

# ***COE Handbook: Section One***

## *Foundational Educational Principles*

### Table of Contents

|                                                                                                 |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>PART I: IDENTITY AND MISSION .....</b>                                                       | <b>4</b>  |
| A. Identity and Mission Statement .....                                                         | 4         |
| B. Student Populations.....                                                                     | 4         |
| <b>PART II: FOUNDATIONAL VALUES.....</b>                                                        | <b>4</b>  |
| A. Unity of Faith, Learning, and Life .....                                                     | 4         |
| B. Importance of the Person .....                                                               | 4         |
| C. Significance of Community .....                                                              | 5         |
| D. Disciplined and Creative Living .....                                                        | 5         |
| E. Service and Reconciliation .....                                                             | 5         |
| <b>PART III: UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES (ULOs).....</b>                                    | <b>6</b>  |
| A. Undergraduate Learning Outcomes Defined .....                                                | 6         |
| B. Programming Alignment with ULOs .....                                                        | 6         |
| <b>PART IV: UNIVERSITY-WIDE UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES.....</b>                       | <b>6</b>  |
| A. Liberal Arts and Liberal Education at Messiah University.....                                | 6         |
| B. The Nature and Structure of Educational Programming: Foundational Concepts and Categories... | 7         |
| C. Delivery of the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes .....                                        | 8         |
| D. Holistic Learning and Guiding Educational Assumptions .....                                  | 10        |
| E. Intentionality Behind Educational Programming Delivery and Support .....                     | 14        |
| F. Climate of Program Review.....                                                               | 14        |
| <b>PART V: PRINCIPLES FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM.....</b>                                 | <b>14</b> |
| A. Structure and Purpose of the Curriculum .....                                                | 14        |
| B. Size of the Curriculum .....                                                                 | 15        |
| C. Assessment of the Curriculum .....                                                           | 15        |
| <b>PART VI: PRINCIPLES FOR ACADEMIC MAJORS .....</b>                                            | <b>15</b> |
| A. The Major and the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes .....                                      | 15        |
| B. Capstone Courses and ULOs .....                                                              | 16        |
| C. Guiding Educational Assumptions and the Majors.....                                          | 16        |

|                                                                       |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| D. Size of Majors .....                                               | 18        |
| E. Required Courses Within the Major .....                            | 18        |
| F. Assessment of the Majors.....                                      | 19        |
| <b>PART VII: PRINCIPLES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION .....</b>               | <b>19</b> |
| A. Mission.....                                                       | 19        |
| B. Purpose .....                                                      | 19        |
| C. General Education and the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes .....    | 20        |
| D. General Education and the Guiding Educational Assumptions .....    | 20        |
| E. Size of General Education .....                                    | 20        |
| F. Assessment of General Education .....                              | 21        |
| <b>PART VIII: PRINCIPLES FOR CURRICULAR ELECTIVES.....</b>            | <b>21</b> |
| A. The Definition and Nature of Curricular Electives .....            | 21        |
| B. Curricular Electives and the Guiding Educational Assumptions ..... | 21        |
| C. Parameters for the Use of Curricular Electives.....                | 22        |
| D. Minor Programs.....                                                | 22        |
| E. Certificates.....                                                  | 22        |
| <b>PART IX: PARAMETERS FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM .....</b>     | <b>23</b> |
| A. Size.....                                                          | 23        |
| B. Eight Semester Blueprint .....                                     | 23        |
| C. Distribution of Credits .....                                      | 23        |
| D. Curricular Accommodation Strategies.....                           | 24        |
| E. Curricular Accommodation Procedure and Protocol .....              | 25        |
| F. Parameters for Interdisciplinary Majors .....                      | 26        |
| <b>PART X: PRINCIPLES FOR THE COCURRICULUM.....</b>                   | <b>28</b> |
| A. The Nature and Purpose of the Cocurriculum.....                    | 28        |
| B. The Cocurriculum and the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes .....     | 29        |
| C. Assessment of the Cocurriculum.....                                | 30        |
| <b>PART XI: FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS .....</b>              | <b>30</b> |
| <b>PART XII: PHILOSOPHY OF CAMPUS MINISTRIES .....</b>                | <b>31</b> |
| A. Introduction .....                                                 | 31        |
| B. Ministries of Worship.....                                         | 32        |
| C. Ministries of Faith and Values Education.....                      | 33        |
| D. Ministries of Spiritual Nurture.....                               | 33        |

|                                                                                  |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| E. Ministries of Pastoral Care.....                                              | 34        |
| F. Ministries of Witness and Service .....                                       | 35        |
| <b>PART XIII: STATEMENT ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE.....</b>                           | <b>36</b> |
| A. Rationale .....                                                               | 36        |
| B. Policy.....                                                                   | 37        |
| <b>PART XIV: ADULT DEGREE PROGRAM.....</b>                                       | <b>39</b> |
| A. General Guidelines for Undergraduate ADP Programs.....                        | 39        |
| B. ADP Curricular Parameters .....                                               | 40        |
| C. Parameters for ADP Majors and Certificates .....                              | 40        |
| D. ADP General Education Parameters.....                                         | 40        |
| E. Major-Specific Writing Requirement .....                                      | 40        |
| F. Capstone Course .....                                                         | 41        |
| G. Assessment of Student Learning.....                                           | 41        |
| H. Relationship between PAL Programming and the Traditional UG Programming ..... | 41        |
| <b>PART XV: FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS .....</b>  | <b>41</b> |
| A. Graduate Learning Outcomes .....                                              | 41        |

## **PART I: IDENTITY AND MISSION**

### **A. Identity and Mission Statement**

Messiah University is a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. The University 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.

### **B. Student Populations**

Messiah University's mission extends to three distinct populations: the traditional undergraduate student, the graduate student, and the adult degree completion student. The parameters in this chapter apply accordingly.

## **PART II: FOUNDATIONAL VALUES**

The University 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 University 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 University's life and mission.

Since its founding by the Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah University 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 University's history, the following five ideals provide a summary of how Messiah University has defined its distinctive Christian character.

### **A. 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 University 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 our gifts, talents, and interests are to be nurtured as acts of praise toward God while serving humanity and all creation.

### **B. 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.

### **C. Significance of Community**

Our understanding of the Church as the body of Christ and our recognition of humanity's interdependence causes 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.

### **D. 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.

### **E. 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.

## PART III: UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES (ULOS)

### A. Undergraduate Learning Outcomes Defined

As per the action of COE Senate on April 3, 2017, the institution articulated six Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs) as the undergraduate framework for accomplishing the institution's mission (previously, the institution called these College Wide Educational Objectives).

#### **1. Foundations for Learning**

Develop skills common to the liberal arts and sciences: research, analysis, reflection, and communication.

#### **2. Breadth and Depth of Knowledge**

Develop knowledge common to the liberal arts and sciences in the fields of arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. Students will also develop specialized knowledge and disciplinary expertise.

#### **3. Faith Knowledge & Application**

Develop informed and mature convictions about Christian faith and practice.

#### **4. Specialized Skills and Scholarship**

Become proficient in the scholarship of their discipline and demonstrate specialized skills needed to pursue a career and/or graduate school.

#### **5. Self-Awareness**

Gain awareness of identity, character, and vocational calling.

#### **6. Social Responsibility**

Demonstrate a commitment to service, reconciliation, and justice, and respond effectively and ethically within the complexities of an increasingly diverse and interdependent world.

### B. Programming Alignment with ULOs

Programming (and subsequent assessment of the program delivery) in each of the educational areas should align with the ULOs. The institution requires majors to assess program-level learning objectives aligned with Outcomes 2, 3, 4, and 5. Majors are welcome and encouraged to assess other areas. The General Education program is required to assess program-level objectives aligned with Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6. Student Success and Engagement is required to assess program-level objectives aligned with outcome 3 through Chapel, and is encouraged to contribute to Outcomes 2, 5, and 6.

## PART IV: UNIVERSITY-WIDE UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

### A. Liberal Arts and Liberal Education at Messiah University

Messiah University is a university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. Given this identity, Messiah University 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 University, 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 University incorporates both liberal and applied disciplines and programming in discrete yet collaborative roles to produce liberal learning. At Messiah University 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.

## **B. The Nature and Structure of Educational Programming: Foundational Concepts and Categories**

### **1. Educational Program**

A coherent and coordinated set of activities designed to help students achieve/embody the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs). Every educational program is based on, justified by, and assessed by the ULOs.

- a. An educational program is (1) directed toward student learning, (2) explicitly guided by a set of objectives directly linked to the ULOs, (3) supervised/led/delivered by educator(s), and (4) approved through appropriate governance channels.
- b. There are two general forms of educational programming:
  - (1) *Curricular Program*: An educational program that is academic credit-bearing.
  - (2) *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.].

### **2. Holistic View of Educational Enterprise**

The Undergraduate Learning Outcomes 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:

- a. All relatively autonomous curricular and cocurricular programming is coordinated in a way that the ULOs are achieved in a comprehensive, efficient, coherent, and mutually supportive manner.
- b. Some educational programs and initiatives have relatively distinct, but intentionally coordinated and complementary, curricular and cocurricular components.
- c. 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.

### C. Delivery of the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

The three educational program areas charged with the delivery of the ULOs are General Education (curriculum), the major (curriculum), and Student Success and Engagement (cocurriculum). The map of how program areas jointly contribute to and are responsible for assessing the ULOs is below.

| Undergraduate Learning Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Program Mapping                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. <u>Foundations for Learning:</u> Students will develop skills common to the liberal arts and sciences: research, analysis, reflection, and communication.</b>                                                                                                             | <p><b>General Education:</b> Critical and Creative Thinking, Communication</p> <p><b>Student Success and Engagement: Dig Deep:</b> (Common Chapel &amp; Sixers, Cocurricular Educational Programming, Student Leadership Programming, Semester-long programs)</p> |
| <b>2. <u>Breadth and depth of knowledge:</u> Students will develop knowledge common to the liberal arts and sciences in the fields of arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. Students will also develop specialized knowledge and disciplinary expertise.</b> | <p><b>General Education:</b> Knowledge of the World</p> <p><b>Major-specific program-level learning objectives</b></p>                                                                                                                                            |

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| <p><b>3. <u>Faith knowledge &amp; application</u>:</b> Students will develop informed and mature convictions about Christian faith and practice.</p>                                                                    | <p><b>General Education:</b> Faith Knowledge and Application</p> <p><b>Major-specific program-level learning objectives</b></p> <p><b>Student Success and Engagement: Be Rooted:</b><br/>Formation of maturing sense of self, identity, self-esteem, confidence, ethics, integrity, maturing sense of relationship to God resulting in spiritual practices, character building, reconciliation, service, intentional growth</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>4. <u>Specialized skills and scholarship</u>:</b> Students will become proficient in the scholarship of their discipline and demonstrate specialized skills needed to pursue a career and/or graduate school.</p> | <p><b>Major-specific program-level learning objectives</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>5. <u>Self-Awareness</u>:</b> Students will gain awareness of identity, character, and vocational calling.</p>                                                                                                    | <p><b>General Education:</b> Self-Awareness and Vocation</p> <p><b>Major-specific program-level learning objectives</b></p> <p><b>Student Success and Engagement: Be Strong:</b><br/>Gain realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, set personal goals, become interdependent and collaborative, work with others different from self (Student Activities Board, Career Coaching, Martin &amp; Flowers Program, Recreational Sports, Wellness Initiatives, Intercollegiate Athletics, Into the City, Life Hacks)</p> <p><b>Student Success and Engagement: Bear Fruit:</b><br/>Communicate effectively, manage personal affairs, be economically self-sufficient, maintain personal health and wellness, prioritize leisure pursuits, live a purposeful life (Intercollegiate Athletics, Into the City, Wellness Initiatives, Life Hacks)</p> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <p><b>6. Social responsibility:</b><br/>Students will demonstrate a commitment to service, reconciliation, and justice, and respond effectively and ethically to the complexities of an increasingly diverse and interdependent world.</p> | <p><b>General Education:</b> Ethics and Civic Responsibility, Inclusive Excellence</p> <p><b>Student Success and Engagement: Be Cultivated:</b> Understand, value, and appreciate human differences; develop cultural competency; understand and pursue reconciliation (Inclusiveness Training, Off-campus programs, intentional connections, Heritage Months)</p> <p><b>Student Success and Engagement: Branch Out:</b> Civic responsibility, commitment to service, effective in leadership, commitment to living in community (Outreach Teams, Leadership Retreats, Service Day, MLK Day, ELI)</p> |
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### **1. Curricular and Cocurricular Programming Involvement**

Some organizational and administrative units of the University 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.

### **2. University-wide educational programming (whether curricular or cocurricular) falls into two categories:**

- a. Required Programming
  - (1) Educational programming (curricular or cocurricular) that every student must successfully complete in order to graduate.
  - (2) While Undergraduate-wide requirements do not exhaust Messiah University’s educational programming, such requirements are sufficient for the student to achieve the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes at an acceptable level.
- b. Enrichment Programming. Educational programming (curricular or cocurricular) which students may choose or elect to complete beyond the minimal requirements for graduation.

## **D. Holistic Learning and Guiding Educational Assumptions**

Messiah University uses a holistic approach to student learning and development, defined as a coordinated effort across divisions to further the development of students’ intellect, character and Christian faith. This is the overarching concept behind our Community of Educator model and our Guiding Educational Assumptions (GEAs).

### **1. Definition of the Guiding Educational Assumptions**

The GEAs are enduring principles about how students learn and develop which inform the undergraduate curriculum and cocurriculum design and pedagogy. Messiah University's Guiding Educational Assumptions are:

- The value of prior knowledge
  - The value of inclusive excellence
  - The value of connecting faith and learning
  - The value of student responsibility and involvement
  - The value of assessing student learning
  - The value of common learning
  - The value of experiential learning
  - The value of disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary inquiry
- a. The value of prior knowledge
    - (1) Assumption: Students learn effectively when teaching and learning is sequential and builds on prior knowledge and cognitive processes, taking into account existing experiences, maturity, and development.
    - (2) Why: Learning is an active process where students construct knowledge and cognitive processes based upon previous experiences.
    - (3) How: Learning activities, programs and curriculum should build on prior knowledge and/or experience, moving from simple recall to higher level skills such as application, synthesis and creation.
  - b. The value of inclusive excellence
    - (1) Assumption: Student learning is enhanced when program/course design and pedagogy incorporates the diverse backgrounds, multiple perspectives, and experiences of all.
    - (2) Why: Students are more equipped to be agents of service, leadership, and reconciliation when they have developed the critical thinking and empathetic skills to promote success of a diverse society.
    - (3) How: Educators honor, respect, and empathize with diverse individuals and facilitate constructive engagement, selecting course and library materials reflecting diverse voices.
  - c. The value of connecting faith and learning
    - (1) Assumption: Exploring the intersection of Christian identity, vocation, inquiry, service and reconciliation promotes effective student learning.
    - (2) Why: Faith is integral to our identity. Learning that develops, connects to, and builds upon Christian faith enhances learning.
    - (3) How: Educational programs are designed to help students explore the relevance and mutual connectedness of the Christian faith to educational pursuits.
  - d. The value of student responsibility and involvement
    - (1) Assumption: Effective student learning occurs when students exhibit ownership and responsibility in the educational process.

- (2) Why: Active learners maximize their learning by displaying agency, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation and setting personal goals.
- (3) How: Educators promote meaningful learning tasks, opportunities to participate in the learning processes, and a clear understanding of the relevance of the content and learning activity or program in which they are participating.
- e. The value of assessing student learning
  - (1) Assumption: Effective learning in curricular and cocurricular environments occurs when learning outcomes are clear and transparent, when students receive feedback on their learning throughout the process, and when educators use evidence of student performance to improve learning.
  - (2) Why: When learning outcomes are clear, students and educators understand the goal of assignments, courses, curriculum, and cocurriculum. Students gain knowledge about how to improve when they receive meaningful feedback on their learning throughout a course and degree program. Improved learning occurs when educators use evidence of learning performance to inform design and delivery of courses and programs.
  - (3) How: Educators use both formal and informal, formative, and summative assessments of student learning towards the course learning objectives. Educators contribute to program and institutional assessment of student learning.
- f. The value of common learning
  - (1) Assumption: Students learn effectively when they participate in building an authentic community based on engagement with shared content.
  - (2) Why: Students can more meaningfully and constructively engage in a larger conversation when they share a foundation of ideas and other reference points. Common learning enables educators to scaffold learning experiences intentionally, building upon content and experiences that students have shared. Common learning contributes to students' sense of identification and belonging with their university community.
  - (3) Educators use shared programming, experiences, living in community or course content with deliberate, collaborative reflection towards attaining learning outcomes.
- g. The value of experiential learning
  - (1) Assumption: Effective learning involves students' engagement in authentic application of learning outside the classroom, founded in appropriate content, and coupled with reflection.
  - (2) Why: Education research has designated experiential learning a high impact educational practice, i.e., it maximizes learning gains and helps students to apply their knowledge in new, expanded, and transferable contexts.
  - (3) How: Structured real-world experiences which apply course/program content and provide opportunity for reflection on learning objectives.
- h. The value of disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary inquiry

- (1) Assumption: Disciplinary expertise coupled with interdisciplinary inquiry enhances student learning.
- (2) Why: A liberal arts education helps students to respond with maturity to the world's complexity by building disciplinary depth along with interdisciplinary breadth and inquiry. When students view topics from multiple disciplines, they are able to develop more complex thinking, develop multiple perspectives, and recognize preconceptions and bias.
- (3) How: The educational programming as a whole encourages interdisciplinary understanding by presenting ethical and society issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives to deepen insights, support critical thinking, and develop problem solving skills. While all areas are welcome to use interdisciplinary approaches, specifically, the major contributes expertise, General Education provides knowledge for common conversation and the cocurriculum provides practical application.

## **2. Purpose of the Guiding Education Assumptions**

These enduring, shared principles about how students learn and develop shape our course and program development and delivery, along with the structure that frames these activities.

- a. At the program level, the GEAs inform the curricular design of General Education, the majors and our cocurricular programming.
  - (1) Courses exist as part of the program design. The department vision shapes the overall program design including the role of individual courses within the program.
  - (2) Some courses may be mandated by the department to highlight specific GEAs as part of the program design. Examples of this include a service-learning course embedded within the major to address experiential learning.
  - (3) As part of the program design, the department may determine common texts for all sections of a course, or embedded assessment measures and corresponding rubric required for the institutional assessment of student learning (e.g. General Education assessments, department-owned assessments required in a course regardless of instructor, FYS Common reading texts).
  - (4) Departments demonstrate how their programs build upon assumptions 1-7 (and 8 as applicable) in proposals and program reviews.
  - (5) The General Education curriculum and the cocurriculum must build upon all eight assumptions.
- b. On the instructor level the GEAs inform individual educator pedagogy in course delivery. The Community of Educators incorporates these assumptions within their pedagogy and course learning objectives/cocurricular program learning outcomes.
  - (1) Integrating the GEAs into personal pedagogy supports faculty efforts in the term-tenure and promotion process because the GEAs align with the TT&P rubric.
  - (2) Cocurricular educators receive feedback on their efforts integrating the GEAs into program delivery as part of their annual evaluation.

- (3) Institutionally, educator training and development should focus on these assumptions.

### **E. Intentionality Behind Educational Programming Delivery and Support**

The University is intentional about the amount of educational programming that is delivered and supported.

#### **1. *Timing of Baccalaureate Degree Requirements***

Baccalaureate degree requirements are designed to be completed by students in an equivalent of eight semesters of full-time study.

#### **2. *Size of Educational Programming***

The size of the component parts of the University'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 University.

#### **3. *Attention to Time Management***

The University helps students to be intentional about how they manage their time and prioritize their involvement in educational programming.

### **F. Climate of Program Review**

The University seeks to create a climate of program review in which student learning in relation to the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes are assessed, and the results of this assessment impact program development and resource management. See [Assessment of Student Learning Manual](#) for policies and procedures related to program review and the assessment of student learning.

## **PART V: PRINCIPLES FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM**

### **A. Structure and Purpose of the Curriculum**

Curricular programming is educational programming for which students earn academic credit. Curricular programming plays the predominant role in the University's graduation requirements. The University 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.) 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. *The Three Components of the University Curriculum***

- a. General Education refers to an intentional program required of all students to help them become broadly informed and liberally educated.
- b. The major refers to an intentional program that requires each student to concentrate on a chosen area of academic study.

- c. Curricular electives refer to courses or curricular programs beyond major and General Education requirements that are used to fulfill the credit hours required for graduation.

## **2. *Curricular Programming and Undergraduate Learning Outcomes***

Since curricular programming plays a predominant role in the University's graduation requirements, the curriculum is designed in such a way that it addresses all the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes to some degree.

## **3. *Undergraduate Learning Outcomes and Campus-Wide Cooperation***

The Undergraduate Learning Outcomes are best achieved through a cooperative effort among curricular programming and academic support units and program areas (e.g., Career and Professional Development Center, Agapé Center, Library, Writing Center, etc.). These units provide resources and specialized expertise that enhance and facilitate the effective delivery of the curriculum.

# **B. Size of the Curriculum**

## **1. *Accommodation of Unique Concerns***

The curriculum accommodates the unique concerns of some areas of study (e.g., the demands of off-campus accrediting agencies.)

## **2. *Parameters for the Undergraduate Curriculum***

The size of the curriculum (and its component parts) conforms to the parameters and policies established in Parameters for the undergraduate curriculum.

# **C. Assessment of the Curriculum**

The curriculum is assessed primarily through the majors and General Education. See [Assessment of Student Learning Manual](#) for policies and procedures related to program review and the assessment of student learning.

# **PART VI: PRINCIPLES FOR ACADEMIC MAJORS**

# **A. The Major and the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes**

## **1. *Major Programming***

The major is directly and primarily tied to Undergraduate Learning Outcomes 2, 3, 4, and 5, which entails the existence of "major" programming. In addressing these Undergraduate Learning Outcomes, each major has program-level learning outcomes which specifically answer:

- a. Breadth and Depth of Knowledge: What knowledge outcomes are foundational to the major?
- b. Specialized Skills and Scholarship: What scholarship outcomes are foundational to the major?
- c. Specialized Skills and Scholarship: What skills proficiencies are required in this major in order to pursue a career and/or continue education at the graduate level?

- d. Self-awareness: In what ways can your students demonstrate an awareness of options for employment, voluntary service, and/or graduate education in the discipline?
- e. Faith Knowledge and Application: In what ways should your students be able to articulate how faith connects to their specialized area of study and to potential career options in that area of study?

## **2. Inclusion of Program Learning Outcomes**

Majors are encouraged, but not required, to include program learning outcomes that address the following ULOs.

- a. Foundations for Learning. Develop skills common to the liberal arts and sciences: research, analysis, reflection, and communication.
- b. Social Responsibility. Demonstrate a commitment to service, reconciliation, and justice, and lead effectively and ethically within the complexities of an increasingly diverse and interdependent world

## **B. Capstone Courses and ULOs**

### **1. The Importance of Synthesis**

Capstone courses are designed for students to synthesize knowledge and skills between General Education and the major.

### **2. Capstone Courses and ULOs 3 and 5**

- a. Capstone courses also build upon skill developed through General Education programming for ULO 3, Faith Knowledge and Application. (“Develop informed and mature convictions about Christian faith and practice.”)
- b. Capstone courses also build upon the vocational foundation laid in ULO 5, Self-Awareness, specific to vocational calling.

## **C. Guiding Educational Assumptions and the Majors**

### **1. The Value of Prior Knowledge**

- a. Students learn effectively when teaching and learning is an active process where students construct knowledge and cognitive processes based upon previous experiences.
- b. Learning in each major is sequential and builds on prior knowledge and cognitive processes, taking into account existing experiences, maturity, and development.
- c. Learning activities, programs and curriculum should build on prior knowledge and/or experience, moving from simple recall to higher level skills such as application, synthesis and creation.
- d. 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.

### **2. The Value of Inclusive Excellence**

- a. Student learning is enhanced when program/course design and pedagogy incorporates the diverse backgrounds, multiple perspectives, and experiences of all.
- b. Students are more equipped to be agents of service, leadership, and reconciliation when they have developed the critical thinking and empathetic skills to promote success of a diverse society.
- c. Educators honor, respect, and empathize with diverse individuals and facilitate constructive engagement, developing programs and courses, selecting course and library materials reflecting diverse voices.

### ***3. The Value of Connecting Christian Faith and Learning***

- a. Exploring the intersection of Christian identity, vocation, inquiry, service and reconciliation promotes effective student learning.
- b. Faith is integral to our identity. Learning that develops, connects to, and builds upon Christian faith enhances learning.
- c. Majors are designed and educators seek to help students explore the relevance and mutual connectedness of the Christian faith to educational pursuits.

### ***4. The Value of Student Responsibility and Involvement***

- a. Effective student learning occurs when students exhibit ownership and responsibility in the educational process.
- b. Active learners maximize their learning by displaying agency, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation and setting personal goals.
- c. Educators promote meaningful learning tasks, opportunities to participate in the learning process, and a clear understanding of the relevance of the content and learning activity to the learning outcomes for the major.

### ***5. The Value of Assessing Student Learning***

- a. Effective learning in the major occurs when learning outcomes are clear and transparent, when students receive feedback on their learning throughout the process, and when educators use evidence of student performance to improve learning.
- b. When learning outcomes are clear, students and educators understand the goal of assignments, courses, and the curriculum. Students gain knowledge about how to improve when they receive meaningful feedback on their learning throughout a course and degree program. Improved learning occurs when educators use evidence of learning performance to inform design and delivery of courses and programs.
- c. Educators use both formal and informal, formative and summative assessments of student learning towards the course learning objectives. Educators contribute to program and institutional assessment of student learning.

### ***6. The Importance of Common Learning. Each major includes a major core (i.e., specific major courses required of all students).***

- a. Students learn effectively when they participate in building an authentic community based on engagement with shared content.

- b. Students can more meaningfully and constructively engage in a larger conversation when they share a foundation of ideas and other reference points. Common learning enables educators to scaffold learning experiences intentionally, building upon content and experiences that students have shared. Common learning contributes to students' sense of identification and belonging with their undergraduate community.
- c. Educators use shared programming, experiences, living in community or course content with deliberate, collaborative reflection towards attaining learning outcomes.

### **7. *The Value of Experiential Learning***

- a. Effective learning involves students' engagement in authentic application of learning outside the classroom, founded in appropriate content, and coupled with reflection.
- b. Education research has designated experiential learning a high impact educational practice, i.e., it maximizes learning gains and helps students to apply their knowledge in new, expanded, and transferable contexts.
- c. Educators structure real-world experiences which apply course/program content and provide opportunity for reflection on learning objectives
- d. Since each student must fulfill the Experiential Learning Initiative requirement as part of their degree, departments are encouraged to offer opportunities such as internships/practica, service learning, off-campus programs, and undergraduate research within their majors' curricular and (when possible) use these to meet the ELI requirement.

### **8. *The Value of Disciplinary Expertise and Interdisciplinary Inquiry***

- a. Disciplinary expertise coupled with interdisciplinary inquiry enhances student learning.
- b. A liberal arts education helps students to respond with maturity to the world's complexity by building disciplinary depth along with interdisciplinary breadth and inquiry. When students view topics from multiple disciplines, they are able to develop more complex thinking, develop multiple perspectives, and recognize preconceptions and bias.
- c. How: The educational programming as a whole encourages interdisciplinary understanding by presenting ethical and society issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives to deepen insights, support critical thinking, and develop problem solving skills. While all areas are welcome to use interdisciplinary approaches, specifically, the major contributes expertise, General Education provides knowledge for common conversation and the cocurriculum provides practical application.

## **D. Size of Majors**

Majors must conform to the parameters and policies established in "Parameters for the Undergraduate Curriculum" (*see below*).

## **E. 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. *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 proficiency with the content and skills of the discipline. The objectives listed in 1.6.1.1 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

- a. understanding philosophical assumptions and ethical issues of their major discipline,
- b. articulating how faith connects to their specialized area of study and to potential career options related to that area of study, and
- c. reflecting on their studies and activities both to assess and cultivate the skills and
- d. knowledge relevant for transitioning to employment, voluntary service, apprenticeship, and/or graduate study.

**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. Academic departments map the common writing in the major course learning objectives (CLOs) to required courses in their major and assess learning on these CLOs as part of their program assessment.

**F. Assessment of the Majors**

Since every student is required to complete a major, assessment of student learning in the major is essential. See [Assessment of Student Learning Manual](#) for policies and procedures related to assessing student learning in the major.

## **PART VII: PRINCIPLES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION**

**A. Mission**

The General Education program at Messiah University develops knowledge, skills and attitudes of intellect, character, and faith that educated Christians use in lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation.

**B. Purpose**

The General Education program works together with the Schools and Departments to ensure that the Messiah University Mission and Undergraduate Learning Outcomes are addressed in the undergraduate curricula of the University: students learn academic skills common to all disciplines, develop an attachment and a sense of delight in relationship to the content, 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 challenge and nurture their intellect, develop and form their character, and engage their Christian faith. Moreover, service, leadership, and reconciliation are addressed at increasingly mature levels as students progress through the program.

### **C. General Education and the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes**

#### ***1. The General Education curriculum contributes to the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes. Course objectives in General Education map to program outcomes, which map to the ULOs.***

- a. Knowledge of the World: Students will articulate a breadth of knowledge about the physical and human world and corresponding ways of knowing. (ULO 2 Breadth and Depth)
- b. Critical and Creative Thinking: Students will ask meaningful questions and engage in focused inquiry, analysis, and synthesis to produce innovative work. (ULO 1 Foundational skills)
- c. Communication: Students will communicate effectively in oral, written, and visual mediums. (ULO 1 Foundational Skills)
- d. Self-Awareness, Personal and Professional Development, and Vocation: Students will demonstrate self-awareness, discern vocation, and apply their skills and knowledge in professional contexts. (ULO 4 Self-Awareness)
- e. Christian Faith: Students will articulate a sense of Christian vocation and Christian commitments that lead to responsible decisions and actions. (ULO 3 Christian Faith)
- f. Ethics and Civic Responsibility: Students will reason and act ethically, as informed citizens able to engage in civil dialogue and to discern, in community, the common good. (ULO 6 Social responsibility)
- g. Inclusive Excellence: Students will employ knowledge of and appreciation for a broad range of cultures and perspectives to function effectively within culturally diverse settings and employ difference toward innovative solutions. (ULO 6 Social Responsibility)

### **D. General Education and the Guiding Educational Assumptions**

The GEAs inform the curricular design of the General Education program and individual instructor pedagogy.

### **E. Size of General Education**

The General Education program must conform to the parameters and policies established in “Parameters for the Undergraduate Curriculum” (see below).

## **F. Assessment of General Education**

Since the General Education program is required of all students, it plays a central role in the achievement of the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes. Hence, the assessment of General Education plays a key role in the assessment of Messiah University's effectiveness in achieving the learning goals of the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes. See [Assessment of Student Learning Manual](#) for policies and procedures related to assessing student learning in the General Education program.

# **PART VIII: PRINCIPLES FOR CURRICULAR ELECTIVES**

## **A. The Definition and Nature of Curricular Electives**

### **1. Number of Academic Credits for Graduation**

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.

### **2. Completing Curricular Electives**

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.

### **3. "Curricular Electives" are Distinguished from the Following:**

- a. "Electives within a major" – course choices offered to students as they complete requirements for their major and hence are considered a part of the major requirements.
- b. "Electives within the General Education program" – course choices offered to students as they complete requirements for General Education and hence are considered a part of the General Education requirements.

## **B. Curricular Electives and the Guiding Educational Assumptions**

### **1. The Value of Student Responsibility and Involvement**

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.

### **2. The Value of Experiential Learning**

Curricular electives provide room in the curriculum for off-campus experiential/contextual learning.

### **3. The Value of Disciplinary Expertise and Interdisciplinary Inquiry**

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 University's educational goal of nurturing students to become "lifelong learners."

### **C. Parameters for the Use of Curricular Electives**

- 1. *The University does not mandate how students use their curricular electives.***
- 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.***
- 3. *Students may choose to use curricular electives to complete a certificate, a minor, or a second major within University policies for the completion of multiple curricular programs.***

### **D. Minor Programs**

#### **1. *Definition***

A *minor* is a prescribed set of courses that focuses on a particular academic discipline or area of study. Since minors are not required for graduation, they are considered to be a part of a student's curricular electives. 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

#### **2. *Assessment of Minors***

The coursework for most minors consists of a subset of key program learning outcomes and coursework supporting those outcomes within the major. Since those outcomes and courses are assessed within the major, School Deans have the discretion to determine if an assessment plan is required for a minor depending on the number of students in the minor, or whether the minor does not have a related major.

### **E. Certificates**

#### **1. *Definition***

A credit-bearing certificate is a prescribed set of courses leading to a credential that should be focused on a defined set of skills or structured expertise. Often a certificate reflects an emerging area of expertise in demand in the marketplace, or professional development requirements that are necessary to stay current. A certificate does not constitute an entire degree program, but it is a separate credential. As such, certificates are accessible to both degree and non-degree seeking students. Certificates should not be confused with the process of professional certification awarded by governmental and professional agencies for teaching and other fields.

#### **2. *Assessment of Certificates***

Certificates are developed and assessed by the offering academic unit. See [Assessment of Student Learning Manual](#) for policies and procedures related to assessing student learning in the General Education program.

## PART IX: PARAMETERS FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

### A. Size

Credit hour requirements for baccalaureate degree programs will range from a minimum of 123 to a maximum of 128 credit hours. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires a minimum of 120 credit hours for a baccalaureate degree.

#### 1. *Curricular Accommodation*

Requirements for a baccalaureate degree program may exceed 123 credit hours only if curricular accommodation is granted.

#### 2. *Supplemental Programs*

Supplemental programs (e.g., dual certification programs) can exceed the 128-credit limit for baccalaureate degree programs but cannot exceed 137 credits.

#### 3. *Ties to External Accrediting/Certification Agencies*

Some degree programs are formally tied to external accrediting/certification agencies. Due to requirements and criteria set by such external accreditation and/or 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.

### B. Eight Semester Blueprint

All baccalaureate degree programs can be completed in eight semesters.

### C. Distribution of Credits

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, and assuming no overlap between General Education and the major, the total credit hours are distributed as follows:

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Major Requirements             | 36-61  |
| General Education Requirements | 49-51* |
| Curricular Electives           | 0-36   |

\*The maximum General Education requirements is 49-51 credits; a global parameter states that no major could require more than 48 General Education credits as every major must have a 3-credit waiver or overlap.

#### 1. *Major Requirements*

Major requirements refer to all the credit hours a student completes for a given major. This includes:

- a. major requirements 36 - 61 credits, to include all discipline-specific courses, all supporting courses required by the major, all discipline-specific or supporting courses that overlap with General Education, all concentrations or emphases within a major, and
- b. all minor requirements in cases when a major may require the completion of a minor.

## **2. General Education Requirements**

General Education Requirements refer to credit hours that are uniquely taken for General Education.

- a. The General Education program totals 49 to 51 credits.
- b. Courses that overlap between General Education and the major count towards the major (i.e., met by major).

Since every major is given three hours of an automatic met/major or waiver, the most credit hours unique to General Education required of any degree program is 4648 credits.

- c. The General Education curriculum in its entirety consists of credits unique to General Education and credits in met/major courses.

## **3. Curricular Electives**

Curricular Electives refer to courses taken to complete graduation requirements that do not count towards either General Education or major requirements.

## **D. Curricular Accommodation Strategies**

### **1. Strategies for Curricular Accommodation**

If an undergraduate degree exceeds 128 credits, the University may use several curricular reduction strategies to ensure the degree requirements do not exceed 128.

- a. Met/Major—a catalogued General Education course fulfills the role of 'met/major' when the course meets a requirement for a major. A met/major course delivers and assesses the General Education course learning objectives and will count toward both requirements in the degree audit. Students outside the major can also take the course to fulfill a General Education requirement. As an example, SPAN 101 is a 'met/major' course for students in the Spanish major.
- b. Met/If—a catalogued General Education course meets both a major and General Education requirement only if students select this particular course from a menu of courses that could meet the major/minor requirement.
- c. Waiver—an undergraduate degree program may receive a General Education waiver for a General Education requirement when the program includes a course (or sequence of courses) that is not a catalogued General Education course and the course (or sequence) fulfills required General Education course learning objectives for a category. Waived General Education requirements are not part of ongoing General Education assessment and students outside the major cannot fulfill a General Education requirement by completing the course. For example, the 'Literature or Art' General Education requirement is waived for our majors in English.
- d. Reduction—a General Education requirement is dropped.

## ***2. Parameters for Identifying Reductions***

If after appropriate met/majors and waivers are applied but the total requirements for completing the degree program exceeds 128 credits, the department can apply for a General Education reduction or reductions as appropriate to reduce the size of the major.

- a. Reductions should aim to preserve the integrity of the General Education learning objectives overall. In particular, selection of proposed reductions should consider essential knowledge and skills required in the contexts within which students in this major are likely to be employed to avoid negative impact to students' career outcomes.
- b. When a reduction in more than one General Education requirement is warranted, reductions should be proposed such that each reduction is from a single General Education category. No more than one reduction in a category will be granted. In this way, reductions will be assigned across several categories rather than concentrated within one category.

## ***3. Limitations on Waivers and Reductions***

No General Education waivers or reductions may involve First Year Seminar, Ethics and the Common Good, Bible, Christian Beliefs, or Written Communication.

## ***4. Semester and Credit Hour Maximums***

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.

## **E. Curricular Accommodation Procedure and Protocol**

Curricular accommodation in a new major is proposed by the respective department to the School Dean, Proposals involving existing majors will advance from the School Dean to the General Education Committee. Proposals for curricular accommodations for new majors will advance from the School Dean to the General Education Committee for approval and will be included as information in the new major proposal that advances through curricular review and Academic Council/COE Senate. Proposals follow these procedures:

### ***1. Proposals for Curricular Accommodation***

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 "Curricular Accommodation Strategies" section (see above).

### ***2. Screening of proposals***

All proposals are initially screened by the relevant School Dean(s) and the Associate Provost for adequate prima facie evidence for the need for accommodation. Should the School Dean and the Associate Provost decide that the evidence warrants further consideration, the proposal is forwarded to the General Education Committee for action.

### ***3. General Education Committee Decision***

The General Education Committee evaluates whether the proposal for accommodation meets the parameters. For an existing major, the action of the General Education Committee is final. For new majors, the curricular reductions are reviewed as part of the Academic Council and COE Senate proposal. Overlap Policy When a student is completing more than one program, at least 12 credits in a minor, 24 credits in a major, and 8 credits in a concentration must be unique to each program.

## **F. Parameters for Interdisciplinary Majors**

### **1. Definition**

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.).

### **2. Substantive Credit Requirement**

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.

### **3. Administrative and Organizational Oversight**

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:
  - (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 undergraduate-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.

#### **4. Identification of Sponsor**

Before the Office of the Provost begins 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.

#### **5. Advising Plan**

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

#### **6. Departmental Approval**

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

#### **7. Curricular Parameters**

All interdisciplinary majors fit within the following parameters:

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Major requirements             | 36-72 |
| General Education Requirements | 49-51 |
| Curricular Electives           | 0-36  |

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. No Interdisciplinary major is eligible for any curricular accommodation that would allow the total major program requirements to fall outside the range in any of the three areas or to exceed 123 credits for graduation.

#### **8. Upper-Level Course Requirements**

At least 40% of the required credit hours and minimum of 18 credit hours will be upper-level courses distributed across the contributing disciplines.

#### **9. Capstone Course**

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, the 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.

**10. *Appropriate writing intensive course(s) must be designated.***

Each undergraduate degree will deliver the approved writing across the curriculum course learning objectives (CLOs). Writing CLOs will be mapped to program outcomes and assessed as part of the undergraduate program assessment.

**11. *Unified Focus and Educational Integrity***

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 to support the integration of the disciplines.

**12. *Counting Students in Major***

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.

## **PART X: PRINCIPLES FOR THE COCURRICULUM**

### **A. The Nature and Purpose of the Cocurriculum**

**1. *Definition***

Cocurricular programming is educational programming for which students do not earn academic credit.

**2. *Enrichment vs. Required Programming***

- a. Enrichment Programming  
Cocurricular programming is predominately enrichment programming—educational programming students choose to complete beyond the minimal requirements for graduation.
- b. Required Programming

Some cocurricular programming is required programming—educational programming in which every student must successfully participate in order to graduate (e.g., required Chapel, Common Text, Welcome Weekend, etc.).

### **3. *The Role of Student Success and Engagement***

Cocurricular programming crosses educational organizational units—Schools, Academic Departments, and Student Success and Engagement. However, the primary focus and greatest amount of such cocurricular programming is within Student Success and Engagement.

## **B. The Cocurriculum and the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes**

Cocurricular programming as a whole is tied in various degrees to all of the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes.

### **1. *Relationship to ULO 1, Context for Students***

Cocurricular programs provide a context for students to use, apply, and refine the foundational and common skills and knowledge addressed in ULO 1 Foundations for Learning through their “Dig Deep” objectives (the ability to adapt to changing situations, make complex decisions, solve problems, reflect and think critically).

### **2. *Relationship to ULO 2, Breadth and Depth of Knowledge***

Cocurricular programs are designed to support and enhance educational objectives in the majors (ULO 2 Breadth and Depth of Knowledge).

### **3. *Relationship to ULO 3, Faith Knowledge and Application***

Cocurricular programming extends student learning in ULO 3 (Faith Knowledge and Application). The cocurricular objective “Be Rooted” fosters student development in the formation of maturing sense of self, identity, self-esteem, confidence, ethics, integrity, maturing sense of relationship to God resulting in spiritual practices, character building, reconciliation, service, intentional growth.

### **4. *Relationship to ULO 4, Specialized Skills and Scholarship***

### **5. *Relationship to ULO 5, Self-Awareness***

Cocurricular programming plays a primary role in ULO 5 (Self-Awareness) with programming aligned with Be Strong and Bear Fruit.

- a. Be Strong: gain realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, set personal goals, become interdependent and collaborative, work with others different from self.
- b. Bear Fruit: the ability to manage personal affairs, achieve economic self-sufficiency, gain vocational competence, prioritize personal health and leisure activities, and pursue purposeful and satisfying life

### **6. *Relationship to ULO 6, Social Responsibility***

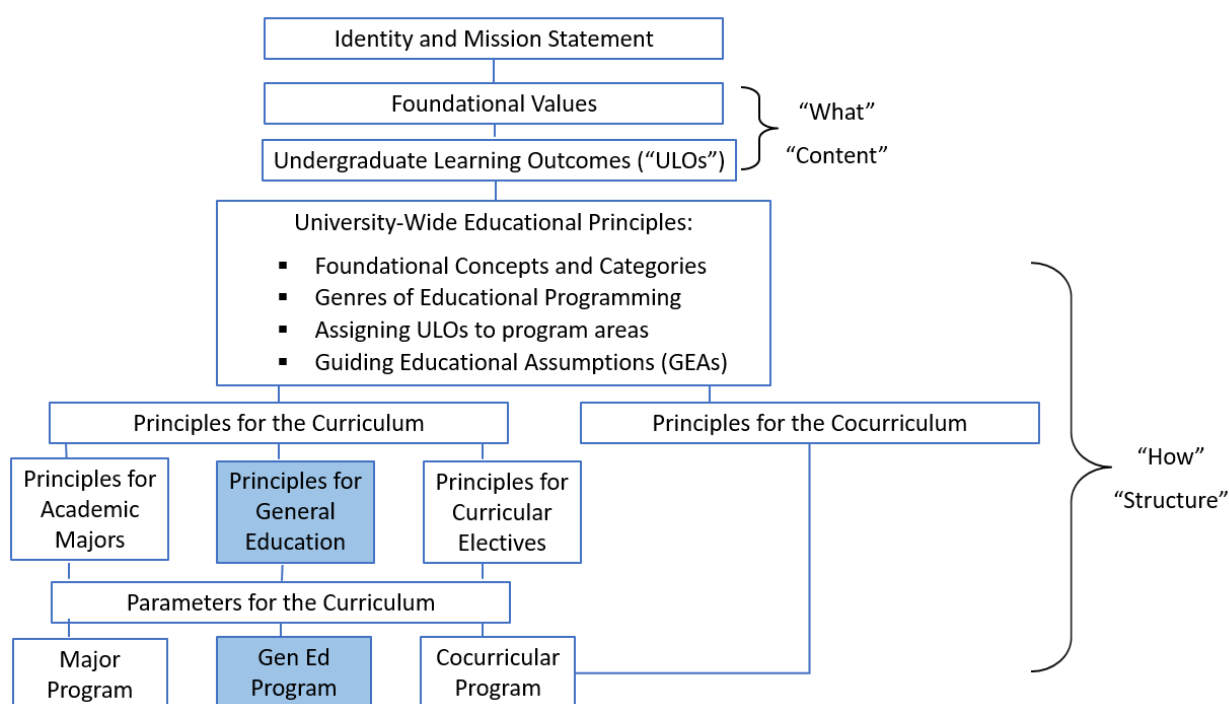
Cocurricular programming also plays a primary role in accomplishing ULO 6 Social Responsibility. These Objectives deal with developing the self-understanding and character necessary to becoming servants, leaders, and reconcilers.

- a. Be Cultivated: Understand, value and appreciate human differences, develop cultural competency, understand and pursue reconciliation.
- b. Branch Out: civic responsibility, commitment to service, effective in leadership, commitment to living in community.

### C. Assessment of the Cocurriculum

Since the required and enrichment cocurricular programming play a central role in Messiah University's educational programming, we document student participation in cocurricular programming and assess its effectiveness. See [Assessment of Student Learning Manual](#) for policies and procedures related to assessing student learning in the cocurricular program.

## PART XI: FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS



## **PART XII: PHILOSOPHY OF CAMPUS MINISTRIES**

### **A. Introduction**

Messiah University 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 University'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 University provide an active religious life on campus, which encompasses instruction, inspiration, consolation, encouragement, and integration.

While accepting certain religious functions, the University 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 University in a manner which encourages participation in a local Christian church and supports and augments the existing church commitments of the members of the University community. The University 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 University 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 University'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 University 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 University community. Messiah University is composed of persons from a variety of Christian denominations; the University's ministries opportunities should, accordingly, be marked by an embracing evangelical spirit.

The religious life of the University will be complex and multifaceted. The most distinctive religious activities undertaken by the University 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 Office of Campus Ministries. The University 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 University 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 University 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 University'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 University sponsors and/or encourages campus religious activities in several categories, as delineated below.

## **B. Ministries of Worship**

As a body of Christians gathered in an educational setting, the Messiah University 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 University 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 University 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 University community, common worship services are difficult to plan—and no worship format will equally engage everyone in attendance. University-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 University community also requires Messiah University 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 University community should find both the larger and smaller contexts for worship to be settings wherein they can approach our common expectations for campus worship.

### **C. Ministries of Faith and Values Education**

As a body of Christians gathered in an educational setting it is also appropriate for the University 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 University 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 University 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 University at large, while others are sponsored by specific departments or other similar units.

### **D. 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 University 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 University where spirituality can be wedded to the larger academic mission of the institution. But programs of nurture should also be part of the cocurricular 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 University 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 University: (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 University also will take cognizance of the diversity of the University 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.

### **E. Ministries of Pastoral Care**

As in other areas of campus religious life, the University 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 University 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.

## **F. 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 University.

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 opportunities to report and celebrate witness and service activities. While much of what happens at Messiah University 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 University 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 University 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 University 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 University 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.

## **PART XIII: STATEMENT ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

### **A. Rationale**

#### ***1. Importance of the Person***

In its statement of Foundational Values, Messiah University 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 University in reference to human beings.

#### ***2. Commitment to Truth***

Further, the University’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.

#### ***3. The Influential Impact of Language***

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.

#### **4. *Greater Sensitivity Motivated by Love***

Because of our Christian frame of reference and in recognition of the ways that language shapes as well as reflects culture, Messiah University 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.

#### **5. *Messiah University's Commitment to the Use of Inclusive Language***

In sum, Messiah University 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 commitment and responsibility as we serve as a creative and liberating force in the world.

## **B. Policy**

### **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.

### **2. *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 over generalized 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.

### **3. Policy Statement**

Messiah University calls for all members of the University community to be informed and intentional about the use of inclusive language. Further, Messiah University expects members of the University 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 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 University’s policy on Academic Freedom.

### **4. Specific Application of Policy**

- a. *University 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.

### **5. Responsibility for Implementation**

All employees and students will be apprised of this Policy upon joining the Messiah University community. Initially, the Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance, the Dean of Faculty Development, and the Vice Provost for Student Success and Engagement will be responsible for communication of this Policy. Subsequently, it is the responsibility of the appropriate Administrators, including Department Chairs/Program Directors 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 in the use of inclusive language will be the responsibility of the Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance, the Dean of Faculty Development, and the Vice Provost for Student Success and Engagement, and Director of Writing, in collaboration with the Gender Concerns Committee.
- 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 University; for students, the "University Discipline Procedures" 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.

## **PART XIV: ADULT DEGREE PROGRAM**

Adult Degree Programming (ADP) is programming geared for adult populations interested in pursuing targeted undergraduate degrees or other academic credentials.

### **A. General Guidelines for Undergraduate ADP Programs**

#### **1. Programming will be consistent with Messiah's educational mission**

- a. The curriculum will be designed within and be consistent with Messiah's Christian faith perspective and commitment to a complementary mix of the liberal and applied arts.
- b. Faculty members will be selected based on their professional and academic qualifications and commitment to the University's mission. Faculty members will bring to the classroom a rich blend of academic preparation, professional experience, and personal faith commitment.
- c. Programs will reflect Messiah's distinct mission to educate men and women for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation.

#### **2. Programming will be of high quality evidenced by ongoing assessment**

- a. Appropriate learning outcomes will be specified and assessed. Each ADP program will be a part of the ongoing Program Review process.
- b. Faculty will be well qualified and suited for the learning outcomes.

- c. There will be adequate resources to support and sustain programming and learning outcomes.
- d. Programming will meet the standards of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Middle States and relevant accreditation bodies, and be in line with quality and successful benchmarked programs.
- e. Programming will include an explicit, sustainable plan for ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of individual instructors in the program.

### ***3. Programming will be net revenue producing***

- a. A feasibility study will be developed for any program that is considered.
- b. It is expected that ADP programming will provide a net income stream for the University.

## **B. ADP Curricular Parameters**

### ***1. Alignment with Undergraduate Guiding Educational Assumptions***

The ADP curriculum (both General Education and the major program) will be mapped to the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs) and align with the undergraduate Guiding Educational Assumptions (GEAs).

### ***2. Size***

ADP bachelor's degrees will require 120 earned credits (required by state of Pennsylvania).

### ***3. Delivery Mode***

The majority of ADP programming will be online, aligned with the University academic calendar. ADP programs may utilize traditional undergraduate summer online courses.

## **C. Parameters for ADP Majors and Certificates**

Parameters for ADP majors and certificates follow the traditional undergraduate degree parameters unless otherwise specified in this section.

## **D. ADP General Education Parameters**

### ***1. General Education Credit Minimum***

General Education courses will constitute at least 40 credits of the curriculum required for the degree. Overlap between General Education and the major is counted toward the size of the major in the same way as the undergraduate parameters.

### ***2. Program Requirements***

The program requirements will include learning outcomes in all four of the areas of traditional QuEST (Abilities of the Liberal Arts, Knowledge of the Liberal Arts, Christian Faith, Social Responsibility), though the number of credits and the courses may differ between programs.

## **E. Major-Specific Writing Requirement**

There will be a major-specific writing requirement embedded in one or more courses for each degree program.

## **F. Capstone Course**

The learning outcomes of our current UG capstone course will be embedded in a course or multiple courses

## **G. Assessment of Student Learning**

All ADP programs will assess student learning specific to their program learning outcomes. See [Assessment of Student Learning Manual](#) for policies and procedures related to assessing student learning in the major.

## **H. Relationship between PAL Programming and the Traditional UG Programming**

### **1. *Overlap between PAL Programming and Traditional UG majors***

While there may be occasional overlap at the course-level, we are not attempting to replicate our traditional UG majors in PAL programming. PAL students are focused and credential-seeking and are looking for degrees or certificates that are directly applicable to advancing their careers. Degree programs will be offered as exclusively PAL options. Students will apply and be admitted into PAL programs.

### **2. *Facilitator Model***

It is anticipated that PAL programming will not be extensively served by full-time faculty with appointments in the traditional UG program. It is anticipated that we will follow a facilitator model in which the point-person for the curriculum is a FT educator at Messiah but the faculty teaching the courses are adjunct/part-time faculty, with flexibility in terms of geographic location.

# **PART XV: FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

The graduate programs at Messiah University are an extension of the University's identity as a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences with a commitment to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church and a mission 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. This is accomplished through a variety of graduate level programs designed to prepare students to enter professions, advance within their profession, or enhance their knowledge or skills.

## **A. Graduate Learning Outcomes**

The School of Graduate and Professional Studies uses Graduate Learning Outcomes to structure the assessment process in a clear and concise manner. The Graduate Learning Outcomes are aligned with the College-Wide Learning Objectives as demonstrated in the table below. All graduate programs' learning outcomes link to these six Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs).

| CWGEO                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Graduate Learning Outcome                                             | Justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Upon completion of their degree, Messiah University graduate students will...</i></b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1                                                                                           | Understanding the foundational content and philosophical assumptions of one's specialized area of graduate study;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Exhibit mastery of specialized knowledge                              | Each program will identify areas of knowledge based on accreditation requirements and industry standards.                                                                                                                       |
| 2                                                                                           | Engaging in scholarship in one's specialized area of graduate study;<br>a. Students demonstrate knowledge of and competence in basic methods, data analysis, research design commonly used in the field, or creative production or performance;<br>b. Students demonstrate competence in the critical review and evaluation of research literature or creative activities;<br>c. Students demonstrate the ability to conduct an independent research project or to prepare an exhibition;<br>d. Students demonstrate practical experience in presenting creative work, research findings, and other scholarship in contexts such as exhibitions, performances, professional conferences, peer-reviewed journals, and other scholarly outlets. | Perform scholarly activities informed by professional standards.      | Scholarly activity requirements differ among programs; each one will identify specific outcomes and expectations for scholarly activities that are informed by professional standards (accreditation, licensing, etc).          |
| 3                                                                                           | Developing proficiency in one's specialized area of study sufficient to prepare students to enter professions, advance within one's profession, or to continue study for a terminal degree;<br>a. To facilitate students' professional identity development and foster strong commitment to ethical practice;<br>b. To encourage students' commitment to lifelong learning and ongoing personal and professional development;<br>c. To encourage students' development of skills to engage in continuing scholarly inquiry, knowledge building, and the dissemination of knowledge across the course of their professional careers.                                                                                                           | Demonstrate mastery of competencies required in their field of study. | Each program will identify professional competency requirements based on accreditation and industry standards. This outcome is limited to student learning during the program; it is not intended to measure lifelong learning. |

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | <p>Articulating how Christian faith connects to each specialized area of study and to potential career or service options in that area of study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To encourage students to explore the relevance of Christian convictions to contemporary issues and concerns;</li> <li>b. To encourage students to apply the insights of Christian theology and ethics to complex social and personal issues;</li> <li>c. To encourage students to develop a sense of civic responsibility and commitment to work with others for the common good;</li> <li>d. To encourage students to make decisions that reflect an ethic of service, a concern for justice, and a desire for reconciliation.</li> </ul> | Articulate how Christian faith and principles inform their vocation. | While not all graduate students identify as Christians, in keeping with the mission and identity of Messiah, each program will identify opportunities for students to consider how Christian faith and principles inform their vocation. The goal is not to indoctrinate all students in Christianity; it is for all students to consider faith, learning, and their vocation. |
| 5 | Each graduate program will develop program-specific learning outcomes beyond those required of all graduate programs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Apply ethical principles relevant to their profession.               | As a faith-based institution, Messiah University graduate faculty believe that we should address ethical principles in each of the programs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 6 | Not Applicable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Demonstrate intercultural competence                                 | Messiah University's mission, identity and strategic plan all address intercultural competence. The graduate faculty feel this should be a pillar of our programs; therefore, it is emphasized in its own outcome.                                                                                                                                                             |