

today

Spring 2021



A FAITH
Approach

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A FAITH APPROACH

OUR NEW MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

What distinguishes a SAGU education? Is it the chapel services? The focus on missions?

There are more than 4,000 higher education institutes around the nation, many of whom have shaped their curricula and campus culture around students' pursuit of personal truth rather than the pursuit of biblical truth. So, where does that leave SAGU?

As culture shifts around us, we grab hold of our roots and the values that formed our institution into what it is today. Our students' purpose is fostered by a Christ-centered worldview and reinforced by a community of believers rallying behind them. **In other words, they are not just taught to see the light; they are taught to be the light.**

As we approach 2021 with boldness and determination, we are excited to integrate our values into a new Master of Arts in English degree. This new offering can propel the careers of hundreds of our alumni serving in multiple contexts and a wide range of industries around the country.



"Our M.A. reinforces the English Department's mission to qualify its majors to critically and thoughtfully engage contemporary culture with a sound apologetic sharpened by studies in literature and writing."
Professor Diane Lewis, English Department Chair

Faith serves as the program's primary foundation as philosophical and real-world issues are weighed by applying the standard of God's Word. "In English courses, we don't sidestep issues in whatever the focus of study is, whether in literature or writing—academic or creative," says Professor Lewis.

A Versatile & Flexible Degree For All

The new 30-credit degree offering will benefit those interested in sharpening their communication skills, advancing in their careers, and transitioning into leadership positions, especially within the educational system.



"SAGU is proud to offer the M.A. in English which will prepare anyone interested in teaching at the college level with the needed coursework and credentials to do so." *Kimberly James, Ed.D., Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness & Dean of the College of Music and Communication Arts*

Chere' Blair, Ph.D., Professor, will serve as the Program Coordinator for the new M.A. in English. In addition to educators, Dr. Blair believes that this program is beneficial to all students interested in pursuing a graduate degree in English from a truly Christian university.



OUR NEW MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH



"Almost anyone who loves the written word could benefit from studying in this program because of its openness and versatility."

Chere' Blair, Ph.D., Professor

Students will gain practical knowledge and insight from courses in literature, creative and professional writing, or English pedagogy. The degree will also allow students to personalize their degree to support their research interests and future goals. Of the 30 hours required for the degree, one can select up to nine hours of graduate-level courses in other disciplines such as Education, Bible, History, and Business.

Who Would Benefit From This Degree?

- Anyone interested in teaching English at the college level
- Current secondary teachers pursuing credentials for teaching dual-credit English courses or at community colleges
- Students who will specialize in the field of English Education & in preparation for curricular leadership positions in K-12 education
- Students with a goal to teach English in countries outside of the United States
- University students desiring to pursue a doctorate in English
- Students pursuing alternative certification through the SAGU Teach Texas plan may request 9 of their hours counted toward their 21 elective hours

Looking Forward

A Judeo-Christian worldview informs the study for every program at SAGU, and we are excited that students enrolled in the M.A. in English degree program will engage real-world issues in ways that are reflective of our identity in Christ.

As SAGU looks to the future, we approach uncertain times in our nation with faith and the assurance that God will lead us in the direction He intends for us to go. The new M.A. in English has been planned carefully and prayerfully. We are confident that the paths of study it opens up for students will provide an exciting, practical journey for each individual, with faith and academic study meaningfully intertwined. To learn more, visit: sagu.edu/MAinEnglish ■



Nathan Goodrich, English Major

"I think the thing about SAGU that appealed to me was its atmosphere. I liked the Biblical emphasis and that I could get an English degree and still have Bible training. It wasn't just something that was cast off to the side.

What has been special about my time at SAGU has been the life experiences and the advice that I get from my professors and mentors. When I go through hard times, being able to relate what I'm going through to something that I'm reading has helped me get through the experience. At the same time, being able to talk to the professors, knowing that they love me and care about me has really helped me in a lot of tough situations. Both the English and Bible professors have given me a lot of good advice and encouragement during some hard times."



From Rick Bowles Vice President of Advancement

Last year, we were all excited to announce our Homecoming events, especially the Michael W. Smith concert. Well, we are excited to reannounce that Michael W. Smith has rescheduled, and we believe Homecoming 2021 will come to pass!

Please save the date for September 30, 2021, for our opening Homecoming event with Michael W. Smith in concert. Homecoming 2021 is set for September 30th-October 2nd. Complete details forthcoming at sagu.edu/homecoming.

We can't wait to share details about this amazing weekend with you, and whether you attend frequently or haven't been back in a while, this is definitely the year to attend! Dr. Tony Garza, Director of Alumni-Development, is working creatively with our Alumni Council led by Alumni President Greg Thurstonson to make this a Homecoming you won't want to miss.

We recently launched an opportunity for ministries and businesses to advertise with SAGU, including our new sagulations.com website, SAGU Today, SAGU Sports Network, Sheaffer Activities Center digital scoreboard (vcrnow.com/sagu), and more. For full sponsorship or a la carte options, contact me at RBowles@sagu.edu. ■

Music Dept. Chair to Play for the International Trombone Festival

During Dr. Tyrone Block's musical career, he has received several prestigious awards and played with some of the world's best jazz musicians. Yet, it was an email he received this past November that the 49-year-old describes as the 'pinnacle of his career.'

The International Trombone Festival (ITF) extended an offer to Dr. Block, SAGU's Music Department Chair, and his quartet, "Coal Hill Quartet" to perform and present for the next festival taking place in Columbia, Georgia, in July 2021.

The ITF is the largest and most widely attended trombone event in the world, with most European, Asian, Australian, African, South American, and North American countries represented. However, only a small number of trombonists are selected to perform or lecture each year. Receiving an invitation to play at this level is the highest honor that a trombonist can receive.

"I became a member of the ITF in

1990," said Dr. Block. "To be selected to not only perform but also to give a lecture - I was just amazed. Thank you, Lord! This is not only a dream of mine but of everyone else in the group to actually perform at the ITF."

The Coal Hill Quartet's presentation, "Global Music, Small Ensembles: Using Chamber Music as an Entry to World Music" will highlight African American and Slavic music styles in addition to Brazilian and Hawaiian music. Dr. Block explains that the group hopes to offer a unique perspective into the stylings and arrangements of music outside of the traditional Western point of view.

"There's a lot of diversity, and through this presentation, I think that we can demonstrate that we need to include these styles into a canon of music that needs to be performed and presented to high school and college students," said Dr. Block. ■



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DFW Alumni Invited to Campus Day Concert

The award-winning band “**We Are Messengers**” is performing a free concert in the SAGU Sheaffer Center during Campus Day on April 16.

The band boasts three Top 5 and ten Top 10 Billboard Christian Airplay hits. Their music style is a fusion of genres from gospel and modern worship to even reggae.

The SAGU Alumni Association is also excited to host its DFW alumni during the concert.

“We would love to have SAGU alumni from around the DFW area come back to campus and enjoy this free event with their families!” said Dr. Tony Garza, Director of Development and Alumni Relations.

To stay informed of the concert and alumni events, be sure to join the DFW Alumni Chapter group on Facebook! Also, don't forget to update your contact information at sagu.edu/update. ■

Student Spotlight: Kendrick Williams *Worship Arts Major*



“SAGU is definitely preparing me for life after college. Because I desire to be a worship pastor, being prepared musically is extremely important to me, and I feel that SAGU is preparing me in that way. I'm learning theory and understanding the depth of music and where it comes from. It's also preparing me spiritually. My Bible courses help me understand the Bible, and it's refining my theology on what I believe about my faith.

At SAGU, I've had opportunities to travel and lead worship. This is extremely important to me, especially since I plan to travel and lead worship when I graduate. Last but not least, it's preparing me practically. I'm learning the importance of prioritizing, being disciplined, and having fun.”

SAGU Ranks in Best Online Universities and Colleges in Texas

SAGU was ranked in the top 31 online universities and colleges in Texas. The ranking study was conducted by Edsmart, an organization that specializes in researching schools nationwide. Edsmart's research is retrieved through the U.S. Department of Education, and then analyzed to provide ratings, reviews, and other information regarding colleges/universities for potential students.

Edsmart chose 31 schools out of the 170+ colleges and universities in Texas. In their article, SAGU was commended on its overall cost, academic quality, student satisfaction, and students salaries after attending the university. SAGU has received numerous accolades and special recognitions in regards to its breadth and quality of its online degrees. The university provides over 70 degrees with most of these programs being offered 100 percent online. ■



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Image of God TOUR

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SAGU to Launch Esports this Fall



David Tipps, wife, Heather and son, Connor.

SAGU will launch its competitive collegiate esports program in the fall of 2021.

As a new addition to SAGU's athletic programs, the university looks forward to reaching a new segment of students interested in competitive gaming. Although this is uncharted territory for SAGU, the school's leadership is confident in the steps that have already been taken and future plans for the program.

"This is a new venture for SAGU, and I am excited for the opportunity to see how this program impacts the SAGU campus and my opportunity to interact with a different set of students in a completely new arena." - Dr. Jesse Godding, SAGU Athletic Director

To lead the charge for the university's new esports program, SAGU is excited to welcome a familiar face. David Tipps, a well-known

member in the SAGU community, having served as an IT Specialist for numerous years, will serve as the Head Coach for the esports program this fall.

"I am excited to help build the esports program from the ground up," said Coach Tipps. "It's incredibly encouraging knowing that I am surrounded by an incredible team and leaders that are working with and alongside me to help make this the very best it can be."

Coach Tipps is beginning the process of recruiting with future plans to build multiple teams to tackle a wide range of competitive scenes. He shares that the department is finalizing which games SAGU Esports will participate in, but explains that they are looking at a multitude of games across a variety of genres. "This allows us to reach a wide range of interests and stay connected to the current trends," he says. The selection of games will adhere to the same guidelines for appropriate entertainment and media as stated in SAGU's student handbook.

To learn more or express interest in participating in SAGU's esports program, please [email esports@sagu.edu](mailto:esports@sagu.edu). ■



SHARE *your* NOTE

www.sagu.edu/mynote

All notes are published online at sagu.edu/alumninotes. Your submission may be featured in the next issue of SAGU Today.



CELEBRATIONS

1 Mark Molina (1991-1995) serves in a missions organization called One Child. This organization brings hope to kids in extreme poverty by providing food, medical attention, education, and by sharing the message of Jesus. Mark has the opportunity to lead teams and pastors to visit the organization's Hope Centers all around the world.

2 Eunise (2000-2003, 2004-2006) & Raymond (1996-2003) Richardson have been married for 17 years, and they have one child, Layla. Eunise owns a private practice as an Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Raymond serves as the Lead Pastor for Foundation of Life Church in Ennis, Texas.

3 Mamie Roberts (1959-1961) and her husband, Jerry, have served in ministry for almost 60 years. Starting out as Evangelists in 1961, Jerry and Mamie then transitioned into pastoral ministry in 1964 serving as pastors in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona until 1997. From 1998 to 2008, they answered the call to serve as missionaries in Central America. Today, they are Pastoral Care Directors for the Arizona Southwest Hispanic District.

4 Daniela Iheanacho (2011-2014) serves as a Client Success Specialist for Indeed in New York City. Indeed is the #1 job site in the world with over 250 million visitors every month.

5 Christine Keith (2003-2007) just celebrated finishing her last semester of graduate school at the University of Oklahoma. She received her graduate degree in Reading Education to be certified as a Reading Specialist. Christine currently teaches 5th grade with Noble Public Schools.

6 Patrick Spenser (2008-2012) student-pastored for 10 years before graduating with his Bachelor's in Church Ministries in 2012. He now serves as the Lead Pastor at Conway Rock Solid Church in Conway, Arkansas, and is happily married to his wife, Kaitie.

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. James Rowton (1932-2020)
Reverend James Rowton, 88, passed away after a long and fulfilling life of ministry. He and his wife, Mary Mae, pastored churches in Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, and New Mexico. He was involved in full-time evangelism in over 500 churches nationwide and for over 40 years. He is survived by his brother, Robert, his son, James, his daughter, Nancy, and eight grandchildren.

Rev. Derwood Dubose (1936-2021)
Reverend Derwood Dubose, 84, passed away this January after a life of service in the Assemblies of God North Texas District. Throughout his ministry, he served as pastor of Memorial Assembly of God in Duncanville, Presbyter of the South Dallas Section, Assistant Superintendent, and District Superintendent, leaving a lasting legacy and spiritual impact on the ministers and churches of the District. Rev. Dubose was recognized as an outstanding leader in our Fellowship. He graduated from Southwestern in 1958 and later served on SAGU's Board of Regents.

Matthew Aaron Cantwell (1974-2021)
Alumnus Matthew Cantwell, 46, went home to be with the Lord after battling COVID-19. A committed Christian, he was known for his servant's heart and involvement at his and his wife Cindy's home church, Foundations Church in Tulsa. Matt graduated from SAGU in 1997 and married Cindy in 1998 at Woodlake Assembly of God Church. He is survived by Cindy and their two sons, Camden and Caden.

Pastor Matthew Netzer (1977-2021) Pastor of RockPile Church (Marble Falls, TX) and alumnus, Matthew Netzer, 43, lost his life in a car accident this January. Netzer was loved within his church and well-respected within his community. He was known for his outreach to outside congregations. He wanted local churches to work together as one, joined together by a singular mission—to share the gospel. Matthew is survived by his loving and supportive wife, Sarah, and their two beautiful children, Lucy and Micah. ■

Update your
contact information!

www.sagu.edu/alumni

chapel highlights



- 1 Katy Jones, Church Leadership Major,** reminded students of the importance of honesty in both their walks with Christ and relationships with each other.
- 2 Dr. Kermit Bridges, SAGU President,** prayed for revival and a thirst for the Lord to break out in our community during the first chapel of the spring semester.
- 3 Dr. Bryan Jarrett, Lead Pastor of Northplace Church,** spoke powerfully of the desperate need we must have for the presence of God. Rather than settling on cheap imitations of 'the real thing,' he challenged our community to seek God's anointing in our lives and experience true fulfillment.
- 4 Dr. Garland Owensby, SAGU Professor,** discussed the importance of unity in the church and how the body of Christ must be banded together to further the kingdom.
- 5 Renay West, AGWM Missionary,** reminded students that God does not want them to be complacent because He has so much more planned for them if they continue to follow Him.
- 6 Dr. Amy Alexander, SAGU Professor,** emphasized the need to meet with the Lord daily in order to stay within His will.
- 7 Jazmine Deanna, SAGU Music major,** shared her powerful testimony with our campus and Rennae de Freitas, SAGU Ministries Coordinator. Jazmine included how God placed her into a loving foster family as a child after her mother gave her up for adoption and how God led her to SAGU.
- 8 Sir James Offord, Chi Alpha missionary,** asked students if Jesus was worth everything they had. He challenged them to ask if Jesus was worth their time, talents, and money. ■

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