



A Statement from the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation on the Cancellation of LGBTQIA+ Research Grant by Baylor University

The Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation Board of Trustees is deeply saddened by Baylor's decision to cancel the recent "Courage from the Margins" research grant following an online campaign of fear and misinformation. A similar project, funded by our foundation and run by the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work over the past three years, has yielded significant insights. They should be permitted to continue the trajectory of the important work they have already been able to accomplish, which focuses on research to equip congregations with evidence-based curriculum on inclusion and belonging for LGBTQIA+ individuals and women.

Our family and Board of Trustees have deep roots at Baylor. Every member of our Board of Trustees matriculated there, and our family has been funding work at the institution for well over 40 years. We do not solicit grants. Instead, administrators and faculty apply for funding to support projects that seek to answer open research questions or to meet campus needs. At most R1 research institutions, including Baylor, University administrators outside of the applying department are well aware of grant applications and provide sign off before submission and before financial awards are made. Baylor has solicited and accepted our funds for multiple projects, including this line of research, over many years. We believe this is following a pressure campaign from groups with a political agenda, which has been very public. This not only abandons this research project, but Baylor's own faculty and the churches this research could serve.

This was an opportunity to answer the Christian call to care for the marginalized by creating resources and providing important research for faith communities. Our hearts break for the professors, research fellows, and, especially, the students who will receive this message from Baylor, loud and clear.

Our foundation is rooted in Baptist distinctives that include church autonomy and the priesthood of every believer. Not all Baptist believers or churches are aligned on every interpretation of scripture concerning women or LGBTQIA+ individuals, but churches need evidence-based research. We believe that all humans are created in God's image and deserve a loving spiritual home. The purpose of this research was not to dictate theology, but to better understand the disenfranchisement that LGBTQIA+ individuals and women often face in the church. This research held the potential to speak to urgent challenges facing the Church today, such as the growing loneliness epidemic among young people and the steady decline in church membership, by offering insights rooted in compassion, community, and belonging.

This decision diserves Baylor students, faculty, and the broader Christian community. Baylor has a duty to protect and uphold the integrity of scientific inquiry, allowing its world class faculty to investigate complex issues without fear of reprisal based on shifting political winds. Pulling the rug out from under its faculty after those researchers have already put the grueling work into securing funding, work they undertook with Baylor's full knowledge and approval, is a chilling affront to the very concept of academic freedom. Stymying research and opportunity will



inevitably lead the best and brightest students and faculty to other universities where their work and their freedom will be valued and protected.

While we are disheartened by this decision, the Baugh Foundation's commitment to supporting progressive, inclusive, and justice-oriented work remains unwavering. We believe that congregations are uniquely positioned to be places of healing and belonging for all people. We continue to support partners who have the courage to listen to voices from the margins and who are dedicated to building a more just and welcoming world.

We regret that Baylor has chosen not to be such a partner. We hope this moment will be a catalyst for reflection and will inspire other institutions to take up the important work that Baylor has abandoned.