

SECTION ONE

**FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATIONAL
PRINCIPLES**

COMMUNITY OF EDUCATORS HANDBOOK

Section 1: Foundational Educational Principles

1 FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 IDENTITY AND MISSION STATEMENT

Messiah College is a Christian college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. The College is committed to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church. Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character, and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society.

1.2 FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

The College motto, “Christ Preeminent,” points to a full and rich understanding of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith relevant to every dimension of life. The phrase points to Jesus Christ as both “the ground for personal salvation and the pattern for life and service.” Messiah College is committed both to the personal dimension of faith in Christ for the forgiveness of and deliverance from sin and to the exemplary nature of Christ’s life as a model for our own. Jesus Christ, “the way, the truth, and the life,” is thus foundational to the College’s life and mission.

Since its founding by the Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah College has affirmed a set of values derived from the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of that denomination. These values have guided the school as it has sought to keep Christ preeminent in the total life of the institution. Stated in slightly different ways during the College’s history, the following five ideals provide a summary of how Messiah College has defined its distinctive Christian character.

1.2.1 **Unity of Faith, Learning, and Life.** This principle affirms the wholeness of persons and the unity of every dimension of life as revealed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. It also emphasizes that all truth is God’s truth and thus avoids the creation of false dichotomies in thinking and in living. Messiah College affirms a unified Christian worldview and lifestyle that joins revelation with rational inquiry and that integrates believing with doing. Christian “calling” and vocation is accordingly broadly understood. All of our gifts, talents, and interests are to be nurtured as acts of praise toward God while serving humanity and all creation.

1.2.2 **Importance of the Person.** Every person is to be respected and valued, regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, status, or position, because each person is created in the image of God. Freedom and responsibility are primary characteristics of being human, and we must take care to protect each other’s freedom while encouraging responsible living. As free agents, individuals make choices that determine the contours of their lives, and they bear responsibility for those choices. Individuals are accountable for their manner of response to God’s grace. Similarly, every person must be responsible in their pursuit of truth and yet be free to develop their own understandings as they integrate their formal studies with their broader experience of faith.

- 1.2.3 **Significance of Community.** Our understanding of the Church as the body of Christ and our recognition of humanity's interdependence cause us to value community. In community, we voluntarily share our lives with each other, we care for each other, we rejoice and suffer together, we worship together, and we offer counsel to each other. While every community develops rules, in Christian communities such rules should always be humane, recognizing the impact they have on the lives of those affected, and should help us appreciate each other's gifts and talents. In any community there will be tensions that require mutual give and take, but a Christian spirit of care and support provides the security needed to accept one's own strengths and weaknesses as one also accepts the strengths and weaknesses of others. The ultimate goal of every Christian community should be to help us live more faithfully as disciples of Christ.
- 1.2.4 **Disciplined and Creative Living.** The mature Christian life is characterized by a delicate mix of discipline and creativity. We are called to a life of devotion and obedience to the Gospel. Such discipleship demands of us self-control and sacrifice and requires us to examine all our wants and desires in the light of God's holiness. The Gospel also calls us to celebrate the goodness of creation and to live our lives in active engagement with this ever-changing world in which God has placed us. In order to fulfill these tasks, we must be both creative interpreters of the world around us and creative actors in that world. Creativity and discipline are complementary characteristics of the mature, joyful Christian life.
- 1.2.5 **Service and Reconciliation.** Central to the Gospel is the work of reconciling individuals with God, with each other, and with all of creation. God has called us to be active agents in this work as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and bear the fruit of the Spirit within us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Prepared in this way, we are compelled to share the redeeming Gospel of Jesus with those around us, to build bridges of understanding and peace across the dividing lines of class, age, gender, religion, and ethnicity; to demonstrate the love of God in service to others; to open our hearts to the poor and needy; and to work for justice wherever injustice prevails.

1.3 **COLLEGE-WIDE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES** [Revised 5/15/03, Board of Trustees]

Messiah College is dedicated to helping students blend faith with learning in service to the world. As a Christian college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences, Messiah College advocates a bold and disciplined exploration of the world and expects its students to both embrace and participate in that endeavor. At the same time, Messiah seeks to instill in its students a sense of intellectual humility, recognizing that even the most learned persons have limited insight and therefore need the insights of others.

The paradigm under which Messiah College's educational programs are designed is that of liberal education. By raising the right questions, exposing students to multiple perspectives, and encouraging critical thinking, Messiah College seeks to enable its students to respond with maturity to the world's complexities. In addition to nurturing these intellectual skills, the College encourages its students to apply their knowledge to the needs of the world—as servants, as leaders, as agents of reconciliation.

Messiah College offers two academic degrees: the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.). When combined with purposeful cocurricular activities, these programs of academic study enable students to gain a perspective of who they ought to be and provide them with the abilities to live effectively as intellectually competent, socially responsible citizens of the world.

Messiah College has a historic relationship with the Brethren in Christ Church. Now expressed in a covenant agreement, this heritage informs the College's programs and activities. The distinctives of this heritage, which is rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian faith, include emphases on justice-seeking, peacemaking, reconciliation, evangelism, and service. Accordingly, the College encourages and prepares students to act as servants who extend the gifts of grace and peace to a broken world. The College also recognizes the need for each individual to appropriate the Christian faith and express that commitment in daily living within a community.

While we realize that learning is a lifelong endeavor, Messiah College expects its graduates to have made progress toward the fulfillment of the following seven objectives (see "Objectives" below). From a practical standpoint, these seven objectives and their subpoints are both interdependent and overlapping, i.e., while they may be visualized discretely and assessed independently, they are nonetheless connected to one another in numerous ways and will often be pursued in multiple program areas. While the relationships among these seven objectives might be articulated in a variety of ways, they are listed and ordered with a particular rationale in mind (see Section 1.3.2).

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- 1.3.1 **Objectives**
- 1.3.1.1 To develop those abilities essential to liberal arts education. These abilities include:
- Thinking logically and creatively, analytically and synthetically, and abstractly and concretely;
 - Reading, observing, and listening carefully and critically;
 - Writing and speaking clearly and coherently;
 - Appreciating the aesthetic dimensions of life;
 - Functioning effectively in quantitatively- and technologically-oriented cultures;
 - Accessing, evaluating, and using information effectively and ethically;
 - Pursuing the process of learning as a life-long pursuit;
 - Balancing commitment with humility.
- 1.3.1.2 To gain knowledge common to liberal arts education. This includes:
- Developing basic understanding of geographical, social, political, and religious realities throughout the world;
 - Learning significant aspects of the Western social, cultural, political, religious, and philosophical heritage;
 - Learning significant aspects of at least one non-Western culture;
 - Becoming aware of how people of different cultures perceive the world, interpret reality, and make meaning;
 - Learning the methods, philosophies, and basic principles of the mathematical, natural, and social sciences;
 - Learning the traditions and methods of the arts and the humanities;
 - Making connections (i.e., probing relationships, including congruencies and contradictions) between learnings acquired in a-f above.
- 1.3.1.3 To become biblically literate and theologically reflective. This includes:
- Developing knowledge of and about God as revealed in Jesus Christ;
 - Gaining knowledge of the Bible's content and themes, including the biblical witness on service, leadership, and reconciliation;
 - Learning about historic Christian beliefs, practices, and ecclesiastical expressions, and the particular emphases of the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions;
 - Becoming familiar with contemporary theological dialogue and biblical scholarship;
 - Recognizing the influence of culture upon the Christian faith, and appreciating the insights that other cultures contribute to Christian theology and practice;
 - Acquiring the ability to articulate and evaluate one's faith;
 - Exploring various connections between faith and learning.
- 1.3.1.4 To attain specialized knowledge and abilities in at least one area of study. This includes:
- Understanding the foundational content and philosophical assumptions of one's specialized area of study;
 - Engaging in scholarship in one's specialized area of study;
 - Developing proficiency in one's specialized area of study sufficient to pursue a career and/or continue education at the graduate level;

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- d. Gaining an awareness of options for employment, voluntary service, and/or graduate education in one's specialized area of study;
 - e. Articulating how faith connects to one's specialized area of study and to potential career options in that area of study.
- 1.3.1.5 To develop an understanding of one's identity and Christian vocation. This includes:
- a. Developing an awareness of and concern for the whole person, including physical, emotional and spiritual wellness;
 - b. Acquiring an appreciation for how one's faith, community, and culture impact one's identity and sense of meaning;
 - c. Developing a sense of vocation that includes but transcends career choice;
 - d. Gaining a realistic sense of one's distinctiveness, including one's interests, abilities, and limitations;
 - e. Discerning and reflecting on the role(s) one assumes in groups, including one's faith community.
- 1.3.1.6 To develop the intellect and character necessary to express Christian commitments in responsible decisions and actions. This includes:
- a. Developing individual and corporate spiritual disciplines that nurture personal faith and compassion for others;
 - b. Assessing cultural values and ethical traditions in light of the biblical witness;
 - c. Applying the insights of Christian theology and ethics to complex social and personal issues;
 - d. Understanding the nature and causes of violence in the world and the means for promoting peace;
 - e. Recognizing the implications of living in an increasingly interdependent world;
 - f. Evaluating institutional policies and social/cultural practices on the basis of whether they promote peace, justice, and reconciliation;
 - g. Gaining an appreciation for cultural and ethnic diversity.
- 1.3.1.7 To become servants, leaders, and reconcilers in the world. This includes:
- a. Practicing a lifestyle based on Christian commitments;
 - b. Developing a sense of civic responsibility and commitment to work with others for the common good;
 - c. Developing the courage to act responsibly and redemptively in a complex world;
 - d. Practicing good stewardship of economic and natural resources;
 - e. Acting in ways that respect gender, cultural, and ethnic diversity;
 - f. Making decisions that reflect an ethic of service, a concern for justice, and a desire for reconciliation;
 - g. Recognizing the relevance of Christian faith to all of life.
- 1.3.2 **Rationale**
- 1.3.2.1 Objective 1 pertains to *abilities, competencies, and intellectual orientations* that Messiah College aims to instill in all of its students.
- 1.3.2.2 Objective 2 and Objective 3 pertain to *bodies of knowledge and issues related to those bodies of knowledge* that Messiah College wants all its students to become familiar with. Objective 3 deals with knowledge that is more explicitly and distinctly Christian.

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- 1.3.2.3 Objective 4 pertains to the *specialized knowledge and abilities* each student will acquire by pursuing a particular major. In a certain sense, Objective 4 relates to all students (“common learning”), since all students will be required to pursue a major. But the content of those majors will vary widely as students prepare themselves to pursue their particular vocations.
- 1.3.2.4 Objective 5 pertains to the *personal (though communally-sensitive) appropriation* of the knowledge gained via Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4. In other words, Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 provide students with the intellectual framework by which to reflect upon their own selves, including their personal abilities, preferences, limitations, and callings.
- 1.3.2.5 Objective 6 pertains to *students’ development as ethical beings*. At Messiah College, ethical reflection is rooted in Christian value assumptions, and it demands both character formation and a thorough understanding of the world (i.e., ethical reflection demands the competencies cited in Objective 1, and the knowledge base outlined in Objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5).
- 1.3.2.6 Objective 7 pertains to empowering students *to act upon their knowledge*, utilizing the tools they’ve gained via meeting Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Messiah College is committed to preparing students for “lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society.” Objective 7 assumes that knowing the good (expressed primarily in Objective 6) must be accompanied by doing the good.

1.4 COLLEGE-WIDE EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES [Approved 5/11/06, Board of Trustees]

1.4.1 *Liberal Arts and Liberal Education at Messiah College*

Messiah College is a college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. Given this identity, Messiah College has both liberal arts baccalaureate programs and applied/professional baccalaureate programs. All baccalaureate programs are subject to the same foundational principles and parameters.

At Messiah College, the liberal arts do not refer to a general attitude or approach to education that can be captured or delivered in any area of study. The liberal arts refer to specific abilities and areas of knowledge related to specific disciplines.

The liberal arts are foundational to liberal education, and thereby, play a central role in General Education. All baccalaureate programs, whether liberal or applied, build on the liberal arts foundation provided by General Education. Each baccalaureate program is a combination of General Education, the Major and Curricular Electives. When the major programming builds on the liberal arts foundation in General Education, the baccalaureate programming (viewed holistically) becomes an instance of liberal education, and our graduates can be considered liberally educated.

In summary, liberal learning at Messiah College incorporates both liberal and applied disciplines and programming in discrete yet collaborative roles to produce liberal learning. At Messiah College liberal education is fundamentally rooted in the liberal arts, and applied programs and liberal arts programs are fitted to build on this liberal arts foundation to complete the student's liberal education.

1.4.2 **The Nature and Structure of Educational Programming: Foundational Concepts and Categories**

1.4.2.1 Educational Program. A coherent and coordinated set of activities designed to help students achieve/embody the College-Wide Educational Objectives. Every educational program is based on, justified by, and assessed by the College-Wide Educational Objectives.

1.4.2.2 An educational program is (1) directed toward student learning, (2) explicitly guided by a set of objectives directly linked to the College-Wide Educational Objectives, (3) supervised/led/ delivered by educator(s), and (4) approved through appropriate governance channels.

1.4.2.3 There are two general forms of educational programming:

- a. *Curricular Program*: An educational program that is academic credit-bearing.

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- b. *Cocurricular Program*: An educational program that is not academic credit-bearing. [Some educational programming is offered for either credit or not for credit. In these instances, whether the programming is considered “curricular” or “cocurricular” depends on whether or not the student chooses to complete the programming for academic credit, e.g., varsity athletics, music ensembles, etc].
- 1.4.2.4 The College-Wide Educational Objectives are best achieved through a cooperative effort between the curriculum and the cocurriculum. This “holistic” view of the educational enterprise implies programmatic cooperation in at least three ways:
- All relatively autonomous curricular and cocurricular programming is coordinated in a way that the College-Wide Educational Objectives are achieved in a comprehensive, efficient, coherent, and mutually supportive manner (e.g., Bible Major, Life Groups).
 - Some educational programs and initiatives have relatively distinct, but intentionally coordinated and complementary, curricular and cocurricular components (e.g., First Year Experience, Senior Year Experience).
 - Some educational programs are partnerships in which the learning objectives are delivered through a collaborative effort between the curriculum and cocurriculum. The educators, resources and educational activities typically associated with curricular and cocurricular programming come together in delivering either a singular curricular (for credit) or cocurricular (not for credit) program (e.g., Residential Seminar, discipline-based service-learning course).
- 1.4.2.5 Some organizational and administrative units of the College are related more to curricular or cocurricular programming than others. However, it is important not to identify “the curriculum” or “the cocurriculum” exclusively with specific organizational and administrative units. All organizational and administrative units related to the delivery of the educational program are involved to some extent with both curricular and cocurricular programming. This is to say they all, to some extent, are involved with credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing programming and activities related to such programming.
- 1.4.2.6 College-wide educational programming (whether curricular or cocurricular) falls into two categories:
- Required Programming*
 - Educational programming (curricular or cocurricular) that every student must successfully complete in order to graduate.
 - While College-wide requirements do not exhaust Messiah College’s educational programming, such requirements are sufficient for the student to achieve the College-Wide Educational Objectives at an acceptable level.
 - Enrichment Programming*
 - Educational programming (curricular or cocurricular) which students may choose or elect to complete beyond the minimal requirements for graduation.
 - Enrichment programming is important insofar as such educational activity complements and enhances College-wide requirements, enriches the student’s educational experience, and, in some instances, is necessary for the student to more fully embody those educational objectives that imply or

require voluntary student participation in order to be more fully experienced and realized. Enrichment programs are an important part of the education program for every Messiah College student to fully become the kind of person envisioned in the College-Wide Educational Objectives.

3. Messiah College's College-Wide Educational Objectives are very ambitious. They envision a specific kind of person—not just a learner who knows important things and has certain skills. The College-Wide Educational Objectives envision a lifelong learner who displays character and is motivated by certain commitments to leadership, servanthood, and reconciliation. These things can be addressed in a limited manner through the required educational programming. In fact, it is not really possible to require a person to become these things. Enrichment programs and opportunities can be intentionally designed for students to “freely” and at their own initiative strive to become a certain kind of person.

1.4.3 **Guiding Educational Assumptions.** Educational programs are not simply a product of the College-Wide Educational Objectives. There are a number of ways in which the educational content, stipulated by the College-Wide Educational Objectives, can be configured and delivered. “Guiding Educational Assumptions”—assumptions related to learning and pedagogical theory—determine the form or shape of educational programming.

1.4.3.1 The Importance of Holistic Learning. Messiah College has one mission and one set of educational objectives that flow from that mission. Therefore, there are intentional efforts to coordinate and connect program areas and the various types of educational programming within these areas. While the educational program contains a number of relatively autonomous parts, these parts function as a coherent whole.

1.4.3.2 The Importance of Student Intellectual, Character, and Spiritual Development to Learning. Educational programming reflects a progression in terms of expectations for students that is consistent with their developing maturity, intellectual ability, and increasing responsibilities.

1.4.3.3 The Importance of Common Learning. A common learning program is an educational program in which all the students are exposed to the same educational objectives and hence have opportunity to have the same (i.e., a “common”) learning experience. The degree of common learning can vary considerably among and within educational programs. At least some aspects of the educational program contain a high degree of common content in order to facilitate student understanding of the College mission and to enable students to make connections across disciplines and across the boundaries of in-class and out-of-class experiences.

1.4.3.4 The Importance of Experiential/Contextual Learning. Educational programs provide opportunity for direct contact or encounters with the phenomena or subject matter being studied, through facilitated and sequenced experiences, occurring in authentic, real-life settings, and requiring the participant to respond with a balance of action, reflection, and application.

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- 1.4.3.5 The Importance of Understanding Multicultural Diversity and Racial Reconciliation. Educational programs are designed in a way to help students engage in issues related to racism, racial reconciliation, and multicultural diversity for the purpose of nurturing persons and shaping social structures that embody a spirit of hospitality, justice, and reconciliation.
- 1.4.3.6 The Importance of Balancing Disciplinary Expertise with Integrative Learning. Academic disciplines and integrative learning play vital roles in a balanced educational program that both emphasizes disciplinary content, methods, and philosophy and explicitly crosses disciplinary boundaries in the processing and understanding of important ideas.
- 1.4.3.7 The Importance of Developing Connections Between Christian Faith and Learning. Educational programs are designed to help students explore the relevance and mutual connectedness of the Christian faith to educational pursuits.
- 1.4.3.8 The Importance of Active Student Involvement in the Learning Process. Educational programs require students to assume some intellectual responsibility for their own learning. Programming is directive enough to shape and give form to the educational experience of students, but students are given opportunities to shape their education within the curricular and cocurricular structures and under the direction of qualified advisors/mentors.
- 1.4.4 The College is intentional about the amount of educational programming that is delivered and supported.
- 1.4.4.1 Baccalaureate degree requirements are designed to be completed by students in an equivalent of eight semesters of full-time study.
- 1.4.4.2 The size of the component parts of the College's overall educational programming is considered so the overall educational programming required and made available to students is coordinated and can be managed by the student, educators, and the College.
- 1.4.4.3 The College helps students to be intentional about how they manage their time and prioritize their involvement in educational programming.
- 1.4.5 The College seeks to create a climate of program review in which student learning in relation to the College-Wide Educational Objectives is assessed, and the results of this assessment impact program development and resource management. See *A Conceptual Framework for Assessing Institutional Effectiveness* for policies and procedures related to program review and the assessment of student learning.

- 1.5 PRINCIPLES FOR THE CURRICULUM** [Approved 5/11/06, Board of Trustees]
- 1.5.1 The Structure and Purpose of the Curriculum**
- 1.5.1.1 Curricular programming is educational programming for which students earn academic credit.
- 1.5.1.2 Curricular programming plays the predominant role in the College's graduation requirements. The College sets the level of credits a student must successfully complete in order to graduate. (Currently each student must complete 123-128 credits, depending on the academic major.)
- 1.5.1.3 Some curricular programming is for enrichment – educational programming students choose or elect to complete beyond the minimal requirements for graduation (e.g., academic credit earned beyond the required 123-138 hours).
- 1.5.1.4 The College curriculum involves three components: (1) General Education, (2) the major, and (3) electives.
- General Education refers to an intentional program required of all students to help them become broadly informed and liberally educated.
 - The major refers to an intentional program that requires each student to concentrate on a chosen area of academic study.
 - Electives refer to courses or curricular programs beyond major and General Education requirements that are used to fulfill the credit hours required for graduation.
- 1.5.1.5 Since curricular programming plays a predominant role in the College's graduation requirements, the curriculum is designed in such a way that it addresses all of the College-Wide Educational Objectives to some degree.
- 1.5.1.6 The College-Wide Educational Objectives are best achieved through a cooperative effort between curricular programming and academic support units and program areas (e.g., Career Center, Agapé Center, Library, Writing Center, etc.). These units provide resources and specialized expertise that enhance and facilitate the effective delivery of the curriculum.
- 1.5.2 Guiding Educational Assumptions and the Curriculum** [See the *College-wide Educational Principles* for a more detailed descriptions of the Guiding Educational Assumptions, Section 1.04.03.]
- 1.5.2.1 The Importance of Holistic Learning. General Education and major programming are mutually supportive and coordinated. Curricular programming is mutually supportive and coordinated with the cocurriculum.
- 1.5.2.2 The Importance of Student Intellectual, Character, and Spiritual Development to Learning. The curriculum reflects a progression in terms of expectations for students that is consistent with their developing maturity, varying levels of ability, and increasing responsibility for learning.

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- 1.5.2.3 The Importance of Common Learning. Aspects of the curriculum are designed to provide a common learning experience both within the curriculum and through cooperative efforts between the curriculum and cocurriculum. For example, all students are required to complete a major and a common General Education program. Some required curricular programming contains a high degree of common content, e.g., a core course or courses required of all students.
- 1.5.2.4 The Importance of Experiential/Contextual Learning. Each student is provided with the opportunity to complete curricular requirements through an experiential/contextual learning context, such as student field and laboratory research projects, service-learning, internships, study abroad, and study at the Philadelphia Campus.
- 1.5.2.5 The Importance of Understanding Multicultural Diversity and Racial Reconciliation. The Curriculum in its thematic content includes (or reflects) diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and global perspectives. Also, the curriculum will be delivered through pedagogical strategies that create a learning environment sensitive and responsive to dimensions of cultural diversity in the classroom.
- 1.5.2.6 The Importance of Balancing Disciplinary Expertise with Integrative Learning
- Study at the undergraduate level encourages both significant inquiry into a specific subject and an understanding of the complementary nature of related academic disciplines.
 - The curriculum reflects both a healthy respect for the academic disciplines and a commitment to explore relationships among them.
 - The curriculum assures the significant presence of the liberal arts, which are understood as (1) those abilities and areas of knowledge common to the liberally educated and (2) those traditions in the arts and sciences which are foundational for being liberally educated and for understanding the student's major area of study.
- 1.5.2.7 The Importance of Developing Connections Between Christian Faith and Learning. The curriculum consistently encourages students to draw connections between Christian faith and their academic pursuits.
- 1.5.2.8 The Importance of Active Student Involvement in the Learning Process. Curricular programs are constructed in a way that provides an opportunity for students to make curricular choices with guidance by an advisor and within established guidelines.
- 1.5.3 **The Size of the Curriculum**
- The curriculum accommodates the unique concerns of some areas of study (e.g., the demands of off-campus accrediting agencies.)
 - The size of the curriculum (and its component parts) conforms to the parameters and policies established in *Parameters for the College Curriculum*.
- 1.5.4 **Assessment of the Curriculum.** The curriculum is assessed primarily through the majors and General Education. See the A Conceptual Framework for Assessing Institutional Effectiveness for policies and procedures related to program review and the assessment of student learning.

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1.6 PRINCIPLES FOR ACADEMIC MAJORS [Approved 5/11/06, Board of Trustees]

1.6.1 The Major and the College-Wide Educational Objectives

1.6.1.1 The major is directly and primarily tied to College-Wide Educational Objective 4 (“To attain specialized knowledge and abilities in at least one area of study”); in fact, College-Wide Educational Objective 4 entails the existence of “major” programming. In addressing this College-Wide Educational Objective, each major approved fulfills the following objectives:

- a. Understanding foundational content, practices and philosophical and ethical assumptions of one’s specialized area of study.
- b. Preparing to engage in scholarship in one’s specialized area of study and providing the opportunity for scholarship activities related to one’s disciplinary and/or professional pursuits.
- c. Developing proficiency in one’s specialized area of study sufficient to pursue a career and/or continue education at the graduate level.
- d. Gaining an awareness of options for employment, voluntary service, and/or graduate education in one’s specialized area of study in the context of reflection on one’s sense of vocation.
- e. Articulating how faith connects to one’s specialized area of study and to potential career options in that area of study.

1.6.1.2 Majors are not limited to College-Wide Educational Objective 4.

- a. Majors have a direct and important role in achieving each of the other six College-Wide Educational Objectives. The skills and abilities in College-Wide Educational Objective 1 (“To develop those abilities essential to liberal education”) are a part of the educational objectives in major courses. They are addressed in a way that is appropriate to the major and that builds on General Education. In particular, each major provides writing intensive instruction that emphasizes the type of writing, information search methods, and forms of documentation appropriate to the discipline.
- b. While majors are not designed or equipped to unilaterally deliver College-Wide Educational Objective 2 (“To gain knowledge common to liberal education”) and College-Wide Educational Objective 3 (“To become biblically literate and theologically reflective”), the educational objectives of major programs build on the foundation laid in these areas by other educational programming.
- c. Major programming is developed in a way that is related to student self-understanding and sense of Christian vocation (College-Wide Educational Objective 5; character and moral development (College-Wide Educational Objective 6), and willingness and ability to become servants, leaders, and reconcilers in the world (College-Wide Educational Objective 7).

1.6.2 **Guiding Educational Assumptions and the Majors** [See the *College-Wide Educational Principles* for more detailed descriptions of the Guiding Educational Assumptions, Section 1.4.3.]

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- 1.6.2.1 The Importance of Holistic Learning
- Each major helps the student understand the manner in which the major discipline is complemented by related academic disciplines.
 - Each major builds on and connects with General Education and in particular the Core Course.
- 1.6.2.2 The Importance of Student Intellectual, Character, and Spiritual Development to Learning
- Each major reflects a progression in terms of expectations for students that is consistent with their increasing levels of maturity between the first year and senior year. This is demonstrated by a balance of lower- and upper-level courses and a major-specific capstone course.
 - The requirements for a given disciplinary major have a significant upper-level component to ensure in-depth study in accordance with the following guidelines: A course may be designated “upper-level” (and given a 300- or 400-level designation) if it satisfies at least one of the following two conditions: (1) its content presupposes exposure to the content of a prior course at the lower-level (100 or 200); or (2) the course’s rigor and level of expectation for student work and performance is significantly greater than for lower-level courses.
 - The total major requirements for each disciplinary major includes at least 18 credits of upper-level courses.
- 1.6.2.3 The Importance of Common Learning. Each major includes a major core (i.e., specific major courses required of all students).
- 1.6.2.4 The Importance of Experiential/Contextual Learning
- To the extent it is possible, the curriculum of each major will be constructed to provide the opportunity to study off-campus for a semester.
 - Each major is encouraged to
 - integrate service-learning within the major curriculum
 - augment theoretical reflection with professional experience through practica, internships, and/or collaborative research, and
 - provide a template for majors identifying the optimal semester for study at the Philadelphia Campus along with relevant course equivalencies.
- 1.6.2.5 The Importance of Understanding Multicultural Diversity and Racial Reconciliation. Within the major, both thematic content and pedagogical strategies (e.g. reading, assignments, field trips, guest speakers, etc.) introduce students to a variety of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and global perspectives.
- 1.6.2.6 The Importance of Balancing Disciplinary Expertise with Integrative Learning
- Each major includes significant study in those arts and/or sciences which are foundational to the discipline, including exposure to the history of the discipline.
 - Each major helps students understand and reflect on the basic philosophical assumptions and ethical issues of the discipline.
 - Schools and Departments are encouraged to develop interdisciplinary majors.
- 1.6.2.7 The Importance of Developing Connections Between Christian Faith and Learning. Each major helps students connect the Christian faith to their discipline of study and professional interests.

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- 1.6.2.8 **The Importance of Active Student Involvement in the Learning Process.** Within each major, students have the opportunity to make curricular choices.
- 1.6.3 **Size of Majors.** Majors conform to the parameters and policies established in *Parameters for the College Curriculum*.
- 1.6.4 **Required Courses Within the Major.** The curriculum of each major is developed and delivered to meet the principles stated above and is appropriate to the discipline of professional area of study represented in the major. Toward this end, each major includes the following two courses:
- 1.6.4.1 **Senior Capstone Course.** This course ensures that students apply the tools of their major to a number of areas important to the liberally educated person. In this culminating experience, students will be expected to act and reflect at a level that indicates a proficiency with the content and skills of the discipline. The objectives listed in 1.06.01.01 above and other concerns of the particular discipline may be addressed in the course. In addition, the Senior Capstone will enable students to continue to enhance their understanding of Christian vocation by
- philosophical assumptions and ethical issues of their major discipline,
 - articulating how faith connects to their specialized area of study and to potential career options related to that area of study, and
 - reflecting on their studies and activities both to assess and cultivate the skills and knowledge relevant for transitioning to employment, voluntary service, apprenticing and/or graduate study.
- 1.6.4.2 **Major Writing Intensive Course.** Each academic major provides a writing intensive course or courses in which the writing skills of that discipline are taught. These courses include writing instruction that emphasizes the type of writing, information search methods, and forms of documentation appropriate to the major discipline and the procedures for pursuing research in the major discipline.
- 1.6.5 **Assessment of the Majors.** Since every student is required to complete a major, assessment of student learning in the major is essential. Such assessment plays a major role in academic department program reviews. See the *A Conceptual Framework for Assessing Institutional Effectiveness* for policies and procedures related to program review and the assessment of student learning.

- 1.7 PRINCIPLES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION** [Approved 5/11/06, Board of Trustees]
- 1.7.1 **Mission.** The General Education program at Messiah College develops knowledge, skills and attitudes of intellect, character, and faith that educated Christians use in lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation.
- 1.7.2 **Purpose.** The General Education program works together with the Schools and Departments to ensure that the Messiah College Mission and College-Wide Educational Objectives are addressed in the curricula of the College: students learn academic skills common to all disciplines, achieve an introductory-level understanding of a variety of disciplines, and develop an ability to apply knowledge gained from these disciplines to a wide range of problems. In the process, students are challenged and nurtured intellectually, their character is developed and formed, and their engagement with the Christian faith is articulated. Moreover, service, leadership, and reconciliation are addressed at increasingly mature levels as students progress through the program.
- 1.7.3 **General Education and the College-Wide Educational Objectives**
- 1.7.3.1 The General Education program is designed to promote competency in the curricular components of each of the College-Wide Educational Objectives (except 4, which is specifically directed at the student's area of specialization). The General Education program is designed to designate the specific College-Wide Educational Objectives that are to be addressed by each curricular requirement.
- 1.7.3.2 General Education plays a primary and foundational role in College-Wide Educational Objectives 1, 2, and 3. Students need to be grounded in these areas for two related reasons:
- a. First, these skills and knowledge have inherent worth. They are the marks of the kind of person we envision each of our graduates to be.
 - b. Second, these College-Wide Educational Objectives are also foundational in that they "set the stage" for the achievement of the other College-Wide Educational Objectives. We expect the skills and knowledge obtained in College-Wide Educational Objectives 1, 2, and 3 to serve and be further developed in the major and the cocurriculum and to equip the student to achieve the other College-Wide Educational Objectives.
- 1.7.3.3 The General Education program makes substantive contributions to College-Wide Educational Objectives 5, 6, and 7. Thus General Education programming relates to student self-understanding and sense of Christian vocation (College-Wide Educational Objective 5), character and moral development (College-Wide Educational Objective 6), and the willingness and ability to become servants, leaders, and reconcilers in the world (College-Wide Educational Objective 7).

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- 1.7.4 **Guiding Educational Assumptions and General Education** [See the *College-Wide Educational Principles* for a more detailed descriptions of the Guiding Educational Assumptions, Section 1.4.3.]
- 1.7.4.1 The Importance of Holistic Learning. The General Education program is supportive of and connected to the major and cocurricular programming. Connections to the major are evident in the Major Writing Intensive Course and the Senior Capstone Course, and connections to the cocurricular program are present in the First-Year Seminar and Core Courses. Yet such connections are not limited to these courses but are infused throughout the General Education curriculum.
- 1.7.4.2 The Importance of Student Intellectual, Character, and Spiritual Development to Learning. The General Education curriculum reflects a progression in terms of expectations for students, which is consistent with their increasing levels of maturity between the first and senior years. The program provides curricular components to the First Year Experience and Senior Year Experience programming.
- 1.7.4.3 The Importance of Common Learning
- The General Education program, since it is completed by all students, is a common learning program. When differences among General Education requirements for specific majors are necessary, they must be kept to a minimum.
 - The degree of common learning that takes place within specific General Education requirements varies. For example, the curriculum contains some requirements met by a common Core Course with a common syllabus. Other requirements are met by different courses with common objectives and/or parameters.
- 1.7.4.4 The Importance of Experiential/Contextual Learning. The General Education Program is structured and administered to provide students an opportunity to study abroad for a semester, spend three weeks of study in another culture, or complete a practicum or internship in a work- or service-related area.
- 1.7.4.5 The Importance of Understanding Multicultural Diversity and Racial Reconciliation
Within General Education, both thematic content and pedagogical strategies (e.g. reading, assignments, cross-cultural experiences, etc.) introduce students by encouraging self awareness to a variety of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and global perspectives.
- 1.7.4.6 The Importance of Balancing Disciplinary Expertise with Integrative Learning
- The General Education program assures the study of the liberal arts disciplines and facilitates a liberally informed approach in all areas of study.
 - The General Education program is designed in a manner which both reflects a healthy respect for the academic disciplines and promotes faculty efforts to model integration.
 - Since liberal arts disciplines provide the context for meeting several of the College-Wide Educational Objectives, these disciplines command greater attention in the curriculum than others.
 - Because of the complementary nature of related academic disciplines, the General Education program has an explicit interdisciplinary component.

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- 1.7.4.7 The Importance of Developing Connections Between Christian Faith and Learning. The General Education program is designed to help students explore the connectedness of the Christian faith with other areas of the curriculum and life.
- 1.7.4.8 The Importance of Active Student Involvement in the Learning Process. The General Education program includes some areas of directed choice so that students have sufficient opportunity to select specific courses which are of interest to them.
- 1.7.5 **Size of General Education.** The General Education program conforms to the parameters and policies established in *Parameters for the College Curriculum*.
- 1.7.6 **Assessment of General Education.** Since the General Education program is required of all students, it plays a central role in the achievement of the College-Wide Educational Objectives. Hence, the assessment of General Education plays a key role in the assessment of Messiah College's effectiveness in achieving the learning goals of the College-Wide Educational Objectives. See the *A Conceptual Framework for Assessing Institutional Effectiveness* for policies and procedures related to program review and the assessment of student learning.

- 1.8 PRINCIPLES FOR CURRICULAR ELECTIVES** [Approved 5/11/06, Board of Trustees]
- 1.8.1 The Definition and Nature of Curricular Electives**
- 1.8.1.1 Each student is required to complete a specified number of academic credits for graduation. *Curricular electives* refer to the academic credits completed by student to meet their baccalaureate degree requirements but not used to meet General Education or major requirements.
- 1.8.1.2 Ideally, all students should have some opportunity to complete curricular electives. The amount of electives required of a given student differs depending on the major the student completes. In some cases, due to the size of the chosen major, a student is not able to complete any curricular electives.
- 1.8.1.3 “Curricular electives” are distinguished from
- “Major electives” – course choices offered to students as they complete requirements for their major and hence are considered a part of the major requirements.
 - “General Education electives” – course choices offered to students as they complete requirements for General Education and hence are considered a part of the General Education requirements.
 - “Enrichment electives” – those courses that students might choose to take beyond the course hours required to complete their degree program.
- 1.8.2 The Importance of Active Student Involvement in the Learning Process**
- 1.8.2.1 Curricular electives are important to a liberal education in that they allow students to complete their undergraduate academic experience by freely exploring their academic interests. Curricular electives allow students to personally shape their educational experience in a way that enhances their specific intellectual, personal, professional, and/or vocational goals. Curricular electives allow each student some latitude in enhancing learning.
- 1.8.2.2 Curricular electives encourage students to pursue learning goals for their own sake and not simply for completion of a specific major or General Education. This is consistent with Messiah College’s educational goal of nurturing students to become “lifelong learners.”
- 1.8.2.3 Curricular electives provide room in the curriculum for off-campus experiential/contextual learning.

- 1.8.3 **Parameters for the Use of Curricular Electives**
- 1.8.3.1 The College does not mandate how students use their curricular electives.
- 1.8.3.2 Since curricular electives are a part of the curricular credit requirements for graduation, decisions on how to use elective academic credits are made under the guidance of the student’s academic advisor.
- 1.8.3.3 Students may choose to use curricular electives to complete a minor or a second major within College policies for the completion of multiple curricular programs.
- 1.8.4 **Minor Programs**
- 1.8.4.1 A *minor* is a prescribed set of courses that focuses on a particular academic discipline or area of study.
- 1.8.4.2 Since minors are not required for graduation, they are considered to be a part of a student’s curricular electives. However, it is possible for a major to require a minor. If this is the case, the minor counts toward the major requirements and is not considered a part of a student’s curricular electives.
- 1.8.4.3 Minors provide a depth of understanding or level of expertise in a discipline or area of study and, in some instances, help to provide preparation for graduate study or to enhance employment opportunities.

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1.9 PARAMETERS FOR THE CURRICULUM [Approved 5/11/06, Board of Trustees]

- 1.9.1 All baccalaureate degree programs can be completed in eight semesters.
- 1.9.1.1 Credit hour requirements for baccalaureate degree programs will range from a minimum of 123 to a maximum of 128 credit hours.
- 1.9.1.2 Requirements for a baccalaureate degree program may exceed 123 credit hours only if a curricular accommodation is granted (see 1.9.5 below).
- 1.9.2 Supplemental programs (e.g., dual certification programs) can exceed the 128 credit limit for baccalaureate degree programs but cannot exceed 137 credits. [Approved 4/20/98, Dean's Council]
- 1.9.3 The total credit hours required for graduation from any baccalaureate degree program fall into three categories: (1) major requirements, (2) General Education requirements, and (3) curricular electives. Assuming no curricular accommodation, the total credit hours are distributed as follows:

Major Requirements	61-36
General Education Requirements	53-44
Curricular Electives	43-12

- 1.9.3.1 Major Requirements refer to all the credit hours a student completes for a given major. This includes
- all discipline-specific courses.
 - all cognate (supporting) courses required by the major.
 - all discipline-specific or cognate courses that overlap with General Education.
 - all concentrations or emphases within a major.
 - all minor requirements in cases when a major may require the completion of a minor.
- 1.9.3.2 General Education Requirements refer to credit hours that are uniquely taken for General Education.
- They do not refer to General Education courses that overlap with the major. The General Education program at Messiah College is 56 hours. Since every major is given three hours of an automatic overlap or waiver, the most credit hours unique to General Education that can be required of any degree program is 53.
 - The above range allows for nine additional hours of a waiver or overlap with General Education. Therefore, the least amount of unique General Education courses that can be required for a student is 44 load credits.
- 1.9.3.3 Curricular Electives refer to courses taken to complete graduation requirements that do not count towards either General Education or major requirements.

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- 1.9.4 Some degree programs are formally tied to external accrediting/certification agencies. Due to requirements and criteria set by such external accreditation/certification agencies, some degree programs may not be able to satisfy the curricular distribution of credits described above and/or be able to be completed with 123 credit hours. When this occurs, a curricular accommodation is granted.
- 1.9.5 **Initial Strategies for Curricular Accommodation**
- a. The first strategy for curricular accommodation is to allow more than the nine additional overlap credits normally granted between General Education and the major. This permits an increase in major requirements by decreasing the credit hours unique to General Education below the normal 44-hour range.
 - b. The second strategy for curricular accommodation is to reduce the number of curricular electives. In other words, the minimum of 12 credit hours of curricular electives can be reduced and transferred to major requirements.
- 1.9.6 If, given these initial strategies, the total requirements for completing the degree program still exceeds 128, a further accommodation in General Education requirements will be achieved first through a “waiver” and then, if necessary, through a “reduction.”
- a. Waiver—a major course requirement (or series of course requirements) is allowed to meet a General Education requirement if
 1. it is not an approved General Education course, and
 2. it fundamentally addresses General Education objectives common to one part of the General Education curriculum.
 - b. Reduction—a General Education requirement is dropped.
- 1.9.7 Reductions are achieved on a major specific basis, in light of the overall major curriculum and the context within which students in this major are likely to be employed. When a reduction in more than one General Education requirement is necessary, every effort will be made to distribute the reduction across the various components of this curriculum rather than taking the entire reduction from a single component.
- 1.9.8 No accommodations in General Education program requirements (whether they be waivers or reductions) may involve First Year Seminar, the Core Course, Bible, Christian Beliefs, and non-major writing requirements.
- 1.9.9 All majors receiving a curricular accommodation can be completed in an equivalent of eight semesters, and the total requirements for a student completing a major may not exceed 128 credit hours.
- 1.9.10 **Curricular Accommodation Procedure and Protocol.** Curricular accommodation in a new major is proposed by the respective department and approved by the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Council, and the Community of Educators Senate. Proposals involving existing majors are approved by the Curriculum Committee and reviewed by the Community of Educators Senate. Such proposals

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follow the following procedure:

- a. A proposal for a curricular accommodation provides (1) a case for the need for an accommodation (e.g., demands from outside accrediting agencies) and (2) a strategy for a curricular accommodation following the priorities set in points 1.9.5 through 1.9.9 above.
- b. All proposals are initially screened by the affected School Dean and the Dean of Curriculum for adequate *prima facie* evidence for the need for accommodation. Should the School Dean and the Dean of Curriculum decide that the evidence warrants further consideration, the proposal is forwarded to the Curriculum Committee for action.
- c. The Curriculum Committee first determines whether an accommodation is justified. Given a favorable decision, the remaining parts of the proposal are processed as follows:
 1. A proposal involving only a reduction in curricular electives or an increase in the overlap between General Education and the major is processed by the Curriculum Committee. Given a favorable decision, a proposal for a new major is sent to the Academic Council and the Community of Educators Senate. For an existing major, the action of the Curriculum Committee is final subject to Community of Educators review.
 2. A proposal requiring waivers and/or reductions of General Education requirements is processed as follows:
 - (a) The department's proposed strategy and rationale for a specific waiver and/or reduction are sent to the General Education Committee for review.
 - (b) The General Education Committee – following the priorities set out in 1.9.5 -1.9.9 above – proposes a recommendation regarding how the approved accommodation in General Education can best be achieved. This recommendation is sent to the Curriculum Committee.
 - (c) For new majors, the Curriculum Committee's recommendation is sent to the Academic Council and Community of Educators Senate for final action. For existing majors, the action of the Curriculum Committee is final subject to Community of Educators review.

- 1.9.11 **Parameters for Interdisciplinary Majors.** [Approved 3/22/2005, Community of Educators Senate]
- 1.9.11.1 Interdisciplinary Majors are major programs that combine in-depth study in at least two disciplinary areas that cross department lines.
- a. In some instances the educational focus will be on learning objectives requiring a synthesis of two or more discrete disciplinary areas (e.g., Spanish Business, BioPsychology, Biochemistry, etc.).
 - b. In other instances, the educational focus is an issue or theme that can naturally be addressed by a number of disciplines (e.g., Peace and Conflict Studies, Leadership, Women Studies, Cultural Studies, Humanities, etc.).
- 1.9.11.2 There will be substantive credit required in at least two disciplines with no less than 12 credit hours in at least one of the contributing disciplines.
- 1.9.11.3 A departmental or some other organizational “home” has been established to provide administrative and organizational oversight of the major.
- a. When the major program crosses department and school lines:

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1. In most cases, one of the departments is considered the primary department. The chair of this department has responsibility in managing the curriculum and is the primary contact with the Office of the Registrar. However, all changes in the curriculum must be approved by each of the supporting departments.
2. In some instances, an oversight committee is formed by the two departments. This committee provides governance and administrative oversight for the major. A complete proposal for this committee will be a part of the proposal for the major. This option is most relevant in instances when the focus of the major is a theme that has more or less College-wide relevance.
- b. When the major program crosses departments within one School:
 1. In most cases, one of the departments is considered the primary department. This means that the Chair of the department has responsibility in managing the curriculum and is the primary contact with the Office of the Registrar. However, all changes in the curriculum must be approved by all the supporting departments.
 2. In some instances, the School Dean provides leadership to the major program. However the proposal for the major must be in a cooperative fashion by the supporting departments. Once approved, all changes in the curriculum must be approved by all of the supporting departments.

1.9.11.4 Before the Office of the Provost will begin processing any proposal for an interdisciplinary major, a person or group responsible for developing and shepherding the proposal through the governance process will be identified.

1.9.11.5 When an interdisciplinary major is approved, a plan for how advising will be distributed across contributing departments will be approved.

1.9.11.6 All curricular/policy changes related to the interdisciplinary major are approved by all the departments supporting the major.

1.9.11.7 Curricular Parameters

All interdisciplinary majors fit within the following parameters:

Major requirements	36-72
General Education Requirements	38-53
Curricular Electives	6-42

- Interdisciplinary majors are a clearly defined genre of major distinct from disciplinary majors. Since interdisciplinary majors combine in-depth work in at least two disciplinary areas, the size of the major requirements should have the potential of being larger than disciplinary majors. In essence, there is a trade-off between in-depth exposure to multiple disciplines and curricular electives.
- When compared with regular majors with no accommodations, the interdisciplinary major parameters allow for two additional course overlaps with General Education (for a total of six) and a reduction of six credits in Curricular Electives.
- No Interdisciplinary major is eligible for any curricular accommodation that would allow the total major program requirements to fall outside the range in any

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- of the three areas or to exceed 123 credits for graduation.
- 1.9.11.8 At least 40% of the requirement credit hours and minimum of 18 credit hours will be upper level courses distributed across the contributing disciplines.
- 1.9.11.9 All interdisciplinary majors have a capstone course related to the major. In some instances, as is currently the practice with other types of majors, the interdisciplinary major will share a capstone course with another major. However, if this is the case, provisions must be made to provide some linkage between the capstone course and the interdisciplinary major. In other instances capstone course will be a course unique to the interdisciplinary major. When there is low enrollment in the major, one or more of the following conditions for this unique capstone course holds:
- a. The course is offered on an every-other-year basis
 - b. The faculty teaching load is prorated, and/or
 - c. The course is offered as a directed study by a faculty member in one of the supporting departments.
- 1.9.11.10 Appropriate writing intensive course(s) is designated.
- 1.9.11.11 An interdisciplinary major is more than simply a “pasting together” of course requirements from two or more different disciplines or existing disciplinary majors. The major has a unified focus and educational integrity. It is not sufficient to simply leave it up to the students to pull the major together into a coherent whole.
- a. The unified focus of the major is evidenced by one or more of the following:
 1. There should be evidence that this interdisciplinary major is recognized by and exists in the broader academy (e.g., other colleges/universities offer this sort of major, academic journals related to this major exist, etc.).
 2. The major is linked to professional/graduate student goals for students.
 3. The major is linked to professional organizations or journals.
 - b. The curriculum contains “linking” courses that bring the contributing disciplines together. This is either a free-standing course or a discipline-specific course in which natural links are present in the course (as evidenced by the *Catalog* description).
 - c. There is sufficient faculty expertise on campus (or with the use of Temple) to support the integration of the disciplines.
- 1.9.11.12 In most cases, the count for students who are enrolled in an interdisciplinary major is determined by dividing the majors by the number of contributing departments (e.g., if there are 14 students in a major with two contributing departments, each department will be credited with 7 students). In some cases, given the nature of the major, another strategy will be more appropriate. The strategy followed will be approved when the interdisciplinary major is approved.

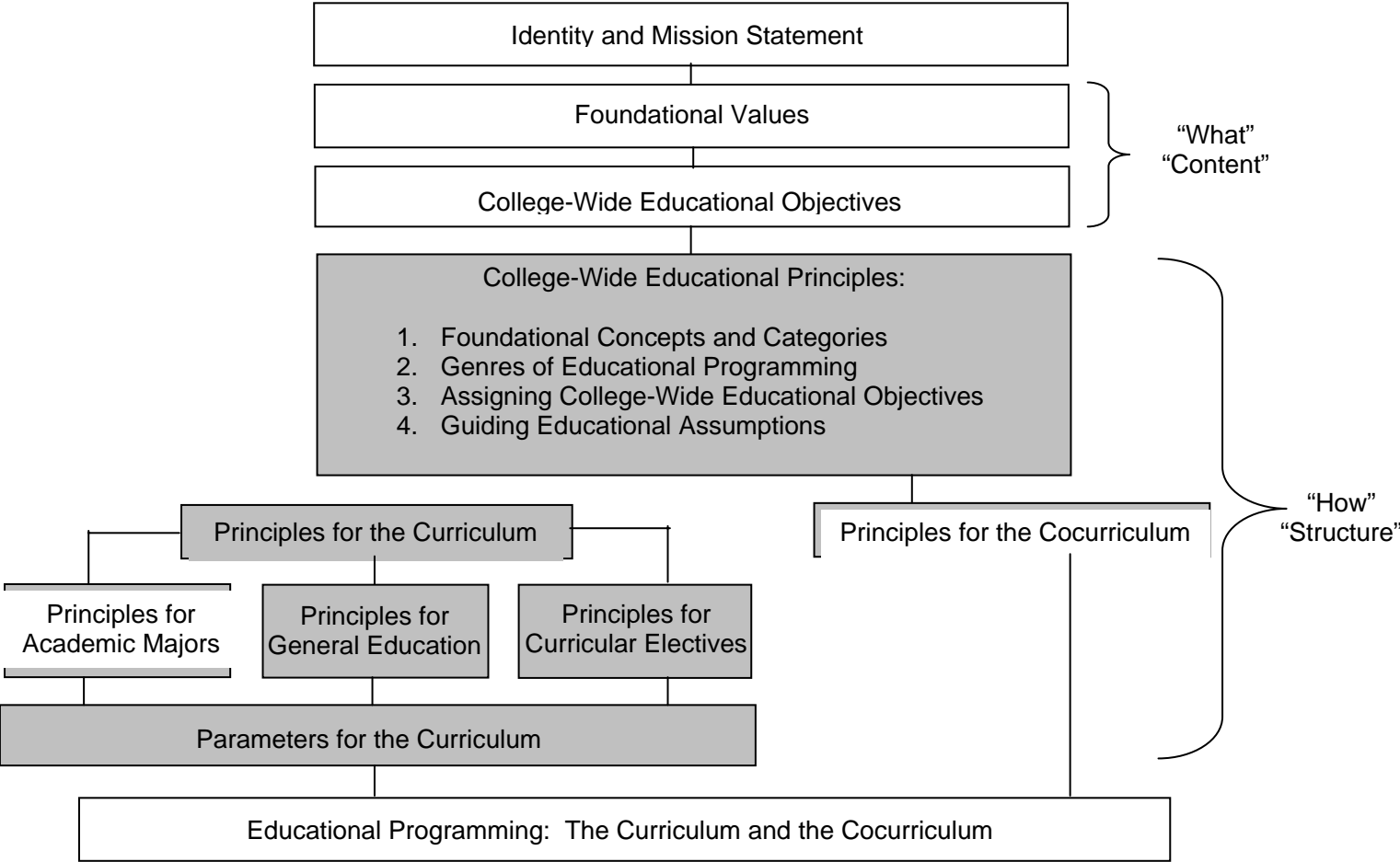
- 1.10 PRINCIPLES FOR THE COCURRICULUM** [Approved 5/11/06, Board of Trustees]
- 1.10.1 The Nature and Purpose of the Cocurriculum**
- 1.10.1.1 Cocurricular programming is educational programming for which students do not earn academic credit.
- 1.10.1.2 Cocurricular programming is predominately enrichment programming—educational programming students choose to complete beyond the minimal requirements for graduation.
- 1.10.1.3 Some cocurricular programming is required programming—educational programming in which every student must successfully participate in order to graduate (e.g., required Chapel, Common Test, Welcome Weekend, etc.).
- 1.10.1.4 Cocurricular programming crosses educational organizational units—Schools, Academic Departments, External Programs, and Student Affairs. However, the primary focus and greatest amount of such cocurricular programming is within Student Affairs and External Programs.
- 1.10.2 The Cocurriculum and the College-Wide Educational Objectives**
- 1.10.2.1 Cocurricular programming as a whole is tied in various degrees to all of the College-Wide Educational Objectives.
- 1.10.2.2 Cocurricular programs provide a context for students to use, apply, and refine the foundational and common skills and knowledge addressed in College-Wide Educational Objectives 1, 2, and 3.
- 1.10.2.3 Cocurricular programs are designed to support and enhance educational objectives in the majors (College-Wide Educational Objective 4).
- 1.10.2.4 Cocurricular programming plays a primary role in College-Wide Educational Objectives 5, 6, and 7. These College-Wide Educational Objectives deal less with common learning skills and common knowledge and more with developing the self-understanding and character necessary to becoming servants, leaders, and reconcilers. Cocurricular programs provide educational experiences for students to become the kind of person described in these College-Wide Educational Objectives.
- 1.10.3 Guiding Educational Assumptions and the Cocurriculum** [See the *College-Wide Educational Principles* for more detailed descriptions of the Guiding Educational Assumptions.]
- 1.10.3.1 The Importance of Holistic Learning. Cocurricular programs are mutually supportive and coordinated. All cocurricular programming is supportive of and coordinated with the curriculum.
- 1.10.3.2 The Importance of Student Intellectual, Character, and Spiritual Development to Learning
- a. The cocurriculum reflects a progression that is consistent with students’ developing maturity and increasing responsibility for learning.

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- b. The cocurriculum is meant to supplement and broaden developmental opportunities for students in addition to opportunities presented through the curriculum.
- 1.10.3.3 The Importance of Common Learning. Aspects of the cocurriculum are designed to provide a common learning experience both within the curriculum, per se, and through cooperative efforts between the curriculum and cocurriculum.
- 1.10.3.4 The Importance of Experiential/Contextual Learning. Students are provided with the opportunity to participate in cocurricular programming that involves experiential learning.
- 1.10.3.5 The Importance of Understanding Multicultural Diversity and Racial Reconciliation. The cocurriculum should be delivered in ways that include or reflect diverse racial, ethnic, and global perspectives. Diverse multicultural strategies and methodologies will be identified and utilized.
- 1.10.3.6 The Importance of Developing Connections Between Christian Faith and Learning. The cocurriculum consistently encourages students to draw connections between Christian faith and their living and learning.
- 1.10.3.7 The Importance of Active Student Involvement in the Learning Process. Cocurricular programs enhance student learning skills by maintaining an appropriate balance between professional support and student control.
- 1.10.4 **Assessment of the Cocurriculum.** Since the required and enrichment cocurricular programming play a central role in Messiah College's educational programming, measures will be taken to document student participation in cocurricular programming and to assess its effectiveness. See the *A Conceptual Framework for Assessing Institutional Effectiveness* for policies and procedures related to program review and the assessment of student learning.

1.11 FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS [Approved 5/11/06, Board of Trustees]



1.12 PHILOSOPHY OF COLLEGE MINISTRIES

1.12.1 **Introduction.** Messiah College is both an institution of higher education and a community of Christian believers. As a community of faith, we seek to create an atmosphere on the campus that encourages truthful worship of God, aids members of the community to mature in their understandings of Christian faith and life, enhances the development of both women and men for leadership in the church, and supports those in need of pastoral care and consolation. We understand these activities to reflect part of the College's mission, wherein we seek to facilitate a holistic vision of student maturity in intellect, character, and faith. Fulfilling the faith-related aspect of this mission requires that the College provide an active religious life on campus, which encompasses instruction, inspiration, consolation, encouragement, and integration.

While accepting certain religious functions, the College does not seek to compete with the work of the local Christian congregations to which the members of the Messiah community belong. Rather, religious life on campus should be organized by the College in a manner which encourages participation in a local Christian church and supports and augments the existing church commitments of the members of the College community. The College will not provide Sunday morning services on campus since such programs might detract from local congregational worship services. When celebrated on campus, Communion will be experienced as part of the church universal and not as an expression of a local congregation or church tradition. Baptism and church membership will be seen as unique to local church ministry.

The Brethren in Christ roots of the College lead us rightly to privilege the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions in creating formal programs dealing with the religious life of the campus. The Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church spell out the doctrinal stance of this blended tradition in greater detail. The College's Statement of Faith, Foundational Values, Educational Objectives, and Community Covenant each articulate some of the practical aspects of joining these faith traditions with the academic context. The special responsibility of the College to this particular theological heritage must be held in tension with a simultaneous concern to make persons from a broad range of theological and ecclesial traditions also feel welcomed into the College community. Messiah College is composed of persons from a variety of Christian denominations; the College's ministries opportunities should, accordingly, be marked by an embracing evangelical spirit.

The religious life of the College will be complex and multifaceted. The most distinctive religious activities undertaken by the College are (1) the integration of faith and learning which takes place most directly within the curricular programming of the school, and (2) regularly scheduled chapel services which are organized by the

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Office of College Ministries. The College also sponsors a range of cocurricular activities and encourages self-organization by students as a means of creating and maintaining a healthy religious life on campus. While some religious activities on campus may be intended to serve the needs or desires of a particular College group, it is assumed that participation in and leadership of campus religious groups and activities will be open to all persons without distinctions of gender, race/ethnicity, or denominational affiliation. The College is committed to the regular evaluation of sponsored religious programming and reserves the right to intervene in unsponsored religious groups and activities should they begin to have a negative impact on the life of the campus. But the College's primary goal is to provide a variety of positive experiences that can help create a campus environment where vital Christian faith can flourish. To this end the College sponsors and/or encourages campus religious activities in several categories, as delineated below.

1.12.2

Ministries of Worship. As a body of Christians gathered in an educational setting, the Messiah College community meets periodically to worship God. Worship is both the most appropriate and most holistic response of the creature to the Creator, and it would be difficult to understand how the College could validly claim to be Christian without incorporating worship of God into the programming of the school in some manner. The primary purpose of worship is to honor the triune God. In worship we intentionally direct our mind and spirit to God. Worship also brings us together as a community of equals. Worship takes us out of our assigned roles (as students or faculty or staff) and reminds us that we stand on common ground at the foot of the cross. Furthermore, worship binds us together in a manner that transcends our differences of opinion and attitude. We all seek to worship the one God and in that oneness of focus we find unity within our diversity.

Worship is multidimensional; it entails praise of God, self-examination, confession of sin, prayer, silence, instruction, and catharsis. Primary elements which facilitate each of these aspects of worship include scripture reading, music, prayer, and preaching. Scripture reading is central to worship because it is God's primary revelation to the Church. Music of various styles and from different periods enables our worship to be enriched by both historic and contemporary Christian traditions. Other forms of artistic expression, such as drama and dance, also contribute to our worship of God. Prayer offers the opportunity for communication with God. The declaration of the Word through preaching provides worshipers with specific applications of God's word to contemporary life. Instruction through preaching is augmented by other forms of speech such as testimonials and corporate readings.

Some programs of worship on campus are designed for the College community at large, while other worship programs provide a content or approach that is of interest primarily to a subgroup of the campus community. We sponsor corporate worship on the campus because our sense of community ultimately is based on the fact that we worship and seek to serve a God who both stands over us all and under girds each of our lives.

Because of the diversity of the College community, common worship services are difficult to plan—and no worship format will equally engage everyone in attendance. College-sponsored worship services which are intended for the community-at-large should thereby vary to some degree and should not be tied exclusively to a single worship tradition. The diversity of the College community also requires Messiah College to provide a range of alternative worship services that appeal to different members of the community. The goal here is to make available opportunities for worship so that everyone can attend some services where worship flows naturally for them. Some such alternative worship services are more traditional in nature and others more contemporary; some are charismatic and others more liturgical; some are highly structured and others more spontaneous. Individuals in the College community should find both the larger and smaller contexts for worship to be settings wherein they can approach our common expectations for campus worship.

- 1.12.3 **Ministries of Faith and Values Education.** As a body of Christians gathered in an educational setting it is also appropriate for the College community to gather in events planned specifically to advance our individual and common understanding of matters related to faith, learning, and living. As in programs of worship, some programs of faith education are designed for the College community at large, while other programs provide a content and approach to learning that is of interest primarily to a subgroup of the campus community wherein participants comprise a smaller segment of the student body.

Programs of faith and values education may be designed in a variety of formats, engaging myriad approaches to learning. Some programs will entail formal inquiry into or discussion of a subject. Others may reflect on experience and be guided primarily by the life-context of one or more participants. Still others may focus on the aesthetic sides of life. In like manner, programs of faith and values education may include a wide variety of topics, including the personal and the corporate, the social and the individual, the local and the international.

On some occasions the College takes care to bring the community together for common programs of faith education. These provide for consideration of and reflection on issues which are relevant to the entire community. At other times, lecture programs, recitals, symposia, and other educational settings are designed to address the interests, needs, and intellectual and spiritual development of select campus groups. Some programs, for whatever audience, are sponsored by the College at large, while others are sponsored by specific departments or other similar units.

- 1.12.4 **Ministries of Spiritual Nurture.** The spiritual formation of students will build on the foundation provided by their families and home congregations. In partnership with local churches, Messiah College can and should have a role in nurturing mature Christian spirituality in the lives of students. This kind of nurture should be embodied in the curricular programming of the College where spirituality can be wedded to the

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larger academic mission of the institution. But programs of nurture should also be part of the co-curricular life of the school relatively independent of what takes place in the classroom, though certainly not in opposition to what takes place in the classroom. Both approaches support the foundational values of Messiah College relative to the concern for unity of faith, learning, and life.

Two values need to be balanced in all programs of spiritual nurture at Messiah College: (1) respect for the spiritual individuality of each student, and (2) attention to the interpersonal dimensions of Christian spirituality. Without an appropriate balance of these two values—the individual and the group—spiritual nurture can become either unhealthfully individualistic or suffocatingly judgmental and oppressive. The Gospel invites us to be reconciled with God as individuals but simultaneously invites us to be reconciled with other persons (and indeed with all of creation). The maturity of faith into which we seek to nurture students is thus one where the personal and social exist side by side. The personal component of spirituality also is holistic, including the responsibility to manifest Christian love in addressing social needs in society.

Spiritual nurture at Messiah College also will take cognizance of the diversity of the College community of faith. This includes differences of denominational allegiance, theological orientation, predispositions of piety, and modes of communication. Programs will simultaneously fit the different spiritual personalities of our students and help open lines of civil and truthful conversation between those different approaches to faith. Christian maturity entails both the deepening of personal convictions and an enlarged ability to respect the faith commitments of others.

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- 1.12.5 **Ministries of Pastoral Care.** As in other areas of campus religious life, the College should actively encourage and facilitate involvement in local congregations and/or home churches in order to provide for the pastoral care of individuals within the campus community. While working in concert with local churches, however, the College may attempt to address needs of the community and provide limited pastoral care as appropriate for members of the student body.

Pastoral care is best defined as a caring “presence” by those given pastoral responsibility to provide spiritual care for individuals within the campus community. The very term pastoral connotes servant leadership and is best modeled by example. While programming should be inclusive and target the entire campus population, it must also be individualized to encourage the development of each person as a being created and loved by God. At times, efforts will need to focus on encouragement to achieve God’s purposes, to be restored to a vital relationship with Christ, or to grow towards Christian maturity. At other times, efforts will be needed to challenge members of the community to be reconciled to one another and to God’s created world to achieve the potential of the campus community. On some occasions, efforts of pastoral care will need to be focused on those who struggle in how to identify with the campus community. Programs of pastoral care must intentionally intersect with opportunities provided by all other aspects of campus religious life. In addition, programs of pastoral care should be aimed at long term reconciliation and restoration of the whole individual to God, to one’s self, and to the diverse community of Christian faith.

Pastoral counseling should integrate faith with the spiritual counsel provided to students and staff. Pastoral counseling should be viewed holistically as care for each person of the campus community and should be provided cooperatively with services of the Counseling Center. Pastoral counseling should always seek to integrate its efforts with the goals of the institution and opportunities offered through academic and cocurricular programming. A vital part of the pastoral leadership is to help educate others to provide Christian counsel and facilitate referral to proper resources both on and off campus.

- 1.12.6 **Ministries of Witness and Service.** Much of the religious life on campus is devoted to worship, nurture, and pastoral care—the “journey inward.” To be complete, faith must include a “journey outward” to encounter the world in ministries of evangelism and service. This witness and service is rooted in our common calling as Christians to be ministers of the Gospel in word and deed wherever we go and whatever we do. It is also rooted in humanitarian concern for the world and the tradition of community service in liberal arts colleges.

The worship, education, nurture, and pastoral care functions of religious life on campus help equip students to “act as servants in the world.” All of these activities should inspire students toward witness and service, give them the biblical and spiritual foundations for witness and service, develop an ethic of service, and provide

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opportunities to report and celebrate witness and service activities. While much of what happens at Messiah College can rightly be labeled “preparation for witness and service,” these activities are designed to contribute to needs in the local community and around the world. There is particular emphasis on encouraging involvement and leadership by both men and women in witness and service activities. Students learn in order to minister more effectively; students also learn by doing ministry.

Messiah College supports and encourages students to become actively involved in witness and service on campus, in the local community, and around the world. These activities will include evangelism, worship, and teaching, which emphasizes articulate witness, the verbal telling of the Gospel story and calling persons to a faith commitment and to growth in the Christian faith. Messiah College also supports and encourages activities of Christian service which emphasize deeds of caring, social action, social change, peace, justice, reconciliation, and social critique. The wholeness of the Gospel is demonstrated when the church in its variety of specific ministries includes all of these components, word and deed, even though specific ministries will often concentrate on one particular aspect. When done in the name of Christ, deeds of service are Good News as are words of evangelism. Both deeds and words witness to the love of God for the world and are signs of the Kingdom of God.

Both the style and the content of acts of witness and service are important. Messiah College supports ministries that emphasize dialogue, listening, reciprocity, mutuality and the building of long-term relationships. Witness and service is done with an appropriate cultural sensitivity and high regard for the personhood of individuals with whom we may work. Neither witness nor service should ever be forced upon someone. The College will emphasize working with established church-related ministries. In addition, it will develop and administer programs in areas which do not duplicate established ministries and will work with programs that work with human needs but are not church-related.

1.13 STATEMENT ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE [Adopted 4/20/04, Community of Educators Senate]

1.13.1 Rationale

- a. In its statement of Foundational Values, Messiah College recognizes the importance of the person, affirming that “every person is to be respected and valued . . . because each person is created in the image of God.” Divinely created and sharing equally in God’s design, each human is worthy of respect and honor, regardless of characteristics including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, ability, or marital or parental. As an expression of that conviction and in recognition of God’s gift of love to each of us, inclusive language should be used in all levels and forms of communication at the College in reference to human beings.
- b. Further, the College’s Foundational Values affirm that “every person must be responsible in their pursuit of truth.” Every member of this educational Christian community—teacher and learner; scholar and thinker; faculty, staff, and student—should uphold the pursuit of truth, using language that seeks to avoid false assumptions and inaccurate or negative stereotypes, biases, or prejudices. We uphold the use of communication that reflects a high ethical standard of truth-seeking and scholarship by avoiding misrepresentation or discrimination of any kind. As an expression of that commitment to truth, inclusive language is used to achieve clarity by neither rendering certain people invisible nor misrepresenting by overemphasizing or generalizing traits of individuals or groups.
- c. Language, as a means of signifying and communicating, is not static or value-free. It is, by its very nature, fluid and dynamic. Thus, patterns and significance of language evolve as culture and ethos change. Language is a powerful means of not only reflecting culture but also constructing and reinforcing beliefs and biases. It describes reality, but it also shapes reality. The use of inclusive language provides a means of positively influencing the social environment by contributing to the sense of worth, empowerment, freedom, and ability of all human beings. At Messiah, it thereby has a positive impact on campus climate, allowing all members of the community to function in an environment of equal opportunity and expectation.
- d. Because of our Christian frame of reference and in recognition of the ways that language shapes as well as reflects culture, Messiah College has a particular responsibility to assure that language is used in ways that do not exclude members of the community or distort the significance of contributions made by all persons to our historical and present-day experience. Through our communication and use of language, greater sensitivity motivated by love becomes the norm.
- e. In sum, Messiah College is a Christian community of divinely created beings informed by God’s love and pursuing truth in every endeavor. We are committed to the use of inclusive language as a means of reflecting our Christian

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commitment and responsibility as we serve as a creative and liberating force in the world.

1.13.2

Policy

1.13.2.1

Definition of Inclusive Language. Inclusive language is written or verbal communication that accurately reflects and affirms the presence, role, status, and value of all members of society by trying to avoid language that excludes certain groups of individuals or that distorts the role or value of those individuals in the community.

1.13.2.1.1

Forms of Exclusive or Discriminatory Language. Improper language usage can lead to various forms of blatant inaccuracy and discrimination. Inclusive language seeks to remedy forms of linguistic discrimination. (N.B. For a person who is not part of the excluded or affected group, it is difficult to perceive the discriminatory nature of his or her language and thus requires extra sensitivity and receptiveness.) The following illustrate examples of linguistic discrimination:

- a. *Invisibility* occurs when certain phrases exclude or ignore a person or group (e.g., using “he” to mean people of either gender). Inclusive language acknowledges the presence of such unrepresented persons or groups.
- b. *Extra visibility* occurs when a personal characteristic irrelevant to the context is emphasized, making the individual or group seem out of the norm (e.g., “blind singer” or “Chinese doctor” rather than simply “singer” or “doctor” when the modifier to the subject has no bearing on the topic discussed). Inclusive language refuses to place extra emphasis on irrelevant differences.
- c. *Trivialization* occurs when certain phrases unnecessarily devalue or denigrate the actions, activities, and occupations of a person or group (e.g., “even a woman can do it”). Inclusive language avoids the belittlement of individuals and groups.
- d. *Stereotyping* occurs when oversimplified and overgeneralized labels are applied to a person or group, thereby denying individuality (e.g., “African-Americans are good dancers”). Inclusive language refuses to limit or pigeonhole any individual or group.
- e. *Imposed labeling* occurs when individuals or groups (often minority or less powerful groups) have a name or term given to them by another individual or group (e.g., Euro-Americans historically called Americans of African heritage “Negroes” but that group’s generally preferred name for themselves is “African-Americans”). Inclusive language avoids the use of such labels or allows the group to define themselves. It is important to be aware of and honor the way a group prefers to be named. It must be recognized that sometimes particular groups’ preferences and labels change or are in flux and one specific appellation may not be embraced as the norm.

1.13.2.2

Policy Statement. Messiah College calls for all members of the College community to be informed and intentional about the use of inclusive language. Further, Messiah College expects members of the College community to use inclusive language in official written and oral communication intended for internal and external audiences. For some, this requires an intentional shift from habitual usage; grace should be exercised as community members conscientiously try to adhere to the policy. This

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policy should be understood within the context of the basic tenets of academic freedom, and is a complement to, rather than an infringement of, the College's policy on Academic Freedom (*Community of Educators Handbook* 6.22.1).

1.13.2.3

Specific Application of Policy

- a. *College employees, staff, and offices* employ inclusive language in all forms of official communication, including but not limited to press releases, published materials, community addresses, campus-wide communications, and interoffice memos.
- b. *Faculty* use inclusive language in classroom discourse, in syllabi, in public lectures and interviews. Faculty members have a responsibility to demonstrate and reinforce inclusivity in their interactions with students as well as in their assessment of student writing and choice of course materials.
- c. *Students* employ inclusive language in their academic activities, including classroom discourse and writing assignments. In addition, students use inclusive language in their cocurricular endeavors (e.g. student publications, activities sponsored by student organizations).
- d. *Historical and/or non-inclusive texts*. As part of the academic enterprise, a wide variety of texts is encountered, representing a diversity of perspectives and contexts. When non-inclusive texts are used, it is expected that the originator's context will be indicated and, when possible and appropriate, that context will be discussed.

1.13.2.4

Responsibility for Implementation. All employees and students will be apprized of this Policy upon joining the Messiah College community. Initially, the Director of Human Resources, the Assistant Dean/Director for Faculty Development, and the Vice Provost/Dean of Students will be responsible for communication of this Policy. Subsequently, it is the responsibility of the appropriate Administrators, including Department Chairs and Supervisors, to encourage adherence to this Policy.

- a. This Policy is included in all First-Year Seminar syllabi, per the First-Year Seminar parameters established by the General Education Committee. Further, faculty are encouraged to include it in all other syllabi.
- b. Further, ongoing education (at least annually) in the use of inclusive language will be the responsibility of the Director of Human Resources, the Assistant Dean/Director for Faculty Development, and the Vice Provost/Dean of Students, and Director of Writing, in collaboration with the Gender Concerns Committee, Micah Partnership, and Office of Disability Services.
- c. When a party is offended by breach of this policy, the offended party is encouraged to act in accordance with Matthew 18:15-16 by seeking informal resolution. For instances in which informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the grievance procedures established by the College (for employees, in the General Procedural Guidelines for Grievances; *Employee Policy and Procedure Manual*, 1.24.1); for students, the "College Discipline Procedures" outlined in the *Student Handbook* should be implemented. Grace and understanding should be exercised in the application of this policy, allowing persons to change from traditional, habitual language patterns toward inclusive ones.

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- 1.13.2.5 Annual Reporting. To enable the Committee to assess campus climate and to address perceived problems, at the end of each year, the Gender Concerns Committee will solicit and collect reports on breaches of this policy. These reports describe in general terms (but omits names and identifying details) each incident reported to them and the disposition of each.
- 1.13.2.6 Consultants. Useful contacts and consultants when questions or difficulties arise regarding use of inclusive or exclusive language include:
- a. Director of Human Resources
 - b. Chair, Gender Concerns Committee
 - c. Associate Dean for Multicultural Programs
 - d. Director of Writing
 - e. Director of Disability Services