Baylor student-athletes continued their winning classroom ways, as a school-record 87 individuals were selected to 2007-08 Academic All-Big 12 teams, including a school-best 69 first-team honorees.

Sixteen of Baylor's 17 programs which compete in the Big 12 Conference produced at least two Academic All-Big 12 performers and 13 had multiple first-team honorees, led by women's track & field, which had 13 first-teamers among its 15 overall selections, and women's soccer's 10 first-team picks among 12 honorees. All-told, women's track & field (15), football (13) and women's soccer (12) all recorded double-digit Academic All-Big 12 honorees.

A school-record 449 Baylor student-athletes were named to the fall 2007 (235) and spring 2008 (214) Big 12 Commissioner's Honor Rolls, including 69 with 4.0 grade-point averages. Baylor established school records for fall, spring and total Big 12 Commissioner's Honor Roll selections during the 2007-08 academic year.

Thirty (30) Baylor student-athletes achieved perfect 4.0 grade-point averages during the fall 2007 semester, while 39 recorded 4.0 marks for the 2008 spring semester.

A total of 80 Baylor student-athletes, including 11 who earned master's degrees, graduated during fall 2007 and spring 2008 commencement exercises.

Baylor had 10 teams register a cumulative grade-point average above a 3.0 in 2007-08 and the cumulative grade-point average for all teams was a 2.97.

For the fall 2007 semester, 51.6 percent of Baylor's student-athletes registered a term grade-point average of at least 3.0. In the spring, that number jumped to 52.3 percent.

A school-record 137 Baylor student-athletes earned 2007-08 Dean's List recognition.

Six Baylor student-athletes earned CoSIDA/ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District honors, including four first-team honorees—Joe Pawelek (football), Beckah Brady (women's soccer), Alex Colyer (softball) and Nicole Wesley (softball). Baseball's Shaver Hansen was a second-team pick, while volleyball's Anna Breyfogle received third-team honors.

Baylor also had six student-athletes selected 2008 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars—Ralph Rodriguez (football), Desmond Jenkins (football), Trey Harts (men's track and field), Britany Devereaux (women's track and field), Kayla Smith (women's track and field) and Nichole Jones (women's track and field).

Football's Michael Machen joined teammates Ralph Rodriguez and Desmond Jenkins on the second annual National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame's Hampshire Honor Society list.

Baylor men's basketball player Mark Shepherd was recognized for his excellence in academics when he was named to the National Association of Basketball Coaches 2007-08 Honor Court.

Baylor men's basketball player Bill Alcorn was one of 96 NCAA Division I student-athletes recognized as a 2008 Cleveland Golf All-America Scholar by the Golf Coaches Association of America. He becomes just the fourth BU golfer in school history to earn consecutive Cleveland Golf All-America Scholar honors, joining Chris Nickens (1996-97), Worth Williams (2000-01) and Chase Thomas (2006-07).

Morgan Chambers and Kristen Hendrix were named to the National Golf Coaches Association All-American Scholar Team. A total of 402 women's collegiate golfers for Divisions I, II and III, were recognized by the NGCA.

Lauren Hagans and Nichole Jones were named to the 2007 NCAA Division I USTFCCCA Women's All-Academic Team selected by the United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association. In addition, the Baylor women's cross country team was named a 2007 USTFCCCA Division I Women's Cross Country All-Academic Team. The Lady Bears' compiled a team GPA of 3.69, the nation's seventh-best mark. Baylor had the highest GPA of any school competing at the 2007 NCAA Championships, eight spots better than the next highest team (West Virginia, 15th). It is believed that this was the first time in school history that any Baylor team recorded the highest GPA of any team nationally qualifying for postseason competition.

For the second consecutive year, Baylor produced the Big 12 Conference's highest Graduation Success Rate (GSR) score according to figures released by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Baylor's 2007 GSR score of 87 was 10 points higher than the NCAA Division I national average of 77 and nine points higher than second-place Colorado in the Big 12 Conference. In 2006, Baylor registered a Big 12-leading GSR score of 88. Following Baylor and Colorado among Big 12 institutions were: Kansas State (77), Nebraska (77), Texas (74), Texas A&M (73), Texas Tech (73), Oklahoma State (73), Kansas (70), Missouri (70), Iowa State (69) and Oklahoma (65).
Five of Baylor’s 18 intercollegiate athletic programs — football (84), baseball (84), men’s tennis (100), women’s tennis (100) and women’s golf (100) — all ranked No. 1 in GSR among their Big 12 peers. Baylor’s men’s track and cross country (87), women’s track and cross country (95) and women’s volleyball (91) programs all ranked No. 2 in the Big 12, while its men’s (58) and women’s (86) basketball programs both ranked No. 3 in the conference. Twelve of Baylor’s programs recorded a GSR score of at least 80 with seven of its teams having a GSR score 90 or higher.

The 2007 federal graduation data showed that Baylor, which has led the Big 12 Conference in overall student-athlete graduation rates five times and finished second on three occasions, ranked second in the conference with its four-class average of 63 percent and its 61 percent rate for only the 2000-01 class ranked No. 6 in the league.

Baylor was one of four Big 12 institutions to register an exhausted eligibility graduation rate of at least 90 percent according to the most-recent NCAA figures, as its 91 percent mark tied Iowa State for third behind Nebraska (94) and Texas Tech (92). Baylor ranked above the NCAA Division I average in both four-class (62 percent nationally) and exhausted eligibility (77 percent) rates, but was slightly below the national average of 63 percent for the 2000-01 class.

Sixteen of Baylor’s intercollegiate athletics programs scored at or above the national threshold of 925 in the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s 2008 Academic Progress Rate (APR). The APR, now in its fourth year, is a four-year average based on the school’s overall student-athlete eligibility, graduation and retention rates for student-athletes who participated during the 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 academic years. It also serves as a predictor of graduation success.

Eleven of Baylor’s athletic programs scored above the national I-A (Football Bowl Subdivision) APR average for their respective sport (baseball, men’s basketball, men’s cross country, football, men’s golf, women’s basketball, women’s cross country, women’s golf, women’s soccer, softball and women’s volleyball). Those same 11 programs were all above the average for all Division I athletic programs nationally.

Baylor had two programs, baseball and women’s soccer, lead the Big 12 Conference in APR with scores of 974 and 988, respectively. BU’s women’s volleyball team ranked third in the Big 12 with its 985 score.

Baylor junior men’s basketball player Mamadou Diene was named the 2007-08 Big 12 Male Sportsperson of the Year by a media panel. Diene is the first Baylor male to receive the prestigious, eight-year-old award and the second student-athlete in school history, joining women’s basketball player Jessica Stratton in 2004, to be so honored. He is the first-ever men’s basketball student-athlete in the conference to receive the award. The Sportspersons of the Year Award was started in 2000-01 to annually recognize student-athletes who displayed an extraordinary degree of sportsmanship and/or community service during the academic year.

In addition to the Big 12 honor, Diene was one of five student-athletes nationally to receive a 2008 Wilma Rudolph Student-Athlete Achievement Award from the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A).

Three Baylor student-athletes were named to the second-annual Big 12 Good Works teams, which recognize community service activities three times annually. Football’s Joe Pawelek (fall), men’s basketball’s Mark Shepherd (winter) and women’s golf’s Meg McDaniel (spring) were honored from Baylor. In addition, two Baylor student-athletes, volleyball’s Kristen Schramek and baseball’s Tim Jackson, earned $7,500 Dr. Prentice Gautt Postgraduate Scholarships from the Big 12.

A total of 39 student-athletes, 16 upperclassmen and 23 underclassmen, formed the inaugural Baylor Leadership Academy graduating class. The upperclassmen completed the Veteran Leaders program while the underclassmen completed the Emerging Leaders program.

The Leadership Academy was formed to provide Baylor student-athletes comprehensive leadership programming with the goal of developing them as effective and vocal leaders for today and successful worldwide leaders for tomorrow. All Leadership Academy members are appointed by their head coach and must complete a year-long program in order to earn graduate status.

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While its student-athletes continued to excel in the classroom, Baylor's teams thrived in competition, too. Ten (10) programs participated in postseason play during the 2007-08 academic year, which marked the third consecutive season at least 10 Baylor teams made the postseason, and four more Big 12 championship trophies now reside in Waco.

Fueled by the postseason success of its track and tennis programs, Baylor finished 42nd nationally in the final 2007-08 United States Sports Academy Directors' Cup standings compiled by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA). Over the last four years, Baylor has recorded four of its six highest finishes in the Directors’ Cup’s 15-year history. BU placed a program-best 25th in the 2004-05 standings, was 32nd in 2005-06, 38th in 2006-07 and 42nd this past year. Prior to the 2004-05 academic year, Baylor’s best Directors’ Cup finishes were 39th in 1998-99 and 40th in 2001-02.

Baylor totaled 477.5 points to place seventh among all Big 12 institutions (in the Waco Tribune-Herald’s annual Big 12 all-sports rankings, Baylor finished sixth to garner its seventh first-division finish in the last eight years) in the 2007-08 national all-sports rankings behind No. 5 Texas, No. 12 Texas A&M, No. 23 Oklahoma, No. 31 Nebraska, No. 33 Oklahoma and No. 38 Missouri. Baylor finished ahead of Big 12 institutions Texas Tech (No. 44), Colorado (No. 50), Kansas (No. 54), Iowa State (No. 58) and Kansas State (No. 71). Stanford won the all-sports sweepstakes for the 14th consecutive year.

Of Baylor’s 2007-08 Directors’ Cup point total, 241.5 points came from its four track teams and women’s cross country, while BU’s tennis teams combined for 156 points.

All-told, Baylor produced 10 postseason tournament teams in 2007-08, four Big 12 Conference championships (two regular season, two tournament crowns), an NCAA national semifinalist team in women’s tennis, two NCAA individual national champions (men’s indoor and outdoor 4x400-meter relays) and 43 All-Americans.

Over the last four years, only Texas and Texas A&M have won more Big 12 regular-season and tournament championships than Baylor (20).

Coach Scott Drew’s Bears were the talk of the national college basketball scene for much of the 2007-08 campaign. The surprising Bears raced to a 16-2 start, their best getaway since the 1945-46 season, cracked the AP Top 25 for the first time since 1969 with a No. 25 ranking the week of Jan. 21, and went on to earn their first NCAA Tournament bid since 1987-88 and finish 21-11 overall (and tied for fourth in the Big 12 Conference at 9-7). It marked Baylor’s first 20-win season since the 1987-88 campaign and just the fourth in the program’s 102-year history.

The Bears set a school-record for Big 12 Conference victories (nine) and ranked as the league’s highest scoring team at 81.3 points per game. Along the way, Baylor also established school-records for non-conference victories (12) and Big 12 road wins (four) while registering its first eight-team tournament title (in the Paradise Jam) since the 1968-69 season and winning the longest game in NCAA history since the shot clock was implemented (a 116-110 five-overtime thriller at No. 16 Texas A&M).
Curtis Jerrells earned first-team All-Big 12 honors, becoming the program’s second first-team selection in the Big 12 era and the first since Terry Black in 2000-01. Kevin Rogers was a third-team All-Big 12 selection by The Associated Press, and joined teammate Henry Dugat as honorable mention choices by the league’s coaches. LaceDarius Dunn was named to the league’s All-Freshman and All-Reserve teams selected by the media.

Art Briles, a native West Texan who resurrected the University of Houston’s football program during his five seasons along the Cougars’ sideline, was introduced as Baylor University’s 25th head football coach November 28, 2007. Briles, who took over a Houston program that was just two years removed from an 0-11 season and won just eight games from 2000 to 2003, posted a 34-28 record with the Cougars and guided them to four bowl games. He inherits a Baylor team that went 3-9 in 2007, but returns 17 starters.

The Baylor women’s tennis team enjoyed its finest season ever, sweeping Big 12 regular-season and tournament titles en route to its first-ever appearance in the NCAA national semifinals and a final national rank of No. 4. Baylor finished the season with a 32-3 overall record, which included a 10-0 Big 12 mark, and advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the fourth consecutive season. Coach Joey Scrivano was tabbed as both the Big 12 and Southwest Region Coach of the Year after leading his program to unprecedented success in 2008.

Zuzana Zemenova, the 2005 Honda Award winner, was one of four finalists for the 2008 women’s tennis honor. A four-time All-American in singles, Zemenova was named the 2008 Big 12 Player of the Year and in the process, became the first student-athlete in league history to win four consecutive league Player of the Year awards in any sport. The 2008 NCAA singles runner-up finished her career as the first Big 12 women’s tennis player to earn four singles All-America citations and her 123 career singles victories, all of which came at the No. 1 position, rank No. 2 on Baylor’s all-time list.

Baylor’s men’s tennis team maintained its grip on the Big 12 regular-season title by winning its seventh straight crown (eighth overall), advancing to the NCAA Tournament for the 11th straight season and reaching the national quarterfinals for the fifth consecutive year. The Bears, who also won the 2008 Big 12 Tournament title, ended the year ranked eighth nationally. Baylor ended the season with a 25-9 record and over the last five seasons has posted an impressive 143-23 (.861) record with four NCAA semifinal appearances.

Lars Poerschke was selected the 2008 ITA/Arthur Ashe Jr. Award winner, an honor which recognizes leadership and sportsmanship. He ended his career as a three-time All-American and four-time All-Big 12 selection in singles, while recording a 119-43 career singles record which ranks in a tie for No. 2 with Benedikt Dorsch on Baylor’s all-time singles win list.

For the fifth consecutive season and the seventh time in the last eight years, the Baylor Lady Bears advanced to the NCAA Tournament where they advanced to the second round for the fifth straight time. With the Baylor men’s team also reaching the NCAA Tournament, it marked the first time in school history both Baylor basketball programs earned NCAA Tournament bids in the same year.

The Lady Bears finished 25-7 overall and second in the Big 12 with a 12-4 record, just a game behind first-place Kansas State, a team they beat in Manhattan. It marked the eighth consecutive season Baylor reached the 20-win threshold and the fifth straight year it won at least 25 games.

The Lady Bears’ Angela Tisdale and Rachel Allison both earned first-team All-Big 12 honors from the league’s coaches and honorable mention All-America recognition from The Associated Press.

Baylor’s lone individual NCAA champion again came from its men’s track program, as the Bears’ 4x400-meter relay teams swept the indoor and outdoor national titles for the second consecutive year. It marked the fifth time Baylor swept the indoor and outdoor 4x400-meter relay titles in the same year. At the NCAA Outdoor Championships, Baylor’s 4x400-meter relay team of Marcus Boyd, Justin Boyd, LeJerald Betters and Quentin Iglehart-Summers cruised to victory with the second-fastest time in school history at the fifth-fastest all-time in NCAA history at 3:00.22. The Bears’ championship indoor team, comprised of Trey Harts, Marcus Boyd, Justin Boyd and Betters, took gold with a world-leading time of 3:05.66.
As a team, the Baylor men finished in a tie for 19th-place at the NCAA Indoor Championships, while it placed in a tie for seventh-place at the NCAA Outdoor Championships to register its highest team finish since 2004. The Bears placed ninth at the Big 12 Indoor and sixth at the Big 12 Outdoor. All-told, the men’s track team produced 17 All-Americans, five during the indoor season and 12 outdoors, and six Big 12 gold medals.

The Baylor women’s track and field teams, meanwhile, also had turned in strong seasons, registering their best finish (T-15th) at the NCAA Outdoor Championships since 2000. The Lady Bears, who finished in a tie for 56th place at the NCAA Indoor, tied for seventh-place at the Big 12 Outdoor Championships after placing sixth at the league indoor meet. The Baylor women tallied 16 All-America awards, 10 outdoor and six indoor, and won four Big 12 championships.

The Baylor women’s cross country squad advanced to the NCAA Championships for the fifth consecutive year, where it placed 17th, the highest finish by a Big 12 team at the national meet and Baylor’s best showing since 2005. Lauren Hagans finished 35th overall to lead Baylor and earn All-America honors as the 24th overall American-born competitor at the meet.

In just its third season of varsity competition, the women’s equestrian program finished sixth in English competition and ninth in Western riding at the Varsity Equestrian National Championships, which were hosted for the second straight year by Baylor at the Heart O’Texas Fairgrounds. It marked the third consecutive year that the Baylor English team advanced to the national meet.

HIGHLIGTHS

The Baylor men’s golf team advanced to NCAA Regional competition for the 11th consecutive year and finished fifth at the Big 12 Championships, its best finish at the league meet since 2002. Colton Williams earned All-Big 12 honors and landed on the All-Championship team after finishing 10th at the Big 12 meet.

Baylor pitcher Kendal Volz was named to the 2008 USA Baseball National Team. He is the first Bear to earn a spot on the National Team since Michael Griffin in 2003. Baylor, which finished its 2008 season with a 32-26 overall record, had five players selected in the 2008 Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft with shortstop Beamer Weems leading the group as an eighth round selection by the San Diego Padres. At least one Baylor player has been drafted every year since 1991.

For the fourth consecutive season, the Baylor softball team landed at least one player on the Louisville Slugger/NFCA Division I All-America squad as third baseman Brette Reagan was selected to the third-team. She becomes the first player in school history to become a three-time selection to the NFCA All-America squad. Reagan also earned Big 12 All-Tournament, first-team All-Big 12 and first-team all-region honors for a 2008 Lady Bear squad which registered a 23-22 record.

Former U.S. National Team player Marci Jobson, who spent the past three years steadily rebuilding Northern Illinois’ women’s soccer fortunes, was hired to lead the Baylor women’s soccer program, Dec. 6, 2007. While splitting time between the U.S. National Team and her Northern Illinois head coaching responsibilities the last three seasons, Jobson led the Huskies to a pair of Mid-American Conference Tournament (MAC) appearances and improved the program’s win total each year. In 2007, her NIU team posted the program’s best record since 1998 at 10-5-5 and advanced to the MAC Tournament semifinals for the second consecutive year.

Although the Baylor volleyball program finished 14-17 overall, it matched its highest Big 12 win total since 2001 with six league wins. The Lady Bears won the SMU Radisson Invitational to give the program at least one tournament title in eight of the last nine seasons.

Hannah Burke became just the third Bear in school history to earn back-to-back Big 12 All-Championship honors as she finished in a tie for 10th-place at 237 to lead the Lady Bears at the 2008 Big 12 Championships.
While Baylor Athletics enjoyed extraordinary academic and athletic success, 2007-08 also saw the following administrative achievements:

Baylor University’s five-year intercollegiate athletics capital campaign, “Victory with Integrity,” continues to fuel the most successful three-year athletic development period in school history and is on course to achieving its stated five-year goal of producing $90 million in private support for the school’s 18-sport NCAA Division I-A sports program.

All-told, the most ambitious capital campaign in the department’s history has resulted in approved capital construction projects totaling more than $45 million, three consecutive record-setting fund-raising years for the Baylor Bear Foundation and significant growth in the department’s endowment.

Ground was broken May 10, 2007, on the new $34 million state-of-the-art Alwin O. and Dorothy Highers Athletics Complex and the Simpson Athletics and Academic Center, which will allow Baylor football to return to campus for the first time in nearly 50 years when it is completed in November 2008. The crown jewel of the Highers Athletics Complex is the 96,300-square foot Simpson Athletics and Academic Center which will bring to campus all functions previously housed at Floyd Casey Stadium.

The athletic endowment has grown to nearly $23 million while the Baylor Bear Foundation enjoyed its finest year ever in 2007-08, raising a total of $4.7 million for student-athlete scholarships.

Baylor football saw 206,266 fans pass through the Floyd Casey Stadium turnstiles in 2007, the 10th-highest single-season total in the stadium’s 58-year history. It marked the first time since the 1991 and 1992 seasons that the Bears drew more than 200,000 fans for their home schedule in consecutive seasons. Baylor averaged 34,378 fans per game for its six-game home slate to finish No. 69 nationally.

Baylor men’s basketball set school records for both total home attendance (116,015) and per game average (7,251) while playing before four home crowds of 10,000-plus. A men’s Ferrell Center record crowd of 10,545 was on hand for the Bears’ 71-57 loss to Texas A&M, March 5, 2008. Baylor ranked 78th nationally in per-game average, while its one-year attendance improvement of 1,186 fans over its 2007 average ranked second in the Big 12 and 23rd nationally.

Baylor’s season baseball home attendance total of 95,027 ranked as the fourth-largest in Baylor Ballpark history, while its 3,065 per-game average ranked as the third-best in Baylor Ballpark history. The Bears have drawn 85,000 or more fans to Baylor Ballpark every year since 2000 and have drawn more than 90,000 in each of the last five seasons. Baylor drew 8,531 fans for its two-game home series vs. Texas A&M, the fifth-highest two-game series attendance total in school history.

Baylor softball averaged a school-record 933 fans per game over its 18-game Getterman Stadium schedule and drew 16,801 fans, the second-highest single-season total in school history.

Baylor’s first-ever student attendance loyalty program, the Golden Rewards program, continued to be well received in its third year. Student attendance increased in 2007-08, highlighted by an increase of over increase of over 560 students per home men’s basketball game. On average, more than half (6,892) of Baylor’s 11,902 undergraduate students attended home football games in 2007. Baylor men’s basketball games averaged 1,139 students per home game overall with a high of 3,642 for the Washington State game, but Big 12 games saw that number increase to 1,996 per contest.
Associate Athletics Director for Internal Affairs Paul Bradshaw completed his second year on the NCAA Women’s Soccer Committee.

Associate Athletics Director for External Affairs Nick Joos completed his fifth year on the Board of Directors of the College Sports Information Directors of America and served as the organization’s First Vice President in 2007-08.

In just its third full year together, the Baylor-ISP Sports Network reached the revenue-sharing threshold of the agreement and Team Baylor was introduced. Team Baylor includes Baylor-ISP Sports’ signature corporate partners—Farm Bureau, Dr Pepper, Hillcrest Hospital, Dodge and Time Warner Cable.