

## **Commitment to Diversity**

***Cedarville University actively seeks to attract and serve a diverse group of Christian employees and students who exercise their spiritual calling to be agents of reconciliation; pursuing unity, peace, and community in an atmosphere that recognizes our union in Christ and celebrates the contributions of all who seek to follow Christ.***

## **Diversity and Mission**

According to our Mission Statement, *“Cedarville University is a Christcentered learning community equipping students for lifelong leadership and service through an education marked by excellence and grounded in biblical truth.”*

The *Cedarville University Diversity Statement* supplements our mission statement by articulating our commitment to be a diverse Christian university, known for our unity in Christ, our love for all who bear His image, and our commitment to biblical community. The purpose of this statement is to help Cedarville University fulfill its mission by equipping its faculty, staff and students to respond biblically to the challenges and opportunities inherent in a diverse culture.

## **Biblical Foundations for Diversity.**

Cedarville University’s approach to diversity is built upon the following biblical themes:

- **Creation**

Diversity, as we have defined it, is a demonstration of God’s intention and divine order for humankind. It serves as a positive reflection of God’s creative and sovereign hand; contributing to our learning, and enhancing our enjoyment of community. (Genesis 1:27)

- **Imago Dei**

*Imago Dei* refers to the biblical doctrine that all people, regardless of race, gender, varying degrees of physical ability, or socioeconomic class are created to bear the image of God. Therefore, a biblical understanding of diversity celebrates the value of all human beings as image bearers with God-given worth and dignity. *Imago dei* extends to people of other faiths, and to those whose viewpoints or beliefs are hostile to Christianity; therefore, all people are to be treated with respect and dignity. (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 9:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

- **Consequences of the Fall.**

Sin has had ruinous consequences for humankind; introducing conflict, disunity, injustice, oppression, and a breakdown of the human community. Scripture gives abundant evidence that sin is not only personal but also corporate; sinful individuals with access to power can use that power corporately to structure society and its institutions in ways that favor the powerful at the expense of the powerless. (Isaiah 10:1-2; Amos 2:7; Amos 5:10-15)

- **Biblical Pattern of Redemption & Reconciliation.**

Sin separates all people from God, and leaves all equally in need of redemption. God offers redemption to all who will believe in Christ, making no distinctions based on race, gender, ethnicity, ability, age, or socioeconomic level. Within the body of Christ there is no hierarchy of value based upon these areas of difference. This pattern of redemption, reconciliation, and equality is evident in the work of Jesus Christ and the life of the early church. (Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47; Acts 10:27-28, 34-35; Acts 15; Galatians 2:6-14; Ephesians 2:17-18; I Corinthians 12:12-20)

- **Biblical Ethic of Love.**

The Biblical ethic of love is one of the defining marks of all true followers of Christ. This ethic calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves, love our enemies, greet strangers, help those in need, and treat others as we would like to be treated. Obedience to Christ requires that we intentionally live according to this ethic. (Psalm 82:3; Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 10:25-37; John 13:34-35; Ephesians 4:1-6)

- **Narratives about Heaven.**

The future family of God is described as containing people of every nation, tribe, people and language, worshiping together, united in Jesus Christ. Racial and ethnic differences in heaven are not erased, rather they remain intact as together we ascribe glory, honor and praise to Jesus Christ. The fact that heaven is repeatedly described in this manner is evidence of the importance that God places on unified worship among diverse people. (Revelation 5:9-10) Personal redemption begins the process of restoring individuals and healing the communities in which we live. Once redeemed, we are called to be ministers of reconciliation; living according to an ethic of love, actively engaged in acts of mercy, forgiveness, restitution, and justice. Corporately, we should also apply the redemptive power of the gospel to institutions that have been corrupted by sin, increasing the degree to which they reflect biblical values and priorities such as love, gentleness, peace, kindness, self-sacrifice, and self-control.

## **Diversity and Unity at a Christ-centered Learning Community.**

Cedarville University is a local community of learners. We function as one context of the body of Christ. Within this context we strive to live with one another in unity, peace, and righteousness. Our ability to fully demonstrate these qualities of Christian community is limited by the extent to which we resemble the breadth of God's family. Recognizing that unity is not uniformity, and based on the diversity that we witness in the body of Christ, we believe that greater diversity at Cedarville University enhances the educational experience by providing a better context for demonstrating the unifying power of the Gospel. It also better equips all our students for success in the increasingly global and diverse workplace that awaits them.

As a Christ-centered learning community, Cedarville University has a calling that is higher than tolerance, superficial compliance or obligation. Our goal is purposeful transformation to the image of Christ. Rather than embracing concepts like tolerance, we are called to build Christian community. Such a community should model the reality of the body of Christ, inclusive of diverse people of God using varied gifts for God's glory. The policies and values of such a Christ-centered University should reflect the Biblical mandate to be ministers of reconciliation, and to bring about genuine unity within a diverse world.