



GRAND CANYON
UNIVERSITY™

Theological Seminary

Graduate Program Manual

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Grand Canyon Theological Seminary: Graduate Program Manual

Table of Contents

Introduction to Grand Canyon Theological Seminary	3
Mission, Vision, and Three Pillars	3
How Does the Seminary Relate to Grand Canyon University?	5
Seminary Leadership Team	5
A Covenant Community	7
Foundational University Documents and the College of Theology Covenant	7
Dispositional and Behavioral Standards.....	8
Interdenominational Dynamics and Diversity	10
The Value of an Interdenominational Education	10
Evangelical Unity in an Interdenominational Environment	10
Diversity at Grand Canyon Theological Seminary	11
Theological Studies at Grand Canyon Theological Seminary	14
The Purpose of Theological Studies	14
Introduction to Graduate Academic Programs.....	16
Preparation for Ministry	18
Biblical Qualifications for Ministry	18
Seminary Preparation and the Local Church.....	18
Spiritual and Professional Formation.....	19
Internships and Supervised Ministry Experience	20
Finding Opportunities for Ministry: Career Services.....	21
Appendices	22
GCU Doctrinal Statement	22
GCU Ethical Positions Statement	23
College of Theology Covenant.....	26
College of Theology Dispositional and Behavioral Standards.....	27

Introduction to Grand Canyon Theological Seminary

For those who plan to serve as ministers and Christian leaders, Grand Canyon Theological Seminary (GCTS) offers focused theological training, grounded in biblical truth. It is our conviction that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, true, and authoritative Word of God. This conviction shapes all that we do and say and provides a firm foundation for theological discussion and ministerial preparation.

The Seminary features programs of study at the Master's level, designed to equip students with an understanding of the historical and theological significance of God's Word. Students are equipped to handle God's Word correctly and minister faithfully for the sake of the churches in which they serve, their personal spiritual well-being, and the society beyond the walls of the local church.

Regardless of modality, whether on ground or online, GCTS students are prepared to meet the various demands of vocational ministry, Christian leadership, and scholarship. Carefully designed academic programs ensure that students know how to draw insight from the text of Scripture and make application within particular ministerial contexts.

Traditional Students (Main Campus)

Students who attend class on the main campus also enjoy the benefits of community life on a growing, vibrant campus that features an emerging graduate student culture and incredible amenities. In addition to its academic programs and student support, GCU's campus offers regular worship opportunities during the day and in the evening, speaker series, fine arts productions, a Division I athletic program, and a wide variety of clubs and programs. Course schedules for graduate, theology students are tailored to accommodate ministry responsibilities and family life. Opportunities for ministry and service on campus and in the surrounding community abound.

Non-Traditional Students (Online and Cohort)

Non-traditional students will find that many of the Seminary's programs offer a level of accessibility that is crucial for those who do not live near a seminary or divinity school. GCTS seeks to bridge the gap between gaining an education and continuing in ministry by offering convenient online theology programs and evening cohort classes with a variety of emphases. This allows pastors and others in ministry to continue serving their local community while pursuing a graduate education through the Seminary. In this way, GCTS intentionally serves ministers and their congregations by equipping Christian leaders without separating them from those who have come to depend on their leadership and ministry. Additionally, much of the programming and theological dialogue that is available to traditional student on the main campus is made available for non-traditional students through video recordings, social media, the College of Theology's blog, and the fully-online Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies.

Mission, Vision, and Three Pillars

Mission

Grand Canyon Theological Seminary develops leaders, ministers, and scholars who rightly handle God's Word, teach what accords with sound doctrine, and equip the people of God for missional service within a rapidly changing world.

Vision

From its start in 1949, Grand Canyon University (GCU) has developed a strong reputation as a premier Christian institution of higher learning. During the course of its rich history, the University has graduated leaders in fields such as education, nursing, business, fine arts, and Christian studies. With the advent of

its graduate programs in theology beginning in 2009 and steady growth in student enrollment, it was nearly inevitable that the University would one day create a seminary. That day arrived with the launch of Grand Canyon Theological Seminary in the fall of 2016. GCTS, the University's graduate theological school, took up the mantle of training faithful pastors, Christian leaders, missionaries, and other ministers within the context of a rapidly expanding University.

The Seminary serves churches and other ministries by training leaders in sound doctrine, cultivating Christian character, and fostering unity in Christ. As an interdenominational seminary, we welcome all students of like mind and faith and embrace denominational, theological, racial, and ethnic diversity within our faculty and student body. As an evangelical institution, we celebrate the unity we have in Jesus Christ who alone is Savior and Lord. In the spirit of Titus 1, we are committed to preparing men and women to hold firm to the trustworthy Word of God so that they are able to give instruction in sound doctrine as they serve others with compassion and godly wisdom.

The Seminary's interdenominational posture strategically positions it to serve a wide array of churches and denominations that hold a high view of Scripture and embrace the central tenets of the Christian faith. Furthermore, due to the value that Grand Canyon places on ensuring that theological education is accessible and affordable, the Seminary is also uniquely positioned to meet the needs of underserved groups including bi-vocational ministers, ethnic churches, denominations that do not have a seminary, and ministers who cannot easily relocate to complete their seminary education.

Together, the faculty and administration strive to make GCTS the premier, interdenominational, evangelical seminary of the Southwest by forming Christian leaders theologically, spiritually, and professionally and equipping them to minister faithfully and effectively within a challenging cultural context.

Three Pillars

The overarching vision of GCTS rests on three pillars that constitute the Seminary's fundamental values and serves to shape its unique identity and mission. GCTS is:

- **Gospel centered**
- **Church focused**
- **Missions oriented**

Gospel centered means that the good news of Jesus Christ is the central focus of all that the Seminary does. At the heart of the Christian worldview is the powerful message that Jesus, the Son of God, gave His life to reconcile men and women to the Father. This good news is central to the mission of GCTS. Without it, we would have no hope to offer to the world in which we live and minister.

Church focused refers to the critical connection between faith and lifestyle. In service to the community of faith, GCTS trains Christian leaders to faithfully live the message they teach and preach. A gospel-centered ministry yields a gospel-centered church, and Christ's Church remains the primary means by which He has chosen to engage the world with hope and love. The gospel of Jesus Christ empowers those who follow Him to live life with one another in a community characterized by faith, hope, and love. When the gospel is central and a church is properly ordered, the people of God are in the best position to commend the hope of Jesus Christ to the world in which they live.

Missions oriented speaks to the Seminary's driving concern to be salt and light by engaging the world outside the walls of the church. The life-giving message that God loves the world so much that he sent His own Son to rescue sinners is good news that must be offered to all. In the Seminary, we are

concerned to obey Christ by sharing the gospel in our neighborhood, across our nation, and around the world, and to train students to do the same.

These three foundational pillars are closely related and interdependent, forming a substantial basis for the Seminary as it seeks to realize its vision and fulfill its mission to develop godly leaders, ministers, and scholars.

How Does the Seminary Relate to Grand Canyon University?

GCTS exists under the auspices of the College of Theology (COT) as well as the larger University within which the College is situated. In addition to several other departments, GCU features nine colleges that are embedded within the larger University. These colleges provide education in specific academic areas. Among them, is COT, which represents a unique covenantal community that provides all theological training at University. Thus, COT, like other Colleges, exists within the larger community that is Grand Canyon University.

Similarly, the Seminary is embedded within COT and represents a distinct graduate theological entity. As such, GCTS features a core faculty, dedicated administrative leadership, and the resources necessary to fulfill its stated mission. We believe that a clear distinction between our graduate and undergraduate programs enhances cultural and programmatic development by providing clear structure, responsibility, and focus at both levels. Consequently, all graduate theological programs, whether online or on the main campus, are under the auspices of the Seminary.

For these reasons, the relationship between the Seminary, the College, and the University is symbiotic and mutually beneficial for all involved. Students and faculty at the Seminary commit to the same doctrinal, ethical, and covenantal standards as other theological students in the College of Theology. Likewise, seminarians participate in the same rich campus community as all others at the University.

Seminary Leadership Team

Faculty and administrators collaborate at virtually every point in developing programs and curricula, cultivating a healthy graduate culture, and serving the many needs that arise within each academic year. Therefore, providing an exhaustive list detailing all who provide substantial leadership within the Seminary is not feasible. Regardless, a short list of key administrative leaders includes the following:

Dr. Jason Hiles

Dean, College of Theology and Grand Canyon Theological Seminary

Jason Hiles, PhD, joined GCU in 2013. He is a graduate of the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design where he received a BFA in sculpture in 1998. He also earned an MDiv from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2001 and a PhD in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2008. Upon graduation from Southeastern, he was appointed assistant professor at Louisiana College and later named associate dean of the Caskey School of Divinity. Dr. Hiles is a member of the Evangelical Theological and Evangelical Philosophical Societies. He is married to Jennifer and has three children.

Mrs. Anna Faith Smith

Associate Dean, College of Theology and Grand Canyon Theological Seminary

Anna Faith Smith, a native of Fort Worth, TX, has lived in Phoenix most of her life. She has a BA in English and an MDiv from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and has been serving at Grand Canyon

University since 1990. She was Assistant Dean of the College of Theology since it was established in 2012 and transitioned to Associate Dean at the inception of the Seminary. Her passion is cross-cultural communication and ministry. She is married to Kenneth and they have two married children and two grandchildren.

Dr. Daniel S. Diffey

Assistant Dean, College of Theology and Grand Canyon Theological Seminary

Dan Diffey, PhD, serves as Assistant Professor of Old Testament within the College of Theology and Seminary at GCU. He has his BA in History, completed an MDiv in Christian Ministry, and earned a PhD in Old Testament before becoming a professor. His interests are in the area of Old Testament and biblical theology. He is married to Anne and has three children.

Dr. Pete Charpentier

MDiv Program Lead, Grand Canyon Theological Seminary

Pete Charpentier, DMin, is a native of Louisiana. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in biblical studies and New Testament, respectively. His DMin work focused on personal disciple making in the context of pastoral ministry. Dr. Charpentier has served in various ministry roles, including youth minister and senior pastor for several years. He and his wife, Wendy, have two sons.

Dr. Justin McLendon

MA Program Lead, Grand Canyon Theological Seminary

Justin McLendon, PhD, is a native of Mississippi. An ordained Baptist minister, he has served churches in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Missouri. He is a 2002 graduate of Mississippi State University, and he graduated from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in 2006 (MDiv, Biblical Studies), and 2009 (PhD in Systematic Theology). He is married to Christie and has three children.

A Covenant Community

GCTS is an evangelical institution within an interdenominational university, which affords students a unique opportunity to study in a context shaped by Christian unity and denominational diversity. The Seminary represents a unique, covenantal community embedded within the larger institution, which is a missional community.

A missional community may be understood as a community of people strategically united in carrying out a mission that centers on following Jesus Christ in word and in deed. Missional communities differ from what may be called covenant communities, in which all members of a school commit to affirming and practicing the same faith. GCTS represents an exception to this general strategy, since the Seminary serves to prepare ministers and Christian leaders. For this reason, it is vital that all Seminary faculty and students are united in their affirmation of the essential doctrines of the faith and committed by covenant to a lifestyle consistent with those doctrines.

In this way, the Seminary is able to make a unique contribution to the larger missional culture of the University by encouraging others through the gospel and preparing God's people to do good works in service to the community (Titus 3). This situation also affords GCTS students and faculty unique opportunities for ministry and service that are not available within institutions that only permit people of like mind and faith to participate in the community. Likewise, the University is able to draw on the leadership of the Seminary's faculty and student body as it strives to clarify its Christian identity and fulfill its mission.

Foundational University Documents and the College of Theology Covenant

As an interdenominational school, GCTS deeply values Christian unity, which is a unity rooted in the fact that all Christ-followers participate in "one body and one Spirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). The body of Christ is diverse, but its mission is clear and its doctrine is by no means confused. The same holds true for GCTS. Three key documents bring GCTS's mission and identity into clear focus: GCU's Doctrinal Statement, GCU's Ethical Positions Statement, and the College of Theology Covenant. These documents appear in their entirety in the Appendices section of this Manual and at gcu.edu.

Significance of the Foundational Documents and Covenant

Grand Canyon University has adopted a Doctrinal Statement, inspired by the Nicene Creed, which outlines the essential tenets of the Christian faith and provides clarity about GCU's identity and mission. The teachings of the Doctrinal Statement represent the basic truths that all believers hold in common. Thus, this document provides a firm basis for fellowship and partnership with others of like mind and faith.

GCU's Ethical Positions Statement outlines beliefs on moral truth, creation, human life, salvation, and more. The overarching goal of these documents is to provide clarity, unity, and alignment across the University on matters of doctrine, ethics, and morality. While it would be impractical for the University to articulate precise ethical guidelines for every possible situation, the principles outlined in the Ethical Positions Statement aim to provide sufficient clarity for sound moral reasoning within the classroom and across the campus.

In addition to the University's Doctrinal and Ethical Positions Statements, the College of Theology has adopted a Covenant that describes a lifestyle consistent with its strong doctrinal commitments. Since the Seminary is embedded within the College, the principles of this Covenant are applicable to Seminary

and undergraduate students alike as well as the faculty. The Covenant underscores the vital connection between the Christian faith and the Christian life. Together, the Doctrinal Statement, Ethical Positions Statement, and Covenant highlight and celebrate biblical, theological, and moral bases for cooperation in accord with the biblical mandate to live life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:27).

Affirmation of the Foundational Documents and Covenant

All Christians are called to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but ministers are specially called to live as exemplars of this lifestyle. Thus, students in the Seminary are asked to affirm the doctrinal basis of the University and standards for conduct that agree with those beliefs. The Seminary asks all its students and faculty to affirm these foundational documents as well as the Covenant with their signature. This is a way of demonstrating our affirmation of the basic tenets of the Christian faith and commitment to a lifestyle worthy of the Lord Jesus and worthy of emulation by others. It is anticipated that these biblically rooted statements of faith and practice will serve as a basis for unity, mutual love and respect, encouragement, and accountability in the spirit of Hebrews 10:24-25.

Dispositional and Behavioral Standards

As ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Seminary students are expected to conform to dispositional and behavioral standards that are consistent with biblical teaching, sound doctrine, and the commitments they make at the start of their program. The College of Theology has adopted the following dispositional and behavioral standards for its students derived from biblical principles and professional expectations within the churches that it serves. Although these standards are not exhaustive, they represent the essential values and qualities that should characterize gospel ministers. Students who fail to adhere to or demonstrate such dispositions may be subject to disciplinary action.

Choosing to grow in love, and desiring to become more and more like Jesus Christ in their character, ministers of the gospel choose to pursue practices that will help them love, and they choose to let go of behaviors that are not loving. Accordingly, ministers of the gospel will:

- Embrace truth
- Display a heart for growth, transformation, and learning
- Demonstrate grace and respect
- Promote peace
- Affirm the value of people
- Maintain sexual purity
- Avoid excess
- Seek first God's Kingdom

See the Appendices section of this Manual for additional details related to these dispositional and behavioral standards, including a fuller explanation of each standard. See the University Policy Handbook for additional information related to the enforcement of these standards.

Significance of Doctrinal, Ethical, and Covenantal Alignment

Doctrinal, ethical, and covenantal alignment are vital to the health of the institution, as the faculty and administration strive to fulfill the mission of developing godly leaders, ministers, and scholars.

Evangelical unity, with respect to doctrine and morality, represents a crucial basis for ministerial preparation just as it represents a crucial basis for gospel ministry. Hence, the University's foundational documents, the Covenant, and the dispositional and behavioral standards above have not been created for purposes of legalistic compulsion or in a coercive spirit. Rather, they represent commitments and guidelines that have been developed for the purpose of living freely together before the Lord.

Since we were called to freedom, we have resolved to live freely by refusing to use our freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Instead, we consider it an opportunity to serve one another in love and in ways that honor Christ Jesus (Galatians 5:13). All who enter into this covenantal community do so freely, but they do so with full understanding that the community strives to cultivate the character of Christ daily. All who participate in the community are encouraged to be on guard against legalism on one hand and lawlessness on the other, as well as the ungodly tendency to stir up strife and dissension unnecessarily.

College of Theology Covenantal Standards Committee

COT's Covenantal Standards Committee is comprised of administrators and faculty from the College. The Committee's central purpose is to ensure that theology students conform to dispositional and behavioral standards during their time at the University. The Committee is tasked with reviewing cases in which students act in ways that do not align with established standards. Since these standards are grounded in and reflective of the doctrinal, ethical, and covenantal bases of the College's community, the board reviews concerns related to each of these areas as necessary. Additionally, the Committee reviews and recommends revisions to dispositional and behavioral standards as well as policies related to these standards. While the Committee may communicate directly with students as necessary, it normally issues recommendations for action to the Code of Conduct Committee.

Interdenominational Dynamics and Diversity

GCTS equips scholars, ministers, and Christian leaders within the context of a denominationally diverse environment that is shaped by an interdenominational mission and vision. The faculty includes representatives from more than a dozen denominational traditions that span the evangelical spectrum. Likewise, the student body reflects a similar diversity of religious heritage and experience. Denominational and theological diversity within the faculty and student body results directly from intentional recruitment and hiring practices that attempt to maintain a body of professors who are well equipped to serve the various needs of their constituency. Nonetheless, we must intentionally strive for unity in addition to diversity if we are to be effective in fulfilling our mission together. This requires careful thought about doctrinal dialogue, genuine love for one another, and a resolve to be “quick to hear, slow to speak, [and] slow to anger” (James 1:19).

The Value of an Interdenominational Education

Christians tend to be passionate about their convictions, and rightfully so. Unfortunately, passionate conviction sometimes generates more heat than light and leaves the impression that we are a quarrelsome people who are prone to fighting over minor details. The book of Jude commands us to “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), but this does not negate other biblical teaching that reminds us that “the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil” (2 Timothy 2:24). Taken as a whole, the Bible instructs us to contend for the faith without becoming contentious with one another.

The diversity of the theological environment at GCU offers students a unique opportunity to grow in wisdom and in knowledge as they mature in their convictions and gain skill for leading God’s people. Students are never asked to renounce their denominational heritage or waiver on their convictions about essential or nonessential doctrines. Rather, they are asked to ground their convictions firmly in the Word of God and to sharpen their understandings through conversation with others of like mind and faith, just as iron sharpens iron.

Furthermore, the experience of engaging other believers who bring unique points of view into theological dialogue requires students to learn how to communicate deep convictions with charity and respect. These attitudes should characterize all Christian dialogue but are absolutely nonnegotiable for Christian leaders and ministers. This approach to theological dialogue is modeled by the faculty of the college and expected of students who are learning to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) so that they are able to lead others to do the same. After all, there is but “one body and one Spirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Evangelical Unity in an Interdenominational Environment

Students are never asked to renounce their denominational heritage or waiver on their convictions about essential or nonessential doctrines. Rather, they are asked to ground their convictions firmly in the Word of God and to sharpen their understandings through conversation with others of like mind and faith. With such diversity, it is absolutely critical for the faculty and student body to diligently guard the unity we have in Christ Jesus. Toward that end, the Seminary’s faculty and students are encouraged to make key distinctions between essential and nonessential points of doctrine in dialogue within the classroom and beyond.

In an increasingly post-Christian world, the need to unite as fellow believers without diminishing the wonderful diversity of Christian expression could not be greater. But any brand of unity that requires a compromise with respect to the essential truths of the gospel will prove too costly and, indeed, deadly from a spiritual perspective. Rather, Jesus insisted on a unity rooted in our deep love for him and a commitment to love one another. This may be described as evangelical unity, which is to suggest that this unity centers on the *evangel* or good news of Jesus Christ. As we draw near to our Lord in loving obedience, we also draw near to one another as His body and bride. This sort of unity precludes the rejection of truth because it depends fundamentally on our Lord, who is the very embodiment of truth (John 14:6).

Distinguishing between Essential and Nonessential Beliefs

In order to model the value of evangelical unity to students, faculty at GCTS are careful to make key distinctions in their teaching and classroom interaction. Theologians and other Christian leaders have long distinguished between doctrine that is absolutely essential to the Christian faith and other teachings that, although important, are not fundamental to Christianity. Essential doctrines are those core teachings that distinguish Christians from non-Christians and must be believed in order for one to be a genuine follower of the Lord Jesus. These teachings include the doctrine that Jesus is fully God and fully human, that he died on a cross in the place of sinners to secure salvation for all who believe, and that he was raised again to life. Similarly, the church has insisted that all who know God in truth affirm the doctrine of the Trinity and regard salvation to be a matter of grace that is granted through faith in Christ. Denial of essential doctrine represents a denial of the Christian worldview.

Nonessential teachings are significant because they safeguard the integrity and health of essential doctrines and because they derive either directly or indirectly from the teaching of Scripture. Examples include the form and meaning of baptism, the organization and governance of the church, qualifications for ministers, styles of worship music, and the timing of Christ's return in relation to other events of the last days. Christians frequently disagree about various nonessential teachings but disagreement about these doctrines does not amount to a denial of the faith. In other words, those who disagree on matters that are not absolutely essential to the faith, while affirming core doctrines, have in no way ceased to be genuine brothers and sisters in Christ.

Diversity at Grand Canyon Theological Seminary

GCTS is concerned to ensure that its faculty and student body is diverse with respect to gender, race, and ethnicity in addition to cultivating theological and denominational diversity. Diversity within the Seminary at each of these points is a value that aligns with and is informed by the non-discrimination and diversity policies of the larger University within which the Seminary is embedded. Thus, GCTS proactively works to create a diverse community that serves the needs of a wide variety of people, churches, and Christian ministries.

In the midst of this rich diversity, the University has consistently cultivated unity around the core doctrines and common practices of the Christian faith. We believe that this diversity and unity reflects the nature and the heart of the Triune God whom we serve. Furthermore, we believe that all people, without exception, from womb to natural death, bear the image of God and have been designed to reflect His glory, love, and creativity. This induces us to treat every individual with equal value, importance, compassion, and just dignity before God.

Thus, true diversity and real unity not only enriches the education endeavor at GCTS but also is critical to the Seminary's mission as it reflects the diversity of the social environment of our city, state, and

country. Maintaining diversity and unity, then, requires a measure of Holy Spirit given gentleness in Christ (Galatians 6:1-2), His tolerance, love, and grace (Galatians 5:22-23), commensurate with the dignity and value of every human life (Philippians 2:1-5).

GCU Diversity Statement

GCU is a Christian institution that embraces a biblical worldview that outlines a responsibility to fulfill the Great Commandments, which, simply stated, are "to love God and to love our neighbor." We are a community of people who value the pursuit of truth and find great understanding in the convergence of viewpoints, backgrounds, and ideas. Therefore, we will provide an environment where learners can openly discuss and debate to gain understanding.

We welcome students from all walks of life, which has contributed to a growing diversity within our population. Our diversity encompasses a multitude of dimensions, including age, national origin, race, color, religion, gender, veteran status, and more. We believe that all people, without exception, bear the image of God and have been designed to reflect His love and creativity.

Our Christian perspective compels us to treat every individual equally with respect and compassion. All community members deserve a comfortable space to express their feelings, so that every voice is heard. All members of the university community will be welcomed, valued, and provided safety in this community.

Finally, diversity not only enriches the educational endeavor, it is critical to it. It will help prepare us for the varied world in which we reside. Maintaining a diverse environment requires a measure of tolerance and understanding commensurate with the dignity and value of all human life. In sum, GCU values diversity because it values every student and employee entrusted to its care.

Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Diversity at GCTS

GCTS strives to become a premier interdenominational, evangelical seminary that is well positioned to serve the educational needs of a wide variety of churches and denominations including underserved communities of faith. In an increasingly post-Christian world, the need to unite as fellow believers without diminishing the wonderful diversity of Christian expression could not be greater. In addition to diverse theological viewpoints, backgrounds, and ideas, GCTS is committed to increasing representation within the faculty and student body by women and minority groups.

In the same way that the Lord Jesus unites believers in fellowship without regard for ethnicity, social status, or gender (Galatians 3:28) and welcomes worshipers from every nation, people, and language (Revelation 5:9), GCTS affirms that diversity is both good and necessary. GCTS welcomes students from all walks of life and from the broad spectrum of evangelical churches. Thus, the Seminary enjoys a wonderfully diverse student body with respect to gender, race, and ethnicity.

Serving the educational needs of a diverse student body will require a consistent and deliberate effort to ensure that faculty hiring takes this diversity into account so that the makeup of the faculty increasingly reflects that of the students it serves. Thus, gender and ethnic diversity represents an emerging initiative at GCTS. Over the past few years, the faculty and administration have increasingly recognized and embraced the need to proactively strive for gender, racial, and ethnic diversity. A central objective relates to the need to recruit a highly qualified faculty that more closely reflects the demographic makeup of the Seminary's student body. An initial step toward meeting this objective was the formation of a Diversity Task Force.

The Diversity Task Force is made up of five members, representing diversity in many ways. They have a diversity of roles at GCTS: one seminary administrator, two seminary faculty, and two members of the

Advisory Board. They are also diverse with regard to gender (three women and two men), ethnicity (three Hispanic, one African-American, and one Caucasian) and with regard to denominational heritage (one Presbyterian, one Church of God, one non-denominational, and two different Baptist denominations).

The Task Force is charged with three major initiatives. The first relates to recruiting faculty for GCTS. The taskforce has reviewed the data on GCTS faculty and students and the hiring pool when job openings are posted at GCU. Armed with that knowledge, they have set benchmarks for hiring initiatives over time. They have contributed and will continue to contribute recommendations of qualified candidates for openings in an effort to increase the ethnic, gender, and denominational diversity. They have also contributed strategies for recruiting minority candidates through networks, boards, and agencies with which they are affiliated.

A second initiative of the taskforce is the commitment to raising awareness of diversity among all constituents in the Seminary, particularly faculty and students. The taskforce will serve in an advisory capacity throughout the year, helping to increase an awareness of the value and the importance of diversity. They will encourage faculty and students to notice and celebrate diversity throughout seminary life.

The third component of their work arises from the second initiative. Having noticed and celebrated diversity, the taskforce will promote active ministry among minority people, the underserved, and the marginalized. The taskforce will contribute significantly to preparing students for ministry in the city where many are forgotten or overlooked.

The Task Force is not intended to be a long-term responsibility for this group of five members, but the initiative of promoting and celebrating diversity in the Seminary is an ongoing focus. Celebrating and caring for God's creation of humankind must be maintained at the forefront of the work at GCTS.

Theological Studies at Grand Canyon Theological Seminary

The Seminary's curriculum is designed to help students apply truth from the text of Scripture to the particular context in which they serve. This intentionally places emphasis on the vital connection between doctrine and life. At the same time, GCTS intentionally builds community within the classroom and facilitates the development of lifelong friendships and peer networks in each program. This combination of curricular and co-curricular theological education results in an engaging and rewarding educational experience, designed to help students achieve a wide variety of educational goals that align with their unique gifts and calling.

The Purpose of Theological Studies

Churches today are in need of leaders who can rightly divide the Word of truth, teach sound doctrine, and equip the people of God for every good work. During the course of your studies at GCTS, you will strengthen what you believe while discovering new biblical and theological insights. We aim to train students to offer biblical responses to contemporary questions by establishing principles, which prepares them to minister within a wide variety of contexts and situations.

Given the hostile climate in which, oftentimes, Christians need to defend what they believe to be true, it is vital for students of the Bible and theology to know what they believe and to become skillful in providing reasonable justifications. Moreover, due to the reality of having the world's religions in our midst, Christian leaders need to be fully aware of the doctrinal disparities and differences of worldview between Christianity and other religious traditions. The better-equipped Christian leaders are, the more useful they will be in serving the church and the world.

Our graduate courses prepare students to instruct new converts in the Christian faith, and equip them to disciple others with the intention of making leaders. In addition, our courses are designed to provide students with a greater theological knowledge and depth in order to make disciples with understanding. As a result, students will be prepared to explain their faith with clarity and respond appropriately to questions as they arise. In the end, the Seminary's faculty strives to provide crucial tools for ministry so that every student is equipped for the ministry to which they have been called.

Academic, Spiritual, and Professional Development

An academic program that prepares ministers must provide a breadth and depth of theological knowledge while developing character and skill for ministry. This basic approach enables students to grasp the practical value of theological concepts while learning how to apply those concepts in real life situations. A theology degree, however, should not be earned simply to gain "head knowledge." Rather, a student should pursue theological understanding in conjunction with personal spiritual growth and development.

As we seek to understand God's Word, we must also strive to grow in our relationship with God and others. In other words, the study of God's Word should transform your life, enabling you to more fully and faithfully love the Lord and serve those around you. Graduate students should view their program of study as a training ground for ministry, and should therefore ask practical questions when they are studying the various courses they will take. Students should know that they will be expected to commit themselves to deep thinking and consistent devotional practice throughout the program of study.

Strategy of the Curriculum

GCTS's academic programs are designed to teach students to rightly interpret the text of Scripture and apply biblical truth in various ministry contexts. This strategy of guiding students from the biblical text to

real-life contexts lies at the heart of the entire curriculum. Each program of study addresses key instructional areas, or learning domains, that help ensure that students gain foundational knowledge, cultivate Christian character, and develop competencies needed for ministry. The Seminary designs programs that give significant attention to each of the following learning domains:

- Biblical Foundations
- Theological and Historical Foundations
- Spiritual and Professional Formation
- Contextualization and Cross-Cultural Studies

These domains provide balance and structure to the curriculum by ensuring that students gain understanding biblical teaching and Christian doctrine and develop character while gaining practical wisdom and skill.

Co-Curriculum

GCTS makes a series of co-curricular opportunities and resources available on campus and online for traditional and non-traditional students alike. “Co-curriculum” refers to various opportunities, activities, learning experiences, and programs that complement and augment academic coursework. These activities and experiences are not required within the curriculum proper, but they are designed to expand and further student learning by supporting objectives related to academic, spiritual, and professional formation. Examples of co-curricular opportunities at the Seminary include the following:

Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies (JBTS): JBTS is an open-source online journal in the field of biblical and theological studies. Written from an inter-denominational evangelical point of view, the journal is reviewed by an editorial board of faculty that represent several academic institutions throughout the world. JBTS seeks to bridge the existing gap by providing high-level scholarship and research to students. This journal also seeks to model good research and writing, so that students can more confidently engage in the field. In essence, this journal is a collection of professors’ writing for the sake of their students. Visit jbtonline.org for more information.

Ministry Forum: Ministry Forum is a faculty-led, student-learning community that serves to connect theology students with pastors, missionaries, Christian leaders, and philosophers for the sake of education, mentoring, relationship building, and mutual encouragement. Monthly sessions feature panels consisting of faculty members and external guests. Videos from these events are posted on YouTube and shared with theology students via email and classroom announcements.

Trending Faith: Trending Faith is a regularly recorded video series featuring the campus pastor and Dean of the College of Theology in a dialogue that responds to questions submitted by the audience. The series is an attempt to model theological and pastoral engagement of current topics of relevance to the church and the society. Videos are posted on YouTube and shared through the College of Theology’s blog on a regular basis.

Living Faith Blog: Living Faith is a blog hosted by GCU’s College of Theology that interacts with a variety of biblical, theological, and practical topics. GCTS faculty, undergraduate faculty, and specially invited guests of the College author the blog’s content. Posts provide practical and biblical advice from a Christian worldview for living our faith in the midst of an increasingly secularized world. In addition, the blog’s authors wrestle with cultural topics and issues that challenge how we live out our faith as believers. Visit blogs.gcu.edu/college-of-theology/ for more information.

GCU Speaker Series: Each semester, various Christian leaders and scholars visit GCU's main campus as part of the GCU Speaker Series. Recent guests have included Peter Williams of Tyndale House (December of 2014), Paul Copan of Palm Beach Atlantic University (February, 2015), J.P. Moreland of Talbot Theological Seminary (April, 2015), Tom Schreiner of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (January, 2016), and John Lennox of Oxford University (February, 2016). Videos from these events are posted on YouTube and shared with theology students via the Living Faith blog, email, and classroom announcements.

These co-curricular opportunities for enrichment and spiritual growth have proven fruitful in the lives of students across the country. As students become aware of the resources they have available to them from home, they report being encouraged in their walk with Christ and their spiritual growth.

Introduction to Graduate Academic Programs

Students may earn a Master of Divinity (MDiv) or a Master of Arts (MA) degree in a specialized area of ministry. The MDiv is the basic degree for professional ministry preparation and is designed for students who intend to serve in local churches, Christian organizations, and other ministerial roles. MA degrees are focused, ministry-oriented degrees that equip students with knowledge and skill for particular areas of ministry, leadership, and service.

Master of Divinity

The Master of Divinity is the standard degree for professional ministry preparation and is designed for students who intend to serve in local churches, Christian organizations, and other ministerial roles. The Master of Divinity program offers comprehensive biblical and theological knowledge while developing skills necessary for effective Christian ministry. This program provides a strong basis for ordained, professional ministry and a substantial foundation for advanced study in preparation for an academic career. The standard degree program features a foundational, pastorally oriented program of study, while additional tracks are offered for those who desire to specialize in a particular area of ministry.

Master of Divinity Residency Program

The residency component of the MDiv degree is strategically designed to further student learning in a conference-style environment at key points within the program of study. Residency courses provide excellent opportunities for students to work collaboratively with professors and colleagues to deepen understandings, enhance skills, and cultivate lifelong relationships. In order to participate in residency courses, students will travel to Phoenix three times during the course of the program, which is about once per year while earning an MDiv degree.

Each residency course is offered in a week-long intensive format that allows students to focus on key aspects of the curriculum while engaging professors and peers. While in residence, students fulfill the major objectives of a designated course while partnering with others working to complete the same class. Each course involves preliminary work that is completed prior to arrival in Phoenix, on-site work completed during the week of residency, and post-work which is completed after students leave campus.

Training in the Biblical Languages for MDiv Students

As the standard degree for ordained professional ministry, the MDiv is designed to train students who are called to serve in local churches, Christian organizations, and in other ministerial settings. Because the MDiv is a pastorally oriented degree, one of the primary objectives is to train competent expositors and teachers of the Scriptures. Thus, the biblical languages are an important component of any MDiv

program. Unfortunately, when many students finish their seminary education, their language skills fall into disuse due to ministerial responsibilities. For this reason, GCTS approaches language training with the goal that students will continue to use Greek and Hebrew beyond their time in seminary.

In order to achieve this, the Seminary has adopted a tools-based curriculum in learning the biblical languages. Students will still learn the foundations of grammar and syntax in conjunction with how to use tools like Accordance Bible Software. Developing the ability to use such tools gives the student the ability to access these languages to do serious analysis of the original languages while balancing the demands of ministry.

At GCTS, each student will take both elementary Hebrew and elementary Greek. Each course is designed to teach the foundations of these languages while simultaneously developing their ability to use tools. Moreover, students will continue to use the languages and tools throughout the program. By the end of their education, students will have grown in their proficiency of the biblical languages and language tools like Accordance, making them more likely to use them long after their seminary education.

Master of Arts

GCTS's Master of Arts programs prepare ministry leaders with specialized training by combining broad theological studies with practical applications of gospel ministry. Curriculum for each MA degree explores Old and New Testament foundations, biblical interpretation, Christian doctrine, ministerial ethics, and a specialized area of ministry. Coursework also guides students through the process of preparing spiritually and professionally in order to shepherd and lead others with grace, compassion, and skill. Multiple MA programs are available to prepare students for various areas of ministerial specialization.

Graduate Certificates

GCTS offers four Graduate Certificates of Completion and one Post-Master of Arts Certificate of Completion. These programs offer focused, certificate-level theological and ministerial preparation in specific areas of study. Programs include the following: Graduate Certificate of Completion in Biblical Foundations, Graduate Certificate of Completion in Global Ministry, Graduate Certificate of Completion in Worship Leadership, and Post-Master of Arts in Theology: Introductory Biblical Languages Certificate.

Preparation for Ministry

Ministerial students will be wise to prepare faithfully for ministry in a way that does not disqualify them from service after graduation. This preparation will require attention to the academic, spiritual, and professional aspects of ministerial training. This will also require careful attention to one's life and doctrine during what may be a lengthy season of preparation.

GCTS's Master's programs cast an ambitious, overarching vision for student formation. While its programs aim to offer rigorous academic courses of study, they also endeavor to integrate a robust commitment to developing the whole student in coordination with local churches, within the context of mentoring relationships, and through required supervised ministry experiences. These goals are conveyed in various aspects of each programmatic description. In essence, all of the Seminary's programs direct significant attention at the inward formation of Christ-like character and the cultivation of an ability to minister with wisdom and sensitivity in specific ministerial contexts and as leaders within the public domain.

Biblical Qualifications for Ministry

Students who sense God's calling to ministry will be wise to consider what is required of a minister, biblically speaking. Qualifications for ministers are listed in several New Testament passages including 1 Timothy 3 where the apostle Paul writes, "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach" (1 Timothy 3:1-2a). The apostle points then proceeds to describe the nobility of character required of all who seek to fill the role. Essentially, such persons must be "above reproach." While many things are of some value in ministry, Paul clearly indicates that the pastor's character is absolutely indispensable. In fact, those who lack depth of Christian character need not apply.

Why, then, are the qualifications for ministers so rigorous? The wisdom of Paul's instruction relates to the fact that an overseer will lead God's people as they grow up into the fullness of Christ through the careful study and application of God's Word. Simply stated, one whose life has not been transformed profoundly by the power of the gospel is hardly in a position to lead others in this way of life. And one whose life does not clearly commend the Lordship of Christ will lack credibility in exhorting others to obey Jesus' teachings.

Seminary Preparation and the Local Church

No other environment offers quite the same opportunity to cultivate unity with fellow Christians as the local church. It is easy to speak of unity theoretically and in isolation from others. It is another thing, altogether, to speak of unity when dealing with real human beings who are working out their salvation in community with others who have not yet been perfected.

GCTS develops Christian leaders, ministers, and scholars in partnership with local churches. This process requires meaningful church involvement on the part of students. But it also depends substantially on mentoring relationships and opportunities offered by seasoned gospel ministers and Christian leaders. In cooperation with the Seminary, professional experience and development are provided through a combination of mentoring relationships, supervised ministry requirements, and internship experiences. These experiences, which take place within the context of a particular congregation or ministry, provide vital opportunities for spiritual and professional growth and development.

GCTS is not the church and, although ministry regularly happens within the context of the Seminary, nothing can replace the intimate fellowship, biblical teaching and worship, and consistent accountability that are available in a local congregation of believers. Thus, we encourage you to join us in the commitment to remain meaningfully involved in the church for your sake, for the sake of all who will benefit from your involvement, and for the sake of the Lord who has called us to such things.

Spiritual and Professional Formation

Within the context of the Seminary's community, significant attention is given to spiritual and professional formation (SPF) in particular. Formal learning domains related to SPF structure the curriculum for each graduate program. In addition to the formal learning domains that structure the curriculum, a series of targets related to SPF have been articulated by the faculty and embedded within each graduate program. These targets ensure that students are in continual dialogue about issues related to formation with faculty, their peers, and ministry supervisors throughout their time in seminary.

Spiritual and Professional Formation Learning Domains and Targets

The Seminary concentrates on four targets in the area of spiritual formation:

- Spiritual disciplines
- Emotional maturity
- Soul care
- Mentoring others in spiritual formation

The order and emphasis on these particular aspects of spiritual formation are intended to cultivate mature leaders who are healthy and equipped to develop other Christians in various contexts of ministry service.

Additionally, the Seminary concentrates on three targets in the area of professional development:

- Discovering one's giftedness to serve in specific ministry settings
- Professionalism in ministry service
- Developing a plan for ministry placement

The order and emphasis on these particular aspects of professional development are intended to posture students to serve effectively in particular areas of ministry either in the local church, Christian organizations, and/or in the academy.

Spiritual and Professional Formation for Traditional Students (Main Campus)

For GCTS's traditional students, the focus on SPF utilizes various informal and formal opportunities to enhance this essential aspect of the program. In addition to classroom lectures and discussions, which include attention to practical application of the specific course content in view, informal interactions between students and professors outside of classroom settings are also vital. From these discussions, more long-term mentoring relationships can and often do develop as well.

Of course, other more formal types of settings provide a good environment for SPF to be cultivated with greater depth. For instance, the monthly Ministry Forum sessions hosted on campus supply great opportunities for students and faculty to explore various theological discussions and how these relate to

the local church and to the community and world at large. Various student clubs create a regular time for interaction in smaller group settings for students and professors to share their thoughts in more personal environments where they can also support one another with prayer and counsel. In these ways and others, SPF is cultivated in the culture of the overall GCTS experience for traditional students in strategic and intentional ways.

Spiritual and Professional Formation for Non-Traditional Students (Online and Cohort)

By design, emphasis on SPF is embedded in every graduate course at GCTS. This allows each faculty member to engage in mentoring in a way that complements mentoring relationships students have developed with their ministry supervisors. Because of the individual and group capacities in the Learning Management System, faculty members can have private or public conversations about the SPF DQs and areas of personal challenge the students are experiencing. Once again, because of the online classroom structure, no student is left out of the conversation because of shyness on the part of one or overexuberance of another. Each student must carry his or her personal weight in the dialog related to each topic: academic, spiritual, or professional.

Along with the benefit of a carefully designed and collaboratively developed centralized curriculum, student-learning outcomes are regularly assessed and adjustments are made as necessary. These features help ensure that GCTS students receive a strong educational experience with demonstrable outcomes. These advantages offer non-traditional students a sound educational experience while allowing them to complete their degree without resigning from their current ministry and without the challenges associated with relocating to a traditional campus.

Spiritual and Professional Formation Discussion Questions

This general approach to online education creates an ideal environment for the formation of students within a graduate, theological program. High levels of interaction within the online classroom and the opportunities students have to develop relationships make it possible for professors to form students spiritually and professionally throughout their program of study. A series of discussion questions (DQs) related to spiritual and professional formation are developed alongside regular academic DQs for each graduate course created at the Seminary. These are reviewed and approved by the Seminary's Spiritual and Professional Formation Committee on a regular basis to ensure that each student's program of study addresses specified targets related to formation. As a result, students are required to interact with peers and professors every week during their time at the Seminary on a variety of key issues related to formation.

Spiritual and Professional Formation within the MDiv Residency Program

SPF constitutes an intentional aspect of residency requirements for the MDiv program. The residency component of the MDiv degree is strategically designed to further student learning for MDiv students in a conference-style environment at key points within the program of study. Residency courses provide excellent opportunities for students to work collaboratively with professors and colleagues to deepen understandings, enhance skills, and cultivate lifelong relationships. In order to participate in residency courses, students will travel to Phoenix three times during the course of the program, which is about once per year while earning an MDiv degree.

Internships and Supervised Ministry Experience

Graduate students are required to participate in mentoring relationships with an identified ministry supervisor early in their program of study. These relationships are formalized near the beginning of students' academic career in order to ensure consistency of accountability and support as they progress

through their program of study. At strategic points within the program of study, supervisors also oversee the fulfillment of ministry experience requirements as specified within selected courses. The total number of required supervised ministry hours will differ, depending on the length of the program of study and the nature of the program. Specific requirements are identified within the course descriptions for each program.

Ministry Supervisors

As noted above, GCU's Doctrinal and Ethical Positions Statement and the College of Theology Covenant provide a solid basis for covenantal community within GCTS. Furthermore, it is important that our students fulfill their supervised ministry requirements in organizations where there is agreement on these foundational beliefs. Supervisors, therefore, are required to read the Statements and the Covenant, affirm the documents, and agree to supervise and guide the student in a manner that is consistent with them.

Internship and Supervised Ministry Committee

The Internship and Supervised Ministry Committee is a faculty-based committee created to ensure internships and other ministry experiences provide supervised, practical experience that complements the classroom learning offered in the programs of study.

The committee creates, reviews, and revises policies related to theology internships and supervised ministry in order to address needs as they arise, to promote best practices, and to ensure alignment with the University's mission. The committee is responsible for communicating policies and best practices to students, faculty, internship providers, and the University's operational teams. Committee members provide approval to internship and supervised ministry applications and maintain a list of approved providers.

Additionally, the committee assesses internship and supervised ministry opportunities, evaluates internship providers for doctrinal and ethical alignment, and approves proposed supervised ministry experiences completed for college credit. Since internships are not currently required within GCTS programs, internships are informal and thus do not require committee approval.

Internships

In addition to participating meaningfully in a local church during the course of studies at GCTS, the Seminary strongly recommends that all students participate in an internship at a local church or other Christian ministry. Currently, internships are not required for academic credit within GCTS's graduate programs. Regardless, internships provide experiences in which conceptual learning merges with practical understanding. These experiences should be guided by ministry supervisors. Internships offer experience, development, reflection, and growth and offer students a glimpse of what awaits them as they enter vocational ministry. Internship opportunities are posted regularly on the Career Services job board. Students may participate in an internship informally without earning credit at any point during their program of study.

Finding Opportunities for Ministry: Career Services

GCU's Office of Career Services provides resources, professional knowledge, and support to help you successfully transition from academics into a purposeful career and satisfying employment. Career Services also offers several career services tools to help you discover potential career paths, build a resume, search for employment, and more. The University's job board, which is maintained by Career Services, features internship and employment opportunities for GCTS students and alumni.

Appendices

GCU Doctrinal Statement

WE BELIEVE the Bible, in the Old and New Testament Scriptures to be inspired, the only infallible, true and authoritative Word of God.

WE BELIEVE that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in God the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

WE BELIEVE in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. Being fully God and perfect man He performed miracles and lived a sinless life.

WE BELIEVE Jesus Christ suffered a vicarious and atoning death through the shedding of His blood. He was buried and on the third day was resurrected in His body; after which He ascended to be seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

WE BELIEVE that mankind was originally created in the image and likeness of God, and free from sin. Through the temptation of Satan, they transgressed the command of God and fell from their original righteousness, whereby all people have inherited a sinful nature that is opposed to God, and are thus under condemnation. As soon as they are capable of moral action, they become actual transgressors.

WE BELIEVE that for salvation of lost and sinful people, the regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life. We believe that the Holy Spirit is fully God and is worshipped and glorified with the Father and Son. He divinely inspired the scriptures, convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, leads Christ's Church in truth and is the Teacher and Comforter sent by Jesus Christ.

WE BELIEVE that salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone; that salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered freely to all who exercise faith in Jesus Christ. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; those who are saved unto the resurrection of the living and those who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

WE BELIEVE in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ as one holy catholic and apostolic Church, Christ's Body and Bride ministering reconciliation to a lost world. As ambassadors for the Kingdom of God and the Church, we affirm that evangelism and engagement in societal issues are both part of our Christian duty; both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and humanity, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ.

WE BELIEVE the message of salvation proclaimed by Christ's Church is an indictment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, denouncing evil and injustice wherever it exists by lovingly ushering in the good news that Christ reconciled the world to Himself.

GCU Ethical Positions Statement

Grand Canyon University's ethical commitments derive either directly or indirectly from its Doctrinal Statement, which affirms the Bible alone as the "infallible, true and authoritative Word of God." Ethical discourse must be carried out with sensitivity and respect, but the Bible serves as the final standard and authority in all matters of faith and practice including ethics. GCU is committed to affirming moral truth in a loving and merciful way that helps rather than hurts, by building up rather than tearing down through harsh judgment and self-righteousness. In this spirit, the University offers this statement of its ethical positions. While it would be impractical for the University to articulate precise ethical guidelines for every possible situation, the principles that follow should provide sufficient clarity for sound moral reasoning within the classroom and across the campus. It is our hope that the statement will provide greater clarity, unity and alignment across the University on matters of ethics and morality.

Position on Ethics and Moral Truth

Christian ethics is the set of moral principles derived from the Bible and rooted in the life-changing message of Jesus Christ, which provide guidance and wisdom for all of life. As a Christian institution, GCU is committed to distinctively Christian beliefs, values, and practices rooted in the notion that God intelligently and purposefully ordered the entire universe including human creatures in ways that are consistent with His good nature and will. The university affirms that God has revealed His moral will to humanity in part through the way He created the universe and humans and in part through Holy Scripture. This means that an objective difference exists between what is right and what is wrong. Furthermore, it is possible to know the difference between right and wrong through observation and reflection on creation and in light of scriptural teaching. In certain situations moral absolutes are difficult to apply with certainty due to the brokenness of the world in which we live and the inherent limitations of human reason. Therefore, humility is appropriate and necessary at all points.

Position on Creation

The doctrine of creation is foundational to the Christian worldview and central to the Bible's emphasis on God's creative purposes and work to restore all things through Christ Jesus. As a Christian institution, GCU is committed to distinctively biblical understandings of God's role in the work of creation and His purpose in creating the heavens and the earth. The University affirms the God of the Bible as the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth and the Creator of human beings. As a result, the earth is the Lord's and must be cultivated and cared for in ways that honor God and align with His creative purposes. The University's position on creation entails an understanding of the universe's origins that is supernatural rather than merely natural. Nonetheless, the University remains open to a range of understandings about the manner by which God brought the universe and human beings into existence.

Position on Human Life

Human life is a great good and a precious gift from God who specially created humanity in a way that uniquely reflects His image and likeness. As a Christian institution, GCU affirms that every human being is precious to God and should be treated with the dignity and respect appropriate to creatures who bear the image and likeness of the Creator. The University affirms the sanctity of human life and the intrinsic value of every human being. All humans must be regarded as persons who retain full personhood from the moment of conception until the point of natural death.

Position on Salvation

The Christian doctrine of salvation derives from the Bible and centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ. As a Christian institution, GCU is committed to distinctively biblical understandings of Jesus, the nature and means of salvation, and humanity's profound need for salvation. The University affirms that true salvation is offered to fallen creatures by a loving and merciful God on the basis of grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ alone. Salvation through Christ involves renewal of the whole person and,

therefore, should result in the transformation of individuals. In turn, those individuals should live in such a way that the communities in which they live are positively affected by this transformation.

Position on Marriage and Sexuality

Christian views on marriage and sexuality derive from biblical teaching, are deeply rooted in the created order, and ultimately reflect the wonderful relationship between Christ and His Church. As a Christian university, GCU honors and affirms the teaching of Jesus and traditional, biblical Christian positions on these topics by affirming marriage as a sacred union between a man and a woman. Furthermore, the university affirms that sexual relationships are designed by God to be expressed solely within the context of a marriage between a husband and wife. Marriage and sexuality should be regarded as good gifts from a wise God who best understands their powerful potential for the common good and maximal human flourishing. When rightly ordered and appropriately enjoyed, human sexuality bears unparalleled capacity, not only for procreation, but also for pleasure, satisfaction and the deepening of relationships. Therefore, as a matter of morality and faithful witness, members of GCU's community are encouraged to trust what God has revealed about these things, and to respond and act with sensitivity, grace, and compassion.

Position on Christian Education

Christian education is the process of forming human beings through the transmission of knowledge, cultivation of competencies, and development of godly wisdom. The University affirms that education relates to the whole person and should assist individuals in finding and living with purpose. Education that is profoundly Christian combines the knowledge of God and His creation while honoring the Lord Jesus and maintaining the integrity of the academic disciplines. As a Christian institution, GCU is committed to distinctively Christian approaches toward education that are grounded in theological conviction, development of sound character, and the capacity to live in ways that honor God, benefit others and contribute significantly to the common good.

Position on Academic Freedom

Christian education requires the freedom necessary to explore and discover the riches of wisdom that God has revealed in the natural world and in Scripture. As a Christian institution, GCU recognizes that critical thought, open dialogue, and a fair presentation of all major views is vital to higher education, but is indispensable for genuinely Christian instruction. The University affirms that a proper balance between academic freedom and responsibility must be maintained for the sake of students, as well as the integrity and mission of the institution. Within Christian education the commitments of the Christian worldview should guide and constrain the educational process. All who choose to participate in the life of the University should strive to sustain an appropriate balance between liberty and responsibility in accord with the purposes for which the institution exists.

Position on Religious Liberty

Religious liberty is an essential mark of any free state and aligns with the theological principle that God alone is Lord of the conscience. As a Christian institution, GCU recognizes that government has been ordained by God and that the state merits the loyalty and respect of its citizens. Resistance to the state is only appropriate when the state requires disobedience to the commands of God. The University affirms that Christians are simultaneously members of the Church and citizens of the state, and thus bear responsibility within both the Church and state. Christian faith is a personal matter but the implications of faith in Christ should not and cannot remain private. Anyone who follows Christ in truth should strive to live in the way that Christ lived both in private and in public.

Position on Christian Unity

Christian unity is rooted in the biblical teaching that the Church is one body united by one Spirit, a common faith and one baptism. Moreover, all believers hope in the same Lord Jesus and worship the

one God and Father of all. As a Christian institution, GCU is committed to biblical unity and Christ-honoring cooperation with all people and institutions of like mind and faith. The University affirms the spiritual unity of believers in Jesus Christ and the need to intentionally cultivate unity based on the essentials of the gospel, Christian fellowship, and cooperation in basic works of compassion and Christian service. While GCU is not a church, it exists in part to serve the church and is guided by a commitment to do so in ways that cultivate and deepen the Christian virtue of unity.

Position on Stewardship

Christian stewardship is rooted in the biblical mandate to fill, subdue, and rule the Earth in ways that honor its Creator and the theological conviction that every good and perfect gift comes from God. As a Christian institution, GCU is committed to distinguishing itself as a university that is concerned to honor God and serve others in the ways it wisely manages, distributes, and employs the many resources the Lord has provided. The University affirms that all tangible and intangible resources should be employed toward the ends of glorifying God, furthering the common good and promoting human flourishing. The many resources that God has entrusted to GCU must be conceived of and treated as opportunities to further the goals and purposes of His Kingdom rather than ours. Thus, the University is committed to the notion that wise business practices and thoughtful stewardship glorify God, benefit the GCU community and its neighbors, and positively impact its considerable sphere of influence within the West Valley and across the nation.

College of Theology Covenant

I understand and embrace Grand Canyon University's commitment to be a distinctively Christian institution characterized by devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, in agreement with the University and its College of Theology, I commit to love the Lord with my whole being, to love my neighbors as myself, and to obey Christ and His Word in accord with the following principles:

Spiritual Principles

I will seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness before all things.

I will labor to embody the qualifications for ministry outlined in Holy Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13, 4:6-16; 2 Timothy 2:14-26; Titus 1:5-16) so that I am qualified to minister within the church of the Lord Jesus and so that my example will glorify Christ and commend Him to others.

Academic Principles

I will commit to growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ through the study and application of Holy Scripture and sound theology.

Social Principles

I will maintain consistent involvement in a local church by regularly worshiping, serving, and studying God's Word with a body of believers and will cultivate unity with fellow Christians, seeking reconciliation and resolution when conflicts arise (Matthew 18).

I will seek to demonstrate the love of Christ, with gentleness and respect, to those who do not yet know Him as Lord and Savior.

Moral and Ethical Principles

I will conduct myself as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ by treating people with love, grace, and respect.

I will strive to keep my mind and body pure and will seek to be above reproach, undefiled, and virtuous in every way and will avoid all activities that violate the University's conduct policies.

College of Theology Dispositional and Behavioral Standards

GCU's Doctrinal Statement, Ethical Positions Statement, and College of Theology Covenant outline the biblical, theological, and moral bases for cooperation within the College in accord with the biblical mandate to live life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As ministers of the gospel, students in the College are asked to affirm the doctrinal basis of the University and standards for conduct that agree with those beliefs. By doing so, the College asks students to commit to a lifestyle worthy of the gospel ministry to which they have been called.

As ministers of the gospel, theology students are expected to conform to dispositional and behavioral standards that are consistent with biblical teaching, sound doctrine, and the commitments they make at the start of their program. "Dispositions" refers to one's attitudinal inclinations, mental and emotional outlook, integrity, and character. Sincerely held dispositions lead to actions and patterns of conduct, which is to suggest that dispositions, at some level, contribute to behaviors.

The College of Theology has adopted the following dispositional and behavioral standards that align with the College's Covenant. Although these standards are not exhaustive, they represent the essential values and qualities that should characterize gospel ministers. Students are encouraged to acknowledge their struggles and shortcomings without fear and for the sake of working through challenges with the support and encouragement of the community. Students who disregard the standards or fail to demonstrate these dispositions and behaviors, however, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Dispositional and Behavioral Standards

Growing in love and desiring to become more like Christ in their character, ministers of the gospel pursue practices that help them love. They choose to let go of behaviors that are not loving. Accordingly, ministers of the gospel:

- **EMBRACE TRUTH:** Ministers of the gospel embrace the truth of Christ, and speak and act truthfully. This includes integrity with respect to the commitment to uphold doctrinal and ethical positions and behaviors consistent with those of the University within their academic work, within the GCU community, and in any internship or supervised ministry/field experience setting. They pursue their own mental and emotional health, seeking to be grounded in reality.
- **DISPLAY A HEART FOR GROWTH, TRANSFORMATION, AND LEARNING:** Ministers of the gospel have a heart for growth and transformation. They demonstrate humility and pursue Christlikeness by taking correction, having a charitable spirit, and not thinking of themselves more highly than they ought. They do not hide sin but, rather, acknowledge it and learn from mistakes as they progress through their program of study. They demonstrate eagerness to learn and engage faithfully with their coursework, classmates, Scripture, scholarly research, faculty, and ministry supervisors.
- **AFFIRM THE VALUE OF PEOPLE:** Recognizing that all people are created in the image of God, ministers of the gospel treat people in ways that demonstrate their intrinsic value and dignity. They abide by GCU's student code of conduct, which governs the conduct of all students who attend GCU. Accordingly, ministers of the gospel reject discrimination and show the value of others in the way they interact with people of all races, nationalities, ages, genders, socioeconomic levels, abilities, and faith traditions. These principles extend to all forms of communication.
- **DEMONSTRATE GRACE AND RESPECT:** Ministers of the gospel demonstrate grace and respect in their attitudes, actions, and words. They embody the fruit of the Spirit, speaking with kindness and patience, communicating respectfully in all situations. They avoid actions and speech that

could show disrespect, a sharp tongue, harassment, prejudice, racism, sexism, vulgarity, foul language, or bullying. Students extend grace and charity at all points including discussions with others who differ with them on matters of doctrine and ethics. They strive for unity, which requires careful thought about doctrinal dialogue, genuine love for one another, and a resolve to be “quick to hear, slow to speak, [and] slow to anger” (James 1:19).

- **PROMOTE PEACE:** Ministers of the gospel seek to be peacemakers, approaching conflict with the goal of restoration and reconciliation. They follow biblical practices for conflict resolution, glorifying God by taking responsibility for their own contribution to a conflict, and asking and offering forgiveness when needed. They bring peace and joy to their classrooms and congregations, avoiding words and actions that might bring discord, dissension, or destruction.
- **MAINTAIN SEXUAL PURITY:** Following the teaching of the Bible, ministers of the gospel maintain personal sexual purity, reserving sexual expression for a marriage relationship between one man and one woman. They refrain from the use of all pornographic materials and any explicit content that would grieve the Holy Spirit while demonstrating an openness to accountability, counsel, and prayer in areas of struggle and perceived powerlessness. They refrain from sexually charged language and behavior inside or outside the classroom.
- **AVOID EXCESS:** Ministers of the gospel avoid excess and abuse of any substances that could move them from a place of health to harm. Students embrace moderation in all things for the sake of safeguarding against idolatry and protecting their gospel witness.
- **SEEK FIRST GOD’S KINGDOM:** Ministers of the gospel pursue God’s purposes for the world even when this requires abandoning the pursuit of their own selfish interests. They cultivate love, justice, beauty, grace, wisdom, and wholeness in their relationships and eschew worldly desires that result in consumerism, materialism, and the pursuit of fame and prestige. They show compassion for and bring about justice on behalf of marginalized people who are overlooked or rejected by society.