



## WILLIAM JESSUP UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY COVENANT

### PREAMBLE

*William Jessup University* is a Christ-centered institution of higher learning dedicated to the holistic formation of students—their academic, mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual formation.

This *Community Covenant* presents who we are and who we want to be—a wonderfully diverse community set apart by faith and for faith. It reflects our best collective self, and the vision of community we want to affirm and build.

Our University community is comprised of many different groups of people including students, faculty, staff, and others. We represent a range of theological positions within the Christian tradition, and the members of the community reflect many different stages in Christian growth. Thus, it is important that we have a common set of expectations, principles, and values for our life together. These core principles and values form our social compact—our *Community Covenant*.

Those members of the University community who do not share the Christian faith are asked to affirm this *Covenant*, not as a statement of personal spiritual conviction but as an affirmation of our community vision and agree to abide by its principles.

This *Covenant* is your invitation to join us. It applies to all who voluntarily choose to become part of the *William Jessup University* community—board members, students, and employees—and is structured broadly around the Great Commandments: Love God and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:36-40).

### LOVE GOD

***We affirm the Lordship of Christ (Acts 2:36) and the authority of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17).***

As the *William Jessup University* community, we acknowledge the teachings and values of Jesus Christ as the guide for our actions and programs as much as humanly possible, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our community has chosen Him and His life-changing message as our guide. Furthermore, the words of Scripture provide the authoritative, ethical, and spiritual foundation for our community. Jesus is Lord and the Bible is our authority.

## LOVE OTHERS

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

We cannot love God and hate our neighbor. We are to love God and show it by how we live and interact with each other. We value all people—and life—as Jesus did, and we see each other as having a God-given purpose. We speak and act respectfully and with an attitude of service towards each other. Christ urged us to serve rather than be served, so we commit to have this approach with each other in the University community.

***We support the weak (Micah 6:8; Isaiah 1:17)—always helping the wounded, the oppressed, and the needy.***

We come from many backgrounds and many of us have had to overcome significant challenges in life. Christ said we should help those around us, especially the weak and the wounded; so we look with extra care to those who are hurting. This includes the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized in our society. Christ calls us to show care and compassion toward one another and to all in need. We do this with those on our campus and in our local community.

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

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

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

We choose to act with maturity and grace towards those with whom we disagree. We value and pursue peace with others. When necessary, we strive always to model a community deeply committed to reconciliation and forgiveness.

## LOVE OURSELVES

***We pursue spiritual formation (2 Corinthians 5:17)—willingly engaging in spiritual disciplines and activities.***

We actively engage in practices that will draw us closer to Christ, and at the same time avoid practices that will draw us away from a relationship with Jesus. We affirm the historical practices of spiritual formation, belonging to a local church, and Christian service.

***We practice holiness (Hebrews 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3) and embrace purity (Philippians 4:8-9)—extending this to word, thought, and deed.***

As a community we seek to:

- a) Demonstrate the Christian virtues of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- b) Love and support that which is good in God’s eyes.
- c) Embrace purity in all relationships and reserve sexual intimacy for marriage between a man and a woman.
- d) Practice speech that is edifying and uplifting.
- e) Model self-control and healthy lifestyle choices.

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

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



This vision for Christian community presents a high standard. By God’s grace we seek to embrace it and uphold it. Consequently, this *Covenant* articulates the foundational framework for our community, subject to the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and Board Policy.

More specific applications of this *Covenant* are expressed in the particular policies for faculty, staff, and students within the University.

## **Community Covenant Chapter on Sanctity of Human Life**

As a Christ-centered liberal arts community, *William Jessup University* shares a common set of beliefs, values, and goals.

The following *Community Covenant Chapter on the Sanctity of Human Life* is consistent with both the teaching of Scripture and the Christian church tradition (and its origins in the Restoration Movement) that has defined the University since its inception as San Jose Bible College in 1939.

This *Community Covenant Chapter on the Sanctity of Human Life* guides the standards and behaviors of the board members, students, and employees of William Jessup University community and is subject to the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and Board Policy.

This Chapter shall also guide the University's participation in any benefit or health plan.

We hold three foundational assumptions:

- Human life is uniquely sacred from conception to the grave.
- The sanctity of life is among the broadest and most inclusive of our moral obligations to other human beings.
- Life is precious and in God's hands.

(Jeremiah 1:4-5) (Genesis 1:26-27) (Psalm 139)

Therefore, we believe that:

- The intentional destruction of innocent human life is unbiblical and contrary to God's will.
- All human beings, at all stages of existence, with every quality of experience, reflecting every type of human diversity, and encompassing every possible quality of relationship have worth and dignity in God's eyes that cannot be measured and should not be violated.
- The university desires to be a community that is committed to engaging in dialogue about human life issues with humility, sensitivity, compassion, and prayerfulness.

(Proverbs 6:16-17)

# Community Covenant

## Chapter on Human Sexuality

### Preamble

*William Jessup University* is a Christ-centered institution of higher learning dedicated to the holistic formation of students; their academic, mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual formation.

Our University community is comprised of many different groups of people including students, faculty, staff, board members and others. We represent a range of theological positions within the Christian tradition, and the members of the community reflect many different stages in Christian growth. Thus, it is important that those wishing to join with us in fellowship share a common set of expectations, principles, and values with respect to human sexuality.

This *Community Covenant Chapter on Human Sexuality* is consistent with both the teaching of Scripture and the Christian church tradition (and its origins in the Restoration Movement) that has defined the University since its inception as San Jose Bible College in 1939.

This *Community Covenant Chapter on Human Sexuality* guides the standards and behaviors of the board members, students, and employees. William Jessup University community and is subject to the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and Board Policy.

This *Community Covenant Chapter on Human Sexuality* is rooted in three foundational assumptions.

- We affirm the human dignity of all individuals, whether or not they agree with this Chapter in the Community Covenant.
- Individual identities are not based solely on gender identity or sexual orientation: as Christians, our primary identity is in Christ.
- The university desires to be a community that is committed to engaging in dialogue about human sexuality, including sexual orientation and gender identity, with humility, sensitivity, compassion, and prayerfulness.

### A. The Purpose of Sexuality and Sexual Behavior

We believe that:

1. Humans are “fearfully and wonderfully made” in the image of God, strategically and purposefully as the biological gender with which they were born.
2. God created humans as sexual beings—male and female—to reflect His image.
3. God designed heterosexual union between a male and female, as husband and a wife respectively, as His good and perfect gift to reflect the complementary relationship between Christ and His Church, and this is the model for healthy human sexual relationships.
4. Sexual intimacy is only appropriate within the context of a lifelong commitment in a faithful, monogamous, heterosexual marriage between one biological male and one biological female regardless of how current state or federal law defines marriage. We consider anything beyond this as sin and contrary to the teaching of Scripture.
5. Members of the University community are called to steward the good gift of human sexuality, consistent with the convictions expressed above.

(Genesis 1:26-28; Matthew 19:4-9; Ephesians 5:31-32; Hebrews 13:4; Mark 10:4-12)

## **B. On Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation**

We believe that:

1. In our sin nature we can experience frailty, ambiguity and perplexity in various areas of human sexuality, including but not limited to sexual identity and sexual orientation.
2. God's redemptive love can transform us in all areas, including how we experience our sexuality and gender.
3. Individuals have the ability to choose their behavior and decide how they wish to experience and express their sexuality and gender.
4. Some individuals may struggle with their gender identity and wish to explore living as a particular gender other than that with which they were biologically created. While we support any individual in their struggle with sexual identity, we do not affirm any decision to identify as a gender other than their biological one, including but not limited to a decision to pursue a medical course of action to physically change one's biological gender.

(Titus 1:12; 1 Peter 1:13-15).

## **C. Implications**

We believe that:

1. An important role of William Jessup University as a Christ-centered institution is to reflect Christ's love, and God's instruction on matters concerning human sexuality. We view these responsibilities as mutually inclusive.
2. The University, at its discretion, may provide an opportunity where individuals can, under the guidance and direction of qualified University personnel, express feelings and concerns around gender identity and sexual orientation in an appropriate setting that extends sensitivity, confidentiality, compassion, and care in a healthful manner consistent with Christian teachings.

## **Community Covenant Chapter on Science and Faith**

### **Preamble**

As a Christ-centered liberal arts community, *William Jessup University* shares a common set of beliefs, values, and goals.

The following treatise on “Science and Faith” reflects our commitment to open dialogue and unity among Christians. Such unity is grounded first and foremost in the person of Christ Jesus, not our stance on creation and evolution.

We hold three foundational assumptions:

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

### **On Origins of Life**

We believe that:

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

2.6 The first human beings fell into sin through an historical act of disobedience to God (Genesis 3:1-7) which brought death to humanity (Romans 5:12) and has affected all of creation in significant ways. Nonetheless, much evidence of the original goodness remains.

2.7 Even today, in our fallen condition, God intends humanity to manage, tend, and care for His earth according to His purposes (Genesis 1:28; 2:15). God opposes all abuse and exploitation of His creation.

2.8 We live under universal, created laws and moral absolutes.

2.9 The material world and cosmos are neither autonomous, eternal, nor self-generating. God is intimately involved in maintaining and upholding His creation. Indeed, all created reality holds together through God's sustaining power (Psalm 33:6-7; 104:27-30; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17). Thus, all progress—whether human or otherwise—depends upon the redemptive activity of God.

### **Implications**

We believe that:

3.1 A biblical view of the origins of life does not constrain legitimate scientific inquiry and research because we accept two sources of information: biblical revelation and natural revelation.

3.2 God is the source of both biblical and natural revelation with respect to His creation. Apparent discrepancies should result in deferring conclusions in favor of a careful and humble reexamination of the presuppositions, theories, and interpretations that led to the disagreement.

3.3 Different positions must be subject to ongoing honest evaluation and scrutiny, and respectful debate within the framework of a biblical Christian perspective.

3.4 Members of the WJU community may differ on the timetable for creation in Genesis 1, conclusions about young earth or old earth, and the extent of changes in life forms over time (e.g. speciation).

Even as we affirm our own convictions, we strive to maintain an attitude of respect and charity towards others who may hold different views on these matters.

# Community Covenant

## Chapter on Preservation of Unity and Community

### Preamble

As a Christ-centered liberal arts community, *William Jessup University* shares a common set of beliefs, values, and goals.

The University community is comprised of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff who are Christian believers and who hold essential beliefs and community understandings in common as referenced in the Statement of Faith and Community Covenant. In the event that members conduct themselves in a manner not consistent with Biblical standards and these statements, then the University will pursue corrective actions to establish unity and restore those individuals into fellowship within the University community. Thus, it is important that those wishing to join with us in fellowship share a common set of expectations, principles, and values with respect to the preservation of unity and community when faced with disputes.

The following *Community Covenant Chapter on Preservation of Unity and Community* is consistent with both the teaching of Scripture and the Christian church tradition (and its origins in the Restoration Movement) that has defined the University since its inception as San Jose Bible College in 1939.

This *Community Covenant Chapter on Preservation of Unity and Community* guides the standards and behaviors of the board members, students, and employees of William Jessup University community and is subject to the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and Board Policy.

We hold three foundational assumptions:

- The University and its Board of Trustees are committed to restore fellowship, when possible, with individuals who are out of conformity with community membership standards as delineated in the University's Statement of Faith and Community Covenant.
- The process of restoration is predicated on the Biblical doctrines of sin, grace, repentance, and restoration.
- We believe that there is always a potential pathway by which differences or conflicts may lead to change, growth, and reconciliation.

(Romans 3:23, Colossians 3:5, 1 John 1:16, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 2:11-14), Acts 3:19, 2 Corinthians 7:9, Jeremiah 31:19, Luke 17:3, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Galatians 6:1).

Therefore, we believe that:

- We must eschew legal recourse and rather, ask that all of those facing disputations with each other or with the University to respect the Bible, as it commends us to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the tenets of the Christian faith.
- In accordance with the University's Employee Policies, we agree that, at the outset of employment, any claim or dispute arising from or related to the University's essential creeds and understandings first be settled through biblically-based mediation as recommended and resourced by the University's administration and confirmed by the employee (Title IX issues will be addressed through the University's published Title IX processes).
- The final adjudication of discipline is entrusted to the Board of Trustees, who has the authority to place individuals under discipline or to otherwise restrict participation in community membership or limit the benefits thereof.

(Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 6:1-8).