



## Looking back at the school year

Dr. Matthew Weathers, BJU's interim chief enrollment officer, completes the IRON40 on March 20.

PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth

See **YEAR IN REVIEW** p.5 >>

# BJU to hire CEO, President Joshua Crockett to stay at university

### Crockett considered for senior pastor position at Morningside Baptist Church

**Jonathan Lovegrove**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**B**ob Jones University plans to hire a CEO with executive experience as current BJU President Joshua Crockett is considered for senior pastor at Morningside Baptist Church. Crockett plans to remain in leadership at BJU.

Following a difficult year, the move aims to solidify BJU's leadership and direction amid financial challenges.

Crockett announced to faculty and staff that he plans to continue in his role as university president, but he sees his position as that of a campus pastor and mentor. He said he still has a pastor's heart, which led him to seek candidacy to return as pastor at

Morningside, where he had served as lead pastor prior to being named BJU president in 2024.

A release to Morningside Baptist Church members shared that "the Deacons voted to present to the congregation Dr. Josh Crockett as candidate for Senior Pastor of Morningside Baptist Church. He also plans to continue in a leadership role with Bob Jones University."

The leadership announcement follows two recent changes at the top of BJU. After serving in the presidency since 2014, Dr. Steve Pettit resigned in 2023. For the 2023-2024 academic year, Dr. Alan Benson, former executive vice president for student development and ministry advancement, was named acting CEO while the BJU Board of Trustees completed a presidential search. On May 7, 2024, Crockett was selected for the position.

At the start of his presidency, Crockett emphasized rebuilding trust in an exclusive interview with The Collegian. Crockett set a goal to "move forward together as a unified school."

Crockett has led BJU through the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, which brought high winds, flooding and facility damage to campus.

Also during Crockett's time as president, the university has gone through a round of both staff and faculty layoffs. In a public message to alumni, Crockett

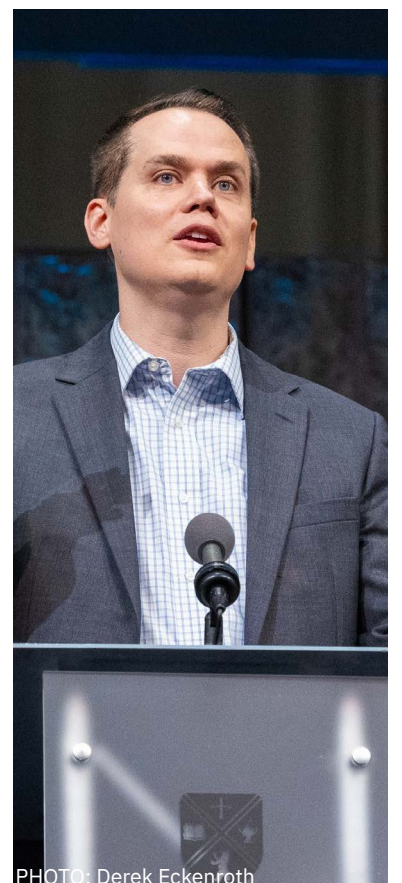


PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth

said that "We had to make some very difficult but necessary decisions. . . to right size our workforce by about 10%."

Crockett has also brought changes to university chapel, with a focus on increasing student participation.



Dr. Joshua Crockett in an exclusive interview with The Collegian. PHOTO: Katelyn McKenney





FROM THE EDITOR

# My last print issue with The Collegian

THE COLLEGIAN

this school year

OVER 63,000

page views on CollegianOnline.com

OVER 1,500

Instagram followers

OVER 800

"Bob Pod" streams

24

student members

1

triathlon livestream

0

Oxford commas

Jonathan Lovegrove  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

When Betty Solomon retired in May of 2023, The Collegian landed at an inflection point. With a new adviser, editor and staff, we faced an exciting opportunity to revamp BJU's student news organization.

Four semesters later, The Collegian's print, web and

social media presence has flourished. In the past 30 days, our Instagram content has been viewed over 118,000 times. This school year, we launched the "Bob Pod," printed all our issues in full color and won nine South Carolina Press Association awards.

Even with the digital pivot, we've still focused on journalistic rigor. Whether covering the aftermath of a natural disaster, leadership

transitions or the death of a student, we've told the stories that matter most.

This is my final print issue as editor-in-chief of The Collegian. I've loved getting to lead an engaged team through this transition, but now it's time for others to step up. The Collegian has a great bench of staff, but we also need new members. If you're interested in joining the team, scan the QR code. We'll be in touch shortly.



JOIN US!



PHOTO: Kaitlin Godwin



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema

## Disc golf and pickleball take center stage in spring society sports

Caleb James | REPORTER

With spring in full swing, students and fans can look forward to an exciting lineup of society sports. This season features disc golf and pickleball as the highlights. Both sports are growing rapidly in popularity worldwide and here on campus.

These sports offer students a great opportunity to get outside and enjoy healthy competition and fellowship with others. Society Sports Director Ryan McCarty said, "There has been a great energy and excitement around society sports this year." These two sports stand out for their

accessibility and ability to bring students together in both casual and competitive settings.

Disc golf is played off campus at Timmons and Holmes parks. Unlike most society sports, disc golf allows individuals to compete solo, though teams of two to four players can also participate. While the competitions are held off campus, practice is available on campus on the newly added disc golf course. McCarty highlighted the impact of the new disc golf course, saying, "More participation and competition in these spaces can build momentum for further additions

and renovations in the near future."

The excitement around society sports doesn't stop with disc golf. Pickleball is also stepping into the spotlight, offering students a fun and competitive way to stay active this season. Pickleball will take place on campus

and is expected to be an energetic atmosphere where students and fans can enjoy the beautiful spring nights. Pickleball is already one of the most popular activities on campus, so introducing an official competition is sure to bring excitement.

As disc golf and pickleball

make their mark on this year's society sports lineup, students have more opportunities than ever to stay active and compete. Whether students seek a competitive challenge or a casual game with friends, this season offers something for everyone.



PHOTO: Bradley Allweil



PHOTO: Anastasia Noonkesser

## More than just athletes: the Bob Jones University Bruins cross country team

William Klapperich  
REPORTER

Strength over weakness. Bob Jones University Cross Country Track and Field Coach Ken Roach used this phrase to describe the team's mentality. According to Coach Roach, this mentality carries over to all the team's work, both on and off the track. Strength over weakness includes both physical strength and a focus on academics, he said. This focus is the core of the program: developing high impact athletes.

Coach Roach said he prefers not to use the term "student athlete." He feels it's not adequate to describe the team. He does not seek to develop students that do athletics, but instead to cultivate students who develop their whole person. Students who have impact across campus and build their character.

"I try my best to invest in them as a whole, more holistically," Coach Roach said. "We have our college athletics and have to go and try

to compete. But I try to give space and room for them to express their talents across the campus."

BJU's Cross Country Track and Field Team is a great way to develop character. The team has three segments of their season: fall, winter, and spring. In the fall, the Bruins compete in cross-country endurance running. In the winter, they compete in indoor track, and outdoor track in the spring. The team also operates differently from the typical BJU teams. Most Bruins teams are in a specific division. This team is not. Since they compete on an invitational basis, they compete against a wide variety of universities. These Bruins compete against athletes from large universities that are on television (such as Clemson University), according to Coach Roach.

The setup for the season pushes the students to excel, but it also is spread out enough to allow the athletes to have a life outside the team. However, that isn't to say that they don't work hard. The Bruins didn't get



PHOTO: Anastasia Noonkesser

nine national championships in a row by slacking off.

Especially because they compete against bigger schools, the Bruins face some unique challenges. For instance, bigger schools have a larger staff who can focus more on training athletes in specific events, such as sprints or jumps. The Bruins have limited staff and resources, which means training is given a more all-around focus.

"It gives us opportunities," Coach Roach said. "It helps us to stay really grounded and hyper focused on making sure we get all of

the basics right."

The team is currently in its outdoor track and field portion of the season. This past fall, they won the national championship in the cross-country portion. While the highlights obviously include the championships, they also include representing BJU.

Coach Roach is optimistic about the season. Many of the athletes now have more experience. Roach encouraged students to support the team and do so while recognizing the goals of the team and that they help to represent and further the BJU mission.



PHOTO: Anastasia Noonkesser

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# Student Life introduces “freshmen halls”

Change to encourage connection between first-year students and upperclassmen

Bethany Brooks | COPY EDITOR

Beginning in the 2025 fall semester, freshmen will no longer live in one residence hall. For the past several years, female first-year students lived in Mary Gaston Residence Hall, and the male first-year students lived in R.K. Johnson Residence Hall.

In March, Student Life introduced “freshmen halls.” These freshmen halls are housed in every residential dorm, rather than just one. This concept retains the benefits of the “first-year experience,” while integrating the freshmen with the sophomores, juniors and seniors. The assistant group

leaders and group leaders for freshmen halls will continue to room together and retain a crucial role in disciplining the new students.

“There will still be just as many opportunities for a student to directly influence the freshmen through a GL or AGL position on a freshman hall. These opportunities will just be available in more than two residence halls,” said Ashley Rush, the Gaston dorm supervisor.

Student Life cited stronger community, discipleship, relationships and residential hall identity as the reasons behind the change.

Rush said, “We will be able to take the benefits



PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth

of First Year Residence Halls (intentional programming, selected leadership and shared experience), and spread this throughout all the residence halls by having freshman halls. Freshmen will experience more interaction with upperclassmen earlier on.

Upperclassmen, that’s your cue to intentionally welcome your residence hall’s freshmen next semester!”

With the integration of residential students, freshmen will benefit from relationships from all classifications. Each freshman hall will build its own

identity and culture within the dorm. “We’ll have the opportunity of instilling a sense of belonging by allowing freshmen to stay in their residence hall all four years, if desired, and be mentored by some of the same leadership and staff for more than one year,” Rush said.



PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth



PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth



PHOTO: Jacquelyn Lilyea



PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth



PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema



PHOTO: Jacquelyn Lilyea



PHOTO: Katelyn McKenney



PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema



BOB JONES UNIVERSITY

# REWIND

View full stories and photos at [CollegianOnline.com](http://CollegianOnline.com)





PHOTO: Katie Williams

# Senior film students bring stories to life

Caleb Fabrizio | REPORTER

We all watch movies—whether they be modern blockbusters, timeless classics or hidden indie gems. But what we may not be as aware of is the immense amount of work, planning and intentionality that goes into making a film. To the graduating seniors of BJU’s Film and Digital Storytelling program, however, this tremendous process is very familiar.

Each year, the senior class of the film program directs its own short film, which is produced over the course of two semesters. This film combines everything the students have learned over their college career and represents their best work.

“Everything I learned and experienced in my time here at BJU has led to my capstone,” said Nathan Barnes, a senior directing one of this year’s short films.

Barnes recently participated in the iNRB 24-hour film challenge and was part of the team that won first place. His previous film experience has included various projects at BJU and an internship with the Kendrick Brothers, where he worked on the acclaimed film “The Forge.”

The long and arduous process behind a senior film begins in the scriptwriting stage, progresses to film shoots and early edits (known as rough cuts). It ends with more polished edits and final touches, such as special effects and music.

# Composer and BJU alumnus Dr. Dan Forrest shares his story

Emily Fennett  
REPORTER

In an interview with The Collegian, highly acclaimed composer and Bob Jones University alumnus, Dr. Dan Forrest, reflects on his BJU education and his career.

## AS A STUDENT

An event from Dr. Forrest’s high school years prompted his decision to attend BJU. He mentioned that “a team came from BJU to my high school when I was in seventh grade, and I really resonated with the students I met.” Dr. Forrest studied at the University from 1995 to 2001, and while he was in undergrad, he joined the Omicron Epsilon Chi Wolverines. Through

interactions with the Wolves’ sister society, the Zeta Tau Omega Seagulls, he met his future wife.

Like many college students, Dr. Forrest did not have one set goal for his college career. Rather, as he said, he “was always aiming at music, but it evolved from piano pedagogy to piano performance (two degrees) to teaching theory to focusing on composition.” As students grow through their time at college, their classes open doors to further questions and shape their interests.

## CAREER AND MAJOR WORKS

Currently, Dr. Forrest works as a composer, publisher and editor, while he teaches and mentors up-and-coming composers. He won multiple awards

In scriptwriting, students come up with the driving ideas that will become their film’s story. Barnes’ film, “Hope in Sorrow,” explores the topic of grief after the loss of a loved one. Likewise, every film by this year’s graduating class has a message to share, whether it takes the form of a fiction film or a documentary.

Following screenwriting, production occurs, involving crews, actors and a multitude of equipment. Many underclassmen worked on the senior films this year, in positions like camera operators or lighting technicians. But this is just the beginning.

“The story really begins in the edit,” Barnes said. “You sit down in front of the computer and you splice in the very first edit. From that point on, piece by piece, the story comes to life, and you realize for the first time that you have a film.”

Often, edits will make or break a production. A well-shot film is nothing if the edits do not produce the connections and flow they are intended to.

This year’s roster of senior films is currently in the final stages of post-production. The producers polish the edits and add music, forming the emotional element to the film. This is the filmmaker’s final test, as they see their year-long efforts finally come together into one complete, cohesive whole.

Likely few will ever fully know the amount of effort it takes to put a short film together, but audiences can appreciate the artistry that has gone into this year’s senior films.

Senior films premiere on May 2 at 7 p.m. in Stratton Hall.



PHOTO: Derek Eckenroth

for his choral compositions and orchestral works, including the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, the Raabe Prize and the John Ness Beck Foundation competition twice—taking first place over famed British composer John Rutter during the first competition. His pieces have

been performed in the BBC Proms and by groups such as VOCES8.

As Dr. Forrest brainstorms new composition ideas, he mentioned, “I don’t just flow forth with awesome ideas—most of what I come up with is derivative and dull—I have to pare all that away to only preserve really

compelling ideas. A normal 4-5 minute piece typically take a few weeks of looking for the right idea, and then a month or two of shaping it into what it should be.” Throughout his career, Dr. Forrest is sure of God’s sovereignty. He mentioned that “God can humble people by bringing them low, or by giving them so much that they realize they could never take any credit.” God has patterned all of time, and He is weaving each thread.

## ADVICE TO STUDENTS

Dr. Forrest gave some advice to those currently in college. “My encouragement to music students is to make the most of all musical opportunities,” he said. “Musicianship is what will serve them best, regardless of how they manifest their music-making.”



PHOTO: provided by Dan Forrest

## OPINION



# Semester in review: Spring edition

## Full of busy students



Jonathan Rose  
REPORTER

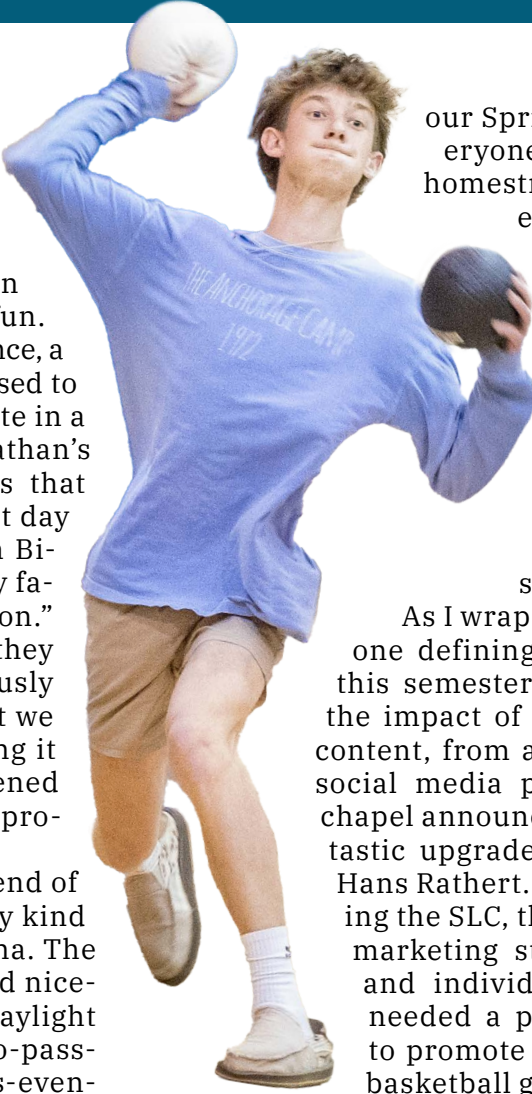
Congratulations on surviving the AACCS invasion of high schoolers last week! Even though it’s been a super busy semester, it doesn’t feel like we’re almost done. As I’m writing this, we haven’t even hit spring break yet. In fact, it’s not even spring where I’m writing from. That should tell you how much editing has to happen for my columns to be published. So since much more will take place before we actually hit graduation, consider this less of a recap and more of a half-time show (just with less singing).

We started the semester in the middle of January, back before the DC’s dishwasher broke and Elon Musk dominated the headlines. During the first week of school, we heard from Rand Hummel, who used his years of counseling experience to give us some fantastic messages with memorable illustrations. At the end of the week, the BJU basketball teams took on Pensacola, an event which got a lot of attention for a very short time before everyone moved on. During our first full week, Greenville got snow! Even though the dusting melted within a day, it was around long enough for all the northerners to learn that, yes, southerners are as confused by snow as the stories say. Apparently, the “Got Milk?” campaign worked a little too well down here. (If you’re under 25, call your mom and ask her what that means. She probably wants to hear your voice anyway.)

The first artist series was Tom Dugan’s one-man-show “Wiesenthal,” which blew away everyone’s expectations and (in my opinion) made a fantastic case for required fine arts events. The next few weeks were so uneventful that the only thing worth mentioning is

the weather, which ranged from 80 degrees to cold and snowy, because Greenville is that weird. Actually, another thing worth mentioning is that the men’s basketball team beat PCC on the road, but that happened in Florida, not on campus. I heard it was fun. The next major event was Bible Conference, a helpful break from class that students used to meditate on God’s goodness, participate in a record number of fundraisers for Jonathan’s House and study for the major tests that their professors scheduled for the first day back in class. While we’re focused on Bible Conference, I’d like to shout out my favorite fundraiser: “Stage the Production.” I am partially shouting it out because they were an awesome cast that hilariously said all the things about campus that we wish we could say. I am also shouting it out because the stage crew threatened our editor for not mentioning the production enough.

The weather warmed up at the end of February, which was actually kind of late for South Carolina. The start of spring coincided nicely with the start of Daylight Saving, aka Try-to-pass-your-midterms-even-though-your-sleep-schedule-stinks Day. Spring (and a guest artist) arrived just in time for “The Sound of Music,” which was probably one of my favorite things this semester. Immediately after show week was Bruins Spirit Week. This was basically the same as the spirit week in the fall, just with fewer jeans days and more students chasing each other. Of course, we can’t talk about spirit week without mentioning the IRON40. Students built community running around campus every afternoon, and Dr. Weathers, who did not die, raised \$280,000 by April 7 for financial aid from alumni who paid to watch him torture himself. At the end of the month, we all took



our Spring Break, and everyone came back to the homestretch of final projects, concerts and in a few days, “Living Gallery.”

There are so many exciting things happening in the next couple weeks, and I don’t know about you, but that makes me want to sing!

As I wrap up this reflection, one defining characteristic of this semester for me has been the impact of student-produced content, from announcements to social media posts. Our weekly chapel announcements got a fantastic upgrade from new editor Hans Rathert. Students—including the SLC, the Collegian team, marketing student specialists and individual creators who needed a project—pitched in to promote Bible Conference, basketball games, “The Sound of Music” and IRON40. But the

creativity extended beyond official communication as meme accounts sprung up into their own niches. Whether they were posting every time freshmen set off fire alarms and someone preached about death, using Miis to recreate events or comparing my appearance to a fictional sea lion’s (unfortunately, I see the resemblance), there was something for everyone to enjoy. Regardless of whether those videos got people to buy tickets or these meme pages stick around until next year, they provided a unique way for students to interact and have fun this school year. Now, as we go, may we remember to look to Christ for our strength and not be disturbed by all the anxious thoughts that may come under the sun. Even if we spend chapel in Ecclesiastes until I graduate, my major looks totally different next semester or my editors tear this column to shreds, God’s goodness will still carry us everywhere we go.



OPINION

“A LOOK BACK” | MARCOS VELASCO

Guys!!! We're near the end of the school year!!

So, let's take a look back at all we've faced.

Huh, never mind.

Regardless, you've made it so far! Keep pushing forward. We're almost done.

Thanks from the Collegian!!!

# sudoku

4				1	2			
				7	4	2	1	9
		2	9		8	7	3	
3		5		8	1			
				3				1
8	9						7	
6	8		1					2
				4	7	5		
					3			



Highlighting the performing arts crew

GUEST COLUMN Dray Dickey | PERFORMING ARTS



Living Gallery is a yearly tradition at Bob Jones University that has been going strong since 1998. The show features live recreations of iconic art pieces for audiences from all over the country. Viewers might be captivated by the incredible acting, set pieces and models, but the countless hours of work that go on behind the scenes might go overlooked. One of my favorite aspects of creating content for BJU’s social media is getting to spend time with people like Mr. Rich Streeter, Mrs. Elizabeth Nelson and the stage crew.

For my internship this semester, I’ve had the privilege of making videos for the BJU Performing Arts Instagram page. I spent many hours in rehearsals for “The Sound of Music,” getting interviews and making promotional content. Now that Living Gallery is approaching, there is a shift in tone from light and fun to reverent and artistic. As I create this month’s social media calendar, it’s exciting to consider the possibilities for highlighting aspects of the production process that most people don’t get to see.

I spent around six hours with the stage crew, getting footage of them dismantling the “Sound of Music” set and preparing for Living Gallery. I greatly admired their positive attitudes as they completed what can often be a thankless job. The audience might never see them, but I hope that showcasing them on social media can give them the recognition they deserve.

The quick turnaround from “Sound of Music” to Living Gallery has been difficult for many. The director, Streeter, has been working hard to put everything together to reach the Easter deadline. Nelson, head of costumes, hair and makeup has mentioned that despite being a little bit behind schedule, she is certain that everything will be ready in time for a great performance. This will be Nelson’s first year as head of the makeup department for Living Gallery, and it’s been a new challenge. She’s recruited all the art majors that she could find to help put makeup on the models and has had back-to-back costume fittings for three days in a row. It’s hard to see the details from far away, but Nelson and her team put so much into each piece.

Even though I’ve only done one week of Living Gallery content, the show is already approaching quickly. My advice for people watching Living Gallery is pay attention to the little details and appreciate the vast amount of work that goes into the show.



“SLEEP” | MARCOS VELASCO

Hey! You!  
GET. SLEEP.

Said with love & made with lack of sleep (I'm not perfect)