 months old. The Burrs' move to Africa began what would become 52 years of missionary service. Their willingness to step into the unknown, with young children in tow, exemplified their deep faith and commitment.

As their ministry expanded, the Burrs were approved in 1970 to serve in the Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Before relocating, they spent time in Switzerland for intensive French language training.

Their leadership only grew from there. In 1981, Billy was appointed Area Director for Central Africa, and in 1996, his role expanded to include Southern Africa, covering 19 nations across the continent. It was a significant responsibility shift,



including administrative responsibilities as well as spiritual oversight.

Through decades spent in Liberia, the DRC, Togo, South Africa, the Burrs' long-term impact on individual lives and entire communities became a living testimony of God's sustaining grace.

The Burrs were faithful in small beginnings, ministering to local teens in Dallas, and equally faithful while overseeing mission efforts across a vast and diverse continent.

After retiring in 2018, the Burrs returned home, leaving behind a legacy etched into the spiritual history of Africa and the hearts of countless people. Today, their growing family includes 2 children, 6 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren, with another on the way.



AUSTIN GREGORY ASST. PASTOR: DISCOVER CHURCH, BUSINESS OWNER

I spent three years on campus and one year as a distance education student at Nelson University. The Nelson professors did such a great job equipping me for ministry. While there, I also met my wife, Alexia, and we have been happily married for 9½ years. We have been on a journey in both marriage and ministry together. I'm coming up on 10 years in ministry since graduating. I started as a youth pastor and now serve as an assoc. pastor at Discover Church in Northwest Arkansas. I've also launched my own creative business, Brands by Sunday, where I focus on logo and branding work for churches and purpose-driven companies making an impact.



JUSTIN COFFMAN PASTOR: HARVEST HILL CHURCH, CHAPLAIN, MAYOR OF MIDLOTHIAN

After graduating from Nelson University, God called me out of business and into community-minded ministry, inviting me to view my hometown as a mission field. In 2018, I stepped into the local political realm and was elected to the city council. In 2023, I became the Mayor of the City of Midlothian, TX, and continue to serve in this capacity. My goal is to shine the light of Jesus throughout our community with everything I do. None of this would have been possible without my wife by my side, the Lord's blessings, and my educational experience at Nelson.



\$2027 X 2027

In 2027, Nelson University will celebrate 100 years of equipping Spirit-empowered leaders. As a faithful family, the University invites you to contribute to the success of this once-in-a-century initiative.

Join us in our bold initiative to share stories of Nelson University's worldwide impact, and bolster the financial foundation for Nelson University's next 100 years.

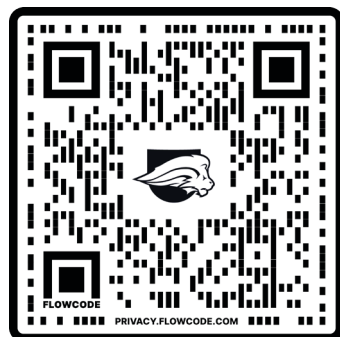
Our \$2027 by 2027 initiative aims to inspire 100 individuals and 100 organizations (churches, businesses and foundations) to partner with Nelson in giving a total of \$2,027 each by our Centennial Celebration in 2027.

Give Today

One Time Gift - \$2027

Monthly Gift - \$75 for 30 months starting in Sept. 2025

Quarterly - until November 2025



www.nelson.edu/advancement/give-2027

DONOR SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

On April 11th, we held our annual Donor Scholarship Luncheon. Through your generous investment, we awarded **166** Scholarships that totaled **\$366,900**.

Each donor scholarship has a story attached to it. A legacy, a person, or a place. All things that make up who we are as an institution, focusing on empowering students to confidently step into the future prepared to live a life of purpose, and committed to their calling - whether in church leadership or in the marketplace.



LOGAN LEE

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

"When you support Nelson University, you are investing in the next generation of Christ-centered leaders in our community, our nation, and world. Each gift builds the future of our institution - and the culture of generational impact we are creating."



YEAR 3 GIVING BY PROJECT

ONE 9/27: SAGU GIVING DAY



TOTAL RAISED: \$54,540

LIONS HELPING LIONS



TOTAL RAISED: \$20,000

FIRST GIFTS



TOTAL RAISED: \$5,960,272

CENTURY SOCIETY



TOTAL RAISED: \$1,210

REGENTS SOCIETY



TOTAL RAISED: \$1,179

GOLF CLASSIC



TOTAL RAISED: \$59,936

PAVE THE WAY



TOTAL RAISED: \$3,379

SIGLO SOCIETY



TOTAL RAISED: \$125

CHURCH PILLARS



TOTAL RAISED: \$7,328

CHURCH LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS



TOTAL RAISED: \$180,877

ECHO SOCIETY



TOTAL RAISED: \$2,129,154

SPORTS VENUE



TOTAL RAISED: \$404,134

SHAPING THE FUTURE GALA



TOTAL RAISED: \$195,775

TOTAL OF FUNDS RAISED SO FAR IN Y3:

\$8,571,488

NELSON UNIVERSITY
Sheaffer Center

OUR 5 YEAR GOAL: \$5 MILLION

Will you join us? www.nelson.edu/2027

GRAND TOTAL OF FUNDS RAISED TO DATE: \$11,704,421

For more information on the 2027 Project, visit www.nelson.edu/2027 or contact advancementoffice@nelson.edu and (972) 825-4880.

MARKETPLACE DEGREE ENHANCEMENTS

DUAL DEGREE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

- ◆ Integrates ministry degrees with complementary career paths
- ◆ First offering: Bachelor of Arts in Church Leadership and Business, launching Fall 2026

KINESIOLOGY PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

- ◆ New **Exercise Physiology Lab**
- ◆ Concentrations in **Pre-Physical Therapy, Pre-Occupational Therapy, and Athletic Training**
- ◆ Physical Therapy Assistant and Athletic Training degrees in development

HEALTHCARE & BUSINESS PROGRAMS

- ◆ New **Healthcare Administration** specialization (MBA)
- ◆ Undergraduate degree in **Healthcare Administration** in development
- ◆ MBA to include specializations in **Marketing and Healthcare Admin**

BUSINESS MARKETING PROGRAM EXPANSIONS

- ◆ New courses launching through 2027:
 - ◆ Digital Marketing Strategy
 - ◆ Consumer Insights & Data-Driven Marketing
 - ◆ Brand Development & Creative Leadership

DIGITAL MEDIA ARTS (DMA)

- ◆ Expanding offerings in Documentary Film, Digital Branding & Graphic Arts - Fall 2025
- ◆ Includes courses in app design, web design, podcasting, and media surveys

AUDIO ENGINEERING PROGRAM

- ◆ Launching Fall 2026, prepares students for careers in sound design, production, and ministry/media



OUR VISION IS TO GLORIFY GOD BY PREPARING OUR STUDENTS TO BE INFLUENCERS FOR JESUS CHRIST, EQUIPPING THEM WITH WORK-READY SKILLS FOR SERVICE AND VOCATIONAL MINISTRY AND THE MARKETPLACE. DR. KIM TREVERN, VP OF ACADEMICS



ACADEMIC COMMITMENT *Cont.*



RICK BOWLES
VP OF ADVANCEMENT

In August of 2018, President Bridges and I met at a Dallas restaurant to discuss the possibility of me joining his cabinet at SAGU (now Nelson University). Over the few months that followed, I began to seek the Lord for confirmation that he had released me from my current role. Long story short, I received that confirmation and was excited to accept the offer to join SAGU in November of 2018 as VP for Advancement. I now find myself in a similar scenario. The Holy Spirit has released me from this assignment, and I'll be moving into a non-profit ministry that focuses on Bibles, books, and church resource publications, as well as worship music. That ministry is based out of Colorado

Springs and Nashville, but my wife and I are glad to be staying in Waxahachie as I will be working remotely. I am grateful to President Bridges for the opportunity to serve the university in this capacity over the past nearly 7 years, and to have had the honor to serve alongside so many of you who have supported this institution through prayer and as volunteers as well as financial partners. There is a "financial revival" happening and I would encourage you to reach out to Logan Lee (Dir. of Development) or President Bridges to learn more about what a difference your ongoing involvement is making. Angel and I are alumni and plan to continue our support of Nelson University, so we look forward to seeing you at upcoming events and celebrations! My new email contact is: rick.bowles@davidccook.org

MINISTRY DEGREE ENHANCEMENTS

WORSHIP ARTS

- ◆ Updated Worship Leadership degree includes hands-on Worship Labs
- ◆ New Associate Degree in Worship Arts to launch soon

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

- ◆ Allows customization across multiple academic disciplines and will allow graduates to teach multiple subjects through alternative certification as well as collegiate courses

ACCL. BACHELOR OF ARTS TO MASTER OF DIVINITY

- ◆ Availability to complete both degrees faster and at lower cost

NEW MASTER OF ARTS IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

- ◆ Focuses on practical ministry training, pending credentialing with the Assemblies of God.

MASTER OF ARTS IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

- ◆ New concentrations in youth ministry and next-gen leadership (launching Fall 2026)

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

- ◆ Recently updated to allow access without a Master of Divinity

MISSIONS LEGACY

HONORING MISSIONARIES LAUNCHED FROM NELSON UNIVERSITY



Since its inception, Nelson University has been a training ground for missionaries all over the world. Mission-mindedness is more than a core value of Nelson University; It guides our purpose which is to see students trained and developed for their God-given callings.

The newly dedicated “Missions Wall”, is lined with photographs and short stories, each tells the journey of men and women who have carried hope, love, and faith to communities around the world. All launched from this very school. Their faces and testimonies remind us of the power of service and the global reach of compassion. This wall serves as a visual reminder of those spreading faith and service across the world.

There would be no room to highlight all the missionaries launched from this university but a few that are mentioned include:

- BOB GODWIN**
1992 - MONGOLIA, ESTONIA
- BRIAN & RUTHIE GOMEZ**
1995- SPAIN
- J.W. TUCKER**
1938- CONGO
- ELIZABETH WILSON**
1936- CHINA
- AMY FARLEY**
2000 - SENEGAL, VIETNAM
- BRENT & SHELLEY TEAGUE**
1988- NIGER
- CHARLES HACKETT**
1954 - FIRST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF U.S. MISSIONS (1993)



CENTERING THE LOCAL CHURCH IN HOLISTIC COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION DR. RENNAE DE FREITAS

As global reliance on nonprofit organizations continues to expand in addressing social issues, Dr. Rennae de Freitas, Dept. Chair of Intercultural

Studies at Nelson University, offers a compelling case for reinvigorating the role of the local church as a central agent of sustainable transformation. In her recently completed Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies—with a concentration in relief and development—Dr. de Freitas explores how churches can, and should, be repositioned as primary partners in community development initiatives.

Her dissertation, portions of which have been published in *Missiology* and the *International Journal of Pentecostal Missiology*, examines the Pentecostal Church in Latin America, with a particular focus on its partnership with ChildHope. This ministry supports holistic education through church affiliated schools, working directly with local Assemblies of God congregations to provide long-term, community-based solutions to poverty, with many of these children sponsored by people in AG churches here in North America.

What sets this model apart, according to Dr. de Freitas, is its commitment to ecclesial partnership. These efforts are not para-church interventions but are embedded within the life and ministry of local congregations. Children who attend the schools are raised within the church community and often return as adults to serve, teach, or pastor. The result is a self-sustaining ecosystem of spiritual formation, educational advancement, and social uplift—rooted in the local church.

Dr. de Freitas presented her findings at the regional conference for the Evangelical Missiological Society

held at Dallas Theological Seminary, emphasizing the theological and practical implications of her research on church-centered community transformation. She argues that when the church is equipped with theological depth, community vision, and structural support, it becomes uniquely positioned to lead transformational change—not just spiritually, but socially and economically.

This approach has significant implications for the training of future practitioners. At Nelson University, Dr. de Freitas is leading curricular development that prepares students in Intercultural Studies and Humanitarian Relief & Development to think critically about sustainability, empowerment, and the intersection of faith and service. Rather than adopting traditional NGO frameworks, students are encouraged to work through and alongside local churches, recognizing them as enduring pillars of trust, leadership, and holistic mission in their communities.

Her research continues to shape conversations within both academic and ministry circles, inviting a reimagining of how faith-based organizations and churches can collaborate without displacing the spiritual and social capital already present in local contexts.

Dr. de Freitas’s work reinforces Nelson University’s commitment to thoughtful scholarship, global mission, and the equipping of servant leaders who engage the world with wisdom and compassion. Her vision is clear: when empowered and engaged, the local church remains one of the most effective instruments for long-term community transformation.



A YEAR IN REVIEW FOR NELSON ATHLETICS 2024-2025



TRACK & CROSS COUNTRY

- ◆ Historic season with multiple school records and top rankings
- ◆ Natalie Guillen: SAC Track Athlete of the Week (1500m)
- ◆ Isaiah Jean: Athlete of the Week (100m – 10.78)
- ◆ Betzaidy Najera: XC Runner of the Week (6K)
- ◆ Montrell Blacknall: NAIA Indoor National Qualifier
- ◆ Multiple SAC All-Conference honors across the roster



MEN'S SOCCER

- ◆ Achieved a .500 season under new Head Coach Cesar España
- ◆ Coach España: North Texas Boys Competitive Coach of the Year
- ◆ Renewed energy with 60+ players committed to the rebuild

WOMEN'S SOCCER

- ◆ Continued rise following 2023 NCCAA National Runner-Up finish
- ◆ First-ever varsity outdoor win
- ◆ All-Conference Honors: Anna Bewly, Daisy Altamirano

ESPORTS

- ◆ Breakout year under first-year Coach Caden Primm
- ◆ Built strong foundation in competitive gaming and team unity
- ◆ Standouts: Isaac Hershberger, Joyce Reyes, Camden Cuellar, Jonathan Pak

MEN'S BASKETBALL

- ◆ SAC Regular Season Champions
- ◆ 6th consecutive NAIA National Tournament appearance
- ◆ CJ Hall: SAC Player of the Year, NAIA All-American

SOFTBALL

- ◆ Memorable season defined by heart and hustle
- ◆ Honors: Sasha Jennings (1st Team), Madysen Wiggins (2nd), Brooke Kinnibrugh (Honorable Mention), Makinzy Kneip (Golden Glove)

BASEBALL

- ◆ Top NAIA offensive team; swept #21 Texas Wesleyan
- ◆ Named NAIA Ball Team of the Week

VOLLEYBALL

- ◆ 6 All-Conference players; Lindi Boling led NAIA in service aces
- ◆ Undefeated in SAC play (22-0); 29-5 overall



FOOTBALL

- ◆ Growth season under new Head Coach Jared Hudgins
- ◆ 8 All-Conference honorees, including: Joseph Chavez (NAIA All-American), Dakeevion Rose, Quavean Mitchell, and Xavier Garcia
- ◆ Traveon Jones was awarded \$20,000 NCCAA Michael S. Scholarship



CJ HALL
NELSON 2025 MALE
ATHLETE OF THE YEAR
AND NAIA 1ST TEAM
ALL-AMERICAN



COACH DELTON DEAL
300TH CAREER WIN
SAC COACH OF THE YEAR



DR. JESSE GODDING
4-TIME SAC AD OF THE YEAR
VOTED NAIA ADA PRESIDENT (25-26)



LILLY HANNA
NELSON 2025 FEMALE
ATHLETE OF THE YEAR, FIRST TEAM
ALL-CONFERENCE AND SAC CHAMPION



FOLLOW US @NELSONUNIVERSITYSPORTS WWW.NELSONLIONS.COM

15 SPORTS

2 DIVISIONS | 1 CONFERENCE



480+

LION ATHLETES

202 ATHLETES

ACADEMIC ALL-SAC
(3.25+ GPA)

53 ATHLETES

NCCAA SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

40 ATHLETES

SAC ALL-CONFERENCE
AWARD WINNERS

8 TEAMS

EARNED 3.0+ TEAM GPA

COACH MOORE RETIRES



SCAN TO WATCH FEATURETTE OF
COACH MOORE'S COACHING CAREER



Coach Moore concluded his legendary career with over 500 wins at Nelson University. He was named SAC Coach of the Year in his final season and leaves legacy of faith and fierce competition. Son Nick Moore, will take over the volleyball program and continue to lead the Lady Lions in excellence and faith.





1200 Sycamore St., Waxahachie, TX 75165

2024

CELEBRATING

10

2014

YEARS

of growing together

For over a century, we've had the privilege of serving Ellis County. Now, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our campus, we thank you for joining us in cultivating a thriving, healthy community. Here's to all we've achieved and the future we're building—together.



1914

 **Baylor Scott & White** | **MEDICAL CENTER WAXAHACHIE**

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