

SBU CELEBRATES 144TH SCHOOL YEAR AT FORMAL CONVOCATION

BOLIVAR, Mo. — Two faculty members and a staff member were honored during Southwest Baptist University's annual convocation Wednesday, Aug. 18 – the opening of the 144th session of the University.

Convocation marks the formal beginning of the academic year, a time when campus focuses on SBU's mission and traditions, and a time to reflect on where SBU has been as an institution and to celebrate its future.

"We have a whole group of new students beginning their SBU career here," SBU Interim President [Dr. Brad Johnson](#) said. "Our new students and returning students bring an entirely new, dynamic energy and an overflowing spring of God's gifts from which we will all benefit.

"While we do not know what this year will bring to us, we do know that we can celebrate the Almighty God who does know the future. As we go throughout this year, I encourage you to peel back the pages of SBU history to discover who we are as an institution, to discover our traditions. And together, let us embrace who the Lord is shaping us to be for the future, for His service and for His glory."



Convocation Address

The tradition of the Orien B. Hendrex Distinguished Teacher Award recipient delivering the convocation address continued with [Jason Halverson](#), the 2021 honoree. The award recipient is chosen by previous graduating classes and is presented annually to a faculty member "regarded by SBU graduates as a distinguished teacher."

Halverson joined the SBU faculty in 2003 as an instructor of athletic training and currently serves as tenured assistant professor in the Kinesiology Division. He earned his bachelor of science degree in biology with an athletic training minor from Indiana Wesleyan

University in 1994. He later received his master of arts in physical education, specializing in athletic training from Western Michigan University in 1996.

Halverson then became a board-certified Athletic Trainer (ATC), as well as a Licensed Athletic Trainer (LAT) and Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS). Prior to joining the SBU family, Halverson worked as a high school outreach athletic training provider and clinical athletic trainer at K Valley Orthopedics in Kalamazoo, Mich. He also served as the head athletic trainer for Kalamazoo Kingdom, caring for semi-professional soccer athletes.

Halverson also is a member of the National Athletic Trainers' Association and the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

He and his wife, Rachel, live in Bolivar with their daughter, Brionna, and son, Blake, and attend First Baptist Church of Bolivar.

Halverson's students say that he is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about his course content, and makes learning fun by fostering a relaxed, hands-on environment and experience.

In his address, Halverson expressed his appreciation for the honor as the Hendrex Award recipient, and the opportunity to do what he loves.

"I have to reflect all the honor that this award represents to God because even after 18 years of doing this, I still feel like a guy who was blessed with doing a profession that he really enjoyed," Halverson said. "And now, I'm just sharing that knowledge with people who are interested in learning it."

He then engaged the audience in a game of "Simon Says" to demonstrate life lessons that can be learned through games, even through a simple, group game.

"We're living in a crazy time where (doing what the crowd does) is an iffy point. 'Should I be doing what the crowd does?'" Halverson asked. "'Should I not be doing what the crowd does? What is the crowd doing?'"

"Here is something to learn: Evaluate it. 'What is the crowd doing? Are they making good choices?' Use your tools: think, study, pray, counsel. Those things will tell us if what the crowd is doing is correct and then we can collectively win. A win feels better as a team."

Halverson also shared some true life lessons from another Simon (Peter) for the SBU family to take into the new semester, sharing verses from 1st Peter.

"Therefore, prepare your minds for action. Be self-controlled. Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed." (1 Peter 1:13)

"Finally, all of you live in harmony with one another. Be sympathetic. Love as brothers. Be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult but with blessing. Because to this, you were called so that you may inherit a blessing." (1 Peter 3:8-9)

"Above all, love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." (1 Peter 4:8-9)

"Simon was a good friend of Jesus," Halverson said. "So good in fact, that Jesus gave him a new name – a nickname – 'The Rock.'"

"If you recall Peter's story, he kind of lost at 'Simon Says.' He, Simon, said that he would never deny Jesus. Yet during the crucifixion, he denied him three times. We learn, however, that Peter's loss was forgiven by Jesus with specific instruction. Peter's charge from Jesus was, 'feed my sheep.'"

Halverson's prayer for SBU is that God will bless each person's position in the game this semester by helping them "to prepare our minds for action, to live in harmony with one another, to love as brothers, to be compassionate and humble and, above all, to love each other deeply."

Newcomer of the Year awards

The Newcomer of the Year awards began in 1995 to recognize one full-time faculty member and one non-teaching staff member who, in their first months of employment at Southwest Baptist University, demonstrate exceptional commitment to the University's mission and make a positive impact as part of the SBU family. Faculty and staff members who have been employed full time for no more than 18 months prior to the selection process are eligible. Committees of peers select the winners.

Faculty Newcomer of the Year:



Shonna Fore serves as an instructor of University Studies and Director of [Career Services](#) within the Clark Success Center. Prior to her current role on the Bolivar campus, Fore served as the assistant director of admissions on SBU's Springfield campus. She also is actively engaged with the Bolivar Chamber of Commerce's Networking at Noon initiative.

"In her first year as an SBU faculty member, she has demonstrated her commitment to serving students and to serving SBU," said Fore's supervisor, [Dr. Dana Steward](#), assistant provost for general education and transition. "She is a true professional who relentlessly pursues providing quality opportunities to

support students and help them develop and prepare to reflect SBU's mission.

"She has cast a vision for SBU Career Services and implemented multiple action steps that move us forward in helping students grow in their career-readiness skills and helping students connect to potential employers. SBU is blessed to have her influence within our institution."

Fore earned her undergraduate degree in sociology with a concentration in social work from College of the Ozarks and her master of science degree in higher education administration from Southern New Hampshire University.

She and her husband, Daniel, attend Calvary Baptist Church in Republic.

Staff Newcomer of the Year:

Missy Wollard began working at SBU in February 2021 and serves as budget analyst and executive coordinator in the Office of Administration. Prior to coming to SBU, she worked for five years as an administrative assistant within the Bolivar school district, and more than 20 years as a district manager for the Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District.

"She came to SBU with strong administrative skills and has shown great initiative in using those skills," Wollard's supervisor said about her. "She has learned SBU's processes, software and operating structure very quickly. When she doesn't already have knowledge in something, in addition to asking questions, she finds and uses tutorials and any tools available to help her learn.

"She has already revamped the work study job placement process. By adding an application process that is accessible through the website, students are now able to communicate areas of interest and departments are better able to identify students who will fit their needs. She also worked with admissions and financial aid to improve the flow of information to students about work study within existing communications with students. She quickly became an expert in the University's cell phone plan. She has made several positive changes to better steward the plan, saving budgetary funds.

"She has offered her assistance to her colleagues, helping accounts payable routinely and HR as well. She is exemplifying our mission by caring for our University community in a Christ-centered manner."

Wollard and her husband, Keith, have been married for more than 30 years.

PHOTO 1: Jason Halverson (center), assistant professor of kinesiology, is presented the 2021 Orien B. Hendrex Distinguished Teacher Award by SBU Interim President Dr. Brad Johnson.

PHOTO 2: SBU provost Dr. Lee Skinkle (right) and SBU interim president Dr. Brad Johnson present Shonna Fore (left), instructor of university studies and director of career services, with the Faculty Newcomer of the Year Award, and Missy Wollard, budget analyst and executive coordinator in the Office of Administration, with the Staff Newcomer of the Year Award.

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