



Standards for Presbyterian College Chaplains

Developed from PMHE Standards, modified and approved by
the Presbyterian College Chaplains Association in February 2003

Preface

A college or university is one of the primary places in our society where public debate takes place, where opinions are shaped and expressed, and where values are formed and articulated. Presbyterian ministry in this context bears

...a faithful witness to the truth, love, and justice of God, as expressed in Jesus Christ, in the higher education community in this country and around the world.

We are faithful to the truth of God when we enable persons to learn about the creation of God, about the mystery in the vast expanse of all that is. We are faithful to the love of God when we enable persons to understand the biblical story and the ministry, message, and mission of Jesus. We are faithful to the justice of God when we enable persons to learn responsibility for the world and all that dwells in it.

From On Being Faithful: the Continuing Mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Higher Education. 1994

College chaplains have a unique opportunity and responsibility to enhance the presence and the ministry of the church within higher education and to influence the future of the church and society with the message of the Gospel. The church calls forth talented and gifted people to serve in this challenging ministry.

Therefore, the Presbyterian College Chaplains Association offers these standards to promote a level of competency for campus ministry. They provide a performance gauge in the ministry and a means to foster a high degree of professional excellence. The living out of these standards bears witness to discipleship with Jesus and his pastoral and prophetic call.

1. Theological Competencies

A college chaplain is expected to:

- Have a basic understanding of the Reformed tradition in the areas of: Old and New Testament contents, Pastoral Theology and Care, Ethics, Worship, Spirituality and Prayer, Peace and Justice Issues, Church History, and Theology of Campus Ministry
- Pursue continuing theological reflection and education

- Have familiarity with other religious traditions and their practices.

2. Conceptualizing Skills

The pastoral skills of a college chaplain show abilities to:

- communicate with and motivate people
- articulate the faith through preaching, teaching, writing, and spiritual direction
- initiate, deepen and terminate pastoral relationships
- organize, facilitate, administer and share responsibility and decision making
- effectively assess, intervene with and refer individuals
- discern the needs of the campus community
- call forth and coordinate the diverse gifts of the community for worship, spiritual nurture, service and mutual edification.

The conceptualizing skills of a college chaplain demonstrate an ability to articulate an understanding of:

- the nature and purpose of higher education
- the experience and perspective of the student, faculty, staff, and administrator in higher education
- human growth and development (faith, moral, spiritual) and how psycho-social, developmental, cultural and ethical dynamics affect pastoral practices
- the interrelatedness of the religious life of the institution, the chaplain, the church, and higher education.

The administrative skills of a college chaplain display abilities to:

- develop and sustain effective professional relationships by being active in denominational and professional organizations of ministry
- minister in an interfaith and multi-cultural environment
- minister collaboratively
- initiate and sustain relationship with other college or university professionals.

3. Personal Competencies

A person ministering on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a believing, practicing Christian whose spiritual life is grounded in the Christian tradition and who:

- articulates knowledge of and faith in the teaching of Christ and the church and shares this knowledge, gifts and talents
- nourishes this faith and knowledge through membership in a worshipping community, prayer and personal spiritual direction, annual retreats and continuing education events
- publicly adheres to the teachings of the Reformed tradition and the PCCA Code of Ethics
- demonstrates a healthy integration of one's own sexuality
- demonstrates a balanced life-style, showing concern for the emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual components of one's own life
- manages stress, arbitrates conflict, accepts failure and ambiguity in morally and socially acceptable ways.

Code of Ethics for PCCA Members

Developed from PMHE Code of Ethics, and modified and approved by PCCA in February 2002.

The Context of Ministry

Chaplains who are members of the Presbyterian College Chaplains Association (PCCA) have a unique responsibility to enhance the presence and the ministry of the church within higher education and to influence the future of the church and society with the message of the Gospel.

We believe that Jesus Christ alone is Lord of the conscience and profess the dignity of all individuals. We understand the role of education to be central to our calling as Christians and our particular response is through specialized ministry as college and university chaplains.

The Presbyterian College Chaplains Association therefore, offers this Code of Ethics to promote a high level of accountability for our ministry on campuses. The living out of this code by those who represent and serve on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bears witness to our discipleship to Jesus Christ and his pastoral and prophetic call.

As Members of the Presbyterian College Chaplains Association,

1. *We Commit Ourselves to The Standards of Our Profession.*

We strive for wholeness and excellence in our ministry. We seek to serve people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love. We seek to form communities shaped by the Gospel and capable of witnessing to Gods reign and purpose in the world. Our ministry prepares, celebrates and reflects on Gods redemptive presence in Jesus Christ. Our Standards give us a starting point from which we can grow as professionals in service to the church and higher education.

2. *We Commit Ourselves to The Gospel, The Reformed Tradition and Pastoral Values.*

We look to Scriptures as the unique and authoritative guide. We are committed to Christ, who directs us to embody a global perspective, to deepen respect for the mystery of life, and to be open to God's call to all persons to serve others in response to the love of God.

We are rooted in the Reformed tradition of which higher education ministry has been an inherent part since 1559. We lift up the values and beliefs about the sovereignty of God over all of life, the goodness of the created world, the value and limitation of reason, a commitment to the moral life, and the call to service. We look to the movement of the Spirit of God throughout the entire human story to promote the value and dignity of the person and the unfolding of the Reign of God in human history.

We commit ourselves to providing a safe and healthy environment in which to conduct our ministry. This environment would be free of any form of harassment.

3. *We Commit Ourselves to Higher Education.*

We presume that God is already present in higher education and not confined to the church alone. As representatives of the Reformed tradition, we embrace the goals and purposes of higher education and seek to enrich the local community of faith and the Church Universal with its fruits. We work to bring awareness to the people of God that they have a sacred obligation to be well informed, active participants in the public arena, bringing their Christianity to bear on the political and economic agendas of the day. We call all persons to continue in learning.

We affirm the positive contributions of higher education and at the same time recognize that the idols of privatism, tribalism, nationalism, technique, and specialized utilitarian education are present as well.

4. *We Commit Ourselves to Discipleship and to Service.*

We promise to our community of faith an active discipleship in the spirit and mission of Jesus as he sought to love, do justice, offer healing, and to speak the truth. We relate with others in ways that respect their dignity as persons and their freedom of conscience without compromising our own beliefs.

We recognize the privileged relationship we have with the people we serve and promise them acceptance and confidentiality. We will give our community of faith dedicated service. We will work hard, given a reasonable job description and work schedule.

5. *We Commit Ourselves to the People We Serve.*

We serve students, faculty, staff, and administrators who gather at institutions of higher education to search and learn, research and teach, envision and carry out. We are called by our colleges and universities and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) primarily to minister to and serve the entire campus community. We extend our ministry to persons of any particular religious tradition, denomination, age, gender, race, creed, physical ability or sexual orientation.

We are concerned for the wellbeing of those we serve as they join with us in the mission of the church in higher education. As leaders within the faith community, we seek no unfair advantage

that our positions may give us. We adhere to appropriate interpersonal boundaries in relating to those we serve.

6. *We Commit Ourselves to the Broader Concerns of Social Justice and Peace in the World.*

We recognize higher education as a privileged place for public debate on the many social concerns facing our society today.

We promise our communities of faith that we will speak the Gospel values within this forum and collaborate with others in the pursuit of peace and justice in the world.

7. *We Commit Ourselves to Personal Faithfulness, Integrity and Well-being.*

We actively pursue our own faith/intellectual development and enrichment. We seek not only personal integrity but also an integration of our faith, our ministry, and our lifestyle. We are committed to wellness, and we care for our own health and personal well-being lest our own needs interrupt or undermine our ministry.

8. *We Commit Ourselves to Be Held Accountable.*

We pray that our church, our communities of faith, and our colleagues will support us and challenge us to live out these ethical principles. As we seek to become more faithful, we pledge ourselves to mutual accountability.