

The Covenant
between
The Synod of the Trinity of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
and
Davis & Elkins College

I. Preamble to the Covenant

Throughout their respective histories, The Presbyterian Church (USA) and Davis & Elkins College have based their corporate lives on the premise that humankind approaches and responds to God through both faith and learning. For example, requirements for ordination as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) make clear that those who sense a divine call to ministry must act on that calling by completing a rigorous program of higher education. This belief in the integral relationship between faith and learning led the Church from its earliest days in North America to found and nurture institutions of higher learning as its very first ministry beyond the local parish. More recently, the Church's commitment to higher education motivated the 2003 General Assembly to adopt Item 09-01, *Reclaiming the Vision: A Mission Strategy to Strengthen the Partnership Between the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities*.

Since its own founding in 1904, Davis & Elkins College has consistently advocated the integration of faith and learning. Indeed, this advocacy is inherent in the College's ethos as a church-related institution of higher education. The College's current mission statement, adopted by the campus community and trustees in 1999, makes that integration explicit. It states: "True to its heritage as an institution of higher education affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the College affirms . . . the unity of the intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions of life." From this shared premise, a relationship of cooperation, complementarity, and mutual respect between Church and College has existed, evolved, and endured through the years.

Although Church and College have distinct missions, the complementarity of their ministries is evident particularly in four areas of endeavor:

Education. The Biblical mandate to grow in the knowledge of God (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:11-15) is the foundation for education within the Church and the church-related college. Both Church and College challenge and support men and women as they seek to achieve their intellectual and spiritual potential—the Church in its more focused ministry of Christian education, the College in its broader scope of all aspects of the created order.

Witness. The Church proclaims the Gospel through the sacraments, proclamation of the Word, and community life. By engaging students in a process of inquiry, by equipping them with the intellectual tools necessary to allow them to distinguish true from false claims, sound from faulty reasoning, fact from wishful thinking, evidence from emotional appeal, by causing them to examine their personal and societal values, and by nurturing their spiritual growth, the College instills in students a sense of vocation, a call to a balanced life that includes and goes beyond career pursuits.

Service. The Church exhorts all Christians to live out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) through acts of love and compassion. Through its benevolent ministries, the Church reaches out to those in need and offers the fellowship and aid of the people of God. The College likewise works to inform and equip students for lives of service in their communities and in the larger world. Indeed, it demonstrates its commitment to involvement with the community through its programs of volunteer services and service learning. Through their respective emphases on service, both Church and College make the message of the Gospel concrete in the lives of those who seek the grace of God.

Leadership Development. The Church relies on inspired leaders to advance its mission. Thus it must be open to drawing out the leadership potential in all women and men who sense a call to serve God and humankind, whether as laypersons or in more formal roles of Church vocations. The Church also provides practical opportunities for people to exercise leadership in order to help them refine their God-given gifts. Embedded in the College's mission statement is its commitment to seek to prepare leaders to meet the needs of the larger society, including the Church, by challenging students to hone and practice their leadership skills. This is achieved in both the College's academic and co-curricular programs, many of which are student driven. The leadership model the College strives to instill in its students is less the corporate model that too often divides society into leaders and followers and more the "leadership of responsibility" in which people of goodwill are empowered with persuasive skills in order to equip them to influence society for the good.

II. **Profile of the College**

Davis & Elkins College is the only institution of higher learning in West Virginia affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA). Founded at the initiative of United States Senators Henry Gassaway Davis and Stephen Benton Elkins, with active support from the Presbyteries of Lexington and Winchester of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the College has always maintained its Presbyterian identity and its commitment to core values consistent with the Reformed tradition.

The College offers a personalized undergraduate education firmly rooted in the liberal arts tradition leading to degrees in the arts and sciences as well as pre-professional and professional studies. Its corporate life is based on values consistent with both its Judeo-Christian heritage and humane traditions: the free pursuit of knowledge and truth, human dignity, compassion, mutual support, justice, and social responsibility.

III. **The Covenant between the College and the Synod**

DAVIS & ELKINS COLLEGE COVENANTS . . .

A. To commit itself to stewardship and service by

1. serving as God's stewards in developing the academic skills and moral values of the men and women who are enrolled as students,
2. challenging students, faculty, and staff to give of themselves in service to others,
3. using effectively its human and material resources to fulfill the College's mission, and
4. nurturing the spiritual and personal growth of all members of the College community.

B. To commit itself to the pursuit of knowledge and truth by

1. acknowledging human potential, including intellectual potential, as a gift from God, and
2. affirming that God is truth and that the pursuit of truth will lead humankind into God's presence.

C. To be a caring community by

1. maintaining an educational and social environment based on core values consistent with the Judeo-Christian heritage and humane traditions,
2. offering a personalized undergraduate education in which faculty and staff alike focus upon the intellectual, spiritual, and personal needs of students,
3. acknowledging and accommodating insofar as possible different learning styles and personal challenges among students, and
4. maintaining a religious life ministry to encourage the development of Christian discipleship as well as open dialogue about matters of faith among Christians and between Christians and people of other faith traditions or those who are of no faith tradition.

D. To maintain a close affiliation with the Presbyterian Church (USA) by

1. maintaining a covenant relationship with the denomination through the Synod of the Trinity,
2. nurturing open and mutually beneficial relationships with the Presbytery of West Virginia, other church governing bodies, and individual congregations,
3. maintaining a significant presence of members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) among trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff,
4. maintaining as chaplain an ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament of the Presbyterian Church (USA) supported by an endowment established by the First Presbyterian Church of Charleston, West Virginia, in memory of former pastors and trustees of the College, Drs. Benny Benfield and George Vick,
5. providing opportunities for service and leadership in the church,
6. being an active member of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities (APCU),
7. promoting values and principles consistent with those of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Reformed tradition, and
8. offering scholarships especially designated for students who are members of congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA), including the Covenant Scholarship to assist dependent sons and daughters of Presbyterian clergy in attending the College.

THE SYNOD OF THE TRINITY COVENANTS . . .

A. To promote the College as an affiliated institution of higher education by

1. acquainting its member churches and presbyteries with the programs offered by the College,
2. utilizing its publications and mailings in the general promotion of synod-related colleges, and
3. encouraging the use of College representatives to make presentations before congregational, presbytery, and synod gatherings.

B. To support the College by

1. assisting the College as possible in the recruitment of students, especially among those who are members of congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA),
2. including the College in the Synod's operating budget as it is able,
3. encouraging gifts for the College from individuals and groups, and
4. encouraging churches to create scholarship funds for students from their midst who attend the College.

C. To maintain an ongoing relationship with the College by

1. reviewing periodically with College representatives how commitments made in this Covenant might best be implemented and progress assessed,
2. including College representatives in meaningful dialogue on issues of mutual interest such as the implementation of 2003 General Assembly Item 09-01, and
3. suggesting from time to time to the Trustees and Honors Committee of the Board of Trustees and the President the names of potential trustees who support the purposes of the College.

IV. Approval and Amendment of this Covenant

- A. This Covenant shall be effective upon its adoption by The Synod of the Trinity and the Board of Trustees of Davis & Elkins College.
- B. The Covenant shall be reviewed at least every six years by duly appointed representatives of The Synod of the Trinity and of Davis & Elkins College.
- C. Special review of the Covenant relationship may be initiated at any time either by the Synod or the College. Concerns and/or suggestions shall be communicated in a timely manner to the other party.
- D. The Covenant may be amended by mutual agreement of The Synod of the Trinity and the Board of Trustees of Davis & Elkins College.

Approved:

For The Synod of the Trinity

For Davis & Elkins College

by _____
Moderator

by _____
President of the College

Stated Clerk

Chairman, Board of Trustees

Date _____

Date _____