

WILLIAM JESSUP UNIVERSITY

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Together, the *Mission Statement*, *Statement of Faith*, and *Community Covenant* define the University's societal posture, role within the Church, and its operational authority as an accredited University. They inform and complement each other, inextricably linked to establish a firm foundation upon which to build the University's regulatory guidelines, operations, policies, and development.

MISSION

In partnership with the Church, William Jessup University ("Jessup") exists to educate transformational leaders for the glory of God.

VISION

Graduates transformed to help redeem world culture by providing notable servant leadership; by enriching family, church, and community life; and by serving with distinction in their chosen career.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in one God, the maker of heaven and earth: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as revealed in the Holy Bible and made known in Jesus Christ our Lord;

We believe that Jesus the divine Son became human, was born of a virgin, ministered in word and miracle, died for our sin, was raised bodily from the dead, ascended to God's right hand and is coming again for His people;

We believe that the Holy Spirit is presently ministering through the Christian community, empowering lives of godliness and service;

We believe that the Holy Bible is completely God breathed, true in all its teaching, and the final authority for all matters of faith and practice;

We believe that Jesus Christ established His church on earth to carry out His saving mission among all ethnic groups and formed her to be one holy people;

We believe in God's saving grace that calls forth from all people: faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and new life and ministry through the Spirit; and

We commit ourselves to the teachings, practice and defense of these truths until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNITY COVENANT

This *Community Covenant* articulates the core theological convictions, values, and behavioral expectations that provide the basis for how we choose to live, work, and study together at William Jessup University. This forms our social compact.

The *Community Covenant* is derived from, predicated on, and emanates out of the teachings of Scripture and the University's *Mission Statement*, *Vision Statement*, and *Statement of Faith*, and adopted Board policies. Nothing contained herein shall be interpreted to contradict, supersede, invalidate, or undermine these foundational tenets of the University.

All members of the University community—Board members, employees, and students—are required to agree to this

Covenant and asked to annually reaffirm their agreement. Students are asked to affirm this *Covenant*, as an affirmation and recognition of the foundation of our community vision and with an agreement to conduct themselves consistent with its principles.

As the William Jessup University community, we acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ and submit to the teachings and values of Jesus Christ as the guide for our actions and programs in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our community has chosen Him and the authority of His words, His atoning sacrifice on the cross, and His life as our supreme authority. Furthermore, the words of Scripture provide the authoritative, ethical, and spiritual foundation for our community. Jesus is Lord and the Bible is our authority.

We affirm the following core tenets:

We value all persons as created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), honoring, loving, and serving one another.

We cannot love God and hate our neighbor. We are to love God and show it by how we live and interact with each other. We value all people—and life—as Jesus did, and we see each other as having a God given purpose. We speak and act respectfully and with an attitude of service towards each other.

We support the weak (Isaiah 1:17), continually seeking to help the wounded, the oppressed, and the needy.

Christ said we should help those around us, especially the weak and the wounded; so, we look with extra care to those who are hurting. This includes the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized in our society. Christ calls us to show care and compassion toward all in need. We do this with those on our campus and in our local community.

We respect authority (Romans 13:1-4), affirming the God-given authority of those in leadership over us in the University and beyond.

We affirm the teaching of Christ and the Scripture regarding those in authority over us. God places them in authority for our good. So, we follow the guidance of those authority structures to the extent that they are consistent with the rule of law, the character of God, and His Word.

We emphasize reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19), expressing grace and forgiveness in conflict.

We choose to act with maturity and grace towards those with whom we disagree. We value and pursue peace with others, wherever possible. We strive to model a community deeply committed to reconciliation and the practice of forgiveness for one another.

We pursue holiness (Hebrews 12:14) and embrace purity (Philippians 4:8), in word, thought, and deed.

As a community we seek to demonstrate the Christian virtues of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; to love and support that which is good in God's eyes; to embrace purity in all relationships; to practice speech that is edifying and uplifting; and to model self-control, modesty, and healthy lifestyle choices.

We live with integrity (Colossians 3:9-10), committing ourselves always to truth and honesty.

For the community to flourish, it must rest on a foundation of trust and civility. We therefore covenant to practice authenticity and honesty. Integrity requires that we take ownership and responsibility for our mistakes.

The following Statements address specific applications of these tenets.

1. STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

This Statement shall guide the University's participation in any benefit or health plan, and is rooted in three foundational

assumptions:

- a) Human life is uniquely sacred from conception to the grave (Jeremiah 1:4-5).
- b) The sanctity of life and its protection is among the broadest and most inclusive of our moral obligations to other human beings (Genesis 1:26-27).
- c) All life is precious and in God's hands (Psalm 139:13-16).

Therefore, we believe that:

- a) The intentional destruction of innocent human life is unbiblical and contrary to God's will (Proverbs 6:16-17).
- b) All human beings, at all stages of existence, with every quality of experience, reflecting every type of human diversity, and encompassing every possible quality of relationship have immeasurable worth and dignity in God's eyes and, therefore, should always be accorded love, respect and honor.
- c) The University is a community that is committed to engaging in dialogue about human life issues with humility, sensitivity, compassion, and prayerfulness.

2. STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

This Statement is rooted in three foundational assumptions:

- a) All individuals have God-given human dignity.
- b) Individual identities are not based primarily on gender identity or sexual orientation. God's design for humanity is that our primary identity is in Christ.
- c) The University community is committed to biblical truth and desires to engage in redemptive dialogue about sex and human sexuality with humility, sensitivity, compassion, and prayerfulness.

A. On Marriage and Sexual Intimacy

We believe that:

- a) God created humans as sexual beings—intentionally and distinctly as male and female—to reflect His image and to complement each other (Genesis 1:26-28).
- b) God created a framework for healthy human sexual relationships and the expression of sexual intimacy in the form of the covenantal commitment of marriage (Genesis 2:22-25).
- c) Only God, in His supreme authority, may define marriage, and He has done so by ordaining a lifelong, faithful, and monogamous commitment between one biological male and one biological female as husband and wife, respectively (Mark 10:4-12). This framework of marriage is God's good and perfect gift and reflects the complementary relationship between Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:31-32).
- d) We consider sexual intimacy practiced outside of the boundaries of this definition of marriage, to be sin and contrary to the teaching of Scripture (Hebrews 13:4).

B. On Gender Identity

We believe that:

- a) Humans are “fearfully and wonderfully made” in the image of God and that God, according to His supremacy and infallible nature, intentionally and specifically designed us to be either distinctly male or distinctly female, a gender binary identified at birth, in accordance with our DNA and biology.
- b) While maintaining our compassionate and redemptive posture of Christian love and grace for all in our university community, including those who struggle with gender issues, we do not affirm and will not support any decision for members of the Jessup community to identify or express themselves as gendered or as ungendered, other than their gender identified at birth.

Implications

- a) We are comforted that in seeking Him, God’s redemptive love guides us to Scriptural truth and creates spiritual conviction towards confession and repentance of sin; and that doing so will ultimately lead to our forgiveness and restoration with Him.
- b) We believe that Scripture teaches us to live full of grace and truth and to minister to those living apart from God’s intention for our lives with love and care, including those who struggle with sexual sin in our community.
- c) While we recognize that living out these truths may cause the separation of those living against these truths from our University community, we will always endeavor to separate with love, compassion, and peace.

3. STATEMENT ON SCIENCE AND FAITH

This Statement reflects our commitment to open dialogue and unity among Christians. Such unity is grounded first and foremost in the person of Christ Jesus, not our stance on creation and evolution.

We hold three foundational assumptions:

- a) God’s creative acts are trustworthily recorded in the Bible and necessary for our understanding of His redemptive purposes.
- b) The Bible affirms that God created the universe, but it does not do so in scientific language nor does it fully disclose God’s methods in creation.
- c) The Christian scientific endeavor presupposes that the universe exists, that it is to some degree knowable through human rationality and the methods of the natural sciences, and that it reveals “the eternal power and divine nature” of its Creator (Romans 1:19-20).

We believe that:

- a) One God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—exists as an intelligent, transcendent, holy, loving Being who existed prior to the formation of the material cosmos. God the Creator is completely, and essentially distinct from, His creation.
- b) As supported by Scripture, all entities and phenomena have been brought into existence by God’s powerful actions and in accordance with His purposes, not by chance.
- c) God made His creation to be good (Genesis 1:31).
- d) The purpose of all creation is to praise God (Psalm 148:7-13). Every element in creation is for the praise of God and praises God in a way appropriate to its created nature, in some cases merely by its existence.
- e) God’s distinct creative acts culminated in the first human beings (Adam and Eve) whom He created in His image (Genesis 1:26-27); a characteristic that distinguishes human beings from all other creatures and bestows on

them unique significance, value, and worth.

- f) The first human beings fell into sin through a historical act of disobedience to God (Genesis 3:1-7) which brought death to humanity (Romans 5:12) and has affected all of creation in significant ways. Notwithstanding this Fall, much evidence of the original goodness remains.
- g) Even today, in our fallen condition, God intends humanity to manage, tend, and care for His earth according to His purposes (Genesis 1:28, Genesis 2:15). God opposes all abuse and exploitation of His creation.
- h) We live under universal, created laws and moral absolutes.
- i) The material world and cosmos are neither autonomous, eternal, nor self-generating. God is intimately involved in maintaining and upholding His creation. Indeed, all creation is sustained through God, Himself (Psalm 33:6-7, Colossians 1:17). Thus, all progress—whether human or otherwise—depends upon the redemptive activity of God.

Implications

- a) A biblical view of the origins of life does not constrain legitimate scientific inquiry and research because we accept two sources of information: biblical revelation and natural revelation. Scripture tells us that God has revealed Himself in the created order (Romans 1:17).
- b) God is the source of both biblical and natural revelation with respect to His creation. Apparent discrepancies should result in deferring conclusions in favor of a careful and humble reexamination of the presuppositions, theories, and interpretations that led to the disagreement.
- c) Different positions must be subject to ongoing honest evaluation and scrutiny, and respectful debate within the framework of a biblical Christian perspective.
- d) Members of the university community may differ on the timetable for creation in Genesis 1, conclusions about young earth or old earth, and the extent of changes in life forms over time (e.g. speciation). As we affirm our own convictions, we strive to maintain an attitude of respect and charity towards others who may hold different views on these matters. It is the University position that disagreements on the age of the earth and the mechanisms are not sufficient rationale for division between followers of Christ. We do believe, as a foundational minimum for biblical theology and anthropology, that the Genesis story does establish the creation of the first human beings, Adam and Eve, as literal and fully human ancestors of all humankind.

4. STATEMENT ON UNITY IN DIVERSITY

This Statement is rooted in the following foundational assumptions:

- a) All people have been fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God and are worthy of human dignity, honor, and respect (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 9:6, James 3:9).
- b) All people have sinned, fall short of the glory of God, and need a Savior (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23).
- c) The ability to know God, and to be reconciled with Him, is afforded to all people through a relationship with Jesus Christ, regardless of race, culture, history, or background (John 1:12, John 3:16).
- d) God's design for humankind is that our primary identity is in Christ (Colossians 2:9-10, 1 John 3:1-2). Christ's sacrifice for all humankind unifies believers in Christ in a common humanity through Him (John 3:16, 1 John 2:2).
- e) Once unified in Christ, our differences in race, ethnicity, national culture, gender, and denomination are reasons for celebration, as this multiplicity of differences is represented in the Kingdom of Heaven and will be

represented in the Kingdom of God upon Christ's return (Galatians 3:27-28, Revelation 7:9).

A. On Race, Ethnicity, and National Culture

We believe that God has created a diverse world made up of different races, ethnicities, and national cultures for the purpose of reflecting His infinite creativity. He is glorified and we benefit greatly when we understand, appreciate, and celebrate our similarities and differences.

B. On Ability

We believe that we have been "fearfully and wonderfully made" in the image of God, regardless of ability, disability, or medical condition. Therefore, all people, with proper preparation and desire, can participate in our thriving campus community regardless of ability, disability, or medical condition.

C. On Denomination

We believe that while denominational differences may cause members of the University to have differing opinions on a host of theological topics of importance, these differences (provided they are not at odds with the Statement of Faith) should never lead to divisiveness within the University.

D. On Theology

We believe that differing theological worldviews are welcome in the University community: 1) for the purpose of bringing students to a knowledge of Christ through repentance and conversion; and 2) in the context of civil, academic discourse for the benefit of preparing students to work and live with diverse populations and conflicting worldviews, so that they may encounter and address conflicting worldviews with compassion and biblical truth.

Implications

- a) We strive to model a University whose community reflects the demographic breadth and depth of the Kingdom of Heaven (John 17:20-21, I Corinthians 9:19-23, Galatians 3:28).
- b) The pursuit of unity in Christ means being intentional about fostering and creating an environment in which students live in a community with people of different races, ethnicities, national cultures, languages, genders, abilities, and denominations.
- c) Fulfilling the Great Commission to make disciples of Christ means being intentional about fostering and creating a campus environment in which students with other theological worldviews are welcomed and ministered to for the purpose of knowing and accepting Christ.
- d) We are called to live in the world, but not to be of the world. In today's highly integrated global society, students will work and live with diverse populations whose worldviews will often conflict with a biblical worldview. The University has a responsibility to prepare students how to evaluate and respond to these conflicts in a way that upholds biblical truth (Romans 12:2).
- e) God desires believers to walk in humility, gentleness, and patience, and love one another while striving to facilitate and maintain unity among believers through the Spirit, in a manner that is characterized by the bond of peace, joy, and love. We will maintain unity and respect in the midst of differences and disagreements with empathy and humility (1 Corinthians 13:13, Galatians 5:22-23).

APPLICATION OF THIS COVENANT

While we strive to adopt a redemptive and compassionate posture with members of the University whose conduct and teaching may be inconsistent with the standards expressed herein, the University shall have the authority to pursue any

corrective actions necessary to establish unity within the University community, up to and including separation from the University.

More specific applications of this *Covenant* may also be expressed in the particular policies for faculty, staff, and students within the University. The final authority to adjudicate any disagreement regarding the interpretation or application of this *Community Covenant* shall rest with the Board of Trustees.

Nothing contained, herein, shall establish any limitation upon the University to conduct its mission, operations, enrollment, or administration consistent with its deeply-held religious beliefs or to limit, waive, or surrender any rights of religious freedom or expression afforded to the University under State or Federal law.

This Statement is rooted in these foundational assumptions:

- a) The University and its Board of Trustees are committed to restore fellowship, when possible and where reasonable, with members of the University whose conduct is inconsistent with the standards expressed in the University's *Statement of Faith*, this *Community Covenant*, or adopted University policies.
- b) The process of restoration is predicated on the biblical doctrines of sin, grace, repentance, and restoration.
- c) We believe that, through a loving relationship with Christ, there is always a potential pathway by which differences or conflicts may lead to change, growth, and reconciliation (Galatians 6:1, Titus 2:11-14).
- d) The commitment toward restoration shall never compromise, or be at the expense of, the integrity and religious mission of the University.

Therefore, we believe that:

- a) Members of the University should make every effort to live at peace with one another, resolving disputes with each other in accordance with Scripture, with discretion, within the tenets of the Christian faith where appropriate, and eschewing legal recourse where possible (Matthew 5:23-26).
- b) Members of the University shall strive to maintain unity in the midst of disagreements with respect, empathy, and humility.
- c) Members of the University are encouraged to exhaust all internal administrative remedies available to them in seeking to resolve disputes, up to and including seeking redress through the Board of Trustees.
- d) When private resolution of disputes in accordance with Scripture is not possible, members of the University shall make reasonable efforts to resolve disputes with each other, or the University, through biblically-based mediation or similar alternative dispute resolution method (Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
- e) The Board of Trustees, in its sole authority, is the final determiner of whether restoration of fellowship within the University community is possible. In the event that separation of a member from the University community is necessary, all efforts will be made to do so with grace, compassion, and discretion.