

## Messiah University's Mission and Expectation for Educators

Messiah University is a Christian university. We therefore seek to hire educators who share this Christian identity and wish to be a part of Christian higher education as understood by Messiah. Messiah University's Christian mission and identity relate to both beliefs and behaviors. All educators of the University are expected to affirm the Apostles' Creed; support the Identity and Mission Statement, Foundational Values, Confession of Faith, Community Covenant, and Undergraduate or Graduate Learning Outcomes (ULO's and GLO's); adhere to stated policies and procedures of the University, agree to abide by the [Employee Code of Conduct](#); and perform duties as assigned.

Messiah is an ecumenical Christian community with representation from many different Christian denominations and theological perspectives. We look for educators who understand the breadth that is present in the University, feel comfortable in this setting, and do not seek to reshape the University in their particular theological image. The [mission and identity](#) of the University exist prior to any employee and hence the University seeks educators who understand the University's mission and identity and want to contribute to and function as teachers/mentors/scholars within this framework.

While Messiah has a broad mix of Christian perspectives, Messiah has theological distinctives which flow from the Evangelical, Wesleyan, Anabaptist, and Pietist traditions that have and continue to shape the life of the University. Thus, in relation to Christian beliefs, the University finds it helpful to distinguish Core, Privileged, and Neutral beliefs. Core beliefs are beliefs affirmed by the University and which all employees are expected to fully affirm, i.e., the [Apostles' Creed](#). Privileged beliefs are beliefs that the University, given its self-understanding, affirms and all employees will support even if they might not fully agree. Neutral beliefs are beliefs on which the University does not take a formal position, e.g., endorsement of a political party, modes of baptism, eschatological positions.

Privileged beliefs represent beliefs that are important to the University while not rising to the level of Core beliefs. These include the University's [Confession of Faith](#) and other particular perspectives on theological issues – issues over which Christians tend to differ. For example, the University affirms the legitimacy of women in ministry and the peace position. While affirming that God is the Creator, the University understands that divine Creation may be compatible with various views on evolution. The University affirms Christian marriage to be the union of one man and one woman and thus believes that premarital and extramarital intercourse and forms of same-sex sexual expression fall outside of God's design for sexual expression.

While these privileged beliefs are affirmations of the University, the University acknowledges the diversity of views within the University community on these "privileged" beliefs. However, all educators are expected to be supportive of the University's privileged beliefs. To be supportive means the following:

- Educators may present alternative viewpoints to ensure that students understand those perspectives. However, educators will treat the University’s position as a valid and responsible Christian approach and will not demean, seek to undermine, or advocate against the University’s position even when they might not fully affirm it.
- Educators will be judicious when mentoring students who have questions about Messiah’s beliefs and behavior expectations. It is the responsibility of educators to be supportive of the University’s positions and help students understand the commitment the students have made to live according to the student Code of Conduct while enrolled at Messiah University.
- Educators may hold positions that are different from the University, but, if expressed, will not take an adversarial stance against the University and will make it clear that the educator is not speaking for the University.

Messiah’s [Community Covenant](#) expresses what it means for all employees and students to live in community. The Community Covenant includes behavior expectations for all members of the community. All educators are expected to support and abide by the behavior expectations of the Community Covenant.

Messiah has a robust residential undergraduate program that includes co-curricular programming and a Code of Conduct for undergraduate students. While a faculty member’s primary role at the University is curricular, we expect undergraduate faculty to be supportive of the co-curricular programming and the [Undergraduate Student Code of Conduct](#) (e.g., undergraduate students are not permitted to drink alcohol while attending the University; while employees are permitted to drink alcohol in moderation, faculty are expected to support the University’s expectation for undergrad students by not consuming alcohol with students). Graduate students are also required to follow a [Code of Conduct](#), which is different from the one that pertains to undergraduate students, but likewise seeks to nurture a hospitable environment conducive to academic excellence.

Precisely because of Messiah University’s heritage of uniting different Christian theological traditions (i.e. the historical development of the Brethren in Christ Church itself) and demonstrating an “embracing evangelical spirit,” we have an inspiring opportunity to model a rare and communal approach of Christian scholars (educators and students) living and learning together, while holding varying perspectives in tension, all the while demonstrating respect and support for the University. Educators have the privilege of modeling community in a manner that the Church and the broader society rarely embodies or witnesses; therefore, educators must be willing to commit to the responsibilities that will be associated with assuming that privilege.

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