

Around the State: HCU receives new accreditations

August 28, 2024

Houston Christian University's bachelor's degree programs in [Cyber Engineering](#) and [Electrical Engineering](#) have been accredited by the engineering accreditation commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, and its bachelor's degree in [Computer Science](#) has been accredited by the computing accreditation commission of ABET. ABET is the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering and engineering technology. ABET accreditation reviews look at program curricula, faculty, facilities and institutional support and are conducted by teams of highly skilled professionals from industry, academia and government, with expertise in the ABET disciplines. "HCU now has the only ABET-accredited Cyber Engineering degree in the state of Texas," said **Katie Evans**, dean of [HCU's College of Science and Engineering](#).



Construction is underway on the new Outdoor Pavilion and three sand volleyball courts on the HPU campus. (HPU Photo)

Construction has begun on the Howard Payne University campus for a new 8,700-square-foot outdoor pavilion and three sand volleyball courts. The \$1.8 million project is located between Veda Hodge Hall and the J. Howard Hodge Bell Towers. This initiative seeks to improve student experience, attract and retain students and provide additional community spaces for both the HPU family and the Brown County area. Brasher & Co., a local outdoor specialist company, will complete the project. Key features of the new pavilion include space for 250 to 300 people; state-of-the-art technology with 10 outdoor televisions and a 12×16-foot video wall; commercial grade kitchen with a gas grill, sinks and refrigerators; storage and restrooms; and a serving area for food. The video package will allow student and community groups to host movie nights, stream HPU athletic competitions and host large watch parties. The three NCAA-regulation beach volleyball courts will be used to launch beach volleyball at HPU in the fall of 2025, with competition beginning in the spring of 2026. The courts also will be available for intramurals, student events and community gatherings. This project is one of several campus improvements planned for the upcoming academic year. Recently completed campus projects include renovations to a microbiology lab, new seating in the HPU Theatre, several classroom renovations in the Newman Academic Building and the new Bob Carter Athletic Park for intramurals.



ETBU Tiger Camp traditions welcome new students to campus. (ETBU Photo)

After a summer filled with work, travel and service, students returned to the Hill at East Texas Baptist University for the August mini-term, move-in day, Tiger Camp and the official start of the 2024-2025 academic year on Aug. 19. Continuing with tradition, the entire ETBU community, including faculty, staff and students, gathered outside campus residence halls on move-in day to lend a hand to incoming freshmen and new transfer students. Their assistance in transporting moving boxes, mini-fridges and dorm essentials ensured a smooth and welcoming transition for new students and their families. Once first-year Tigers settled into their new campus homes, they dove into the vibrant life at ETBU during Tiger Camp, the university's annual welcome week tradition. The three-day event, filled with outdoor games, fellowship and informative sessions, helps students connect with their new living and learning community—making the transition to college life fun and engaging. The campus community gathered Sunday evening for fellowship and ice cream at the annual "Chill on the Hill." On Monday morning, ETBU alumnus and pastor of First Baptist Church in Haughton, La., **Gevan Spinney** challenged the campus community to: "Let go of your past. Because of God's grace, we can all have a seat at the king's table," at the first chapel service of the semester.

Donna Hedgepath, president of Wayland Baptist University, brought her “Better Together” message to the quarterly meeting of the Lubbock Area Baptist Association, Aug. 26. Hedgepath, the first female to serve as president of a university in the South Plains/Panhandle region, hosted the gathering of primarily Baptist ministers in United Supermarkets Conference Center on Wayland’s Lubbock campus. Noting there has been a “whirlwind of activity” since her arrival in July, the new president detailed how God’s hand was at work to bring her from Campbellsville University in Kentucky to Wayland. Hedgepath noted the needs of Wayland: “In order to really tackle that financially, and just logistically, we’ve got to rally and unify,” she said. “And the only way we can do that is to have folks come together.” The president spoke of Wayland’s future, noting the largest resident class at the Plainview campus since 2018 and the excitement she witnessed while going through Wayland’s Koinonia new student orientation as “a freshman this year.” Noting that 23 of Wayland’s football players have given their lives to Christ in recent days, she said, “I’m going to end by asking you to pray for our students, because one thing that Pete and I love is students.”

Retirements



Michael Monhollon
(HSU Photo)

Michael Monhollon, associate provost and chief data officer at Hardin-

Simmons University has announced his retirement, effective May 31, 2025, after more than four decades of distinguished service as a lawyer, professor and academic leader. Monhollon has been with HSU since 1988. After retirement, Monhollon plans to focus on his writing career and spend more time with family in Palmetto, Fla.



Tom and Mary Dunn (Courtesy Photo)

After 21 years of service at Heart of Texas Baptist Camp, **Tom Dunn** will retire as maintenance and facilities director. He and his wife, Mary, will move back to their home in Cross Plains, where they have many friends. Reportedly, he likes to say he has been “the shepherd of over 100 toilets.” His presence at Heart of Texas will be missed. A “come-and-go” retirement party will take place at the camp, Aug. 31 from 2-4 p.m., or join the virtual retirement party on Facebook [here](#). The virtual event runs until Aug. 31, where comments expressing gratitude for his service may be shared.