

SOUTHERN WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2024-2025



Mission Statement

Southern Wesleyan University is a Christ-centered, student-focused learning community devoted to transforming lives by challenging students to be dedicated scholars and servant-leaders who impact the world for Christ.



**Biblically
Faithful**



**Academically
Rigorous**



**Vocationally
Effective**



**Financially
Affordable**

President's Letter

One of the great refrains of Scripture is found in Psalm 136: "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good and His steadfast love endures forever." With this in mind, all of us at Southern Wesleyan University have much for which we can be thankful.

Reflecting on the past year, I must begin with our Vision and our Four Foundations. Our vision at Southern Wesleyan University is to be a Stronghold and an Oasis for God's Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. We accomplish this vision with the Four Foundations that we want to see instilled and growing in the lives of every one of our students and graduates. These Four Foundations are Biblical Faithfulness, Academic Rigor, Vocational Effectiveness, and Financial Sustainability. If you are wondering what that means in practical terms, we want to graduate servant-leaders who love the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who follow the Scriptures and apply them while thinking critically and effectively about all the salient issues of our times, who are able to get jobs, and who are not broke from crippling debt. We believe these are for the welfare of the students we love, and that these Four Foundations are brought about in their lives through the grace and mercy of the God whom we love.

This year at Southern Wesleyan, our students have seized every opportunity to grow in their academics, their faith, and their athleticism with stories highlighted in the following pages from each of those areas. By God's grace, we have not only overcome challenges – from Hurricane Helene to the challenging federal government revision of FAFSA – but we have come through with greater strength. We also have seen encouraging signs of growth – perhaps more than we have seen at SWU in years. Truly, the Lord is good and His steadfast love endures forever.

You are an integral part of this Kingdom work, and we are thankful for your support. We look forward to your continued partnership!

In His Service,

William D. Barker, Ph.D.
Southern Wesleyan University

Academic Growth Initiatives

SWU is pleased to announce the reinstatement of Academic Deans for SWU's College of Arts and Sciences, Benson School of Business, and School of Education. These academic leaders will cultivate the growth of new degree pathways and a renewed sense of vision at SWU.



The College of Arts and Sciences will be led by Dean Chad Stutz. Dr. Stutz will work with chairs of the five divisions of the College of Arts and Sciences to pursue President Barker's liberal arts vision, especially in re-imagining SWU's core curriculum.



The Benson School of Business will be led by Dean Priscilla Hammond. Dr. Hammond will work to expand undergraduate programs and cultivate opportunities for marketplace multipliers, along with improving and enhancing our existing M.B.A. and D.B.A. programs.



The School of Education will be led by Dean Greg Benson. Dr. Benson will be leading the effort to restore SWU's secondary education degree pathways, as well as developing additional undergraduate degrees to create more pathways to teaching credentials and licensure.

SWU Awarded Nationwide Grant

SWU has been awarded a \$50,000 Capacity Building Grant from Wake Forest University's Educating for Character Initiative to support its project, "From Knowledge to Wisdom and Character: Building a Transformational Core Curriculum in the Christian Liberal Arts Tradition." The grant will provide critical resources to enhance faculty development, curriculum design, and student engagement strategies that prioritize character formation as a central outcome of the university experience.



2024-2025 Professor of the Year

Dr. Jonathan Sircy

Dr. Sircy is the 2024-2025 SWU Professor of the Year named for his dedication to outstanding teaching and student mentorship. He is also the recipient of the 2025 South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (SCICU) Excellence in Teaching Award.

TOP 5 MAJORS

RELIGION • BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION • PSYCHOLOGY
SPECIAL EDUCATION • EXERCISE SCIENCE



SWU
GLOBAL

SOUTHERN WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

ONLINE LEARNING & GRADUATE EDUCATION

SWU Global reflects Southern Wesleyan University's ongoing commitment to innovative, accessible, and Christ-centered education. Under the leadership of Dr. Nathan Street, Dean of Online Learning and Education, SWU Global extends the university's reach to offer high-quality online academic programs to students across the globe, including undergraduate, graduate, and high school dual enrollment learners. By building on the university's strong tradition of academic excellence, SWU Global harnesses the power of online education to make transformative learning experiences more accessible than ever before.

Contact the SWU Global team at swuglobal@swu.edu or 864-644-5508.

Christ-Centered Excellence. Wherever You Are.

Record-Breaking Advancement Success

Under the leadership of Dr. Todd Wilson and Rev. Emily Holley, SWU's growing Advancement Department has seen record-breaking success, with three times the funds raised so far this year compared to last year. After months of investment and relationship cultivation with donors, SWU received a large land gift in western North Carolina, the largest single gift in the school's history. In addition, SWU's partnership with the Wesleyan Church Education Investment Fund continues, with \$1,158,000 contributed to SWU this fiscal year.

By The Numbers

100%

OF STUDENTS
RECEIVE
FINANCIAL AID

(undergraduate)

\$15,362

AVERAGE
INSTITUTIONAL AID

given to all incoming
freshman, reducing the cost
of tuition from \$28,500
to \$13,138 per year.
(2024-2025)

Spiritual Life & Student Life

40

Ministry Teams
& Student
Organizations

19

Discipleship
Teams



SWU students have the opportunity to participate in, organize, and lead various clubs, organizations, and ministry teams on campus. These are designed to complement their academic programs to prepare students for a life of service.



3

Overseas Mission Trips
Panama, Cambodia, & Romania

8

Student Missionaries
Serving as NEXT interns in various
locations in the US and globally.



3x

Funds Raised
Compared to
2023-2024

111

Donor-Funded
Scholarships



26

New Hires
2024-2025
(July 2024-April 2025)



170

Faculty
& Staff
(FT & PT Faculty)

3.3

AVERAGE
GPA

255

DEAN'S LIST
STUDENTS

5

SENIOR HONORS
PROJECTS

137

MAY 2025
GRADUATES

Athletics

14

NCAA Division II
Athletic Teams



SOFTBALL MAKES HISTORY!

SWU Women's Softball claimed the Conference Carolinas Southwest Division Title for the first time in program history. The Warriors finished 30-15 overall, 16-8 in conference action, and 11-5 in the Southwest Division.

O'NEILL HAS AWARD-WINNING YEAR

Ronan O'Neill earned the 2024-2025 Conference Carolinas Men's Indoor Track and Field Scholar Athlete of the Year award and the Conference Carolinas Track Athlete of the Year award. O'Neill secured a spot among the top 60 runners at the NCAA DII Men's Cross Country National Championship.

MEN'S & WOMEN'S WARRIOR GOLF RETURNS

The Men's and Women's Golf programs return to the green this fall, led by Coach Matt Smith. The reinstated teams will partner with SWU's home course at Cross Creek Golf Club in Seneca. This athletic program growth highlights SWU's commitment to student-athlete development both in the classroom and in competition.

LEA WINS CONFERENCE AWARD

Happy Lea was named Conference Carolinas Outdoor Track & Field Freshman of the Year after two First Team All-Conference finishes in the 110 meter hurdles and 400 meter hurdles. He broke the Warrior school record in the 110 meter hurdles and received U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association All-Region Honors.



Andrew Davis - Senior

Andrew Davis's story captures what makes a SWU education unique. A competitive runner, Andrew chose to skip a track meet to attend an environmental science field trip—and it changed the trajectory of his career plans. From naming endangered red pandas during a zoo internship to advocating for experiential learning before the University President's Cabinet, his journey reflects how academic rigor and faculty mentorship can shape both calling and confidence. Andrew is building on the strong foundation he gained at SWU to fulfill his desire to teach.



Kim Boyer - Alumni

Kim Boyer embodies the spirit of SWU. A 2020 graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, she serves as an emergency room nurse at Bon Secours St. Francis Eastside Emergency Department. Kim credits SWU's Christ-centered, academically rigorous education with shaping her into a compassionate caregiver who takes pride in serving others. Her dedication to nursing excellence earned her the 2020 "Nurse of the Year" award from Prisma Health Oconee Memorial Hospital and the 2025 "DAISY Award" for exceptional patient care.



Jared Baldwin - Senior

Although ministry had always been a part of Jared Baldwin's life, his passion for it deepened significantly after Hurricane Helene struck his church, Bethel Wesleyan in Flat Rock, North Carolina. In response, he organized a campus-wide food drive for victims—an experience that helped launch his journey into youth ministry. As a religion major and the 2025 Bob Black Blue Blazer award recipient, Jared's time at SWU has prepared him to walk alongside young people in the church and lead with both compassion and conviction.

**BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL • ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS
VOCATIONALLY EFFECTIVE • FINANCIALLY AFFORDABLE**

Save the Dates

2025

OCT 03 Showstoppers Spectacular

NOV 12 Military Appreciation Event

DEC 06 Lessons & Carols

DEC 12 Commencement

2026

MAR 26-28 Spring Musical & Homecoming

MAY 01 Commencement

THE Faith & FUTURE FUND

Southern Wesleyan University

Southern Wesleyan University's Faith and Future Fund is your opportunity to change a life and leave a legacy. Every contribution to the Faith and Future Fund has an immediate impact on SWU students and supports our mission to provide a Biblically faithful, academically rigorous, vocationally effective, and financially affordable education.

Your contribution of unrestricted funds enables SWU to direct money to where it will have the most significant impact on academic excellence, student life, and areas of need. A gift of any size enables you to create a campus-wide legacy.

*Are you ready to change
a life & leave a legacy?*

**Southern
Wesleyan**
UNIVERSITY

www.swu.edu
864.644.5000

Give Today!
swu.edu/giving

