

VINE UNIVERSITY



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2020-2021

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I. FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

1.1 Mission Statement

The mission of Vine University is to equip Christian leaders for intercultural ministry through theological higher education.

1.2 University Outcomes

We carry out our mission by focusing on these institutional outcomes:

- University Outcome 1: We strive to grow as Christian leaders, demonstrating a personal and spiritual maturity.
- University Outcome 2: We strengthen our call to ministry as we enhance our ministry vision and competencies.
- University Outcome 3: We train to communicate and work in intercultural settings to impact the world for Christ.
- University Outcome 4: We engage in the study of theology to be competent in articulating changeless truths.

1.3 Christian Philosophy of Education

Vine University participates in the growing non-Western Christian missionary movement by training missionaries and mission-minded church leaders. A chief goal of missionary movement is the discipling of the nations, that is, developing individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds into Christ's disciples. Graduate education for global witness at Vine University is grounded in biblical, theological, and historical basis of the Christian faith. Building on that base, further study is provided in intercultural leadership and ministry.

Education for global Christian witness at Vine University combines spiritual formation, field-based professional training, and continuing intercultural research. The faculty seek to integrate research and professional development in different modes of instruction (residential, distance, and extension). Although intercultural ministries require a vast body of knowledge from a wide range of disciplines, students are encouraged to explore it as an integrated whole. In combining experiential learning, continuing research, and formal learning (lectures, and reading), graduate education at Vine effectively prepares works to meet the rapidly changing conditions of the contemporary world.

1.4 Biblical Foundation Statement

All the board members, administrators, and faculty members of Vine University subscribe to the following statement of faith.

1. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is the only infallible and inerrant rule of faith and practice (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:1-21).
2. There is one true and living God revealed to us in Three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and love (Gen. 1:1; John 10:30; 4:24).
3. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal and Incarnate Son of God and the only Savior of sinners. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and unites in His Person true Deity and perfect humanity (John 1:1-4; 14:9; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matt. 1:18-25).
4. The substitutionary and vicarious death of Christ on the Cross provided a perfect propitiation (covering) for the sins of the world and “through faith in His blood the value of His redemptive work is created for the believer” (Hebrews 2:9; John 6:44-69; 3:1-18; Romans 3:25).
5. Christ arose in a literal, bodily resurrection, and His present work in heaven is as Mediator, Advocate and High Priest. Christ will come again to earth in His personal return as the Blessed Hope of the church (Acts 1:10-11; 2:32-36; 3:12-16; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:24; I Cor. 15:12-58; John 14:1-4; 20; I Thess. 4:15-18).
6. The Holy Spirit, proceeding forth from the Father and the Son, possesses full Deity and personality. He came on the day of Pentecost to abide in the church and to indwell all true believers of that church for their instruction, guidance and comfort (Acts 2; 4:7-37; Rom. 8:1-17).
7. Men are justified by faith in the shed blood of Christ alone. Those who are justified are also regenerated and made partakers of the Divine nature (John 3:16; 5:25; Romans 5:1-2; 8:15-17; 10:9-10).
8. The justified and regenerated are called to a life of separation from sinful and worldly practices, and are also called to the service of God and the maintenance of good works (Matt. 16:24; 19:21; Mark 10:21; Rom. 12:1; II Cor. 6: 15-17).
9. The true church consists of all those who have been born from above and united to Christ, and are therefore members of that spiritual body of which the risen Christ is the Head (I Cor. 12:12-15; I Thess. 4:13-18).
10. The sacraments instituted by Christ are baptism and Holy Communion. Baptism is to be administered with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the sign and seal of the inward faith that has already taken place in the heart of the believer. Holy Communion is to be observed until Christ returns as a remembrance of His death, a fellowship with the living Christ and His church, and an anticipation of His return. The efficacy of the sacraments is in the blessing by Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit in those who by faith receive Christ (Matthew 28: 18-20; I Cor. 11:17-34).
11. All men are sinful by nature and practice and are eternally lost apart from the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:10-26; 6:23; John 16:8; I Cor. 3:16-17).
12. The dead shall receive a reward when they are resurrected at the judgment day. Believers will go into eternal blessedness and the devil and all unbelievers into eternal suffering (Isaiah 14: 12-17; John 8:44; 14:1-5; Revelation 20:22).

2. ACADEMIC INFORMATION

2.1 New Student Orientation

New Student Orientation is required for all newly admitted students and is designed to assist them in their transition into a new learning environment. Vine University faculty and staff realize that new students have special needs and are devoted to fully preparing them for their integration into the Vine community. At New Student Orientation students

- Meet other new students, faculty, and staff.
- Become familiarized with VU policies and procedures
- Be introduced to academic information
- Enroll for their first semester of classes.

2.2 Academic Advising

Vine University provides support for students through the appointment of a faculty advisor. The goal of faculty advising is to provide each student a one-to-one relationship with a member of the faculty. The faculty advising relationship has several purposes:

- Academic advising regarding degree requirements
- Vocation guidance and career planning
- Personal and spiritual counsel as needed

Students will meet with their advisor before each semester in order to evaluate progress, courses and academic program for the next semester.

The program director is available to provide advising for current students regarding career goals and planning, job search, resume writing, and interview skills. The director is normally available for advising during regular office hours.

2.3 Registration

Students will construct their schedules in cooperation with their assigned advisor. A student may enroll in approved courses until the add/drop date as identified in the academic calendar. In each semester, the add/drop date is fourteen calendar days after the first day of classes. Students may also drop a course before the add/drop date and there will be no grade recorded on the transcript or official record. After the add/drop date, withdrawals from a course before the end of the eighth week of a semester will result in a “W” on the transcript. A student who “unofficially withdraws” by not attending classes of instruction will be given an “F” grade for that course.

2.4 Confidentiality of Education Records

In compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), Vine University will disclose information from a student's education records only with the prior written consent of the student—except that education records may be disclosed without consent to university officials having a legitimate educational interest in the records and to third parties specifically authorized by FERPA.

Education records are defined as records, files, documents, data and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by Vine University. Students have the following rights regarding their education records:

- To have access to their education records.
- To consent to release a record to a third party.
- To request nondisclosure of directory information.
- To seek amendment of information which the student demonstrates is inaccurate.
- To be notified of their privacy rights.
- To file complaints with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the university to comply with FERPA.

2.5 Grading System

The following grading system is in effect at Vine University.

GRADE	MARK	GPA POINTS	INTERPRETATION
A	96-100	4.0	Outstanding
A-	92-95	3.7	Superior
B+	88-91	3.3	Very good
B	84-87	3.0	Satisfactory
B-	80-83	2.7	Average
C+	77-79	2.3	Acceptable
C	74-76	2.0	Borderline pass
C-	71-73	1.7	Not acceptable
F	0-70	0.0	Failing
P/F	71-100/0-70	0.0	Pass/Fail (selected courses)
I		0.0	Incomplete
W		0.0	Withdrawal
AUD		0.0	Audit

An Incomplete (“I”) grade may be granted only when students are unable to complete course requirements because of extenuating circumstances. These circumstances may include personal illness, personal or family crisis, or other reasonable and unforeseeable events. It is the responsibility of the student to submit a petition for an Incomplete grade, signed by the

instructor, to the academic dean by the last day of the term. If the petition is granted, all the outstanding assignments must be submitted to the instructor by the end of the next semester to receive a letter grade.

2.6 Grade Appeal

In the event a student questions the appropriateness of a grade assigned for a course, the student must first discuss the matter with the faculty member. The discussion should be initiated by the student as soon as possible after the grade is assigned, but no later than five academic days into the next semester. The faculty member concerned in the appeal is expected to respond within 5 academic days of the initiation. In the event that the faculty member(s) concerned agrees to change the grade/decision, the normal process for changing a grade shall be followed.

If there is no response from the concerned faculty or the student wishes to appeal the faculty's decision after the discussion, the student may present the issue directly to the academic dean. The student may appeal in writing to the academic dean within fifteen academic days of the first day of the next semester if a satisfactory resolution is not reached with the faculty. The dean will become familiar with the facts of the case by communicating with the student and the faculty member. The parties have a right to meet with the dean without the other party being present. The faculty member will respond in writing to the dean concerning the student's appeal. The dean may either accept or deny the student's appeal. The dean will notify the student and faculty member of his/her decision in writing within ten academic days of receiving the appeal. In the event that the dean accepts the student's appeal, he/she will initiate a grade change.

2.7 Student Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is essential. Records of class attendance are the responsibility of the faculty, and every course's syllabus should clearly state the instructor's policy on class attendance and how attendance affects a student's final evaluation in the course. When a student misses class, the student is expected to follow the instructor's policy as stated in the course syllabus. The student should contact his/her instructor as soon as possible after he/she knows the absence will occur or has occurred.

If the cause of the absence is an illness, accident, or family emergency, each instructor should assist the student to make up any missed work. Time lost through such absences should not prejudice class standing. Faculty members should specify the appropriate time frame for making up missed work. If the cause of the absence is less compelling (e.g. choosing to miss class, oversleeping), instructors may or may not permit the student to make up missed work, and may or may not assess a penalty for class absence.

If any of the following conditions are true, the faculty member should contact the dean of students:

- The faculty member is concerned for the student's health or well-being, or thinks the student needs additional help.
- The student has had excessive absences in the class. (An instructor should not assume that continued absence from class indicates an official withdrawal unless so notified).
- The faculty member believes the student has been untruthful about the cause of absence.

If the dean of students is working with a student regarding an emergency or ongoing personal concern(s) affecting the student's academic performance, the student's faculty will be notified by e-mail or telephone. Students are encouraged to use the resources of the dean's office if an emergency situation occurs, or if assistance is needed to resolve individual concerns.

2.8 Academic Integrity

At the beginning of each course, the instructor and students are expected to reaffirm their commitment to be beyond reproach in their academic work as a vital reflection of Christian character. The faculty and students are encouraged to establish a community which values serious intellectual engagement and personal faithfulness more highly than grades, degrees, or publications. Some infractions of the commitment to academic integrity can be addressed by personal confrontation and corrective counsel. The following violations will be addressed formally and may result in a failing grade on the assignment or exam and possibly in the course:

- Submitting as one's own work material obtained from another source.
- Using ideas from published, unpublished or electronic sources without proper quotations.
- Cheating on exams by any means.

2.9 Academic Probation and Dismissal

Students whose semester G.P.A. falls below 2.0 the first time will be placed on academic warning by the registrar, with copies to the academic dean, the dean of students, and the student's adviser. The second or third time a student's semester G.P.A. falls below 2.0, whether or not in consecutive semesters, the student will be placed on academic probation. If the semester G.P.A. falls below 2.0 a fourth semester, the student will be subject to academic dismissal.

Students whose cumulative G.P.A. falls below 2.0 will be placed on academic probation for the next semester. A student will remain on probation as long as his or her G.P.A. is below 2.0. A student who continues on probation for three consecutive semesters will be subject to academic dismissal. Summer and winter session courses are not considered semesters for this purpose.

Students who fail a course in any term will be contacted in writing concerning their performance, with copies to the academic dean, the dean of students, and the student's adviser. Students who fail the same course a second time will be automatically placed on academic warning. Students who fail the same course a third time will be subject to academic dismissal.

3. STUDENT SERVICES

3.1 Student Financial Aid

Vine University does not participate in federal or state student financial aid programs. However, the university has limited scholarship funds available for full-time students who require financial assistance. Students are encouraged to discuss their financial needs with the director of administration.

3.2 Campus Employment

Vine University has on campus job opportunities for a limited number of students. Students will be hired as part-time employees of the university after an application and interview process is completed. Under normal circumstances, students will be awarded 8 to 12 hours per week. Students are eligible for on-campus employment after fulfilling the following requirements:

1. Complete a job application and submit it to the financial aid officer
2. Interview for the position and be offered the position
3. Attend a work orientation session led by the supervisor
4. Demonstrate an ability to maintain a high level of work performance while also maintaining a normal academic load.

3.3 Information Technology

Vine University is committed to promoting an environment of learning that encourages students to use modern technology to enhance their experience. Wireless internet can be accessed throughout the campus. Students are encouraged to use a laptop/notebook computer that complies with the minimum system requirements. Students will be oriented to the IT use policies during student orientation.

3.4 Library Services

The mission of the Vine University library is to provide the learning and research materials to students such that they are able to effectively attend to their extra classroom study and related coursework assignments. To further achieve our institutional mission, the university has developed a learning resources program to facilitate and enhance student learning by providing tutorial, research, and other forms of academic support. All students are invited to a library resources tour and are encouraged to request assistance in developing learning and resource finding skills.

The library is open from Monday through Thursday, at 1:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The library is closed on Fridays, except during the week before and week of final examinations. The library will assist you with any reference request made by a student. A reference librarian is available on Monday

thru Thursday, from 1:00 am to 6:00 pm. Students may also utilize the card catalogue for a comprehensive listing of all the holdings available at the Vine University library.

Most of the circulating materials may be checked out for two weeks and can be renewed for another two weeks unless requested by another student. Bound periodical volumes may circulate for three days. But unbound periodical issues and reference materials do not circulate outside the library. Students may access any of the library computers during any of the above hours of operation.

4. STUDENT LIFE

4.1 Student Life Purpose and Vision

The Student Life office exists to support the development of the student by

- facilitating student learning;
- encouraging social, emotional, and spiritual growth; and
- equipping students to live the Christian life.

Because we believe that God's sovereignty reigns in all areas of life and because Christ called us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we seek to foster a community of learning and faith. It is Vine University's vision to be a community that grows both in academic and spiritual life. The central focus of the university's leadership is to build and maintain a caring environment for students, staff, faculty and other members of the university community, in which the well-being of the whole person can be nurtured. Vine University encourages the faculty, students, and staff to nurture spiritual life in formal and informal ways through the practice prayer, regular devotions, and expressions of faithfulness, justice and mercy.

4.2 Community Life Principles

The communal life of Vine University is guided by biblical principles. We gladly confess that all of life is under the rule of Christ, revealed through the Bible, which we hold to be the infallible, inerrant Word of God. Therefore, the Vine University community's lifestyle is to reflect this truth by obeying God's Word.

Being a part of the community at Vine University means being accountable first to the Lord, and then to one another in Christ. Students, along with the rest of the university community, must demonstrate personal moral integrity in all the areas of their lives and work as part of that community.

Members of the Vine University community (students, faculty, and staff) are asked to abide by biblical principles regarding life. It is our goal to live lives that are pleasing to God. Our community will grow in Christ as we seek to glorify God through our thoughts, through our words, and through our actions.

4.3 Community Conduct

Communication

Staff and faculty communicate with the students electronically through email and through announcements posted on the Vine University website. Students are expected to check their email and the website regularly. Additionally, some announcements are made after chapels. In

order for any community to thrive, positive communication needs to be practiced by all members. When communicating with staff and faculty, students need to show respect for both the individual's position and time. For example, appointments should be made and kept to respect the person's time.

Right to Privacy

All members of the Vine University community have a right and a high expectation of personal privacy and security. Highly personal and sensitive materials exist in classes and offices that must be protected. Therefore it is strictly forbidden for students, without permission, to access another's computer, files, exams, bag, or similar item.

Online Forums

Students often choose to participate in online forums including social networking sites, virtual communities, blogs, online journals, and other websites (familiar examples of this type of forum include Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr). While the university recognizes that these forums are an integral part of modern communication, we caution students to consider carefully the information and comments they post in online forums. For their own safety and success, students should assume that any information they publish online is visible and accessible to everyone. Students are as responsible for their words and actions in online forums as they are in any interpersonal interaction, private forum, or public forum. Behavior inconsistent with Vine University's mission, community standards will not be exempted from disciplinary action simply because it occurred or originated in an online forum.

4.4 Student Code of Conduct

Students are expected to observe the university's student code of conduct and demonstrate a cooperative and respectful attitude towards all. Students should strive to develop a strong ethical and upright character, professional competence, and compassion.

A student who violates the university's student code of conduct will be subject to disciplinary action which can result in one of the following seven levels of disciplinary action: official warning; reprimand; property restitution; assignment of failing grade; probation; Suspension; dismissal.

Student Code of Conduct

1. No practice of cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic or internship program.
2. No sale or possession of dangerous drugs, restricted drugs or narcotics, except when lawfully prescribed.
3. No unauthorized use or misuse of University property.
4. No destruction of campus property or property belonging to the university's administrative personnel, faculty or students.

5. No theft of university property or property owned by a member of the administration, faculty, staff or student.
6. No obstruction or disruption, on or off campus, of the educational aims and processes of the university.
7. No entrance to campus in intoxicated or drugged states.
8. No possession or use of explosives, dangerous chemicals or deadly weapons on campus property without prior authorization of the president of the university.
9. No physically abusive or disrespectful behavior toward a member of the university's administrative personnel, faculty, staff, or students.
10. No engaging in lewd, indecent or obscene behavior on campus.

4.5 Policies against Discrimination and Harassment

Vine University does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, veteran status, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The university shall adhere to all applicable state and federal regulations. Consistent with its mission, Vine University seeks to assure all community members are able to learn and work in an atmosphere free from harassment. Harassing conduct is contrary to the nurturing community of faith and learning the university wishes to foster. Harassment threatens the well-being of the university community.

This policy applies to all community members, including faculty, staff, and students. The university will take appropriate action when this policy is violated. For the purpose of determining whether particular conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the following definition will be used:

Harassment is conduct that is based on race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status and interferes with a person's employment or educational experience or creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive working, educational or living environment.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual assault. Sexual harassment, including sexual assault, can involve persons of the same or opposite sex.

In accordance with state and federal law, sexual harassment occurs when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, academics or participation in a Vine University program or activity, or (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for a decision affecting such individual's employment, academics, or participation in a Vine University program or activity.

4.6 Complaint Procedures

Members of the Vine University community may bring complaints or concerns about harassing or discriminatory behavior to the dean. The university may seek informal resolution when it receives allegations of unlawful discrimination or harassment. If an informal resolution does not result, a formal process may be initiated by submitting a complaint or grievance to the dean. Initially, concerns may be communicated orally; however, they should be submitted in writing before any formal review takes place. The written complaint should specify the university policy violated and all relevant factual details.

- a. The dean shall read the complaint, and if it warrants further investigation, then a copy of the complaint should be forwarded to the person against whom the complaint is made (“respondent”). If the allegations would not constitute a violation of a policy, then the dean should inform the grievant in writing that the allegations are not subject to further investigation.
- b. The respondent shall be given 14 calendar days from receipt of the complaint to return a written response to the dean, who then shall initiate a reasonable investigation into the matter. The investigation may include meeting with the parties, talking with witnesses, and reviewing any supporting documents. A grievant may elect to withdraw a formal complaint at any time; however, the university reserves the right to investigate all complaints in order to protect the interests of the university and its community.
- c. Within a reasonable time, the dean shall make a decision based on the formal complaint, response, and any other relevant information. This decision shall be in writing and shall consist of factual findings, conclusions, and a remedy if one is appropriate. All parties shall receive a copy of the decision.
- d. Any party may submit a written request for appeal of the decision to the president of the university within 14 calendar days from receipt of the decision. The request for appeal must specifically set forth all grounds for appeal. The non-appealing party must be given the opportunity to respond in writing to the request for appeal. Within a reasonable time, the president shall make a decision based on the complaint, response, decision, request for appeal, any response to the appeal, and any meeting the president held in regard to the appeal. The decision of the president shall be final. All parties shall receive a copy of the president's decision.
- e. All written decisions made and materials produced in a grievance conducted under this procedure shall be retained by the academic dean for at least two years from the date that the final decision was issued.

4.7 Campus Safety

The university is adamant about providing a safe and healthy work and learning environment. The university’s goal is to provide safe areas, equipment and materials. To protect their own others’ safety, all members of the university community are expected to observe safety rules and immediately correct or report unsafe conditions.

All employees must immediately report a work-related injury or illness to their supervisor. Supervisors must report any job-related accident or illness to the business manager or

president within 24 hours. All members of the university are required to complete an emergency contact form. In an emergency, the information is used to notify next-of-kin and medical personnel.

4.8 Student Clubs

Vine University students are encouraged to establish and facilitate clubs that provide outlets for their special interests. All clubs must, however, be sanctioned by the student dean to receive funds, conduct fund-raising, or advertise events on campus. The general requirements of the club are that

- it must have accountability (faculty/staff adviser);
- it must build unity (membership is open to all applicable persons); and
- it must serve the greater community (one community event per year).