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 Samford University’s 179-year history is one of academic excellence and leadership. As a Christ-centered institution, we remain firmly rooted in our identity and mission while continually expanding educational opportunities and experiences for our students. Samford increases its influence by graduating students capable of addressing the profound challenges facing today’s society. Samford’s strong character positions us as a place of hope and as a guiding light for future generations of thoughtful leaders.

 Samford is the top-ranked university in Alabama in national rankings published by the *Wall Street Journal*. Additionally, the *Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education* ranks Samford 3rd in the nation for student engagement. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks Samford 40th in the nation for best undergraduate teaching and 100th for best value. *Kiplinger’s Personal Finance* ranks Samford 34th among U.S. private universities for value and affordability.

**Samford University Highlights 2019-2020**

* Samford University continues a growth trend with a **fall 2019 enrollment record for the eleventh consecutive year** of 5,692 students (3,591 undergraduate and 2,101 graduate/professional).
* Following an academic program review, the trustees approved a new name and updates to the curriculum in the Department of Religion. As the **Department of Biblical and Religious Studies** the department will offer a **new major in Biblical Studies** to serve students seeking to learn more about the biblical text as they prepare for a future in missions, ministry, or higher education.
* **Christian Ministry** became an academic department within the School of the Arts and launched two new minors: church and culture and intercultural engagement. Samford’s Ministry Training Institute joined the Department of Christian Ministry and enrolled 1,407 students in its programs.
* **Cumberland School of Law’s Center for Advocacy Education** program has long been recognized as one of the nation’s best. Much of the program’s reputation is built on the consistent championship performance of Cumberland’s national trial teams. The school strengthened and enhanced curricular foundations of the program with two new litigation courses—Deposition Skills & Technology and Jury Selection—and recruited top trial lawyers to teach the courses as adjunct faculty.
* On Wednesday, March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the rapidly spreading **coronavirus (COVID-19)** outbreak to be a pandemic that would encircle the globe. Various public health and government officials began issuing clear instructions regarding heightened standards for social distancing. In response, Samford announced all instruction would move online through April 6. Less than two weeks later, the university declared the closure would extend through the end of the semester. On April 2 the decision was made to also move all summer courses online and to cancel Samford’s international programs through August 10. Samford’s comprehensive emergency readiness plan, developed in 2015, provided a road map for continuity of instruction. The university’s exclusive online course delivery experienced a few problems, yet Samford’s faculty and students have generally met or exceeded expectation. Samford’s professionals have demonstrated great creativity through the process and have been able to serve as a valuable source of advice for other institutions (including a flagship state university). Samford plans to resume in-person instruction in the Fall Semester.