



## COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The mission of Wesley Theological Seminary (“**Wesley**” or “**the Seminary**”) is to prepare persons for Christian ministry, to foster theological scholarship, and to provide leadership on issues facing the church and the world. Our aim is to nourish a critical understanding of Christian faith, cultivate disciplined spiritual lives, and promote a just and compassionate engagement in the mission of the church to the world.

Wesley is a community of persons in the church, accountable, as all Christian communities are, to the intention of God that all may be one. In recognition of God’s intention, this Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“**DEI Commitment**”) recognizes all humans are made in the image and likeness of God and establishes Wesley as a community that intentionally seeks to include persons of multifarious differences as students, faculty, staff, administrators, and members of the Seminary’s Board of Governors (“**Board**”).

Wesley’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is to be lived out in our admission and support of students; in the hiring and promotion of faculty, staff, and administrators; in the selection of members to the Board; and through the work of Wesley’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (“**DEI Committee**”) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer (“**DEI Officer**”) as supported by Wesley’s Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Wesley’s Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation addresses the Seminary’s commitment to complying fully with all applicable federal and District of Columbia laws prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. This Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion addresses the Seminary’s further commitment to promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational experience, recruitment and hiring process, and affirming work environment.

### REASONS FOR WESLEY’S COMMITMENT

Wesley’s community embraces and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental to our Christian faith. God is the creator of all humankind (Gen 1:27, inclusive language) and in God we share a common humanity. Jesus made clear God’s love for all people regardless of their color, ethnicity, gender, background, or other personal characteristics and demonstrated God’s inclusive love during his life. Further, he showed through his teaching and ministry that Christians are to accept and be in ministry with persons least like them as well as most like them. Jesus showed that Christians and Christian communities have a particular obligation to demonstrate the reality of Christ’s culture-transforming love for all people. Wesley strives to create a diverse and inclusive community, equip a diverse group of individuals for Christian ministry, and provide leadership to the world on this fundamental aspect of our faith.

Wesley's community also embraces and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion because a diverse and inclusive environment enriches the experience of the Seminary's students, staff, faculty, administrators, and Board. Learning with and from persons representing different life experiences and spiritual journeys to Wesley's community informs intentional understanding, creates opportunities to engage, and equips us to tear down dividing walls that prohibit oneness in the peace of Jesus. Interaction within a diverse intellectual community improves active learning and critical thinking. Scholarship flourishes when the rich diversity of human perspectives and experiences is heard, equitably regarded, and included in the curriculum, conversation, and consciousness. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are thus core to Wesley's mission as a Christian seminary.

## **INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT**

The Seminary's DEI Committee and DEI Officer, together with the Seminary's administrators and Board, have responsibility for institutional oversight of Wesley's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **A. DEI Committee**

The following representatives within Wesley's community shall serve on the DEI Committee:

- (1) DEI Officer, appointed by the President.
- (2) Title IX Coordinator, appointed by the President.
- (3) Director of Human Resources, appointed by the President.
- (4) One Board member, appointed by the Board.
- (5) One faculty member, appointed by the faculty.
- (6) At least one additional staff member, appointed by the Staff Council.
- (7) At least one student, appointed by the Student Council.

The Seminary's DEI Officer, Title IX Coordinator, and Director of Human Resources shall serve ex-officio on the Committee with no term limit. Other committee members shall serve two-year terms with a limit of three consecutive terms. Terms for the Board and faculty representatives on the committee commence at the beginning of the academic year (July 1) in odd-numbered years. Terms for the staff and student representatives commence at the beginning of the academic year (July 1) in even-numbered years. If a member ceases to serve prior to the expiration of their term a replacement member shall be appointed, in the same manner as the departing member, to serve the remainder of the departing member's term. Serving a partial term as a replacement member shall not count against the limit of three consecutive terms on the committee.

The DEI Committee shall include at least one person of color; at least one person who is not a person of color; and representatives of various genders. If at any time the committee does not meet these requirements the president shall appoint an additional member or members to satisfy the requirement. The additional member(s) shall serve until the end of the academic year for which

they were appointed and may be reappointed by the president if these requirements would not otherwise be met.

The DEI Committee shall choose one of its members to serve as the committee chair for each academic year. If a chairperson is not chosen by September 1 of any academic year, the president shall appoint a chairperson from among the members of the committee.

The DEI Committee shall have the following duties:

- (1) Nominate an individual to serve as the Seminary's DEI Officer to be appointed by the President.
- (2) Collaborate with the DEI Officer and assist in advancing the goals of this DEI Commitment.
- (3) Participate in educating the Seminary community on DEI issues by encouraging engagement and facilitating awareness activities and opportunities that amplify the Seminary's commitment to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. Expand DEI focuses to embrace individual consciousness and communal commitment to creating an enviable diverse experience for all persons affiliated with Wesley.
- (4) Develop procedures to promote and implement Wesley's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Amplify DEI awareness through surveys, events, a dynamic webpage, DEI tools for faculty to use in curriculum and classroom and being equipped to have answers for any person who asks about the hope we have (1 Pet 3:15) in our calling to welcome everyone to Wesley's community for an encounter of the love of God.
- (5) Monitor the Seminary's application, admission, retention, recruitment, and hiring procedures to ensure that these support Wesley's DEI commitment and report any departures from this commitment to the person(s) responsible for the area of concern and to Wesley's president.
- (6) Through the DEI Officer, report at least annually to the president and to the Board's Enrollment and Academic Programs Committee regarding all significant matters related to the DEI Committee.
- (7) Recommend to the president and the Board, as the committee deems appropriate, any changes needed to this policy.

## **B. DEI Officer**

A DEI Officer shall be nominated by the DEI Committee and appointed by the president to serve until otherwise determined. The DEI Committee will nominate an individual who is a regular member of the Seminary's staff or faculty, but not a member of the Administrative Council or Board of Directors, and who in the committee's view exhibits integrity, sensitivity, and leadership.

The DEI Officer shall have the following duties:

- (1) Coordinate DEI activities that involve the committee and engage students, staff, faculty, administrators, and the Board.
- (2) Consult with the DEI Committee chair to manage meeting logistics and disseminate information to DEI Committee members.
- (3) Consult and coordinate with the Title IX Coordinator, the Director of Human Resources, the Associate Dean for Community Life, and other Seminary personnel regarding DEI issues.
- (4) On behalf of the DEI Committee, report at least annually to the president and to the Board's Enrollment and Academic Programs Committee regarding all significant matters related to the DEI Committee.

### **C. Seminary Administration**

The Seminary's president and other members of the administration have responsibility for recruiting and admitting students, hiring employees, and administering the operation of the Seminary. This includes responsibility for pursuing the goals set forth in this policy. To this end, the Seminary's administration shall:

- (1) Lead, support, and monitor the Seminary's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- (2) In admitting and supporting students, and in hiring and promoting faculty, staff, and administrators, take intentional actions to advance the Seminary's commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion.
- (3) Coordinate with the DEI Committee and DEI Officer in these efforts, including where appropriate with respect to recruiting, hiring, and promotion decisions.

### **D. Board of Governors**

The Seminary's Board of Governors is an integral part of the Seminary community and has an important role in advancing the goals of this policy. To this end, the Board shall:

- (1) Approve an annual budget for DEI activities/programming and a DEI Officer stipend.
- (2) In selecting its members, and in appointing members to leadership positions on the Board, seek commitment to advance the Seminary's commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion.

- (3) As part of its oversight role, support and monitor the Seminary’s efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- (4) Review the DEI Officer’s reports to the Board’s Enrollment and Academic Programs Committee, and act if needed in response to such reports.

### **PUBLICATION OF THIS POLICY**

This policy shall be published on the Seminary’s website and in the Seminary’s Faculty Manual, Staff Manual, Student Handbook, and Annual Catalog. It will also be an addendum to job descriptions, admission packets, orientation materials, course syllabi, and Blackboard.