

Baylor task force on spiritual life and character formation starts work

July 7, 2016

WACO—As part of Baylor University’s continuing response to incidents of sexual violence, Provost Gregory Jones convened the first meeting of a task force on spiritual life and character formation.

Jones chairs the 21-member task force—one of two executive-level teams Baylor created following an investigation by the Pepper Hamilton law firm regarding the university’s response to sexual assault complaints. Reagan Ramsower, senior vice president for operations and chief financial officer, heads the other team, a sexual assault task force.



Gregory Jones, Baylor University executive vice president and provost, convened the first meeting of a task force on spiritual life and character formation. It is part of Baylor’s continuing response to incidents of sexual violence.

Administrators intend for the task force on spiritual life and character

formation to provide long-range strategic direction to help Baylor live up to its mission “to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community.”

The group—composed of Baylor administrators, faculty, staff and students—will “be guided by the conviction that Baylor’s Christian mission ought to animate the entire life of the university,” Jones said.

Serving with Jones on the task force are:

- Lori Baker, an anthropology professor who assumes new duties as a vice provost July 25.
- Tierra Barber from Baylor athletics.
- Burt Burleson, university chaplain and dean of spiritual life.
- Shelley Conroy, dean of the Louise Herrington School of Nursing.
- Ron Cook, professor at Truett Theological Seminary and director of the Center for Ministry Effectiveness.
- Darin Davis, vice president for university mission.
- Andrea Dixon of Baylor marketing, liaison with the sexual assault implementation team on culture and climate.
- Students Danny Dominguez and Emmy Edwards.
- Elisa Dunman, director of new student programs.
- Jan Evans and Jennifer Good from the modern languages and cultures office.
- Cheryl Gochis, vice president for human resources.
- Kevin Jackson, vice president for student life.
- Jill Klentzman from the School of Engineering and Computer Science.
- Marcie Moehnke from the biology department.
- Bill Neilson from the honors program.
- Mitch Neubert, who holds the Chavanne Chair of Christian Ethics in Business.

- Elijah Tanner, special assistant to the executive vice president and provost.
- Jonathan Tran from the religion faculty and the Honors Residential College.

Baker, Jackson and Davis will lead implementation teams from the task force. They will explore how to encourage and enhance spiritual formation and character formation and how to encourage greater collaboration throughout the university to communicate the highest ideals of Christian living. They also will explore how local churches and other Christian ministries can be part of mission-centered efforts.

The task force's work is "at the heart of Baylor's Christian identity as we seek to educate our students in ways that will bless them for their whole lives," Davis said.

"As our task force begins its work, we first will take stock of the many ways and places where moral and spiritual formation is already flourishing at Baylor," he added. "We want to build on those practices and enhance them. But we also want to ask challenging questions about the very nature of the community we are called to be—as students, staff, faculty, graduates and constituents."

Baylor regents [hired Pepper Hamilton](#) last September to investigate the university's response to reports of sexual violence.

In May, the regents released a 13-page "[Findings of Fact](#)" document and a 10-page set of [recommendations](#) from Pepper Hamilton.

For a compilation of the Baptist Standard's coverage of Baylor University's handling of campus sexual violence, [click here](#).