

Lilly grants benefit Wayland and Truett programs for high school youth

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[Wayland Baptist University](#) and Baylor University's [Truett Theological Seminary](#) each received \$600,000 grants from the [Lilly Endowment's](#) high school youth theology institutes.

The grant to Wayland will help fund Kaleo, a program designed to foster Christian leadership among high school juniors and seniors. The grant to Truett Seminary will establish Running the Race Well, a youth spirituality and sports institute.

The Lilly Endowment created its high school youth theology institutes initiative to encourage teenagers to explore their religious beliefs and their concerns about contemporary challenges by studying theology and examining how faith calls them to lives of service. Wayland and Truett are among 82 schools nationally participating in the initiative.

Clinton Lowin, associate dean of Wayland's School of Religion and Philosophy, designed the Kaleo program with the goal to transform the lives of high school students through discovery, discernment and affirmation of God's call for Christian leadership.

"This grant is one of the most exciting things that has happened to the School of Religion and Philosophy in our history," Dean Paul Sadler said. "It has tremendous potential to influence the lives of Christian young people, and it also gives churches and Wayland an opportunity to form very productive partnerships."

Responding to God's call

Lowin had been in discussion with leaders at the [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#) and other organizations who expressed a growing interest in trying to find a way to help more students consider God's call on their lives, preparing them for service to the church and in their communities.

High school juniors and seniors will enter into a yearlong mentorship program with a senior pastor or youth pastor. Students also will participate in a one-month immersion that focuses on three phases of development—a wilderness camping experience at Glorieta, N.M.; classroom instruction in biblical and theological studies on the Wayland campus and ministry projects through area churches; and a two-week overseas mission trip in partnership with Student International.

After they complete the immersion experience, students will return to their churches and mentors for another eight months of study and learning, when they will be instructed and held accountable by Kaleo for implementing some sort of Christian ministry within their church or community.

'Running the Race Well'

Truett Seminary's Running the Race Well program will provide an annual experience within a diverse community, using an eight-day, mentor-guided setting that helps teenagers become discerning, vibrant leaders in sports, church and beyond. It is designed to inspire the faith of serious-minded youth to be leaders spiritually and morally within the sports culture. Students preparing for their junior and senior years of high school will be eligible to apply, and the first sessions will be offered during summer 2018.

At a retreat, participants will study and interact with Running the Race

Well faculty, share meals, meet with their mentors, discuss moral and social issues specific to sports and life, learn leadership skills, practice spiritual disciplines, serve with Mission Waco and join in other immersion experiences and competitive sports-virtue labs.

Running the Race Well partners include the BGCT and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, along with Duke University Divinity School, Queen's University, Regent's Park College, Oxford University, Seattle University, University of Gloucestershire, the National Christian College Athletic Association and the Vatican's Office of Church and Sport, as well as Waco churches and various sports ministries and coaches.

"We want to help youth, parents, families, mentors, coaches and churches to bridge the gap between Christian belief and behavior in the sphere of sports—to impact the X's and O's of sports with a compelling vision coupled with application for why we do sports as Christians," said John B. White, faculty director of Running the Race Well and Truett's sports ministry and chaplaincy program.

Truett Seminary Dean Todd Still called the initiative "a fresh, innovative way to engage and to shape young people."

"If I were still a spiritually curious, athletically oriented youth, I would be thrilled to be a part of such an opportunity," Still said.