

Classroom learning leads Wayland students to practical application

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PLAINVIEW—Religion students at [Wayland Baptist University](#) are putting their education to the test—and not just in final exams.

Students in Clinton Lowin's "Introduction to Baptist Ministry" class were challenged to look at Wayland as their church and conduct a needs assessment to determine what new ministry opportunities might be available.



Little did he know the idea would take on a life of its own. Students not only discovered a need on campus and in the community, but also developed a ministry plan they could undertake in response.

Lowin explained part of his educational strategy is to give students practical experience to coincide with theory and knowledge.

"Learning doesn't happen in a vacuum," he said. "If we are talking about kingdom objectives and functioning in the world, it doesn't have to stop in

the classroom."

So, Lowin challenged his class to perform an environmental survey to determine what type of ministry might be needed on the Wayland campus and in the surrounding community.

Students focused on the homeless and hungry and quickly determined that a large percentage of the Plainview population fits the criteria. They also discovered Wayland students who can't afford meals once their meal tickets run out or are not accepted due to a lack of funds.

The group began to formulate a plan for meeting these needs, under Lowin's supervision. He quickly pointed out to the students the project would not earn them a grade or be used for course credit. This didn't dissuade the students. In fact, Lowin thinks it increased their motivation.

"Just doing these things doesn't shut if off at the end of the semester," Lowin said. "This surpasses a grade. This is about the kingdom. Once they got that, it was amazing. It just took off."

As the semester came to an end, the group still was in high gear. Having formed a guiding coalition and discovered community member who shares their concern for meeting the needs of students, the group hopes to hold another planning meeting at the beginning of the spring semester.

From there, they will invite the campus community to determine the amount of interest in their ministry proposal. The group will continue to gather resources and determine the best avenue to feed hungry people—in the community and on campus.

"They are making things happen," Lowin said. "It is for me to just get out of the way and allow them to do the things they love to do and want to do, which is to change the world."