

Baylor achieves top status as a research university

December 20, 2021

WACO—Baylor University was named a Research 1 university by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

That designation means Baylor joined the nation's top research institutions as a doctoral university with "very high research activity."

Baylor joins fellow Carnegie R1 institutions in Texas in UT-Austin, UT-Dallas, UT-Arlington, UT-El Paso, UT-San Antonio, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University, University of Houston, University of North Texas and fellow private institution Rice University.

'Distinctive Christian voice and mission'



Linda Livingstone is the 15th president of Baylor University and the first woman to lead the school, founded by Texas Baptists in 1845. (Photo/Baylor Marketing and Communications)

“Our R1 aspirations have represented an incredible opportunity—one given to us by God—to do what very few, if any, universities have achieved: maintaining our foundational Christian mission while reaching R1 status as a top-tier research university,” Baylor President Linda A. Livingstone said in her weekly [Presidential Perspective email](#).

“Through the dedicated work of our faculty and staff and our academic and research leadership, we have made remarkable progress since 2018 on our [Illuminate strategic plan](#), which provided the framework to build on Baylor’s historic strengths and strategically invest in new areas of research and service.

“Through top-tier research, scholarship and external funding support, R1 universities—that now include Baylor University—bring their voice to bear in addressing our world’s most significant challenges. And as a Christian research university, Baylor infuses the quest for solutions, at the highest levels, with the university’s distinct Christian voice and mission.”

Carnegie reclassifies institutions every three years. R1 universities meet benchmarks across 10 indicators, including research expenditures, research doctorates awarded and number of research staff in science and engineering fields. The latest classification is under a six-week public review before becoming official by the end of January 2022.

In August 2019, Baylor University officially announced plans to pursue Research 1/Tier 1 recognition by building on Illuminate, which launched in 2018 and accelerated the quest toward preeminence as a Christian research university. The university had anticipated reaching R1 status by 2024.

‘It’s to the glory of God that we do this’

“This is a moment of exuberant joy for Baylor University. It has been a labor of love for so many people,” said Baylor Provost Nancy Brickhouse. “As we look ahead to the future, achieving R1 designation will make it easier for us to continue our growth in recruiting world class faculty, graduate and undergraduate students and to attract people who are serious about research and want to be at a place with a compelling Christian mission like Baylor.

“It’s to the glory of God that we do this, and we now get to double down further in pursuit of the impact we hope to have as a Christian research university.”

Kevin Chambliss, Baylor vice provost for research, called achievement of R1 designation “a collective effort” that involved “many people over many years.”

“Our administration, faculty, staff, deans and more have rallied around this vision and done the work to make it happen. It’s an incredible time to be here at Baylor University, and we’re poised even more definitively for growth in the years ahead because of all that has been implemented to make R1 recognition a reality,” Chambliss said.

Consistent with Illuminate strategic plan

The Illuminate strategic plan is built upon the foundation of Four Pillars, where Baylor will be a community recognized for its “unambiguously Christian educational environment; transformational undergraduate education; research and scholarship marked by quality, impact and visibility; and nationally recognized programs in human performance

through the arts and athletics.”

“As we have traversed this journey to R1, our commitment to excellence university-wide has grown even stronger,” Livingstone said. “That commitment remains evident in our transformational undergraduate education, in providing impactful services to students that support them academically, spiritually, personally and in their future careers, and in achieving at the highest levels of human performance in the arts and athletics as we prepare students for worldwide leadership and service.”

In July, Brickhouse and Chambliss updated the Baylor board of regents on progress on Illuminate and R1 goals, including:

- Increased research doctorates from 110 in 2016-2017 to 167 in 2020-2021.
- Growth in research expenditures from \$29.4 million in 2017 to \$47 million in 2021, with external research expenditures currently growing at 28 percent.
- Increased awarded research dollars from around \$11 million in 2017 to more than \$27 million so far in 2021.
- Increased research staff from 47 in fall 2016 to 68 in fall 2020.

Additional R1-related progress over the past year included:

- Procuring a \$43.4 million research grant for the [Global Flourishing Study](#), the largest single funded research project in Baylor history and the largest initiative of its kind to investigate the factors that influence human flourishing.
- Four professors winning highly competitive National Science Foundation CAREER grants in 2020, the most ever in a single year at Baylor.

- Welcoming two endowed faculty chairs in the School of Engineering and Computer Science to provide leadership to Illuminate's data sciences and material science initiatives.
- Completing the Baylor Academic Challenge, now known as the Foster Academic Challenge, a dollar-for-dollar matching program that generated significant support from alumni and donors to establish 14 new endowed faculty chairs and significantly advance the aspirations of Illuminate.

In November, the Baylor board of regents affirmed the framework for the next five years of Illuminate, including hiring 100 new faculty over this time, further accelerating the university's academic enterprise.

"I want to personally thank our board of regents, who supported Baylor's institutional aspirations with the approval of Illuminate four years ago and for their most recent reaffirmation of our R1 goals through Illuminate Forward for 2022-27. I am also deeply appreciative of the ongoing support of the Baylor Family through our Give Light campaign on behalf of our faculty, students and campus overall," Livingstone said.