

600 – Community Life

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A community by definition is a group of people living together who share a common way of life which is expressed in shared beliefs, goals, values, purpose, responsibilities and communication. Inherent in this common way of life is a set of principles and derived customs which characterize the distinctiveness of such a community. These time-established customs become the traditions with which members of the community identify. Asbury University is a community of learners in the American Christian liberal arts tradition. Founded in 1890 upon the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, Asbury University established its mission to prepare students educationally to impact their world for Jesus Christ. This mission is demonstrated in the institutional motto: "Eruditio et Religio"; that is, "Learning and Religion." This heritage of academic excellence and spiritual vitality has been the hallmark of the University's greatness for more than a century, and this commitment continues today.

From its beginning, Asbury University has been distinctive in the culture of its day, not for the sake of being different, but because the University possesses a different world view. Integration of academic excellence and spiritual vitality requires training which is clearly different from the larger world's perspective. During the course of our history, the community has established guidelines, which are examined and cautiously revised in order to maintain its heritage and mission in an ever-changing world. While these guidelines may be examined and altered, it is absolutely essential that we remain totally committed to the Asbury University heritage of Christian faith and grace and to the concept of a dynamic Christian community.

A distinguishing mark of a Christian community is that its members commit to a set of basic principles which are considered essential to maintain the spirit and health of the community. At Asbury University, the basic tenet of our community is found in Jesus' two great commandments in Matthew 22:37-40:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...and...you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Thus, members of the Asbury University community seek to love God and practice self-sacrificial love in relationship to others. Such disciplined community living is essential preparation for servant-leaders who will give their lives to fulfill a cause greater than themselves.

The concept of community at Asbury University is built on ten foundational principles that we believe are essential not only during your years at Asbury, but throughout the rest of life. These may not be the only principles upon which a community can be founded, but we have found them to be effective in promoting a unique partnership of faith, living and learning.

These principles are important to all we do at the University whether you are a student, administrator, faculty or staff. We have found that “fit” within the community is critical to a student’s development, and appreciating and being committed to what these principles represent is essential. We enthusiastically welcome students who may struggle with one or more of the principles, but being willing to support and uphold what the community stands for is imperative. The following ten foundational principles govern our community.

600.2.1BIBLICAL MANDATES

Asbury University is committed to following **Biblical mandates for living**. The Bible is our ultimate authority, providing the essential teachings and principles for personal and community living. By following Biblical mandates regarding lifestyle decisions, an individual may discover a life of holiness in relation to God and others.

600.2.2COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Asbury University promotes a **radical commitment to Jesus Christ** as both Savior and Lord. We believe that Jesus Christ desires a personal relationship with every individual and invites us to die to selfish ambitions that we might live for Him through the power of the Holy Spirit. This personal relationship is fostered by individuals who open themselves to God by practicing various spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, fasting, discipleship, accountability, fellowship with believers, witnessing to God’s grace in their lives, and individual and corporate worship. This radical, but directed, abandon leads to an extraordinary life which brings glory and delight to Jesus Christ and grace as well as the fruit of God’s Spirit to the believer.

600.2.3BALANCED LIFESTYLE

Asbury University encourages a **balanced lifestyle**. God has created us as multifaceted individuals. Our community seeks to influence the whole person by advocating a life which exemplifies a healthy approach to the spiritual, rational, social, emotional and physical aspects of the human existence.

600.2.4INTEGRITY

Asbury University is committed to a lifestyle characterized by **integrity**. In contrast to a world often characterized by selfish compromise, the University community is characterized by honesty, faithfulness, loyalty and mutual respect.

Integrity is both knowing the right thing to do and doing it regardless of the circumstances, which builds character and moral excellence.

600.2.5 ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Asbury University is a **learning** community. Academic endeavors are critical components of a larger educational preparation of the whole person. As a learner, pursuing both knowledge and the application of knowledge are important. Complementary to the classroom learning, Asbury University promotes learning which occurs outside of the classroom as a byproduct of living in community with other learners.

600.2.6 RESPECTFUL AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Asbury University is a **respectful and inclusive** community. The transforming work of God in the lives of individuals is reflected not only in respect for proper authority, but also for oneself and others and the property of others. Asbury University seeks to foster respect, acceptance and support for differences of gender, race, color, national origin, age, mental and physical ability, expressions of the historic Christian faith and ethnic culture.

600.2.7 REDEMPTIVE COMMUNITY

Asbury University is a **redemptive** community. The community promotes a right relationship with God, with one another and with the institution itself. Redemption requires us to move beyond love as a theory and to put it into practice through forgiveness, reconciliation, restitution and restoration. Thus, the goal of redemption is to move toward maturity in Jesus Christ.

600.2.8 DISCIPLINED COMMUNITY

Asbury University is a **disciplined** community. Healthy and holy living requires self-control which is evidenced in learning to limit our own freedom for the good of ourselves and the community. Our community encourages its members not only to discipline themselves but also to be accountable to God and others for their actions. The practice of disciplined living is a lifetime skill which is not always convenient but is always healthy when practiced with a sense of balance.

600.2.9 SERVING COMMUNITY

Asbury University is a **servicing** community. The idea of being “saved to serve” permeates this community because Asbury University’s mission is to develop servant-leaders who will make significant contributions to society. It is important to help others and make meaningful contributions to improving the world in which we live, including the challenge of society’s bigger problems.

600.2.10 CELEBRATIVE COMMUNITY

Asbury University is a **celebrating** community. One sign of a healthy community is the sense of celebration involved in its history and traditions. Asbury University

has maintained a focus on its mission for over 120 years and continues to celebrate its heritage as a provider of Christian liberal arts education in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Academic and spiritual programs, class identity, athletics and student organizations are all worthy of celebration.

600.3**FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY****600.3**

A community cannot exist unless members demonstrate a concern for one another which results in a maturing of both the individual and the community as a whole. Asbury University promotes a community which is characterized by three interdependent functions: Caring, Cooperating, and Correcting.

600.3.1**CARING**

As we follow in the steps of Jesus Christ and His teachings, we will demonstrate a love for those around us which is evident in our caring, “carrying,” and comforting of one another. Practically speaking, our concern for others will go beyond the obvious spiritual and physical realms into the emotional, mental, and social realms. This concern for the development of the whole person emphasizes our commitment to develop whole people who are wholly prepared to be wholly used of God.

600.3.2**COOPERATING**

Any effective organization is distinguished by the way in which its component parts work together to achieve the ultimate mission. Asbury’s mission is to provide students with the opportunity to learn in a Christian, liberal arts environment and to prepare them to make a significant contribution in their world for Jesus Christ. A team approach where there is a collegial and collaborative effort between administration, faculty, students and staff results in a cooperating community where the whole is greater than and more important than any of its component parts.

600.3.3**CORRECTING**

The heritage of the University has always held high expectations for its members and expected them to maintain both their own character and the University’s character. Our love for one another motivates us to encourage and, when appropriate, correct each other as we strive together to achieve God’s purpose for our lives. Redemptive correction brings one to repentance, forgiveness, accountability, and growth.

The expectations of a disciplined lifestyle are worthy but should not be confused with the means of salvation which comes through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The standards espoused in this handbook reflect the combination of Biblical imperatives, traditions and commitments that can prepare one for a “lifestyle for a lifetime.”

The four categories of “Morality, Honor, Propriety and Civic” are not exhaustive and may often seem to overlap. Each area, however, represents a set of values which are important for the continuance of Asbury University’s heritage and fulfillment of her mission.

Students are expected to honor the lifestyle standards of the University even while off campus and between school terms while continually enrolled. Members of the community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the values of Asbury’s traditions.

600.4.1MORALITY

Issues of morality at Asbury University are seen as those which can be delineated as right, virtuous and just and are based on Biblical mandates. Discernment in these moral issues is important in our development as individual believers, and violations in this category often result in greater disciplinary consequences. Offenses of sexual immorality, abortion and drunkenness (alcohol or drug induced) are almost certain to result in immediate dismissal from the University.

- **Christ-Like Attributes Encouraged:** Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are Christ-like attributes that can be demonstrated through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23 declares these as demonstrations of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, and we should encourage one another to practice these in our relationships.)
- **Sinful Attitudes Discouraged:** Hatred, discord, jealousy, uncontrolled anger, greed, quarreling and envy are condemned in Galatians 5:19-21, hinder our relationship with others and are not acceptable Asbury community attitudes.
- **Idolatry and Occult Practices:** Also condemned in Galatians 5 and should not be practiced.
- **Human Sexuality:** The University affirms the Biblical view of human sexuality as being expressed fully in the context of a marriage between a man and a woman.
- **Sexual Immorality** (including adultery, homosexual behavior and premarital sexual intimacy): These behaviors are expressly prohibited in Scripture. Offenses in this area could result in immediate dismissal from the University.
- **Pornography:** The use of pornography in any form is demeaning and damaging to individuals and is therefore prohibited. The University feels that its use is inconsistent with Biblical principles.

- **Immodesty of Dress:** Scripture is clear that immodesty of dress is to be avoided. The University supports this admonition and reserves the right to determine for this community what that may include. (See also Propriety section.)
- **Speech:** Lying, dishonesty, gossip, slander, profanity and vulgarity (including crude language) are expressly prohibited in Scripture. Such speech is not helpful for building others up and should be avoided.
- **Theft** (including plagiarism): Expressly prohibited in Scripture and not acceptable behavior.
- **Gambling:** Scripture is clear in principles regarding the use of money, and gambling activities are inconsistent with those principles.
- **Abortion:** Though not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, abortion violates Biblical principles regarding the sanctity of life and should never be encouraged or condoned. Getting an elective abortion to terminate an unwanted pregnancy will lead to almost certain dismissal from the University.
- **Alcohol:** Drunkenness is explicitly addressed in Scripture as immoral and will likely lead to dismissal. In addition, the use of any alcohol can be damaging to the individual and community (see also Honor section) and is therefore prohibited.
- **Local, State, Federal Laws / Submission to Authority:** Romans 13:1 is clear that we should subject ourselves to the authority of the government. Asbury University community members are expected to uphold all local, state and federal laws. Arrest on or off campus is subject to review within the University's disciplinary procedures.
- **Civil Disobedience:** On rare occasions civil laws might require behavior that is contrary to God's law as found in Scripture. In such cases, each individual would submit voluntarily to the civil penalty for his or her behavior, and said behavior would be reviewed within the University's disciplinary procedures.

600.4.2

HONOR

In addition to Biblical expectations as mentioned in the Morality section, members of the Asbury University community voluntarily commit to abide by community standards that are intended to promote the well-being of both the individual and the University community. These standards are not intended to be seen as absolutes or an index of Christian spirituality, but as standards which uphold the long-standing established character of the Asbury University culture. Members are expected to contribute to the growth and maturity of others and should discipline their own actions by adhering to the principle of consideration of others before themselves. □

- **Sunday / Sabbath:** Each member is expected to keep the Lord's Day (Sunday) distinctive as a day set apart primarily for worship, fellowship, ministry, recreation and rest. Due to the unique nature of this day, the campus will not be open for "business as usual" but will only provide services and programs which are deemed absolutely necessary. The University will not sponsor academic activities or athletic competition on Sunday.
- **Worship:** Fellowship and instruction are essential to the growth of the Christian. Chapel is held weekly MWF at 10 a.m. and is generally required

for all students. It should not be a substitute for involvement in the local church. Members of the community are expected to attend weekly church services and are encouraged to attend class and campus prayer meetings.

- **Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs:** Use of certain substances can be both physically and psychologically damaging to the individual and community. Consequently, members are to refrain from the use of tobacco in any form, alcoholic beverages (including “nonalcoholic beer” and similar products) and illegal drugs. The preceding substances are not to be used, possessed or distributed on or away from campus. Prescription drugs should be used in accordance with the physician’s directions.

Violations in the area of alcohol or drug use will result in almost certain dismissal from the University for a period of time. As recommended by the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, the parents of students under the age of 21 will be contacted for any violation regarding alcohol or illegal drug

- **Social Dancing:** The University acknowledges that Scripture does not address the issue of social dancing directly, and committed Christians may differ widely in their attitudes toward dancing. In its desire to maintain a distinctively Christian environment that promotes physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, Asbury University does not permit social dancing on or away from campus, nor does it allow any University-sponsored group to sponsor dances anywhere else (note exception below).*

Many forms of contemporary dance are associated with unwholesome behavior. However, Asbury University also recognizes that some forms of social dancing may not exhibit or lead to unwholesome behavior. As an exception, therefore, students are allowed to dance socially in a manner that honors Christ at off-campus celebratory occasions such as weddings, military balls, graduation exercises, church and family occasions and in *Asbury special celebratory occasions such as Jr./Sr. These Asbury celebratory occasion exceptions are limited (likely 2-3/yr.) and permitted based upon guidelines and written approval processes available in the Student Development Office.

Further, as an exception for campus-sponsored events, some forms of dancing choreography may be included in dramatic presentations, musicals and “variety” shows as approved by the faculty/staff advisor of the event.

- **Vandalism / Respect for Property:** The community fosters a respect for personal, institutional and public property and expects its members to care for the property of others with the same kind of care they would give their own. Students will be held responsible for vandalism or damage to property of others.
- **Verbal or Physical Abuse:** We respect the worth and dignity of each individual and are sensitive to the special needs of each individual. Therefore, discrimination against others on the basis of race, national origin, gender, religious beliefs or disability is not acceptable in any form. (See also non-discrimination policy in “General Policy and Procedures” section.) Verbal or physical abuse of others is not acceptable.
- **Respect for Authority / Insubordination:** Members are expected to demonstrate a responsible attitude toward authority. Consequently,

insubordination to and disrespect for authority and refusal to accept the correction of those in authority is not acceptable.

- **Media-Related Entertainment:** Community members are urged to use great discretion in the media they choose to view. Visual media is defined as materials designed for viewing and includes magazines, television, movies, videos and the Internet.

Believing that Scripture teaches that purity of heart is influenced by the eyes and the mind, our principle is based on Philippians 4:8 (NAS), which states: “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.” It is the responsibility of the individual, in conjunction with life within the Christ-centered community, to learn to discern what kinds of media are appropriate for followers of Jesus Christ.

In light of this principle, community members should avoid visual media which contains sexually explicit or pornographic material, excessive profanity, excessive violence, or promotes or celebrates the demonic or occult. Media which devalues the worth of God’s human creation should be avoided.

While external rating systems (e.g., PG, PG-13, TV-MA) are inadequate for developing discernment, they can provide a starting point. On campus, PG and PG-13 movies are generally permitted unless they violate the guidelines in the preceding paragraph. Movies which have these ratings should also be selected thoughtfully with consideration for both personal conviction and community impact.

On the Asbury University campus, an R-rated movie would rarely provide the educational or redeeming value which would warrant its viewing and therefore is prohibited. However, individuals are invited to engage in dialogue with the Resident Director about movies which might be considered exceptions to the R-rated exclusion.

600.4.3

PROPRIETY

In a community, guidelines of propriety provide direction for behaviors which are considered acceptable and proper. For example, standard guidelines for etiquette are simply expected rather than being delineated in this document, but specific matters of propriety for the Asbury University campus follow. Members of the community are challenged to give up some of their own preferences for the sake of community.

These Asbury University-specific expectations reflect a community concern for modesty and courtesy. Violations in the area of propriety usually result in incident notices or warnings unless the action is repeated or part of a pattern of unacceptable behavior which requires a more stringent consequence.

- **Dress Code:** The campus dress code represents a concern for modesty, neatness, timeliness, cleanliness and appropriateness. Historically, community members have dressed according to high standards which demonstrated maturity. As fads and fashions come and go, Asbury reserves

the right to determine if styles are appropriate and conform to the principles named here. For instance, although short skirts/dresses may be in fashion, most skirts/dresses that are shorter than two inches above the knee (sitting or standing) are considered immodest.

Faculty, staff and residence life staff in charge of activities or facilities of the University have the authority to require adjustments on the part of individuals whose apparel is considered inappropriate.

Biblical principles which apply to the area of attire include a desire to glorify God in everything, responsibility to fellow believers, respect for others including a sensitivity not to offend, and personal standards appropriate to being a "new creation."

Distinction between class and casual (out of class) attire: The dress code is designed to delineate a difference between the class experience (including chapel) and the casual environment. Students in classes are expected to dress in a manner appropriate for the business of being a student and in a way that reflects a respect for the academic endeavor. Specifically:

- **Class and Chapel Attire:** Shorts, athletic wear, sports hats, torn or ragged clothing and t-shirts with messages that are in conflict with the character and values of Asbury University should not be worn.
- **Casual Attire:** Principles of modesty and neatness still should be considered for attire worn in public areas like the student center, cafeteria, library and classroom buildings when not in class. Shorts and athletic wear (excluding running shorts, swimsuits, and spandex-type shorts/tights) may be worn in public areas when not in class.
- **Sunday Noon Meal Attire:** The Sunday noon meal is also a time where class attire or nicer is appropriate. We encourage students to view the Sunday noon meal as a special time together and to dress in a way that respects that time.
- **Semi-Formal Attire:** In keeping with the principle of appropriateness and timeliness, community members are encouraged to wear more formal attire for special events such as Artist Series, Highbridge Film Festival or other special occasions. Modesty should always be considered.
- **Grooming:** Community members should refrain from extreme hairstyles. Hair should be neat and clean, and beards and mustaches should be neatly trimmed.
- **Relationships and Visitation:** Out of respect for others and propriety in relationships, members of the community are asked to be discreet and prudent in public displays of affection.

Discretion in visiting the rooms, homes or off-campus living quarters of the opposite sex is expected.

- Visiting the rooms or residence halls of the opposite sex should only be during designated visitation times and in accordance with residence life visitation policies.

- Visiting the off-campus living quarters of the opposite sex alone should be avoided.
- Spending the night with a member of the opposite sex, even without sexual contact, is considered inappropriate and could result in consequences including dismissal from the University.
- It is expected that visiting the home of a student of the opposite sex will be by invitation from the host family.

600.4.4 CIVIC

Members of the community are expected to contribute positively to both the local and campus community by being responsible citizens. The civic responsibilities of a community member necessitate that the member develop a respect for the community standards and the authority of those standards. In conjunction with respect, the member should develop a willingness to be corrected in love when necessary.

Violations of civic responsibilities will result in institutional responses which appropriately correspond to the severity of the infraction. Expectations include:

- **Local, State and Federal Laws:** Students should abide by all local, state, and federal laws.
- **Facilities:** Students should not enter or occupy facilities without proper authorization.
- **Keys:** Possession or duplication of keys without proper authorization is prohibited.
- **Undeveloped Properties:** Areas of campus that are undeveloped (e.g., cross country course area, reservoir) should not be entered after sunset without proper authorization.
- **Technological Property:** Computer files, I.P. addresses, e-mail, voice-mail boxes or technological property of others should not be accessed without proper authorization. (See also Information Technology Services Memorandum of Understanding in General Policies and Procedures section.)
- **Safety:** Students should not engage in activities which pose a threat to their own safety or the safety of others, or that create unsafe environments (such as open flames).
- **Fire Safety Equipment:** Misusing fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and other safety equipment is prohibited.
- **Firearms/Weapons:** Firearms or other weapons are not permitted on campus or at University-related off-campus events without prior permission of the Vice President for Student Development. Knives with blades more than 3.5 inches are considered weapons.
- **Motor Vehicles:** All motor vehicles must be registered and display a University parking permit. Failure to register a vehicle results in a \$50 fine. Students falling below a cumulative 2.0 GPA are subject to having the privilege of operating a vehicle on campus revoked. Automobile & Parking Guidelines are distributed with the parking permit and are also available online and in the Office of Student Development.

- **Disruption to Normal Campus Functions:** Students should refrain from activities that disrupt the normal functioning of the campus.
- **Speakers:** Students should obtain permission from the appropriate vice president before bringing an outside speaker to campus.
- **Public Demonstrations:** Permission must be obtained from the Vice President for Student Development at least 24 hours prior to conducting any public demonstration.

600.5

EMPLOYEE/STUDENT DATING

600.4

Asbury University is committed to creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in which all members of the campus community can work together freely to accomplish the mission of the university. All employees must recognize that our mission is to educate and serve students in a spirit as expressed in this Community Life section of the *Faculty Manual*.

In light of this commitment, dating or amorous relationships between employees and students are considered to be inappropriate and are strongly discouraged. The university acknowledges, however, that such relationships may develop. In such instances, the employee is expected to promptly notify the immediate supervisor about the relationship. It will be the responsibility of the supervisor to advise the provost/appropriate vice president of the circumstances. A careful review will take place before a course of action is recommended or taken. With the interest of all parties in mind, the college will determine how to deal with each situation on a case-by-case basis. The resolution to a case may involve employee discipline including a change in the employment position or in termination of the employee. A decision to terminate an employee in such an instance must be reviewed by the president. Employees dating students to whom they give regular instruction, either in a classroom or work setting, is not permitted. See section on sexual harassment.