

Samford University

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



1,080

Record number of first-year
students enrolled
(fall 2023)



Fidelitas: Faith and Future

Fidelitas is the Latin word for faithfulness, and faithfulness animates all that we aspire to achieve within Samford University's strategic plan announced in 2023. With every step forward, the Samford community takes faithful strides to sustain and strengthen the university's Christ-centered educational mission.

The aspirational goals within *Fidelitas* are aligned across eight pillars: Academic Distinction, Faith Formation, Student Engagement, Community Celebration, Athletic Success, Global Influence, Employee Elevation and Financial Stewardship and Strength. This thoughtfully designed plan seeks to establish our institutional priorities and provide a roadmap to a bright future. It is bold, comprehensive and adaptable to the evolving landscape of higher education. It connects Samford's past with its present and it strengthens our future.

The following pages of this annual report share stories illustrating our journey to implement *Fidelitas* over the past year. Throughout these stories you will see a commitment to excellence in the classroom, on the field of competition and in cocurricular offerings. And above all, you will see stories celebrating Samford's mission and the wonderful accomplishments of our people. Our students achieved national distinction, our faculty members were honored for their teaching, service and scholarship, and our athletic teams garnered 11 Southern Conference championships—a new record for Samford.

These stories from 2023 also showcase members of the Samford community who embody what it means to be faithful. From one Samford football player's personal mission to make a spiritual impact to the university's efforts to engage our surrounding community in new ways, we are making a difference in the world around us.

I am confident that by God's grace and with the support of our faithful Samford family, we will achieve the bold vision provided through *Fidelitas* and see our beloved university reach new heights. And this world will be better for it.

For God. For learning. Forever.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beck A. Taylor".

Beck A. Taylor, PhD
President





Faith and Future

Samford casts its eyes to the future with a new comprehensive strategic plan: *Fidelitas*. The plan is aligned along eight themes, which are defined below and expounded in the following pages.



ACADEMIC DISTINCTION

Samford distinguishes itself as a growing, comprehensive, Christ-centered university with rigorous and relevant undergraduate, graduate and continuing studies programs that are innovative, led by faculty committed to excellent teaching, scholarship, creativity and service, and designed to equip graduates for meaningful lives of vocation, service and ministry.



FAITH FORMATION

Samford encourages students and employees to grow in their Christian faith while extending the love of Christ to all and applying biblically- and theologically-informed reasoning to contemporary issues.



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Samford provides meaningful and creative opportunities for students to actively shape the university and their own experiences through leadership, service, social, spiritual and wellness activities.



ATHLETIC SUCCESS

Samford attains athletic excellence through competitive success, academic achievement, community participation and spiritual formation.



COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Samford celebrates the different experiences and perspectives that students, employees and alumni bring to the campus community while cultivating unity and spirit around common aspirations for Christ-centered community life.



EMPLOYEE ELEVATION

Samford elevates the professional, economic and spiritual growth, as well as overall wellness of its employees as essential to reaching the university's full potential.



GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Samford positively influences the world through education, outreach and service by preparing students to engage others through athletic, cultural, economic, intellectual, language, political, religious and social exchanges.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP AND STRENGTH

Samford stewards and grows its financial, physical and technological resources to sustain excellence across the university in service to its mission and vision.



ACADEMIC
DISTINCTION



Ready for Work

National ranking shows Samford grads are well prepared

Samford University is ranked #10 among all colleges and universities in the United States for the quality of career preparation provided to its students according to a recent ranking published in *The Wall Street Journal*. The top national ranking affirms what many Samford alumni already know—the university prepares graduates well for the future.

For instance, at Orlean Beeson School of Education, students are provided with tailored educational experiences that lead to high employment and graduate school acceptance rates. In the school's teacher education programs, field experiences are tiered, growing increasingly complex from their first experience at the sophomore level through the capstone experience as seniors who are interning in school settings for the entire semester. In the school's human development and family science programs, the department

boasts more than 25 partnerships with entities ranging from for-profit businesses, nonprofit organizations, churches and community groups. A hallmark of these programs is the art of matching students' passions with applied experiential opportunity. In the school's educational leadership program, mentors in the field are paired with students to provide support, encouragement and practical knowledge from experienced and varying perspectives.

"Career preparedness is a part of the fabric of all degree programs in our school," said Anna McEwan, dean of Orlean Beeson School of Education. "There is a correlation, if not a causation, between career preparation at the course level and the fact our students are either employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation."

#10
in the nation
for career
preparation

—The Wall Street Journal
(2024)



In Howard College of Arts and Sciences, students are provided with a well-rounded liberal arts education that equips them with the essential skills needed to succeed in many career paths. Opportunities such as study abroad and undergraduate research contribute to a more well-rounded and fulfilling educational journey. The school's career preparation course equips students with practical skills, including résumé writing, portfolio building and interview preparation. Furthermore, each department offers similar courses and practicum internships, allowing students to gain real-world experience in their chosen field of study. A great example has been the Department of Communication and Media's new public relations agency that took on its first five clients in 2023. Students enrolled in the class created PR campaigns for businesses in the Birmingham area using the skills they've acquired.

"When I speak with alumni who graduated from our programs, I hear countless stories about how Samford prepared them, not just for their first jobs, but for the long term with the ability to pivot, adapt and retool at every stage of their careers," said Dawn McCormack, dean of Howard College of Arts and Sciences. "The

sense of community we have here at Samford enhances our educational experience in a way not possible at most other institutions. Our faculty invests in the development and success of our students, fostering skill acquisition, spiritual growth and confidence building. These things come together to create an ideal educational environment for our students."

This latest ranking from *The Wall Street Journal* coincides with data released in November 2023 by Samford's Career Development Center that shows 97% of May 2023 Samford graduates are either employed, continuing their education in graduate school or working in postgraduate internships, confirming Samford students are well prepared for the dynamic workplaces of tomorrow.

"No one talks about postgraduate life and the reality many young people face, feeling confused or lost as they dive headfirst into the workforce and adulthood," said McEwan. "But our goal is that our graduates do not have to face that reality alone. We want our graduates to boldly walk into the next chapter of life confidently pursuing their calling and making the world a better place."

97%

of undergraduate
alumni are working
or in further study
within six months
of graduation

(2023)





ACADEMIC
DISTINCTION

National Achievements Showcase Samford's Distinctive Academic Programs

Over the past year, the 10 schools of Samford University and its students have earned national and international recognition. Some of the outstanding accomplishments include:

Beeson Divinity School

The Global Methodist Church approved Beeson Divinity School as one of its recommended educational institutions. Three books by faculty were honored in *Christianity Today's* 2024 Book Awards including books by Dean Douglas Sweeney, Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism and Cultural Engagement Joshua Chatraw and adjunct professor Collin Hansen.

Brock School of Business

The Thomas J. Adams Sr./AutoTec Endowed Professor in Risk Management and Insurance was established with Rusty Yerkes named as its inaugural holder. The Fairway Commercial Real Estate Lab also opened. Both enrich the curriculum and guide the support students receive at the school. The Center for Sports Analytics continues to gain national acclaim, including top 10 recognition in the 2023 International OnCon Awards.



Cumberland School of Law

The school is ranked in the top five in the nation in three separate trial advocacy rankings: 4th in Trial Advocacy by *U.S. News & World Report*, 3rd in the Gavel Rankings (2nd overall since 2019), and 5th in the Trial Competition Performance Rankings (4th

overall since 2016). *Princeton Review's Best Law Schools 2023* also recognized Cumberland School of Law in two specialized categories: 6th in the nation for Best Quality of Life and 7th in the nation for Greatest Resources for Women. Overall, the school's ultimate bar pass rate for the class of 2020, including graduates two years out, was 97.2%.



Orlean Beeson School of Education

Undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs have been recognized by the National Council on Teacher Quality as among the best in the nation in their latest report, "Teacher Prep Review: Strengthening Elementary Reading Instruction." Samford is one of only two universities in the United States to have earned an A+ distinction for preparing aspiring teachers in the most effective methods for teaching reading.

Howard College of Arts and Sciences

Ella Ford, a political science major, won top speaker at the national American Debate Association tournament in March 2023, giving her a legitimate claim as the best first-year debater in the country. The college also launched new coursework in cybersecurity and a new major in neuroscience.

Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing

The school received more than \$2 million from the federal government to improve the preparation of primary care nurse practitioner students committed to careers in medically underserved and rural areas. The last two Bachelor of Science in Nursing cohorts had a 100% first-time pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses. Currently, 100% of Samford's nursing students completing the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner certification have successfully passed.



McWhorter School of Pharmacy

The school's 96% first-time pass rate on the Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination was among the highest in the nation—the national average was 77%. Graduates set a record of 63 pharmacy residency matches, ranking nationally in the top 20% of pharmacy schools. The school received a historic \$2.5 million gift from alumnus Francois Coutu, PharmD '81 in support of student scholarships and the establishment of the Coutu Scholar program.



School of the Arts

Samford interior design representatives received honors at the 2023 IIDA Alabama Design Awards with two Samford students receiving prominent national awards. Piano performance and pedagogy student Allison Frederick was selected as one of six teaching assistants at Interlochen Arts Camp, an internationally renowned camp for youth.

School of Health Professions

The school announced news of a 97% first-time pass rate by graduates on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination. The Department of Physical Therapy earned its 10-year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.



School of Public Health

The Department of Nutrition and Dietetics announced that its accredited undergraduate didactic program in dietetics received the highest of marks—a 100% three-year average pass rate on the national level registered dietitian exam.



14:1
student-to-
faculty ratio

Mission of a Lifetime

Professor and director of assessment and evaluation Andrea Collins exemplifies everything Samford. She has four degrees from the university and has been a longtime professor at Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing. But it's her trips away from campus that best demonstrate her commitment to Samford's mission.

Collins leads medical expeditions to Honduras annually, taking along College of Health Sciences students and faculty. In the past 10 years, this has included 68 family nurse practitioner students, 11 pharmacy students, and 13 nursing alumni, among others. Collins says she's personally been to about 80 villages in the Copan area of the country and cared for more than 30,000 people.

"Away from distractions and surrounded by individuals whose joy comes from the Lord rather than circumstances, participants on these trips are challenged to grow in their own faith," said Collins. "Despite our failings and the challenges of the trips, God has used them to bless not only those who are served, but also those who do the serving."

Collins and her teammates collaborate with a Honduran physician, dentist and local translators during the trips. Each day, the group travels into a different rural mountain village where a temporary free health clinic is set up in a local church or school. The clinic

consists of an admission area where everyone receives medication for parasites, an exam area where individuals see a health care provider for medication and physical therapy evaluation and instruction, and an area to distribute food, clothing and medications. This activity also provides a time to assess spiritual needs and pray with the family. Individuals walk from surrounding villages, and it is common to see 250-300 individuals per day. During the trek made in July 2023, Collins and team facilitated clinics in eight villages.

"On the most recent trip, one nurse practitioner student was able to start an IV on a dehydrated dying newborn and provide fluid resuscitation. I diagnosed, provided education and provided several months of medication to a man with rheumatoid arthritis who had been to two other clinics and received no diagnosis. These scenarios are not unusual," said Collins.

Collins is already in planning mode for the next trip and delights in bringing others on the journey she's been on for 23 years.

"By living out my faith and offering the trip opportunities to others regardless of their faith, I have been blessed to see trip participants come to know Jesus as their Savior. Some have put Jesus back in His proper place as Lord. On these trips, I till soil, I throw seeds, and I water with faith that the true impact will be seen in heaven one day," Collins said.



Running Interference for Christ

One of the first things sport administration major Joshua Mathiasen shares with others is that he knows he is beating the odds. "Statistics say I should not be a Division I football player," said the nose guard on Samford's defensive line.

Yet he is, and he credits God with that victory. Mathiasen was born when his mother was in prison; his father is still there. His grandmother took him to church, but he found himself thrown out of Sunday school frequently. A Chicago native, he landed at a university in Illinois to play football, but it was not a good fit. That's when he hit the transfer portal and received an offer from a school of which he had never heard.

"I really didn't know that I would be at Samford. I knew I wanted to play football and how I had planned my steps, but I didn't realize God had already set one in motion," referencing his favorite Bible verse, Proverbs 16:9.

Mathiasen plans to pursue a master's degree in marketing and possibly become a creative director working with youth. He has already started down that track, through his work with the Samford student organization RANSOM, or Radical Athlete and Student Oasis Ministry. The group was founded at Samford 14 years ago to provide worship and service opportunities. It typically meets on Monday nights for a weekly worship service and fellowship, gathering an average of 80 people each week. Mathiasen serves as Samford's campus leader.

"We're very focused on community and I love that about it. It's not your conventional ministry. We focus on reaching the lost and we ask that people come as they are," said Mathiasen.

Over the years, Samford's RANSOM team has formed RANSOM groups on four other college campuses. Mathiasen and others attend faith-focused leadership conferences, intentionally develop relationships with those seeking the Lord and regularly hold free sports camps for children to share the love of Christ.

"RANSOM Samford is really changing the trajectory of what college ministry looks like and overall changing the trajectory of those around us," said Mathiasen. "We can truly have an impact and it's starting on Samford's campus."

Mathiasen's dedication to spreading the Gospel through community doesn't end with RANSOM. He along with fellow football player Daniel Bettis encourages their teammates to attend church, recruiting more than 40 of them to do so over last summer. And he's on a personal mission to meet every Samford student he can to share what's most helped him.

"Lean into your community—at Samford or anywhere you go. God didn't create us to be alone. He created us to be a part of that community for at my weakest, they are strong," Mathiasen said.

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Joshua Mathiasen





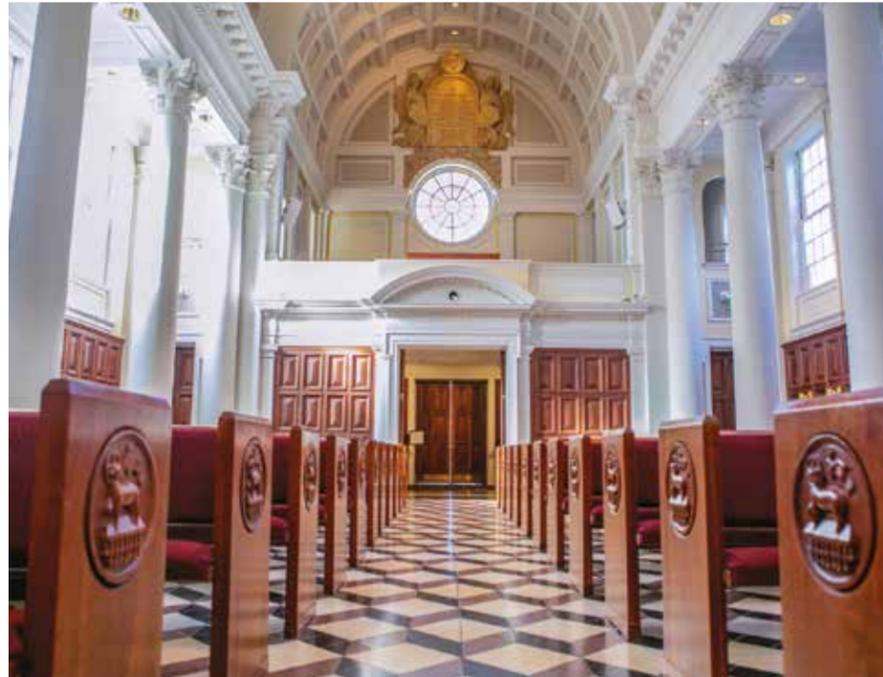
Beeson Divinity School Welcomes New Grant for Preaching Project, New Degrees

In its 35th year, Beeson Divinity School continues to grow, adding three new degree programs, along with the welcome news of a \$1.2 million grant which will fund exciting new opportunities for preachers on and off campus.

The Spirit and Power Project

The grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. will fund The Spirit and Power Project, which benefits both Beeson Divinity School and undergraduate students at Samford. The project, which will be coordinated by the Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute, will equip both aspiring and active preachers to proclaim the Gospel faithfully and wisely, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to preach sermons which glorify God and build up the body of Christ.

The Spirit and Power Project has three primary objectives. First, the project will enrich the training and formation of aspiring preachers through existing educational programs. Students preparing for preaching ministries will have new opportunities and avenues to gain preaching experience with the provision of coaching and mentoring beforehand, as well as review and feedback sessions afterwards. Second, the project will engage current preachers with programs and services that enhance their spiritual vitality and theological judgment. To aid in this endeavor, the grant will fund and support preaching peer groups and will also sponsor retreats for preachers. Third, the project will develop a preaching fellows program, an annual preaching conference and a preaching podcast.



Theology for the Church

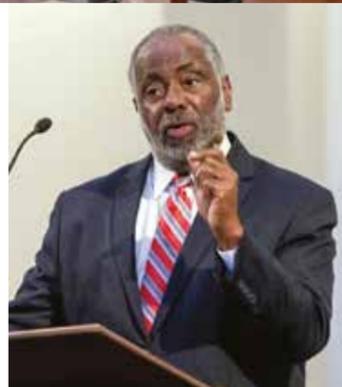
The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Theology for the Church is the first research doctoral degree offered by Samford in its history. The new degree program equips graduates for theologically robust ministry in and for the church of Jesus Christ. It includes a common set of courses, comprehensive exams and dissertation research under the supervision of Beeson faculty.

Master of Arts in Christian Counseling

The new master's degree in Christian counseling will prepare students to counsel from a distinctly Christian perspective, equipping graduates to synthesize historic truths of the Christian faith with practical ways to help those in need.

Master of Theology

The Master of Theology degree will equip those who desire more advanced study for ministry or wish to prepare for a research doctoral degree. As with Beeson's other degree programs, the emphasis is on theology in the service of the church and the kingdom of God. The 30-hour degree program is flexible, allowing students to take a variety of courses instead of specializing in one field of study.



Refocus for Samford's Worship Collective

The year 2023 brought changes for one of Samford's dynamic worship teams. The Samford Worship Collective evolved to place a focus on student worship leaders and serving the church and university community through corporate worship. Established in 2017 as the Worship Arts Ensemble within the School of the Arts, the group initially concentrated on various creative expressions of worship artistry, embracing drama, dance and visual art.

The Samford Worship Collective draws students from across campus with a diversity of majors. This year, the group expanded to 22 students. It utilizes a worship band model that includes a variety of instruments as well

as four to six singers. Students serve both on and off campus in various contexts including churches and schools, serving as ambassadors for the university.

"Being a part of the collective has had a profound impact on my faith. When we gather, we don't merely rehearse with the intent to perform. We actively discuss how to lead in a Christ-like manner, and we sing for the glory of God, not our own edification," said Ben Barry, a freshman accounting major. "Being a part of this team drives me to examine myself to ensure I am in a spiritual position worthy of leading others."

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Ben Barry

Genesis Retreat Fosters Faith and Community

Transitioning to college can be an intimidating experience for any incoming freshman. Forming a community can be difficult, and that's where the Samford Genesis Retreat comes in.

"We often hear freshmen (and upperclassmen) reference the retreat as the time they met their best friend," said Bobby Gatlin, campus pastor. "Our focus is to give students a strong, Christ-focused start to their time at Samford as we discuss the importance of pursuing faith during college."

In fall 2023, a group of almost 800 freshmen loaded onto buses and headed to the Shocco Springs Conference Center for a weekend of worship and community.

"Coming to college not knowing a lot of people can be scary, but the retreat allowed me to make new friendships and connect with more people. It also had an impact on my spiritual life. Having a time of worship and a great message each night gave me a sense of peace and comfort knowing I would be okay," shared Cadence Key, a freshman human development and science major.



A Cappella Choir Wins Third International Choral Competition

The Samford University A Cappella Choir swept the top awards at the CantaRode International Choir Festival in the Netherlands in May 2023. They also won two other significant awards: the “Audience Award” and “Best Conductor” for professor Philip Copeland, who has led the A Cappella Choir since 2010. They competed with 12 other choirs from 11 different countries including Sweden, The Netherlands, Belgium, Malaysia, Slovakia, Germany, Hungary, Ukraine and Estonia. This competition win is especially significant because of the high-quality choirs involved.

“Going into the competition, the Sophia Chamber Choir from Ukraine was easily the favorite to win because they recently won the Tolosa Choral Contest and the European Grand Prize,” said Copeland.

The CantaRode event was the final stop of a 12-day trip to Belgium and the Netherlands for the A Cappella Choir and its first international tour since 2018. That year, the group won the Laurea Mundi Competition in Budapest,

Hungary. Two years prior, the group came in first at the Šiauliai Cantat in Lithuania.

“Our hope is that Samford students gain a new perspective about the world and their place in it. These gatherings teach us all that we are more alike than we are different, a perspective that is sorely needed in the world today,” said Copeland.

The Samford A Cappella Choir was founded in 1939 and is featured throughout the year on campus at commencements, convocations, concerts and worship services.



Samford Debate Finishes Season Ranked Nationally

Samford’s championship-winning debate team continues to dominate once again. After a successful fall 2023 season, the team was ranked 5th in the nation by the American Debate Association.

“This is the highest ranking for a fall semester in my 18 years at the university,” executive director of debate Ryan Galloway said. “It shows the depth of the squad in all three divisions, showing that both the present and future of Samford debate are incredibly strong.”

Freshman Laurel Pack said, “I think a lot of the team’s success comes from the work the squad does outside of tournaments. Oftentimes, a round is won before it even begins, not through skill or talent, but through preparation.”

In the season opener at Northwestern University, Pack and junior Sarah Chew finished in the Elite Eight of junior varsity teams, defeating leading debate teams from across the country.

“In a tournament, every round starts from scratch,” Chew said. “It takes a lot of mental focus, persistence and drive to make it all the way to the end and treat every round like it’s the only one.”



At the University of Kentucky tournament held a few weeks later, Chew and Pack placed second in the junior varsity division. Another second-place win for the junior varsity debate team followed at the Mukai tournament, and at the George Ziegemeuller Invitational, the varsity team placed first with junior TJ Riggs winning top speaker at the event.

The group’s winning streak only continued as the weeks went on with Chew and Pack placing second yet again at the Harvard University tournament and sophomore Ella Ford and junior Abby Montgomery winning first and second speaker in the junior varsity division at the last tournament of the season.

“This success shows our team can beat the best teams in the country,” Galloway said.



6
legal clinics
led by
Cumberland
School of Law
students and
faculty

Cumberland School of Law Clinics Change Lives

In 2023, Cumberland School of Law announced two new clinics for students to expand their legal knowledge and gain real world experience. The Cooney Contracts and Risk Management Clinic and the Cumberland Parole Clinic provide opportunities for students to immerse themselves in the legal profession through a hands-on approach.

The Cooney Contracts and Risk Management Clinic allows for second-year and third-year law students to learn about the legal implications of construction, insurance and surety contracts. The clinic will service clients of McGriff Insurance Services LLC, part of Truist Insurance Holdings Inc., and one of the top 10 largest insurance brokers in the world.



The Cumberland Parole Clinic partners with Redemption Earned, a nonprofit formed by retired chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court Sue Bell Cobb. The mission of Redemption Earned is to identify, assist and represent worthy individuals who have spent decades behind bars. These individuals are deemed to have earned parole or work release.

In the clinic, students engage in representing clients of Redemption Earned. Students learn the process for parole and screen clients who seek parole, review records of the Department of Corrections to determine whether a prisoner poses a risk to the public, plan re-entry services for potential parolees and prepare for and argue parole cases before the Alabama Parole Board. In addition, students assist Redemption Earned with its WIN Project by removing obstacles that are keeping prisoners from entering the work-release program.

Cumberland School of Law has a long history of similar clinics that provide students with hands-on experience working with real clients in the community. Other clinics include the Capital Defense Clinic and the Criminal Appeals Clinic, both of which are conducted in partnership with the Jefferson County Public Defender's Office, the Cumberland Innocence Clinic and the Cumberland Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic.

Colloquia Event Celebrates Student Research

Samford's second annual Student Research Colloquia saw undergraduate and graduate students from various disciplines gather to present their scholarship and research in a public forum.

Featuring 156 students and 95 poster presentations, the event showcased students' independent and collaborative research on a breadth of topics, from biology to social work and nearly all disciplines in between.

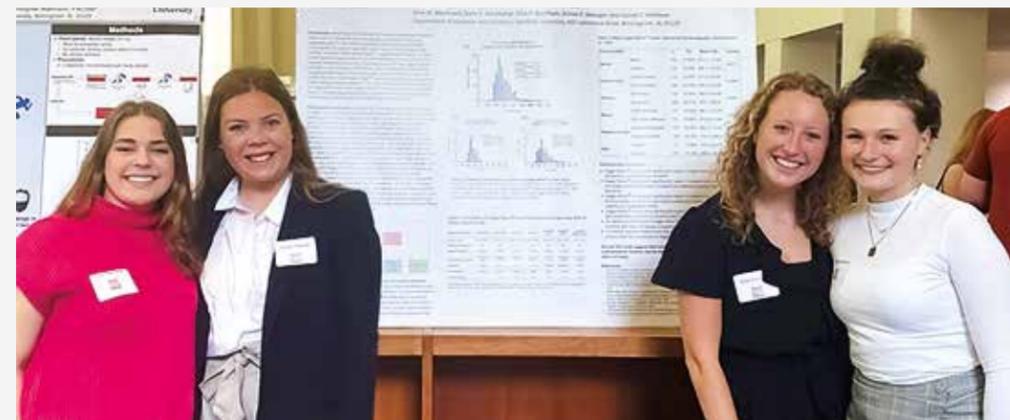
"Our students have so much creativity around the topics they think about—things we take for granted," said Linnea Minnema, director of grants and sponsored programs in Samford's Office of Research. "They have a genuinely fresh perspective on research."

Faculty members judged presentations based on criteria such as purpose, findings, implications, context, contribution and methodology. Senior nutrition and dietetics majors Eliza Burnham, Katie Hynekamp, Elise Marchand and Aimee Metzger were among the students who presented. Their project aimed to assess fruit and vegetable intake among undergraduate college students. To do so, they involved more than 300 Samford students who completed a health and demographic survey before undergoing physical assessment with a Veggie Meter, a noninvasive research-grade instrument that detects and quantifies carotenoids in the skin.



"We found that females, upperclassmen, health science majors and those who were physically active or very active had a higher fruit and vegetable intake," Hynekamp said.

With more than 400 guests in attendance, the students gained experience in presenting and expounding on their topics. The Samford Student Research Colloquia is hosted by the Research Advisory Collaborative, a campus group serving to advance and support the research and scholarship efforts of both faculty and students.





ATHLETIC
SUCCESS

Success On and Off the Field

From the classroom to the playing field, Samford's student-athletes are unrivaled. Not only did nine of the university's teams win 11 Southern Conference (SoCon) championships in the 2022-23 season, but their graduation rates also scored high marks compared to other universities nationally. Samford teams won championships in soccer, volleyball, football, women's indoor track and field, men's indoor track and field, men's basketball, women's outdoor track and field, men's outdoor track and field and baseball, making this the winningest year in university history.

"Winning a single championship is one of the hardest things to do in sports," said Martin Newton, director of athletics. "Winning 11 in one year is remarkable, and a testament to all the hard work, dedication and sacrifice of our student-athletes, coaches and support staff. As proud as I am of them for winning championships, I'm prouder of the content of their character and how they represent our university."



Given the outstanding year of achievements, Samford earned the Commissioner's Cup, which goes to the top all-around men's athletics program in the SoCon, and the Germann Cup, for the SoCon's top overall women's athletics program. This is the third consecutive year Samford has won the Germann Cup.

In November, the NCAA announced its latest Graduation Success Rate (GSR) report, rating Samford's athletics team with an impressive 98%, the second-highest score in the nation and tied with top-ranked schools in the country, including Duke, Notre Dame, Northwestern and Princeton. Samford has a long history of performing among elite institutions for its combination of excellence in both academics and athletic competition.

The ranking is additional proof that Samford's student-athletes are making the grade. More than 260 of them were on the SoCon's Academic Honor Roll in 2023, which requires a 3.0 grade point average or higher. Eighteen of the honor roll student-athletes had a perfect 4.0 grade point average.

"I am continually impressed with how consistently hard our student-athletes work, both athletically and academically," deputy director of athletics Michelle Durban said. "In every year since the GSR was implemented, our student-athletes have scored among the nation's best. We are all extremely proud of these scores and know they will continue in the years to come."



11

**Southern Conference
(SoCon) championships
in the 2022-23 season**

98%

**NCAA Division I
Graduation
Success Rate**





ATHLETIC
SUCCESS

Coaches and Athletes Credit Successful Season to Project SAMson

Bringing together the latest technology, data analysis and sports medicine practices, Project SAMson has transformed the training regimen of all Samford student-athletes across the university's 17 NCAA Division I teams. Launched in 2021, Project SAMson is a combined initiative by Samford, its athletic programs, Andrews Sports Medicine, American Sports Medicine Institute, Brock School of Business, the College of Health Sciences and the Center for Sports Analytics. Its goal is to enhance athletic performance through improved strength and conditioning training, reduced injury risk, advanced injury prediction and treatment, and data-driven return-to-play protocols.

“Project SAMson has been a complete game changer for our football team.”

Head football coach
Chris Hatcher

Athletes utilize wearable technology that tracks a wide array of performance metrics. The data is then analyzed by Samford students in Brock School of Business and the Center for Sports Analytics. Students from various areas within Samford's College of Health Sciences then work with coaches and athletic trainers to develop unique training regimens and nutrition plans for each athlete.

“Project SAMson has been a complete game changer for our football team. The equipment and technology have allowed our players to train more effectively and efficiently. Our team became faster and stronger. It allowed us to keep our team in excellent shape while not fatiguing them,” said head football coach Chris Hatcher.



Through its partnership with faculty and academic programs in business and health sciences, Project SAMson also provides hands-on experience for students across campus. Students from Brock School of Business and the Center for Sports Analytics work with faculty to analyze the data and present it to the coaches and athletes. For Austin Streitmatter '23 who majored in marketing and management with concentrations in sports marketing and data analytics, interning with Project SAMson was one of the most meaningful experiences during his time at Samford.

“I attribute everything I've been able to accomplish at this point to Project SAMson. Being able to be a student who can analyze an incredible amount of data has given me the opportunity to apply the skills I've learned in the classroom and that is an amazing résumé booster,” Streitmatter said.

Students from the College of Health Sciences also intern with the teams. Using the data generated during workouts, student interns help create individualized nutrition plans and training regimens for the athletes. Hannah Futrell, a senior majoring in nutrition and dietetics in the School of Public Health, worked closely with the football team during her junior year. She created pre-practice and pre-workout meal plans, made protein shakes for the athletes after workouts, packed snack bags for away games and traveled with the team to assist with nutrition-related needs while on the road. Because of her experience with Project SAMson, she hopes to pursue a career as a sports dietitian for a college or professional football team.

“The experience I have had with Project SAMson is going to help me excel in my career more than anything else I have done. The connections that I've been able to make and the knowledge I've gained about how sports teams work has been huge,” Futrell said.





Partners in Service

Community engagement can mean multiple things, but to Debby Haralson, who leads Samford's efforts, it all comes down to faith.

"God challenges us to venture into the lives of the people around us; those who look and act like us and those who do not. We learn, again and again, that loving people requires respect, empathy, listening and a host of other challenges. Before long, we realize anew that loving our neighbor is also a way of loving God," said Haralson.

Haralson and her team in the Office of Community Engagement provide meaningful connections between Samford and people in the community.

"The idea is that when our students, faculty and staff communicate and collaborate with civic organizations and community ministries, we can be a part of creating a stronger, happier Birmingham and beyond," she shared.

In 2023, 82 students dedicated an entire semester to serving others through community cadres, completing 675 hours of service. They addressed food insecurity, helped with language barriers, supported people with end-of-life challenges and advocated for those experiencing systemic injustice. The signature event for the Office of Community

Engagement is Samford Gives Back. Held each spring, last year's event involved nearly 600 students serving at 25 different sites across Birmingham. A new student organization was also created in 2023 called Samford Food Heroes, which collaborates with the Grace Klein organization to gather unused food from across campus for those in need.

"Community engagement gives our students the opportunity to learn about social issues they may have read about or seen on a video, issues like poverty, addiction, human trafficking, and the like. When students can spend time with people directly affected by these challenges, perspectives broaden. What was once an issue is now a name and a face. Empathy, understanding and creative solutions grow out of intentional relationships," said Haralson.



Samford's Dining Experience Reimagined

Students returned to campus in fall 2023 to a completed 20,000-square-foot renovation of the university's dining hall, affectionately known as the Caf. The project included a revamp of the entire dining space and the Howard Room, and additions of new technology and furniture in the Ralph W. Beeson University Center.

"It is a place and space where people can gather and enjoy each other's time and company," said Jeff Poleshek, assistant vice president for operations, planning and construction.

Additional cuisine options have been added, including a teaching kitchen where guest

chefs are able to cook dishes for students. The first chef was Food Network star James Briscione '01, who serves as Samford's first culinary advisor. Another cuisine option offers innovative meals without nine of the most common food allergens.

In a recent survey, one student wrote: "It's modern, but true to Samford. It's big enough where I feel as if I'm not missing out on a 'caf experience,' like being at a major state school, but it's small enough to where I feel as if I can still make lasting and meaningful connections."



Wellness Garden Plants Seeds of Community

The Samford Wellness Garden is an oasis of sustainability and interprofessional community, located outside the College of Health Sciences. Clara Darling, director of the Samford Wellness Kitchen, received a grant for the garden in 2022, and it has flourished ever since. This gardening effort serves as a learning opportunity for students and provides hands-on experience for those who are interested in growing their own food.

"My greatest wish is to encourage our students to slow down and appreciate the beauty of 'slow' foods, home grown foods and homemade meals. Sharing meals with friends and family—this is what life is about," said Darling.

Darling and her team grow a variety of crops within the garden, including three varieties of radishes, two varieties of peppers, Japanese Hakurei turnips, carrots, albino beets, swiss chard, kale and cabbage. They are also growing herbs, like oregano, rosemary and thyme. Additionally, the Samford Wellness Garden is home to a new composter used to fertilize the garden, ensuring the plants are healthy year-round.

Darling and her nutrition students host regular community cooking classes as an opportunity to teach participants about sustainable food practices, growing their own foods and composting. The garden also hosts volunteer days where participants learn more about planting, harvesting and garden maintenance.



Leadership Samford Fosters Interdepartmental Community and Career Confidence

In fall 2023, Samford launched a new initiative for employee elevation named Leadership Samford. Fifteen employees were selected out of a pool of applicants for an 11-month cohort to deepen their knowledge of the university and develop organizational leadership competencies.

“Leadership Samford has cultivated a cohort of emerging leaders who have not only demonstrated a deep understanding of leadership principles but have also begun applying these principles to their daily work,” shared Adam Roebuck, assistant director of individual and organizational success. “Through workshops, team-building exercises and collaborative projects, participants have developed strong interpersonal skills, fostering a more cohesive and united community.”

Employees involved in this cohort have nothing but wonderful experiences to share.

“My favorite experience has been to travel to where Samford was founded at Siloam Baptist Church in Marion, Alabama. To hear university historian, Jonathan Bass, share about the reason Samford was formed and the vision for the future was incredibly inspiring,” said John Roland, a development officer in the Division of Advancement and Marketing.

Tiffany Robayna, assistant professor in Howard College of Arts and Sciences, agreed.

“I truly loved the session with April Robinson, assistant vice president of student development and support, speaking on how she stepped into leadership and embraced it as a Christian woman. Her story spoke to me personally and encouraged me on my own journey.”

Participants represent various academic schools and divisions across the university. These members who have different daily experiences come together to learn about Samford’s mission and history and its progression from a small Alabama college to the leading Christian university it is today.

“I have found the engagement with faculty and staff from different areas of campus helps to foster a deeper sense of community and belonging on campus,” said Andrea Bowers, associate professor of physical therapy in the School of Health Professions. “I also believe the reflective assignments on personality, values, and leadership style improve self-awareness for working more effectively in our roles.”



Faculty Accolades

Samford’s faculty receives growing recognition for excellence in teaching, service and scholarship. These are just a few examples of their outstanding accomplishments over the past year.

Valerie Prince, professor in McWhorter School of Pharmacy, was appointed the 168th president of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). APhA is the nation’s oldest and largest pharmacy organization, leading the profession and equipping members for their role as medication experts in team-based, patient-centered care.

Oswaldo Padilla, professor in Beeson Divinity School, was elected to the Society of New Testament Studies, a highly selective and prestigious international society of New Testament scholars.

Carol Koch, professor of communication sciences and disorders in the School of Health Professions, was elected to the Council on Academic Accreditation for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.

Carol Ratcliffe, chair of the Department of Healthcare Administration and Informatics in the School of Public Health, was reappointed to the Statewide Health Coordinating Council (SHCC). The SHCC is responsible for reviewing, revising and preparing Alabama’s State Health Plan, which is used by other entities to develop and operate the state’s health systems.

Mary Yakimowski, professor of educational leadership in Orlean Beeson School of Education, was elected to the executive committee of the national Accreditation Council for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Jim Griffo, adjunct professor in the School of the Arts’ Department of Architecture & Interior Design, was recognized for being among IIDA International’s first Emeritus Class, a designation awarded to 19 of the institute’s 15,000 members.

David Smolin, the Harwell G. Davis Professor of Constitutional Law and director of the Center for Children, Law and Ethics in Cumberland School of Law, served as a special adviser to Child Identity Protection (CHIP), an international nongovernmental organization based in Switzerland.

Jennifer Coleman, professor in Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing, was inducted into the Alabama Nursing Hall of Fame and the National League of Nurses Academy of Nursing Education Class of Fellows.

Lauren Young, librarian and instruction coordinator in Harwell Goodwin Davis Library, was appointed to the Atla Open Press Editorial Board, an international library association specializing in religious and theological information resources.

Darin White, professor of marketing and executive director of the Center for Sports Analytics in Brock School of Business, joined the Marketing Accountability Standards Board (MASB). The MASB is a brain trust of global marketing thought leaders and practitioners who collaborate to solve accountability issues in the industry and advocate for global brand and marketing standards.

Chuck Stokes, associate professor of geography and sociology, and **Rachel Hagues**, associate professor of social work, were named Lilly Faculty Fellows. They will receive startup funds to inaugurate a Lilly Faculty Fellows program on campus.

Anthony Overton, chair of the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences in Howard College of Arts and Sciences, was appointed to the board of directors for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The group promotes sustainable and responsible utilization of fisheries and prevents overfishing to preserve populations for future generations.

Paul Kuruk, the Lucille Stewart Beeson Professor of Law in Cumberland School of Law, was elected vice chairman of the World Intellectual Property Organization’s (WIPO) Preparatory Committee of the Diplomatic Conference. Headquartered in Switzerland and part of the United Nations, the WIPO is the global forum for intellectual property services, policy information and cooperation.



Global Influence, Lifelong Impact

Experiential learning is a distinctive of Samford University with global implications. In 2023, students traded the classroom for a passport to study and encounter various international experiences firsthand.

Immediately following spring commencement, Samford sports marketing students left Birmingham, Alabama, for Birmingham, England, to present their semester-long research project to a group of executives with the Walsall Football Club. Their research, focused on the valuation of corporate sponsorships and stadium naming rights, opened doors for future involvement with international sports properties, including a 2024 student project with Cambridge United Football Club.

"Flying to Europe to present a school project was a unique experience that I will never forget," said Matthew Madden, a senior economics major.

In pharmacy, summer programs in Great Britain and Spain offered electives designed to teach students about a pharmacists' role in other countries' health care systems. Students visited various sites, including community pharmacies, hospitals, universities, professional associations and famous landmarks.

Fourth-year pharmacy student Noah Gann said, "The trip truly opened my eyes to the international importance of pharmacy. Learning about how a completely different style of health care approaches the profession of pharmacy... strengthened my love for the profession."

In July, Master of Accountancy students embarked on an inaugural London excursion, providing a unique professional development experience for future business leaders. The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity allowed students to immerse themselves in the culture, history and professional atmosphere of one of the world's most dynamic business hubs. They met with executives at the international headquarters of Google, Coca-Cola, Amazon, Lloyd's Insurance and Ernst & Young, participated in workshops focused on transferring internationally within an accounting firm, and engaged with several Samford alumni living and working abroad.

These are only a few of the vast experiential learning opportunities impacting the education of Samford students. Furthermore, Sydney, Australia was the learning location for students studying international marketing. And, since 2006, law students have traveled to Cambridge, England, for a five-week summer program at Cambridge University, where they engage in courses such as The English Legal System and Shakespeare.



From Ancient Ruins in Israel to a Samford Lab

There are not many universities where undergraduate students can discover ancient relics during an excavation on the other side of the world and then bring the artifacts back to campus to research them. Yet, that is exactly what senior William Spanier experienced in summer 2023 after studying abroad in Israel.

The biochemistry major traveled to the ancient site of Shikhin in Israel with James Strange, the Charles Jackson Granade and Elizabeth Donald Granade Professor in New Testament, for four weeks. He then brought the artifacts found at the site back to Samford, where he spent the following five weeks researching their elemental and chemical composition under the guidance of Brian Gregory, professor of chemistry and biochemistry.

"I established a deep understanding and connection to Israel, created life-long friendships and grew in my faith," said Spanier. "Participating in living history and holding artifacts that likely haven't been seen for almost 2,000 years was exciting."

Gregory's group has been researching pottery found by Strange's excavation groups at the site of Shikhin for years. He and students like Spanier have researched the artifacts to learn more about the origins of the Shikhin pottery, which dates to the late first century A.D.

In Israel, Spanier and Strange excavated what they think was a synagogue wall built over an ancient cistern. They found numerous artifacts and uncovered a plaster floor. Not only did Spanier become a certified archeologist by the end of the dig, but he also grew as a scientist since joining Gregory's research group.

"We combined science and religion and saw God's beautiful design in both," Spanier said.

In November 2023, Strange collaborated with two other scholars to present this dynamic research project at the annual American Society for Overseas Research meeting in Chicago.



On the Horizon

Campus master plan moves forward

The Samford University Board of Trustees wrapped up the 2023 calendar year by unanimously approving Samford Horizons, a long-term campus master plan that is based on the university's strategic plan, *Fidelitas*. The trustees also endorsed plans to proceed with the first phase of Samford Horizons, which includes a new residence hall for first-year students, two new residence halls for upper division students, and more than 500 new parking spaces.

"Samford is taking a necessary step forward," said Judge Karon O. Bowdre, JD '80, chair of the Samford University Board of Trustees. "The addition of these residence halls will ensure we can continue to provide our students a nurturing environment for learning on a beautiful residential campus."

The Samford Horizons plan is a visionary set of potential campus improvements that

responds to the university's sustained growth in enrollment. Included in the project is the university's soon-to-be largest residence hall which will feature 513 beds in single and double suite style configurations. It will be located north of the Ralph W. Beeson University Center and south of Lena Vail Davis Residence Hall. When combined with Mamie Mell Smith and Vail Residence Halls, the three-building complex will form Samford's Freshman Commons and serve as home to all first-year students.

Also included are two new upper division residence halls, totaling 140 beds, to be located just east of the Tri Delta house in the West Campus Residence Halls area. Initially serving both the general student body and Greek chapters, anticipated growth in Samford's Greek population may eventually require both facilities to become dedicated

Greek housing. Finally, a parking addition with more than 500 spaces will be added to the north parking deck, adding much needed parking capacity to a growing campus.

The new facilities, which will total an estimated \$188 million in cost and will be complete by fall 2025, were announced on the heels of other exciting campus projects either recently completed or currently under construction, including the new Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex. The complex will fully open in fall 2024 and will offer state-of-the-art amenities, such as an esports studio, fitness studios, a 24-hour convenience store and much more.

The first phase of the complex—the Health and Wellness Center—has already been completed on the bottom floor of the Dwight M. and Lucille S. Beeson Alumni Center. This includes a new home for Samford CARES

and University Health Services. In this new space, students have the opportunity to receive counseling support, medical services and utilization of the Samford Food Pantry if needed. President Beck A. Taylor has been encouraged by this year's progress and is looking forward to the days ahead.

"It's been exciting to see how our students have embraced this project," shared Taylor. "Our students knew they needed a space like this to thrive and flourish. It's also been assuring and affirming to see the number of partners who have come to the table, both individually and corporations or foundations, who have seen the importance of this project and have been willing and able to give us their financial support."



A new 513-bed freshman residence hall will be located north of the University Center.



Two upper division residence halls in West Campus will add 140 beds.

Summary Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

Year Ended June 30, 2023

Assets	
Cash	139,968,236
Investments	412,090,021
Pledges Receivable, net	30,565,534
Student Loans Receivable, net	16,833,679
Property, Plant and Equipment, net	351,247,759
Other Assets	19,081,889
Total Assets	\$ 969,787,118
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	12,775,260
Deferred Revenue	8,602,927
Other Liabilities	13,870,419
Lease Liability	1,858,319
Annuities Payable	2,078,721
Pension Plan Obligation	47,217,998
Notes Payable of Consolidated Subsidiaries	21,491,652
Infrastructure Debt	27,466,309
Long-term Debt	316,852,891
Total Liabilities	\$ 452,214,496
Net Assets	
Without Donor Restrictions	108,327,526
With Donor Restrictions Time or Purpose	132,350,384
With Donor Restrictions Perpetual	276,894,712
Total Net Assets	\$ 517,572,622
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 969,787,118

Summary Consolidated Statement of Activities, All Funds

Year Ended June 30, 2023

Revenues, Gains and Other Support	
Tuition and Fees	198,182,753
Less: Scholarships and Fellowships	(79,316,839)
Net Tuition	\$ 118,865,914
Board and Lodging	26,783,890
Gifts, Grants and Contracts	12,791,134
Endowment Spending	21,498,791
Other Income	10,001,329
Total Operating Revenues, Gains and Other Support	\$ 189,941,058
Expenses by Function	
Academic and Student Services	159,725,001
Administrative Support	24,504,321
Fundraising Expenses	4,218,149
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 188,447,471
Increase in Net Assets from Operating Activities	\$ 1,493,587
Non-Operating Activities	
Pension Liability Adjustment and Periodic Pension Cost	(3,695,806)
Investment Income	29,122,544
Draws from Endowment for Scholarships and Operations	(21,514,395)
Capital and Endowment Gifts	9,684,304
Other Changes	1,417,603
Net Increase from Non-Operating Activities	\$ 15,014,250
Total Increase in Net Assets	\$ 16,507,837
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$ 501,064,785
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 517,572,622

The financial information was derived from the audited consolidated financial statements.

EST. 1841

87th oldest university in the United States

97%

of undergraduate alumni are working or in further study within six months of graduation

17

NCAA Division I varsity sports

ENDOWMENT

\$403.5 million*

*Value reported is current through June 2022

ENROLLMENT

5,791

3,832 undergraduate

1,959 graduate/professional

CAMPUS SIZE

247 ACRES

Samford's annual fiscal and economic impact on Alabama

\$453.3 million*

*2021-2022

357

Full-time teaching faculty

Average undergraduate class size

19

Student-to-faculty ratio

14:1

Geographic diversity of student body

49

STATES

16

COUNTRIES

174

Undergraduate majors, minors and concentrations

66

Graduate majors, minors and concentrations

ACADEMIC SCHOOLS

- School of the Arts
- Howard College of Arts and Sciences
- Brock School of Business
- Beeson Divinity School
- Orlean Beeson School of Education

- School of Health Professions
- Cumberland School of Law
- Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing
- McWhorter School of Pharmacy
- School of Public Health

AN ENGAGED CAMPUS

57

student activities organized events

170

student organizations

31

residence halls

74

annual arts events

16

Greek-letter organizations

10

intramural sports

6

main-stage theatre and opera events

115

cadres engaging students in spiritual growth

9

club sports

152

spiritual life convocation events



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