

ROBERTS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

The members of the Board of Trustees of Roberts Wesleyan University recognize the importance of articulating standards of how we exercise our trusteeship. By adopting this *Handbook* we acknowledge that trusteeship requires a code of behavior not usually expected of other individuals. By willingly and enthusiastically accepting the privilege of serving the public's and the constituents' interest in this institution, we also accept the obligations and responsibilities that accompany trusteeship. The Roberts Wesleyan University Statement, the Exposition of the Christian Vision and the Community Ethos Statement are considered foundational for the entire operation of the University.

THE UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

Our Mission

As a community of learners committed to historic Christianity, Roberts Wesleyan University seeks to prepare thoughtful, spiritually mature, service-oriented people who will help transform society.

Our Foundational Assumptions

The mission of Roberts Wesleyan University is anchored in shared assumptions about:

Scholarship

- The world reflects the mind and purpose of the Creator.
- God desires people to reflect upon the world thoughtfully.
- Faith precedes and conditions all understanding.
- Knowing the truth requires people to act upon that truth.

Spiritual Formation

- The study of Scripture – the authoritative guide for faith and life – is the foundation for an informed Christian worldview.
- We affirm the richness of diverse traditions within historic Christianity.
- We honor the Creator through nurturing the life of the mind.
- Each member of the community is shaped and strengthened in faith through shared experiences.

Service

- Christian service derives from the Biblical mandate to love God and to love one's neighbor as oneself.
- Christian commitment to servant-leadership should contribute to constructive and restorative acts.
- Christian service responds to the diverse needs of individuals and communities.
- Christians learn and grow from serving others.

Our Commitments

In keeping with our mission, Roberts Wesleyan University provides an education that focuses on scholarship, spiritual formation and service.

Scholarship – As a community of Christian scholars, the University believes that learning is multifaceted and achieved in a variety of ways.

- **Discovery** – We provide opportunities for inquiry and investigation that contribute to intellectual growth and understanding.
- **Integration** – We provide opportunities to achieve an interdisciplinary understanding of issues and concerns.
- **Application** – We provide opportunities to learn by engaging problems in society.
- **Education** – We seek effective methods of teaching and learning.

Spiritual Formation – As a faith-affirming community, Roberts Wesleyan University provides an environment where people’s relationship with God through Christ can be nurtured.

- **Scripture** – We explore our world through faith perspectives that affirm the authority of scripture.
- **Tradition** – We affirm the richness of historical Christian thought and practice through the ages.
- **Reason** – We employ critical thinking to integrate our faith beliefs with our views of the world.
- **Experience** - We provide opportunities for transforming encounters with God.

Service – As a University attuned to the needs of the world, we seek to develop people of faith who will help transform the world through service.

- **Vocation** - We strive to discover how our God-given talents can lead to productive lives of service.
- **Service Learning** - We provide learning through service opportunities.
- **Global Perspective** - We encourage the development of cross-cultural competence and a global perspective.
- **Social Responsibility** - We foster socially responsible engagement in society.

Our Graduates

As a result of the opportunities provided them, the ideal graduates of Roberts Wesleyan University will be characterized by:

Thoughtful Engagement that includes:

- Sound choices leading to intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- Competence in their chosen discipline.
- Lifelong habits of inquiry, reflection and critical thinking from a Christian perspective.

Spiritual Maturity that values:

- An ability to articulate a Christian worldview.
- Excellence and integrity in work, family, service and culture, with Christ as an example.
- A desire to extend compassion, mercy and justice to all people.

Commitment to Service that reflects:

- The desire to participate as world citizens with a cross-cultural awareness and a global perspective.
- The knowledge and skills needed to contribute meaningfully to society.
- A clear sense of vocation through meaningful avenues of service.

Our Heritage

Roberts Wesleyan University, originally Chili Seminary, was founded by Benjamin Titus Roberts in 1866. Roberts was an evangelical Methodist minister and the first General Superintendent of the Free Methodist Church. He and the other founders of the Church affirmed the view of Christian teaching, personal piety and social action taught by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. The Church’s official teaching in its Articles of Religion clearly shows its roots in historic orthodox Christianity. Its heritage can be traced through the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, the Augsburg Confession of the Protestant Reformation and the great historic creeds of the early church, such as the Apostles’ Creed, back to the Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The heritage of the University within the Free Methodist tradition has been of major importance in the development of its educational programs. Stating his purpose for founding the school, Roberts wrote, “While we cannot prize too highly the benefits of mental culture, we should not lose sight of that moral and religious culture which lies at the foundation of correct principles and good character.”

Continuing in its Christian heritage and its dedication to “education for character,” Roberts Wesleyan University remains committed to the mission of integrating a Christian worldview and learning.

Our Educational Philosophy

Roberts Wesleyan University serves traditional and non-traditional students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The University’s educational philosophy is built on the assumption that education must address the whole person as a physical, psychological, social, rational and spiritual being. An education at Roberts Wesleyan University presupposes both the complexity of the world and the diversity of human nature. No one method of inquiry or verification is regarded as the sole route to knowledge. Nor does one set of skills provide sufficiently for a life of service. A Roberts Wesleyan education is one in which students investigate the aesthetic, historic, philosophic, scientific and professional disciplines.

Academic pursuit is strengthened by the University’s historic Christian concern for the communication of human values and the development of the whole person. Through membership in a community of learners, students are encouraged to cultivate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare thoughtful, spiritually mature, service oriented persons who will have a transforming impact on society.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE CHRISTIAN VISION IN THE ROBERTS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

The following remarks offer a brief exposition of what we mean when we describe ourselves as Christian in the Mission Statement, the primary self-definition of the University community. It does not intend to go beyond what is given in the Mission Statement, either explicitly or implicitly. Because the term Christian has been used to cover a wide range of views, it may be helpful to clarify our use of that term.

A Heritage of Essential Christian Teachings

The Mission Statement notes that we affirm central teachings derived from the Scriptures and embodied in classic Christian documents, such as the Apostles’ Creed. Among these are the teachings that:

God has revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three Persons;

God is the Creator and Preserver of all things;

The Word of God was incarnate in Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, was raised on the third day, ascended into heaven and will return at the end of time to judge the living and the dead;

The Holy Spirit works in the Church and in the world to overrule in human affairs and to bring salvation;

The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament comprise the uniquely inspired written Word of God, are true and reliable, and teach authoritatively about God, human nature, the way of salvation and the life of faith;

The Church is the particular instrument, though not the only means, by which God calls people to salvation and the life of faith;

All persons are born in sin, willingly commit sin, and cannot earn or bring about their own salvation;

God faithfully calls and awakens persons to the need of salvation;

Those who repent of their sin and trust in Christ are freely and undeservedly forgiven of their sin, put in a right relationship with God and given the Holy Spirit who sanctifies and transforms them;

The Christian life involves obedience to God's commands and service to Him and others.

A Christian Worldview

The Mission Statement further notes that the University remains committed to the integration of a Christian worldview and a liberal arts education. A Christian worldview affirms that all truth is God's truth, and assumes that:

Christian teachings, as those noted above, give perspective to intellectual inquiry, and liberate rather than inhibit the intellectual quest;

The world in which we live is rational, reflecting the mind and purposes of its Creator and Preserver;

The human being, unique among the creatures of our material world, has the capacity to understand, to some degree, the world;

One of our God-given tasks is to reflect upon the world with rigor, precision and skill;

The various liberal disciplines, when vigorously pursued, yield insight and knowledge about the world;

The methodologies of these liberal disciplines, when properly applied, are compatible with the Christian faith, and their findings complement rather than contradict its teachings;

God's truth is both comprehensive and absolute;

Our educational task is to study and teach God's truth to the extent that we can come to know it.

A Christian Concern for Human Values

The Mission Statement also notes that Roberts Wesleyan University is strengthened by its historic Christian concern for human values. As such, Roberts Wesleyan University seeks to provide excellent Christian higher education for qualified persons. The university supports the spiritual growth of its students as it affirms these beliefs:

- Roberts Wesleyan University affirms the inherent value and equitable treatment of all people. Grounded in this unwavering affirmation, the University is committed to the promotion of a community that celebrates the beauty of human diversity, values diverse individuals and perspectives, and endeavors to create a campus where all people feel welcomed and respected. This commitment flows from our originating history and key foundational theological perspectives, including the belief that all people are created in the image of God.
- Roberts Wesleyan University affirms that
 - Human beings fulfill the purpose of life only by glorifying God and enjoying Him.
 - All people are called through the free offer of the Gospel to repentance and faith, and to a life of obedience and service.
 - Everyone can be enriched and develop strong, positive, and healthy character through a life of piety.
 - All people have gifts from God through which they may serve Him and society.
 - Our students, while at Roberts Wesleyan, should be equipped for competent service in a broad array of secular and religious venues.

ROBERTS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

COMMUNITY ETHOS STATEMENT

Roberts Wesleyan University is privileged and blessed to have on its Board of Trustees, faculty and staff persons whose very lives embody the *Mission Statement* (and other supporting documents) of the University. The trustees and employees of the University, through their devoted work, have pledged their energies and resources to upholding and furthering the spirit and content of the Statement, which clearly places the University within the Christian tradition. In that context, trustees, faculty and staff are expected to serve as role models for the students within the University community – role models whose Christian lifestyles are characterized by the positive virtues of honesty, integrity, justice and caring. Trustees, faculty and staff, as members of Christ’s kingdom, and as members of the University community, seek to integrate their identity as active Christians into every aspect of their professional and personal lives. Therefore, our ethos is primarily one that concerns itself with positive virtue and with the joy and love that naturally lead to, and that are results of, an engaged, committed life of service to God and others.

It is also true that the University places itself within that tradition of orthodox Christianity that believes, among other things, that the following do not represent the biblical ideal: the misuse of alcoholic beverages and tobacco, the misuse of drugs, and certain behaviors related to sexuality, including sexual harassment, the viewing of pornography and sexual activity outside of marriage, which is defined in our creed as a relationship between one man and one woman. Therefore, the University expects that all trustees, faculty and staff will respect the right of the University to consider such activities unacceptable in the modeling context of the Christian University and thus will conduct themselves in such a manner that their behavior will not undermine the University’s position.

It should be clear that the emphasis at Roberts Wesleyan University is not on what *cannot* be done, but rather on what *can* be done to help our students learn and grow spiritually, emotionally and intellectually in the context of a deeply committed Christian environment. Our goal is not to concentrate on the negative, but to highlight and proactively encourage the positive, organic and holistic ways in which devoted Christian trustees, faculty and staff, active in their churches and in the development of their own spiritual lives, can naturally and lovingly help students become agents for positive change as they serve God and society, in order that they might bring honor to Christ in our world.