

Around the State: HPU names faculty member of the month

March 3, 2026

Howard Payne University's **Lajeana Long**, assistant professor of nursing, was selected as faculty member of the month. Long has served HPU for three years and teaches juniors and seniors in HPU's nursing program. She is grateful for the way HPU allows her to teach nursing students through the lens of faith. Long's goal is to teach her students how to treat the whole patient. She wants her students not only to care about their patient's physical health, but their emotional and spiritual health as well.

Wayland Baptist University has been selected to participate in the Texas Work-Based Learning Consortium, a competitive statewide initiative designed to expand career-focused learning opportunities for college students while strengthening connections between higher education and employers across Texas. Wayland joins a select group of peer colleges and universities in the state chosen for their commitment to preparing students for meaningful careers through innovative academic experiences. The three-year consortium initiative integrates work-based learning projects directly into college coursework, allowing students to collaborate with industry partners, gain professional experience, and build career networks while completing their degrees without delaying time to graduation. The consortium is supported by the Trellis Foundation and the Greater Texas Foundation and represents a growing statewide effort to connect higher education more closely with workforce needs while expanding equitable access to high-impact learning experiences for students across Texas.

East Texas Baptist University recently concluded its annual Spiritual Renewal event, held on campus Feb. 23-25. The three-day emphasis featured guest speaker **Josiah Jones**, a 2006 graduate of ETBU, and

centered on the theme “No Filter: Getting Real about Faith, Hurt, and Hope.” Throughout the week, students, faculty, and staff gathered in Rogers Spiritual Life Center for morning chapel, with additional evening worship services on Monday and Tuesday. Over three days, Jones shared both biblical teaching and personal testimony. Raised in Fort Worth, he was deeply invested in sports and pursued success in every arena he could find, only to discover it left him empty. As a college student-athlete, he surrendered his life to Christ, an experience that reshaped his purpose and direction. By sharing personal experiences and pointing to Scripture, Jones emphasized the importance of being authentic and surrounding yourself with other believers.

The spiritual life team at Houston Christian University gathered students, faculty, staff, and administrators for Spring Ignite, a time of spiritual growth and fellowship centered around the theme “Fully Alive Together.” This year’s event addressed foundational topics critical to the Christian walk, including sexuality, singleness, marriage, and friendship, offering a holistic perspective on how to live faithfully in community. The event included preaching and worship sessions led by Seven Mile Road Church, creating an atmosphere of connection and reflection. Students had the opportunity to engage with peers and faculty in discussions on living “fully alive” together—embracing God’s design for relationships, intimacy, and community.