

Worship Initiative a partner in training worship leaders

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Founded by Texas worship leaders Shane and Shane, the Worship Initiative equips and encourages thousands of worship leaders and church musicians.

Several Texas Baptist schools have seen the value of partnering with the [Worship Initiative](#).

Robbie Seay, executive vice president of leader development and content at the Worship Initiative, explained when Shane and Shane began the initiative, their “aim was really to come around worship leaders, any men and women who were leading churches, leading college students, college students, high school students, all of the above.”

“How can we come around them and equip them for the work of ministry?” they asked.

The founders also saw a need to encourage worship leaders by providing a space to build community with other worship leaders when they began the Worship Initiative about a decade ago, Seay noted.

Seay described Worship Initiative as “a training and resourcing platform.”

When worship leaders subscribe and login to the platform, “they engage with content that teaches them from the basics of learning a song to the complexities of what it means to actually have a theology of worship.”

Content also answers questions such as: “How do I lead a team? How do I play with a band? How do I grow on my instrument?”

“There’s nothing quite like the training and resourcing platform that we

provide,” Seay said.

Texas Baptists-related partnerships

At Houston Christian University, one Texas Baptists-related school that utilizes Worship Initiative, student worship leaders go to the platform to learn hymns and spiritual songs—and the scriptures associated with those songs—to prepare for student-led convocation worship.

HCU students engage the platform “as a team as they lead their peers in worship,” Seay explained.

Dallas Baptist University also subscribes to the Worship Initiative. But in their partnership, a team from the Worship Initiative goes to the campus once a semester for in-person training.

“The drummers are gathering with one of our experts, and they’re talking about what it means to play drums in the context of worship,” Seay gave as an example.

Whether the students are receiving training for chapel or other worship leading opportunities on campus, they are learning and growing through in-person engagement, he said.

At Baylor University, Chason Disharoon, associate director of the Dunn Center for Christian Music Studies in the Baylor School of Music, explained the Dunn Center hosts [an annual summer music camp](#) geared specifically toward high school students with an interest in worship leadership.



Worship Lab brings high school students interested in worship leadership together for summer worship camp at Baylor. (Baylor

Photo)

He noted 2025 will be the 11th year of the event, called Worship Lab. Through the years, the Dunn Center has partnered with Worship Initiative for Worship Lab in several ways.

At times, Worship Initiative has offered product trials of their platform to the students. Other times, Worship Initiative team members have talked in-person to campers about Worship Initiative's products.

This July, Disheroon said, "Worship Initiative will send a team of leaders to our event to teach in breakout classes on specific instruments within the worship band.

"This partnership is invaluable, in that it allows our students to receive training directly from those who are pouring attention and energy into building the Worship Initiative platform and further championing the equipping of young people," he explained.

Disheroon noted as an aside that Seay is a past member of the board of advisers for the Dunn Center and "one of the key leaders in the design of our program at Baylor.

"His position at Worship Initiative is a continuation of his passion for educating future ministers and building leaders, starting with the young people who are committed to serving in churches across the country."

At Hardin-Simmons University, a closer partnership with Worship Initiative is under discussion.

"We are currently in the planning stages of partnering with them to offer more resources and valuable experiences for our worship leadership students at HSU," said Tiffany Stotts, director of worship leadership, associate director of spiritual formation for worship and instructor of

worship at HSU.

HSU developed the [worship leadership major](#) in 2020, officially opening it to students in 2021. The degree is custom designed and not offered anywhere else.

In fact, “it’s the only degree in Texas where you can get a full worship leadership degree (as a) major and not just, like, a track or emphasis,” Stotts said.

Stotts also oversees all the worship teams for the whole school. That includes chapel twice a week, with [student-led worship](#). Additionally, the school outsources worship teams to provide worship leadership in the community and at events around the state.

In the past, Stotts explained, HSU used Worship Initiative just as “an amazing resource” for anyone in the worship field.

“They have a great, affordable system that you can just sign up for as a user—where you get access to all of their trainings, and their chord charts and recordings.”

But over time, people she knew well from her work at HSU, and DBU previously, joined the staff of the Worship Initiative. One of these connections, Adam Westlake, served on her worship team at DBU on electric guitar as a freshman.

Westlake now is responsible for much of the electric guitar training for Worship Initiative, as well as running the studio and producing tracks, Stotts explained. Their friendship has led to multiple conversations over the past year about ways their partnership may expand at HSU.

Stotts noted “everything at Hardin-Simmons is really growing.”

HSU recently opened a new College of Arts and Media, which includes the

school of music, theater, arts and communications.

“There’s not really another College of Arts and Media in Texas, especially at a Christian college,” she explained. Hardin-Simmons is trying to “offer something here that you can’t get anywhere else,” she said.

While nothing is finalized yet, the two organizations are working out the details of an expanded partnership. One of their main goals is to help HSU worship leadership students build community and have resources when they graduate. So, Stotts sees this as an area where Worship Initiative can provide additional value.

“Because of all their connections at Worship Initiative, ... they’re kind of the hub,” Stotts said. “If I need to know something about worship, and I need to talk to people who are professionals in their field, but also love the Lord and who genuinely are doing this with a ministry heart, I’m going to call Robbie Seay.”

‘Worship pastors,’ not ‘worship artists’

Stotts said worship leaders don’t make a relationship with God happen, but they do strive to facilitate an environment where people are invited to come and meet God.



Chapel musicians at HSU grow through Worship Initiative partnership. (HSU Photo)

“We are musicians. And we want it to be done well, but we don’t want it to be a performance,” she said. “We want to be so good at what we do that we kind of disappear.”

“There’s a difference between worship pastor and worship artist,” Stotts explained. It’s a different mindset that the team at Worship Initiative understands, she said.

Tom Tillman, director of music and worship in Texas Baptists’ Center for Church Health, said he has worked with the Worship Initiative team on a number of occasions.

“We are here to help people in their ministries, so we point folks to resources like this all the time,” Tillman said, noting “networking and partnerships are always important.”

The Worship Initiative seeks to address three concerns with their platform: lack of Christ-centered, biblically rooted worship in the church; lack of qualified, passionate and healthy leaders to assume roles of worship leadership in the church; and lack of effective resourcing and training for worship leaders and musicians in the church.

The platform currently serves about 10,000 worship leaders, but expects that number to triple through their expanding partnerships with Texas Baptists-related universities and Baptist seminaries within and outside of Texas, along with other organizations, Seay said.