

# **HPU business professor prepares students for lives of service**

May 28, 2019

BROWNWOOD—Brad Lemler followed a winding route to teaching at Howard Payne University, where he is dean of the School of Business and professor of accounting.

Lemler grew up in Indiana, attended college in his home state and spent time teaching at 16 universities across the United States.

“I was born and raised in northern Indiana and spent most of my life there,” he said. “I have also spent time teaching in Michigan, California and Texas. So, I’ve been around a little bit.”

Lemler initially earned his undergraduate and master’s degrees in accounting at Indiana University, later obtaining his doctorate in the same field at the same university.

“Those were so much fun, I started to collect master’s degrees just for something to do,” he said with a smile.

Lemler earned a master’s degree in interdisciplinary studies, focusing on agricultural policy, from Texas Tech University. Then, in a kind of homecoming, he earned a master’s degree in economics from the University of Notre Dame.

“I was born and raised 30 miles south of South Bend, and I figured if I had a Notre Dame degree, I could root for the Notre Dame Fighting Irish, and they’d really be my team,” he said.

# Re-evaluating priorities

Lemler emphasized the role faith has played in his life, both as a professor and as an individual. However, faith and profession did not always have equal importance in his life as they now do. While teaching at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Mich., he came to a realization regarding the nature of faith's impact on life.

“One summer, I’m sitting there, probably reading the Internal Revenue Code,” he recalled. “And this thought comes into my mind: ‘I know 10 times more about the IRC than I do the Bible and, from an eternal perspective, is that wise?’”

This realization sparked Lemler to pursue biblical knowledge. So, he completed two theology degrees—a Master of Ministry and a Master of Arts in theological studies, both from Bethel College in Mishawaka, Ind.

“As I was studying, I became convinced of the value in preparing Christians for lives of service—not just pastors, but all Christians,” he said.

The importance of service, regardless of career or calling, influences Lemler's method and mission behind teaching.

“At HPU, and any of the places I’ve taught, my mission is and has been to train up Christians for lives of service as business professionals,” he said. “But we also offer an environment that, if you’re a nonbeliever, if you haven’t embraced Jesus as your Savior, it is still the best possible place for you to study.”

# Apply biblical principles

Lemler's goal is to apply biblical principles to the field of business.

“That’s what we’re looking for—those times when it’s the most natural thing in the world to do,” he said. “A great thing about HPU is that we’re really open to doing that. It’s encouraged. It’s supported. That’s something I really appreciate.”

Lemler emphasized the environment HPU and its faculty provide students helps ensure the quality of the education business students receive.

“This is a safe place where if you try something and fail, we will pick you up, dust you off and set you back on your way,” he said.

“We’ve got good people to start off with, but then we’ve put those good people in an ideal setting to foster cooperation and collaboration. I think that just really helps us get the most out of things.”