

University Principles and Expectations

As a distinctively Christian and Baptist institution, Southwest Baptist University believes it should demonstrate how the life-values commanded in Scripture can be integrated with academic instruction. These values include a sensitivity to the needs of the larger community; a commitment to justice, mercy and personal integrity; a desire for moral growth; and a sense of mutual accountability. The moral values of the University are expressed as ethical standards and are guided by an understanding of Scripture and a commitment to its authority regarding all areas of Christian faith, learning, and living.

Because of the prevailing moral confusion in our society, the University must speak clearly about Christian ethical standards. The Statement of Faith and five statements of ethical standards have been adopted by the Board of Trustees for the University family, which is composed of students, faculty, staff, administrators and trustees. These standards concern our Statement of Faith, Academic Integrity, Christian Lifestyle, Sexual Conduct, Marriage and Family Responsibility, and Respect for People and Property.

These statements of faith and ethical standards guide the University in its obligations to students and others in the University family who are involved in an honest pursuit of the truth by requiring integrity in academic pursuits, by encouraging a Christian approach to sexuality, by supporting a stable family life, by modeling responsible Christian interpersonal relationships, and joyful adherence to our statement of faith.

Statement of Faith

PRINCIPLE: The University is committed to the teachings of the Holy Bible, God's inerrant Word, as articulated in the "The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000" (BFM 2000) (or current edition), and to providing an environment where those truths are taught and demonstrated by the University's employees.

EXPECTATION: The University hires and prefers qualified faculty, administrators, and employees who affirm these truths without reservation, express a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and join with a church that affirms the same statements or join with a Missouri Baptist Convention affiliated church in good standing with the MBC, and support the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program efforts of such churches. All faculty members, administrators, and employees must annually indicate their on-going commitment to perform their duties and teach consistent with and not contrary to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 or current edition.

Statement on Academic Integrity

PRINCIPLE: Truthfulness, diligence and commitment are part of the very nature of God. God's plan for believers is that their nature will become like His. Because of this, our lives should demonstrate these qualities. Scripture commends personal integrity and condemns that which undermines it.

EXPECTATION: Academic integrity is based on truthfulness and is the responsibility both of faculty and students. Faculty members are responsible for maintaining integrity in their academic pursuits. Faculty members also have the responsibility for setting and clarifying academic requirements for the work of students. Academic integrity is a personal responsibility of students to represent as their own work in reports, papers or examinations only what they are entitled to present honestly. Academic integrity also includes the collective responsibility of faculty members and students to ensure that all uphold the spirit and letter of this principle. Conduct which violates academic integrity includes cheating in any form on examinations and presentations of the ideas or writings of others without proper credit.

Statement on Christian Lifestyle

PRINCIPLE: Scripture teaches that believers are set apart to God's purpose through sanctification, but will sin. Scripture also demands that believers demonstrate a lifestyle that is distinctively different from that of non-believers.

EXPECTATION: A Christian lifestyle is expected of all members of the University family. It consists of demonstrating those attitudes produced by the gift of the Spirit, practicing truthfulness in all relationships or activities and exhibiting our dedication to Christ through our commitment to excellence in daily work or academic activities. A Christian lifestyle avoids such specific sins as greed; jealousy; pride; lust; bitterness; uncontrolled anger; prejudice based on race, sex or socioeconomic status; use of alcohol as an intoxicant; substance abuse; stealing; profanity; dishonesty; occult practices; illegal activities; use of pornography; and sexual sins, such as pre-marital sex, adultery and homosexual behavior.

Statement on Sexual Standards

PRINCIPLE: Scripture teaches that heterosexual union is the only acceptable expression of sexuality and must be reserved for marriage and insists on sexual abstinence for those who are unmarried.

EXPECTATION: All members of the University family should abstain from unbiblical sexual practices and from behavior which may lead to a violation of God's standards on sexual activities.

Statement on Marriage and Family

PRINCIPLE: God's ideal for marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. Scripture views marriage as a witness to the permanent relationship between Christ and His Church and the family as God's first institution.

EXPECTATION: The University has a concern over the increasing pressure being placed by external and internal forces on the institution of marriage. It recognizes the struggle of those within the University family who strive to keep their marriages stable under these pressures. Nevertheless, members of the University community should not enter into divorce except under the most severe circumstances and then only after pursuing all possible options, including counseling, and after considering the impact of divorce on their families, their personal lives and their professional responsibilities at SBU.

Statement on Respect for People and Property

PRINCIPLE: Scripture teaches that all people, regardless of their socioeconomic, physical, mental or spiritual condition, are individuals of worth in the eyes of God. Scripture also teaches that ownership of property is to be respected. It exhorts Christians to look out for the welfare of other people, to be good stewards of the possessions God has given and to be honest with one another.

EXPECTATION: The University expects behavior from all members of the University family that demonstrates the highest standard of respect for people and property and that exemplifies the Christian commitment to loving one another. Certain behaviors are not acceptable according to this ethical standard. These include sexual harassment, disrupting the rights of others to pursue appropriate University activities, depriving individuals of the use of their property or depriving the University of the use of its property.

University Response

The University recognizes a responsibility to assist all members of the University family to grow spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. The University responds to that responsibility by offering opportunities for education, ministry, encouragement, and worship. The University encourages members of its family to take advantage of these opportunities.

This process of growth sometimes involves failure to meet expectations. The University, as a place of learning, prefers to deal with that failure as an opportunity for redemption and further growth. In those few cases where the individual has willfully ignored the expectations and refuses all opportunities for redemption or where the failure causes substantial public damage to the institution, the University may find it necessary to sever the relationship with the individual.