



## Understanding Grand Canyon University's Christian Identity

As an interdenominational Christian institution, Grand Canyon University's fundamental beliefs, values and practices are outlined in our Doctrinal Statement, Ethical Positions Statement and Mission Statement. As important as it is to document those core beliefs, it is even more important to bear witness to them as they are lived out on our campus and in our community on a daily basis.

Ask any student on campus why they choose to attend GCU and the word "community" will undoubtedly be a focal point of the conversation. The core of that community is a Christian worldview and the University's intentional steps to nurture that culture on campus.

To that end,

- All GCU faculty and staff sign a statement of expectations acknowledging they understand and will support the University's missional approach based on its Doctrinal Statement, Ethical Positions Statement and Mission Statement. For faculty positions within the College of Theology, applicants also provide a personal statement of belief and complete a worldview questionnaire to ensure they are committed to a lifestyle that is consistent with those commitments.
- The University recently completed a five-year initiative to more fully integrate the Christian worldview throughout its entire curriculum, including the sciences. GCU graduates will be able to express what it means to have a Christian worldview, the implications of that on human value and dignity, how that affects ethical decision-making and how it can be applied within their specific academic discipline or vocation.
- Because GCU is primarily a teaching university (that also incorporates research), it has fostered an environment in which faculty are able to more fully support and mentor students both academically and spiritually while also facilitating interdisciplinary opportunities that enhance student learning outcomes.
- More than 1,000 GCU students each year receive ongoing training in spiritual formation, community building and student engagement to serve in leadership positions as Life Leaders, Resident Assistants and Student Affairs.
- GCU has developed strategic partnerships with more than 2,000 Christian high schools across the United States.

The fruits of these efforts are seen in a myriad of ways throughout the campus, but are most evident in the following statistics: In a 2017 University-wide faith integration survey, almost 85 percent of traditional campus students said they have a positive perception of faith integration and almost 87 percent of online students have a positive one. Moreover, nearly 80 percent of campus students and nearly 75 percent of online students said their faith has grown while at GCU. Contrast that with data from [campusrenewal.org](http://campusrenewal.org), which portrays the exact opposite -- estimating that roughly 70 percent of Christian teens nationwide *lose* their faith during their first year of college.

At GCU, hundreds of students learn about the Christian worldview for the first time each year while thousands of Christian students grow in their faith due to intentional curricular, co-curricular and cultural-shaping efforts on campus.

Other examples of GCU students living out their faith are abundant:

- Between 5,000-7,000 students voluntarily attend Chapel service every Monday morning in GCU Arena.
- More than 1,500 students attend the Gathering worship services on Tuesday evenings.
- Students participate in more than 150 weekly student-led Life Group sessions which offer a place to form relationships, build community and grow spiritually through studying the Bible. Trained student Life Leaders are also available for prayer, spiritual counsel and support.
- Approximately 300 GCU students participate in 25 global mission trips each year to destinations such as Thailand, South Africa, Cambodia, Mexico and India to expand the Kingdom and spread the message of Jesus Christ.
- In our Phoenix community, students participate in outreach efforts at homeless shelters, senior centers, veterans homes, weekly youth ministries in the park, and shelters that aid the victims of sex trafficking, among others.
- GCU students and staff have contributed nearly 20,000 volunteer hours in a partnership with Habitat for Humanity that has resulted in the renovation of more than 200 homes in GCU's inner-city neighborhood.
- Roughly 1,200 GCU students provide free academic assistance and mentoring to students from more than 130 K-12 schools through the University's Learning Lounge program.

GCU is clear about its identity and its foundational convictions as a Christian institution, and we are intentionally committed to living out that faith within the context of a missional community.

In the classroom, that results in students who are educated from a distinctly Christian perspective while incorporating biblical principles and servant leadership values no matter what their vocation.

On our campus, it creates a welcoming spirit and loving service to students from all walks of life, including some who may experience Christianity for the first time.

And in our neighborhood, it means following both the word and deed of Jesus Christ, who taught that Christians should live as salt and light within the world by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

“When you combine all of those elements, we believe Grand Canyon University has been transformative in the lives of our students and the world around us,” said GCU President Brian Mueller. “We encourage students to find their purpose within a world that displays the wisdom and glory of God. This provides unique opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, self-awareness and depth of character. This educational strategy enables thoughtful people to understand Christian beliefs and Christian believers to become more thoughtful. As a result, graduates of Grand Canyon University are prepared to engage the world with a sense of vocational calling and purpose.”