

Title: Renewal of Covenant with Colleges and Universities

Origin: Task Force on Undergraduate Education

Background:

- In 1976 the General Board:
 - Created a written covenant to be adopted by individual governing boards as a condition for continued funding for undergraduate institutions through the common mission fund.
 - Established the undergraduate institution funding formula that continues today
- During 1977, 14 of the 17 eligible institutions affirmed the covenant. (Drake University, Northwest Christian College, and Tougaloo College did not enter into the covenantal relationship.) Midway College joined in covenant in 1981.
- At the request of the college presidents and the board of Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, in 2008 the General Minister and President called a task force into being to review the 30 year covenant among Disciples undergraduate institutions and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- The members of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education were: Charles Watkins (Chair), Diana L. Batzka, Olin Fregia, Paul Jones, David Murph, Dan Oliver, Christal Williams, Sharon Watkins.
- The updated covenant follows.

Recommended Action:

That the General Board receives this item for information & discussion only. Pending the outcome of HELM's board action on this item, additional action by the General Board may be required.

TASK FORCE ON UNDERGRADUATE HIGHER EDUCATION

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

(Disciples of Christ)

Response to the Charge of the General Minister and President

August 4, 2009

From its frontier beginnings the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has valued education, treasured learning, respected scholarship, and regarded colleges and universities as essential to its mission of transforming individual lives and the larger society. The founders of our movement were teachers and administrators of Disciples colleges who intentionally integrated faith and reason into their lives and into the lives of their institutions of higher education.

The Covenant

Within the universal Body of Christ the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is known for its ecumenical and inclusive vision, as well as its commitment to intellectual curiosity and collaboration. Across national boundaries this church expresses itself in covenantal relationships in congregations, regions, general ministries, and in partnerships with institutions of higher education. Each Disciples college and university is characterized by its own integrity, self-governance, authority, rights and responsibilities. From this covenantal relationship the Christian Church reaffirms its commitment to the role of higher education in the fulfillment of its total mission.

Consistent with the Disciples' identity as a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, our church colleges and universities model the welcoming table through their non-sectarian approach to learning and teaching. The core values of a liberal arts education are shared by the church: valuing the dignity of all people, acting with integrity and responsibility, viewing self as part of community, living life within a global context, providing service to others, and pursuing life-long learning. These shared core values are the basis for the covenantal partnership between the church and its colleges and universities.

The church benefits from this partnership with its colleges and universities in developing servant leaders, fostering global awareness, and encouraging a passion for peace and justice. Likewise, colleges and universities benefit from this partnership with the church's ethical insights and essential values. We share a commitment to an anti-racist/pro-reconciliation vision of the church and world and to ecological sustainability. We work together to discern truth, encourage critical thinking, and participate in moral formation of persons.

The Role

In partnership with the church, Disciples colleges and universities participate in the deliberative processes of the church and maintain appropriate relationships as provided for in the *Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

Disciples colleges and universities participate in the funding system of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for allocation of resources as do regions and general ministries and in accordance with existing and developing agreements.

The Relationships

This partnership between colleges and universities and the church in all its expressions is critical to the vitality, vision and heritage of each. To nurture and sustain this partnership clear and intentional communication is essential.

Colleges and universities are most supportive of the covenant partnership when they

- offer their resources to congregations, regions and general ministries and explore joint endeavors;
- emphasize in communications their partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- engage in ongoing dialogue on the meaning of their partnership with the church;
- actively recruit Disciples students;
- generously provide scholarship assistance to Disciples (and in most cases United Church of Christ) students;
- participate in congregational events, regional and general assemblies;
- collaborate with other Disciples colleges and universities;
- create a campus ethos that encourages students to discern their vocational goals;
- identify and nurture future educated leaders for church and society;
- pursue excellence in fulfilling their mission;

The church is most supportive of the covenant partnership when it

- recommends Disciples colleges and universities to prospective students and their families;
- expresses persistently and persuasively its commitment to our colleges and universities and vigorously supports our colleges and universities in their mission;
- advises potential benefactors of the vital role higher education plays in Disciples tradition;
- sponsors events jointly with nearby Disciples colleges and universities;
- educates colleges and universities about the value of their partnership with the church;
- encourages Disciples to apply for faculty, staff, and administrative positions within Disciples colleges and universities;
- recognizes that Disciples colleges and universities are part of our movement to bring about wholeness in a fragmented world.