

Coordinates: 35°14′52″N 91°43′38″W

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# Harding University

**Harding University** is a private liberal arts university with its main campus located in Searcy, Arkansas, United States, about 50 miles (80 km) northeast of Little Rock, with other campuses located around the world. It is the largest private university in the state of Arkansas. Harding is one of several institutions of higher learning associated with the Churches of Christ.

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## History

Founded in Morrilton, Arkansas, in 1924, Harding College was named after James A. Harding, a minister and Christian educator associated with Churches of Christ.<sup>[2]</sup> Harding College moved to the campus of the defunct Galloway Female College in Searcy, Arkansas, ten years later. Today, the university contains forty-nine buildings on its Searcy campus. It has satellite campuses in North Little Rock, Paragould,<sup>[3]</sup> and Rogers as well. In addition, Harding boasts a

### Harding University

<span></span>	
<b>Motto</b>	"Community of Mission"
<b>Type</b>	Private
<b>Established</b>	1924
<b>Affiliation</b>	Churches of Christ
<b>Endowment</b>	\$117.9 million <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>President</b>	Bruce D. McLarty
<b>Provost</b>	Marty Spears
<b>Academic staff</b>	314
<b>Students</b>	5,904
<b>Location</b>	<span>Searcy, Arkansas, U.S.</span> <div><span><span><span><span><span>35°14′52″N</span> <span>91°43′38″W</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span></span></span></span></span></div>
<b>Campus</b>	Suburban, 350 acres (140 <span> </span> ha)
<b>Colors</b>	Black and Gold <div><span><span> </span></span><span><span> </span></span></div>
<b>Nickname</b>	Bisons
<b>Sporting affiliations</b>	NCAA Division II – GAC
<b>Website</b>	www.harding.edu (http://www.harding.edu)

number of international campuses around the globe: in [Brisbane, Australia](#); [Viña del Mar, Chile](#); [London, England](#); [Porto Rafti, Greece](#); [Florence, Italy](#); [France](#); and [Namwianga Mission, Zambia](#).<sup>[4]</sup> The university also maintains a [School of Theology](#) in [Memphis, Tennessee](#). Furthermore, Harding operates Camp Tahkodah, a 1,350 acre camp in the Ozark mountains near [Floral, Arkansas](#), and [Harding Academy](#), also in Searcy. The fall 2017 student body of 5,541 students includes 4,185 undergraduate and 1,356 graduate students from forty-nine states (currently missing North Dakota) and fifty-four foreign nations and territories.<sup>[5]</sup> The fall 2017 enrollment was bolstered by a freshman to sophomore retention rate of 82.5 percent.

## Campus

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The campus comprises 49 buildings located on 350 acres (140 ha) near the center of Searcy. The campus lies roughly between Race Avenue and Beebe-Capps Expressway and includes several other minor thoroughfares, the campus of [Harding Academy](#), Harding Place (a retirement community), and portions of surrounding neighborhoods.

The heart of the campus includes the [George S. Benson Auditorium](#), which hosts a required daily devotional and informational session known as "chapel" and sits facing the McInteer Bible and World Missions Center. Brackett Library, the American Studies Building (Education and English departments), the David B. Burks American Heritage Building (hotel and offices), Pattie Cobb Hall, and the Administration Building frame a grassy central commons area upon which can be found several paths, a fountain, and a bell tower made out of bricks from the institution that once stood there: Galloway Female College. Notable additions in recent years have included several dormitories. Expansions of the cafeteria, student center, art department, and the David B. Burks American Heritage Building, as well as the addition of the McInteer Bible and World Missions Center, came with the closing of the road that once ran through that part of campus. It is now a pedestrian mall.



The David B. Burks American Heritage Building on the Harding University campus.

After years of competing in the Ganus Athletic Center, Harding's volleyball and basketball teams moved back to the Rhodes-Reaves Field House, a round-topped airplane hangar from WWII. The "old gym", as it was once called, was retrofitted to accentuate the already deafening acoustics of the facility, working to the advantage of the home teams. The campus also has extensive intramural sports facilities.

In 2013, Harding renovated part of Unity Health South into an area for Harding's Doctor of Physical Therapy Program.

In 2017, Harding remodeled space in the McInteer Center which houses the Linda Byrd Smith Museum of Biblical Archaeology.<sup>[6]</sup> According to Harding University, "This museum features artifacts related to the period of the patriarchs, crucifixion and chronologies related to the ancient world." It includes an LCD touch-screen panel with three or four educational videos. Objects in exhibit will be rotated annually.

## Academics

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### Organization

Structurally, the university comprises nine separate colleges: the College of Allied Health, the College of Arts &

Humanities, the College of Bible & Ministry, the Paul R. Carter College of Business Administration, the Cannon-Clary College of Education, the Carr College of Nursing, the College of Pharmacy, the College of Sciences, and the Honors Colleges. Each college then has its own subdivisions of departments or other sections.<sup>[7]</sup> The University also has a School of Theology in Memphis.

## Accreditation

Harding University has been accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Higher Learning Commission. Specific colleges and programs have received further accreditation by other, specialized agencies as well.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Rankings

The U.S. News and World Report has consistently ranked it among the top 25 regional universities in the South.<sup>[9]</sup> The Princeton Review has also rated the institution among the best colleges in the Southeast.<sup>[10]</sup> The rankings website Niche has given the institution a grade of B+, academically.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Library

Harding University's primary campus houses the Brackett Library, which includes the Ann Cowan Dixon Archives & Special Collections. Its School of Theology, in Memphis, maintains a well-respected theological library, the L. M. Graves Memorial Library.

## Student life

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Most students participate in local churches, social clubs, spiritual devotionals, or intramural sports. Each weekday morning, students are required to attend "chapel", a 35-minute devotional session. Chapel presentations are usually led by students or faculty, but special events and guest speakers take place on a regular basis.

## Social clubs

Harding forbids formation of local chapters of national social fraternities and sororities. In lieu of the traditional Greek letter organizations, Harding sponsors student-led "social clubs" that serve a similar social networking function to the Greek system. Most of these organizations have adopted Greek letter names that are similar to national fraternity and sorority names. Currently there are 17 women's social clubs and 14 men's social clubs at Harding. Social clubs are open to all academically eligible students and serve as some of the university's most visible student-led organizations. The clubs are a prominent part of student life with slightly more than half of all undergraduate students participating as social club members.

The social club induction process begins when clubs host "receptions" in the fall to recruit new members. Prospective members then complete a "visitation", which requires that they meet and interview every current member of the club. The membership process culminates in Club Week, when each prospective member bonds with the other members of



The Original Harding College Arch.

the club through a series of scheduled activities throughout the week.

Once a student is accepted into the club, they attend biweekly meetings and can participate in club-sponsored sports, service projects, and Spring Sing.

List of clubs:

- |                     |                    |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ■ Alpha Tau Epsilon | ■ Iota Chi         | ■ Regina           |
| ■ Beta Omega Chi    | ■ Ju Go Ju         | ■ Shantih          |
| ■ Chi Sigma Alpha   | ■ King's Men       | ■ Sigma Nu Epsilon |
| ■ Chi Kappa Rho     | ■ Knights          | ■ Sigma Phi Mu     |
| ■ Chi Omega Pi      | ■ Ko Jo Kai        | ■ Sub T-16         |
| ■ Delta Chi Delta   | ■ Kyodai           | ■ Titans           |
| ■ Delta Gamma Rho   | ■ Lambda Chi Theta | ■ TNT              |
| ■ Delta Nu          | ■ Omega Phi        | ■ Zeta Pi Zeta     |
| ■ Gamma Sigma Phi   | ■ Phi Kappa Delta  | ■ Zeta Rho         |
| ■ GATA              | ■ Pi Theta Phi     |                    |

### Hazing controversy

Harding's social clubs have been involved in hazing controversies over the years. As a result, some have been forced to disband, including the Seminoles (2010), Kappa Sigma Kappa (2005),<sup>[12]</sup> Mohicans (1982),<sup>[13][14]</sup> and most recently Pi Kappa Epsilon.

### Spring Sing

Spring Sing is an annual musical production held during Easter Weekend, featuring performances by the social clubs. It is widely attended by current and prospective students, alumni, and Searcy residents. An estimated 12,000 people attend the show each year.<sup>[15]</sup> Each year, an overall theme is selected, and each club develops music and choreographed routines for the show. Rehearsals begin as early as January.

Spring Sing also typically features two hosts, two hostesses, and a general song and choreography ensemble, with these roles chosen by audition. The ensemble performs to music played by the University Jazz Band.

Each club act is judged and, according to their performance, awarded a certain sum of money. The clubs then donate this money to charities of their choice.

### Athletics

Harding has competed in the NCAA at the Division II level since 1997, beginning in the Lone Star Conference moving in 2000 to the Gulf South Conference and then moving to the newly formed Great American Conference (GAC) in 2011. Men's sports include Soccer, Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Football, Golf, Men's, Tennis, and Track and Field. Women's sports include Basketball, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Golf, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Track and Field, and Volleyball.

The facilities for the sporting events are: First Security Stadium, Ganus Activities Complex,<sup>[16]</sup> Stevens Soccer Complex,<sup>[17]</sup> Jerry Moore Field (baseball),<sup>[18]</sup> Berry Family Grandstand (softball),<sup>[19]</sup> Harding Tennis Complex,<sup>[20]</sup> and

the Rhodes-Reaves Field House.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Policies

In keeping with the university's expectation of the "highest standards of morality, integrity, orderliness, and personal honor", Harding has a number of rules that were designed to foster these standards on campus.<sup>[22]</sup>

Chapel and Bible class attendance are mandatory for students who are taking at least 8 hours for credit in a given semester. Additionally, students must complete at least 8 hours of Bible courses in order to complete the Liberal Arts curriculum. "First Time In College" (FTIC) students must take a survey course in New Testament during their first year (the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the first semester, the rest of the New Testament the second) followed by a survey of the Old Testament during their second year (Genesis–Job in Semester 1 and Psalms–Malachi in Semester 2).

Most students are required to live on campus, and those who do are required to be in their residence halls by midnight (00:00) during the week and 1 a.m. (01:00) on weekends. Except in certain open house events, men and women are not allowed to visit one another's dorm rooms.

Harding has had a no smoking policy on campus since August 1978. Disciplinary action may be taken against students who use illegal drugs whether on or off campus. The consumption of alcohol is also prohibited for students and faculty both on and off campus. A violation of this policy usually results in expulsion for one semester. Searcy, Arkansas is in White County, which is a dry county.

Harding requires faculty to dress professionally when attending class, chapel, lyceum, and American Studies programs. Prior to August 1979, female students were required to wear dresses to class and are still required to dress "modestly." In recent years, there has been a controversy regarding the wearing of yoga pants on campus.

## American Studies Institute

Harding also houses the American Studies Institute (ASI), a center designed to supplement students' academic training and promote "a complete understanding of the institutions, values, and ideas of liberty and democracy".<sup>[23]</sup> In doing so, the ASI exhibits a generally conservative political stance, focused on going "back to the fundamental values that made this country great". The formal roots of this program date back to 1953, when Harding formed the School of American Studies.

Prior to the formal foundation of the ASI, Harding was also involved in the production of a series of animated cartoons extolling the virtues of free-market capitalism. This, too, forms a precursor to the political conservatism that has characterized the ASI. This series, including "Make Mine Freedom" (1948) as well as "Meet King Joe" (1949), were all produced by John Southerland Productions as part of a concerted campaign to fight against the threats of communism at the beginning of the Cold War using popular media. The animations contrast mainstream American values with the values of Soviet communism. The initiative represented a central concern of Harding president George S. Benson, who believed that fighting socialism was a moral imperative, causing him to abandon the pacifism and political



The Administration Building of Harding University.

disengagement championed by founding influences [James A. Harding](#) and [David Lipscomb](#), reversing the university's course and setting it on its current conservative political trajectory.

Currently, the ASI sponsors a number of programs aimed at promoting these values. These include entrepreneurial and leadership programs, a distinguished student honors program, the Belden Center for Private Enterprise Education, and participation in the Walton Scholars Program, which brings in qualified students from Hispanic countries to Arkansas colleges and universities.

## People

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### Presidents

- [J.N. Armstrong](#) (1924–1936)
- [George S. Benson](#) (1936–1965)
- [Clifton L. Ganus Jr.](#) (1965–1987)
- [David B. Burks](#) (1987–2013)
- [Bruce D. McLarty](#) (2013–present)



Dr. Ganus as Vice-President in 1962.

### Notable alumni

- [Mary Elizabeth Bentley](#), [Republican](#) member of the [Arkansas House of Representatives](#)<sup>[24]</sup>
- [Stephen Mark Brown](#), American opera tenor
- [Jim R. Caldwell](#), first Republican member of the [Arkansas State Senate](#) in the 20th century
- [Janet Cherobon-Bawcom](#), Olympian [distance runner](#)
- [Tank Daniels](#), former NFL [American football](#) [linebacker](#)
- [Zach Dasher](#), Republican candidate for Louisiana's 5th congressional district seat in the November 4, 2014 primary election, nephew of [Phil Robertson](#) and [Si Robertson](#)
- [George Andrew Davis, Jr.](#), a highly decorated [fighter pilot](#) and [flying ace](#) of the [United States Army Air Forces](#) in [World War II](#) and later of the [US Air Force](#) during the [Korean War](#)
- [V. E. Howard](#), founder of the radio *International Gospel Hour*, originally based in [Texarkana, Texas](#)<sup>[25]</sup>
- [Timothy Chad Hutchinson](#), attorney and former member of the [Arkansas House of Representatives](#)
- [Khalil Jahshan](#), [Palestinian-American](#) activist, media commentator, and executive director of the Arab Center Washington DC
- [Ed Madden](#), poet, activist, professor of English, and Director of Women's and Gender Studies at the [University of South Carolina](#)<sup>[26]</sup>
- [Chad Marshall](#), an American [Major League](#) soccer player
- [J. Stanley Marshall](#), former president of [Florida State University](#) and member of the Board of Governors for the [State University System of Florida](#)
- [Jerry W. Mitchell](#), investigative reporter and recipient of a "genius grant" from the [MacArthur Foundation](#)
- [David J. Porter](#), Texas Railroad Commissioner
- [Ty Powell](#), professional football player
- [Willie Robertson](#), star of A&E's [Duck Dynasty](#) as well as CEO of [Duck Commander](#)<sup>[27]</sup>



- Korie Robertson, star of A&E's Duck Dynasty and wife of Willie Robertson
- Preacher Roe, Major League Baseball pitcher
- Edward Granville Sewell, American mathematician and professor at University of Texas, El Paso
- Rubel Shelly, writer, minister, professor, and former president of Rochester College<sup>[28]</sup>
- W. Stephen Smith, voice teacher and author, Northwestern University Professor of Voice and Opera
- Farrell Till, activist and editor of *The Skeptical Review*

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## External links

- [Official website](http://www.harding.edu/) (<http://www.harding.edu/>)
- [Harding Athletics website](http://www.hardingsports.com/) (<http://www.hardingsports.com/>)

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