



June 18, 2021

Friends,

Dordt University's Board of Trustees met yesterday for our regular June meeting. On our agenda were matters pertaining to human sexuality, which have been a topic of conversation for our campus community over the past year. On those agenda items, the Board not only reaffirmed the current policy, but also directed and supported the administration in the application of that policy.

Dordt's mission statement has been a continual guide for all the activities of this university: "*As an institution of higher education committed to the Reformed Christian perspective, Dordt equips students, alumni, and the broader community to work for Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of contemporary life.*"

As we work together to live out the institution's mission, we aim to have unity, clarity, and consistency about these matters. We cannot have conflicting beliefs about our understanding and interpretation of Scriptural truths—particularly among our faculty and staff charged with mentoring our students toward Christ-centered renewal.

Dordt University believes, based on its understanding and interpretation of the Bible, that God's creational design is for two sexes, male and female; and that the only appropriate and permissible context in which sexual intimacy may be expressed as overt sexual interaction is in the marriage partnership between a man and a woman. Dordt University is committed to being a Christian community where its employees and students live according to God's creational structure and abide by these Biblical injunctions for marriage and sexual activity. The university expects all students, faculty, and staff to live in accord with this understanding of sexual interaction as long as they are members of the university community.

As we carry out our work in this area of contemporary life, we must speak these truths in love. Finding ways to wholeheartedly and simultaneously live out both grace and truth within our world today is no easy task. Yet, God has called us to this work, and God will equip us to carry it out. We will not speak truth effectively with hearts hardened to a world broken by sin. As we live in relationship with those struggling through such brokenness in their lives, we strive to do so in love.

The Board of Trustees and administration recognize that Christians in the broader community may differ on these beliefs. It is not our desire to create a culture of fear, worry, or concern among Dordt faculty and staff as we work together. Instead, we aim to maintain our unity and consistency as a unique and specific Christian institution, in order that we can be bold in our application of grace and truth in these important cultural matters.

While we hold students, faculty, and staff to certain beliefs and behaviors, we also understand that beliefs can change for people over the course of time. We expect that faculty and staff who do not share our beliefs on these matters may not be able to sustain an employment relationship with this community.

Some may wonder how Dordt's actions on these matters relate to academic freedom. Here, we point to Dordt's statement on academic freedom from the Educational Task, which ends with these words:

*Dordt faculty are called to explore, tend, and develop God's world by asking probing questions, formulating insights, wrestling with ideas, freely dialoguing with differing perspectives, and living obediently, all while prophetically working toward shalom. This involves submitting to God's Word as revealed in creation, embodied in the person of Jesus, expounded in the Scriptures, and applied through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit and his Church. In doing so, faculty participate in the Reformational tradition of Semper Reformanda – Reformed and always being Reformed, according to the Word of God.*

We believe that a careful reading of the Educational Task illuminates not only the freedom, but also the responsibility of Dordt's faculty and staff to teach and mentor our students Christianly on many challenging contemporary topics, including human sexuality.

The hope of the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Cabinet is that this note provides a helpful blend of assurance, clarity, and comfort following a season of campus conversations on these matters. If questions or concerns persist, please feel invited to speak with Vice President for Academic Affairs Leah Zuidema or President Erik Hoekstra in the days to come.

For the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Cabinet,



Debra Broek, Chair



Erik Hoekstra, President