

General Information

HISTORY

In 1936, during the bleak days of the Great Depression, Dr. H. E. Watters, former President of Georgetown College in Kentucky and Union University in Tennessee, made a heroic but futile effort to re-open Jonesboro Baptist College in Jonesboro, Arkansas. The Jonesboro school succumbed to financial exigencies in the early 1930s after only a few years of life. Jonesboro Baptist College had not been the first Baptist educational venture in Northeastern Arkansas. In 1899, Baptists established the Maynard Baptist Academy in Randolph County, and Woodland Baptist College had flourished briefly in Jonesboro from 1902 to 1911. Despite the tradition of Baptist education in Northeastern Arkansas and Watters' diligent efforts, there was to be no revival of Jonesboro Baptist College. Yet, Watters had not failed entirely. His dramatic appeal for Baptist education inspired others, notably H. E. Williams.

In 1941, Williams, the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Pocahontas, led in the establishment of Williams Baptist University (originally Southern Baptist College) in that town. For several years Williams had been building support for such a venture and in the spring of 1941 when he learned of the availability of a suitable building he pressed forward with an organizational meeting. On June 10, 1941, several hundred people from Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri gathered in Pocahontas to establish a college. Among those in attendance were alumni of Jonesboro Baptist College and Maynard Academy. The new college, which opened on September 10, 1941, was in a very real sense the descendent of the earlier colleges. Indeed, Williams Baptist University ultimately inherited the large library of the Jonesboro school and the first dean of the University was an alumnus of Maynard Academy.

For five years the University experienced steady growth at Pocahontas, but on December 26, 1946, the administration building with much valuable equipment was destroyed by fire. The University was then moved to Walnut Ridge.

A milestone was reached in the history of the institution in 1948 when the Arkansas Baptist State Convention voted to include the University in its budget. Another significant development occurred in 1968 when the Arkansas Baptist State Convention officially adopted Williams Baptist University as a member of its family of institutions; the University is now owned and operated by the Convention.

At the commencement in the spring of 1973, the University Trustees announced that H.E. Williams, who had served as President for thirty-two years, had been appointed President-Emeritus and that D. Jack Nicholas had been elected the second President of the institution. On July 1, 1991, Jimmy A. Millikin assumed the Presidency of the University. On August 1, 1993, Gary C. Huckabay became the fourth President of Williams Baptist University. Dr. Jerol B. Swaim's tenure as President began in July 1995. Prior to his selection as the University's fifth president, Dr. Swaim had served at Williams for more than thirty years as Professor of History and Academic Dean. In 2012, Dr. Tom Jones became the sixth president of the University.

WILLIAMS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY VISION STATEMENT

Williams' vision is to produce exceptional graduates prepared to engage local and global cultures through a Christ-centered worldview.

WILLIAMS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an excellent, holistically Christian, liberal arts education, while compassionately shaping students' lives.

WILLIAMS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY PURPOSE STATEMENTS

To provide opportunities to profess, practice, and strengthen one's faith and to encounter Biblical values.

To provide a caring campus community with opportunities for service to others, leadership preparation, and wholesome recreation.

To provide and assess programs of liberal arts, professional studies, and lifelong learning for a diversified traditional and non-traditional student body.

To provide an organization responsive to the needs of students, personnel, programs, and facilities, with a commitment to planning and leadership.

To provide an aesthetically pleasing campus glorifying to God's creation.

To provide and execute a plan which secures adequate resources to sustain and advance the institution.

To provide a positive image of the quality programs, faculty, students, staff, and graduates of the University.

To provide serviceable facilities which sustain the mission of the University.

To provide a technologically sophisticated infrastructure which supports academic, student, and administrative services.

To provide cultural experiences, thought provoking events, and educational enrichment for the campus community and the community at large.

To provide a healthy athletic atmosphere which engages the team members, the campus community, and the community at large.

To provide desirable housing for students and faculty.

INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC GOALS

To produce students who demonstrate an understanding of the Judeo-Christian heritage and Christian world view.

To produce students who demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively across the curriculum.

To produce students who demonstrate the ability to reflect critically upon the environment, society, and self.

To produce students who demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking and analytical skills to become more effective problem solvers.

To produce students who demonstrate an appreciation for a healthy lifestyle that will promote lifelong health and fitness.

To produce students who demonstrate a competence in at least one particular body of knowledge.

FACULTY

A dedicated and professional faculty is the salient attribute of a strong University. Academic life is governed by the faculty who determine entrance requirements for students, define courses of study, establish degree requirements, teach and advise students, and recommend for degrees those students who have completed their studies.

The influence of the Williams faculty reaches beyond the campus. Faculty members are active in church, civic, professional, and academic organizations; frequently they speak to various off-campus groups; and they write for denominational and secular publications. Most faculty members are widely traveled and many have lived in other sections of the United States and foreign countries.

LOCATION

Williams is located in the northeast Arkansas community of Walnut Ridge. The campus offers the peace and security of a rural setting with easy access to larger communities. Walnut Ridge/Hoxie has a population of about 8,000, and Pocahontas, eight miles to the north, has 6,000 residents. The larger city of Jonesboro, with a wide array of dining, entertainment and shopping, is 33 miles away. Little Rock and Memphis are within a two-hour drive.

Williams is located three miles north of downtown Walnut Ridge, just off U.S. Highway 67. The campus is nestled between the Ozark Mountains and Crowley's Ridge, with ample outdoor activities available.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Williams has an attractive campus of 250 acres with excellent academic, recreational, and housing facilities.

Administration: The Jerol B. Swaim Administration building houses most of the University's administrative offices. Offices in the administration facility include admissions, financial aid, business affairs, academic affairs, advancement, public relations and president.

Apartments: Williams has modestly priced apartments for married students, as well as a limited number of honors apartments for single students who qualify.

Athletic/Recreation Complex: The Southerland-Mabee Athletic/Convocation Center consists of a standard gymnasium, weight room, racquetball courts, jogging track, and stage area for concerts.

Cafeteria: The Mabee-Gwinup Cafeteria can accommodate 500 plus students during meal periods. The Moody Dining Room is utilized primarily for special dinners and banquets. The President's Dining Room will seat 12 guests.

Old Chapel: The WBU Old Chapel is one of the few buildings left on campus from the former Walnut Ridge Army Flying School. The chapel, which has undergone extensive renovation, seats 200 people and is used frequently for dramas and lectures.

Classrooms: Approximately 35 classrooms are available for use by students and faculty for academic and co-curricular activities.

Education Curriculum Lab: This facility, housed in the Sloan Center, provides an array of resources specifically intended to benefit students preparing for careers in education.

Faculty Housing: Williams owns 27 houses used by faculty and their families.

Joy Ring Student Success Center: This facility also houses the Billie Harty Counseling Center and provides academic, vocational, and personal counseling to all students. Tutoring services are also available.

Library: The construction for the present building was completed in 1966 and named after former employee Felix Goodson, a good friend of the principal donor for the library building. The Felix Goodson Library is a comfortable and well-equipped facility at the heart of campus academic life. It is conducive for study and reflection. The library contains more than 60,000 volumes and eBooks and a broad spectrum of scholarly and popular periodicals. The library offers personal assistance, online catalog, print journals and periodicals, online journal databases, microforms, interlibrary loan, photocopy service, a computer lab, special collections, archives, online tutorials, Wi-Fi service, comfortable seating and group study areas. Included in the library building is a classroom equipped with a computer, multimedia projector, TV, VCR, and DVD. The library's Web site is www.williamsbu.edu/library and its Facebook address is [https://www.facebook.com/felixgoodsonlibrary\(wbu\)](https://www.facebook.com/felixgoodsonlibrary(wbu)). Library hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight; Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Saturday, noon to 4:00 p.m.; and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight. Library hours are subject to change and may be closed during inclement weather.

Maddox Center: The Maddox Center houses the academic areas of music, art, communications, English, history, religion, speech, and business. The Maddox Center also contains a number of classrooms, music rehearsal rooms, a large choral room and a gallery. The Professor Jerry D. Gibbens Atrium is at the center of the facility.

Mail and Copy Center: Student mail is distributed through the WBU *Mail and Copy Center*. Each student is assigned a secured post office box for obtaining mail and packages. Stamps, envelopes, boxes, mailing supplies, etc., are available for sale, in addition to FedEx and USPS package shipping services. Black and white and color copy printing, laminating, and binding services are also available for a nominal cost.

Manley Chapel: Manley Chapel was completed in 2009. This iconic building is the location for weekly Chapel services and other special events. It seats over 600.

Media Center: The Learning/Media Center is located in the Sloan Center. The center provides audio-visual materials and equipment, and listening and viewing labs. The center schedules the use of audio-visual materials and equipment, prepares instructional aides, and provides duplicating services.

Residence Halls: Residence halls include Cash, Wilson, Nicholas and Butler for men and Belle, Southerland and Shell Wing for women. Special features in residence halls include either a private bath or a shared bath throughout the facilities. All residence halls have lounges, cable TV, and high-speed internet.

Sloan Center: The Sloan Center houses offices for education, psychology, natural sciences and mathematics. It also features a computer lab, lecture hall, science labs, classrooms, conference room, a greenhouse, and the Network Operations Center.

Student Center: The Mabee Student Center provides a fitness room, “Mac” computer lab, the Eagle Coffeehouse and Grill, and the campus store. The Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Campus Ministries, and other student activity offices are located in the center.

Technology: Williams’s students have access to a substantial technology infrastructure at the University. The Felix Goodson Library catalog is on-line and accessible from any workstation on campus. Comprehensive Internet services are available to students through the University's three computer labs and workstations in the library, residence halls, and the Student Center. The University also provides, through its web site, an array of electronic journals and other resources. Students have access to copy machines at the library or may have copies made at the Mail and Copy Center.

Virtual Bookstore: Students order textbooks through the WBU Virtual Bookstore, powered by Follett. The link for the virtual bookstore is found on the WBU website. Textbooks can be purchased new or used. In addition, some rental options are available. All textbooks are shipped to the Mail and Copy Center for student pick-up. The address for the Mail Room is 56 McClellan Drive, Walnut Ridge, AR 72476.

Athletic Annex: The Athletic Annex is located approximately one-fourth mile east of the Maddox Center. It houses the WBU athletic weight room and the Wrestling Center.