

Mission

(Handbook 2023-2025)

The content of this chapter is applicable to both full-time and adjunct faculty.

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1.1. INTRODUCTION

(modified 2014)

As members of the Seaver College faculty, we have special opportunities and benefits. As teachers, we prepare future generations for full and successful living, or for what George Pepperdine called “a life of usefulness.” To see students realize some of their God-given potential is the purest of pleasures. We teach in beautiful surroundings and enjoy a scholarly community of talented and gracious colleagues. And we are part of an institution that has a “will to excellence, a growing reputation for quality, and a sense of optimism for the future.” Of course, our quest for truth and perfection is always elusive, but as teacher-scholars we find significant meaning in the search rather than in the attainment of ultimate goals.

This edition of the Faculty Handbook is intended to serve as a ready reference for the faculty on important areas of College and University policy. The handbook reflects official policy on the matters covered, but it is not meant to be comprehensive. Other important documents such as accreditation standards, internal procedural statements, and standards of legality are sources of College and University policy as well.

Faculty members, especially new faculty members, should read the pages that follow inasmuch as they, along with the faculty contract and supplemental policy and procedure statements, will largely determine faculty rights and duties with respect to the University, College, and students. The definition of policies and procedures should provide guidance and avoid misunderstandings. Acceptance of a faculty appointment constitutes an agreement by the faculty member to abide by the policies and procedures of the University, including all amendments thereto. The provisions of this handbook are subject to change through normal College and University processes.

The 2006 and 2008 editions of the handbook were compiled and modified with the help of the Seaver Faculty Association Executive Committee. Indeed, nothing appears here that has not been reviewed, although not necessarily approved by members of the SFA Executive Committee. Future editions of the handbook will follow this collaborative process. Readers will find that the text has been annotated with notes citing when particular sections first appeared in the handbook and when they were amended. These notes will demonstrate that the handbook, like most organic documents, has been evolutionary in its development.

1.2. THE MISSION OF PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

(modified 2012)

Pepperdine is a Christian university committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service, and leadership. The mission of Pepperdine University has remained consistent during its history. The statements of mission, direction, and values that the University affirms today are built on George Pepperdine's founding address (1937), the Pepperdine University Affirms statement (1970), and [The Mission of Pepperdine University](#) (1999).

1.2.1. HISTORY

A successful businessman, Mr. Pepperdine founded George Pepperdine College to implement his vision of a college based upon Christian values for men and women from all walks of life. He donated the funds to purchase thirty-four acres in Los Angeles. With 167 students, the College was dedicated on September 21, 1937. Mr. Pepperdine was an active leader in the Churches of Christ, with which the University has maintained a vital relationship since its inception.

From 1937 to 1970, Pepperdine was primarily a small, undergraduate liberal learning college. In 1971, with the addition of professional schools, the College became Pepperdine University. Through the generous support of Mrs. Frank Roger Seaver, the current 830-acre Malibu campus was dedicated in 1972. Seaver College (the undergraduate school), the Caruso School of Law, the School of Public Policy, and the University's principal administrative offices are located on the Malibu campus.

The George L. Graziadio Business School and the Graduate School of Education and Psychology are professional schools headquartered in Los Angeles, with multiple education centers located throughout Southern California. Though primarily focused on educating adult professionals, both schools offer residential programs on the Malibu campus.

1.2.2. PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY TODAY

Today, Pepperdine University is a selective, mid-size, comprehensive university offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in a wide range of disciplines. Pepperdine enrolls approximately 8,000 full-time and part-time students, with a full-time faculty of more than 300 professors and scholars. The University is particularly proud of its role in

the greater Los Angeles area, one of the most vibrant and exciting regions of the world, providing students with enriched learning and service opportunities.

Pepperdine owns and/or operates campuses in Argentina, China, England, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Washington D.C. for study-abroad programs. It offers regular programs in many other countries for both graduate and undergraduate students and has developed strategic alliances with world-class universities throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America to facilitate student and faculty exchanges.

The University continuously improves the quality of its educational programs and facilities. The Drescher Graduate Campus in Malibu is designed to include The Graziadio Business School, the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, and the School of Public Policy.

1.2.3. VALUES

The most distinctive feature of Pepperdine University is its commitment to academic excellence in the context of Christian values. Mr. Pepperdine's original statement of purpose in 1937 continues to resonate with the mission of the University today:

"Therefore, as my contribution to the well-being and happiness of this generation and those that follow, I am endowing this institution to help young men and women prepare themselves for a life of usefulness in this competitive world and to help them build a foundation of Christian character and faith which will survive the storms of life."

This dual commitment to academic excellence and Christian values is more fully articulated in the affirmation statement in the University's catalogues and publications:

Pepperdine University Affirms

That God is

That He is revealed uniquely in Christ

That the educational process may not, with impunity, be divorced from the divine process

That the student, as a person of infinite dignity, is the heart of the educational enterprise

That the quality of student life is a valid concern of the University

That truth, having nothing to fear from investigation, should be pursued relentlessly in every discipline

That spiritual commitment, tolerating no excuse for mediocrity, demands the highest standards of academic excellence

That freedom, whether spiritual, intellectual, or economic, is indivisible

That knowledge calls, ultimately, for a life of service.

1.2.4. GOVERNANCE

The University is governed by a forty-member, self-perpetuating Board of Regents. To maintain the University's vital relationship with the Churches of Christ, the majority of regents are active members of that faith community. Regents are selected to represent a broad diversity of community and professional interests. The authority of the regents and the relationship with the Churches of Christ are defined in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The impact of this religious affiliation permeates the University and its programs.

1.2.5. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The University implements its mission through a variety of educational programs. In each school and program, the University strives for: (1) an excellent and demanding educational experience that focuses on the student as the heart of the learning experience, and (2) a Christian values focus that challenges the student to examine the moral, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of learning and life.

Seaver College, a highly selective undergraduate college of approximately 3,000 students, offers a rigorous core curriculum with majors in a variety of disciplines. A majority of Seaver students live on the Malibu campus, enabling participation in a broad range of activities beyond the classroom, ranging from the arts to athletics. More than half the undergraduates study abroad. Seaver College also offers selective master's degree programs.

The University's four professional schools offer graduate programs in management, education, psychology, law, and public policy. While providing a values-centered education within their disciplines, each of the four professional schools emphasizes the University's mission of service to others through societal leadership. Beyond the traditional graduate programs in these fields, the University offers a broad range of programs for adults engaged in lifelong learning.

1.2.6. THE FACULTY AND STAFF

Faculty and staff members support the University's mission of academic excellence and Christian values. They serve as role models and mentors, as well as teachers and scholars; the faculty members are committed to the primacy of teaching and learning. Virtually all tenured or tenure-track faculty members have earned terminal degrees in their disciplines. Students and alumni consistently cite the quality, accessibility, and

caring nature of the faculty and staff as among Pepperdine's major strengths.

1.2.7. THE STUDENTS

Pepperdine students come from all fifty states and more than seventy nations. The students represent a wide variety of religious, cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The University embraces this diversity, which enriches the educational process. Students of all ages are enrolled, reflecting the University's commitment to lifelong learning.

1.2.8. ALUMNI, PARENTS, FRIENDS, AND ADVISORS

Pepperdine is supported by a strong and vibrant constituent network composed of alumni, parents, friends, donors, volunteers, and advisors. The more than 80,000 alumni of Pepperdine University are highly successful in both graduate study and in a wide variety of professional interests. Alumni join parents, friends, and donors in serving the University through a variety of volunteer advisory boards, support councils, and committees.

1.2.9. DISTINCTIVENESS

The University is blessed with many assets to achieve its aspirations: a clear vision and mission, a consistent and guiding spiritual heritage, an intellectually vibrant and caring faculty and staff, excellent students, small student-focused classes, a strong core curriculum combined with leading-edge programs, a unique global perspective and emphasis, an embracing of diversity, a beautiful and spiritually uplifting campus in the world's most exciting region, and strong alumni, community, and financial support.

Among the 3,500 colleges and universities in the United States, and the thousands more abroad, Pepperdine aspires to establish its distinctive place in higher education. Pepperdine University seeks global recognition as an academically outstanding, midsize, comprehensive university grounded in Christian values, dedicated to strengthening its graduates for lives of purpose, service, and leadership in the twenty-first century.

1.2.10. ACCREDITATION

Pepperdine University is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In addition, a number of Seaver College academic programs are nationally accredited.

1.3. THE MISSION OF SEAVER COLLEGE

1.3.1. FOREWORD

It has been rightly observed that we never rise higher than our dreams. Nor are we likely to stumble accidentally into greatness. Rather, we must illuminate the path we intend to take with as much clarity as possible. In March 1998, the Pepperdine University Strategic Planning Committee adopted the Seaver College Integrated Strategic Plan. Although currently under revision, this plan presents a comprehensive picture of the College as it is and an image of what it hopes to become. Set out below is the all-important introduction to that larger plan. The goal of this introduction is to paint with a broad brush what is detailed with considerable specificity in the complete planning document – laying out what we believe ourselves to be and helping us see our way into the future.

1.3.2. THE MISSION OF SEAVER COLLEGE

Seaver College exists to provide a link between the knowledge and wisdom of the past and present with the challenges of the future. The College is a community within the larger Pepperdine University community which integrates several groups: teachers committed to a life of instruction and scholarship; students preparing to assume responsible roles in contemporary society; staff members, volunteers, and donors committed to advancing the goals of the community; and administrators and regents charged with helping to achieve these goals.

Seaver College is primarily undergraduate and residential. It is selective in enrollment and committed to high academic standards. Its task is to prepare persons of diverse economic, social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds to become moral and intellectual leaders and to challenge them to value service above material success. To accomplish this task, Seaver faculty members, administrators, and staff members serve as role models, both as professionals and as human beings who are committed to excellence and motivated by personal faith in God. Students benefit from many small classes, a nurturing campus environment, opportunities for diverse social interaction, and individual attention from these teacher-mentors.

Seaver is a liberal arts college. As such, it nourishes and transmits the noblest ideas of Western culture – the achievements of science and technology as well as the artistic, intellectual, and ethical heritage of the Western world. At the same time, the Seaver curriculum and co-curriculum also reflect a modern, global worldview much broader than that of the West and more complex and egalitarian than in former times. Nor does

it isolate itself from the nature of life and the economic realities of our own age. Therefore, many subjects are studied that are not included in the traditional categories of the liberal arts. Nevertheless, the College is completely committed to the spirit and intent of the traditional baccalaureate: the sharpening of the mind, the ennobling of the heart, the broadening of the vision, and the cultivation of the arts of speaking and writing which result in civilized and fruitful discourse. It is likewise devoted to the relentless search for truth in an atmosphere of freedom of inquiry: to think, to question, to doubt, to believe, and to affirm.

Seaver College places the students' total development at the heart of its educational strategy. The College therefore recognizes the importance of both the curriculum and the co-curriculum. It strives to effect the total development of the student – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual – and to lay the foundations of lifetime learning. It recognizes that learning takes place constantly, in every facet of the student's life, and therefore seeks to integrate and direct this complex of experiences toward its developmental goals.

Since there is a significant correlation between the degree of individual student involvement in the life of the college and success in effecting student development, concerted effort is made to maximize the involvement of each student in the larger life of the College.

Seaver is a Christian college. As such, it affirms in undergraduate and graduate programs that there are sources of truth deeper than those of secular culture: Moses, purveyor of divine laws; Amos, crying out for social justice and unfeigned piety; Paul, overwhelmed with both the reality of sin and the joy of forgiveness; and ultimately, Jesus of Nazareth, in whom God is uniquely revealed, and by whose death and resurrection all humankind can receive reconciliation with God. The study of religion and the opportunity for corporate worship are integral elements in the Seaver experience. A commitment to Christian beliefs regarding the origin, nature, and destiny of humanity permeates the curriculum. The College's ties to the Churches of Christ call it to a serious commitment to Biblical Christianity. Thus, in its mission, Seaver College seeks to remain true to the most profound insights of the religious movement which constitutes its heritage.

1.3.3. THE SEAVER ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

A. COMMONALITY

Administrators and staff members at Seaver College plan, structure, organize, supervise, coordinate, and carry out tasks which facilitate the work of the faculty

and the interaction of faculty members and students, and which provide the co-curricular environment in which student development occurs. They share with the faculty the responsibility for achieving the college's goals within the framework of its mission statements. They must therefore share many of the same qualities and values which characterize the faculty. These include:

Thorough preparation. Seaver administrators and staff members have adequate experience and/or professional preparation to perform with excellence, and a strong interest in constantly improving performance and skills.

Strength of character worthy of emulation. Administrators and staff members interact with students daily and in those interactions teach by example. In demonstrating a service orientation, maturity, and ethical clarity, they serve as role models along with the faculty. This aspect of their responsibility is no less important than the specific tasks which they perform.

A devotion to Christian moral and ethical values based upon a personal spiritual commitment. The power of these values is dependent upon an honest allegiance to them. Consequently, Seaver College, as an independent, church-related institution, appoints administrators and staff members who are themselves unreservedly committed to such values and who discipline their own lives by them. A significant majority of them base their commitment to such values, and their daily lives, on an active personal faith in Jesus Christ, and live out that faith in their churches and communities.

A sense of servanthood. Administrators and staff members understand themselves to be servant leaders, recognizing that commitment to Seaver's mission and the welfare of the Seaver faculty and students is the primary factor in every decision made, every task accomplished, and every personal interaction undertaken inside or outside the college.

B. DIVERSITY

Diversity is as significant among administrators and staff members as among the faculty and students. These groups, therefore, all exhibit diversity in cultural and racial heritage. Men and women are both represented. The makeup of the administration and staff reflects the University's Christian character, and within Christianity its strong historic relationship to Churches of Christ, while fully recognizing the valuable contributions of others who complement and share a commitment to the mission of Seaver College. Regardless of race, creed or cultural origins, all staff members and administrators will demonstrate a high level of

competence.

Implementation and Evaluation. It is the responsibility of those who hire, supervise, and evaluate staff and administrators of the college to ensure that those under their supervision reflect the qualities noted above.

1.3.4. THE SEAVER FACULTY

A. COMMUNITY

Seaver College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences is a community of scholars within Pepperdine University sharing the ongoing process of intellectual discovery and personal growth. The faculty forms the nucleus of this community, and its interaction with students is the community's central activity. The Seaver faculty draws its strength from both its commonality and its diversity.

B. COMMONALITY

Seaver faculty members share the following qualities and values:

Excellence and satisfaction as teachers of undergraduate students. Seaver's primary mission centers on its impact on students, especially undergraduate students. Seaver faculty members therefore strive to be excellent teachers – well prepared, fair, enthusiastic, innovative, and constantly improving. The priority which they place on teaching can be seen in such things as the level of energy expended in preparing for instructional activities, creativity in using varied methods of instruction, and sensitivity to student needs and questions in and out of the classroom.

Thorough academic preparation. Seaver faculty members have acquired the highest appropriate degrees in their areas of teaching and research. This initial preparation becomes the basis for continued intellectual growth, active participation in professional organizations, and contributions to the disciplines of academic specialization.

Strength of character worthy of emulation. The ideal relationship between teacher and student at Seaver College is more than mere academic interaction; therefore, faculty members at Seaver seek to be role models as well as academicians. While this fact does not imply that faculty members lack the right to private lives beyond the confines of the college, it does call attention to the Seaver philosophy of educating the whole person and recognizing that such an education extends beyond the classroom. The faculty's strength of character, maturity, and ethical clarity are

integral to the heritage it seeks to pass on to students.

An inquisitive spirit. The love of learning and a critical approach to knowledge are the beginning of scholarship. The Seaver faculty views learning and discovery as exciting and takes special joy in them. The faculty is in fact a community of lifelong learners who have never stopped growing intellectually. Research at Seaver is not a sterile professional exercise but rather the natural fruit of an inquisitive spirit. Seaver faculty members often share their research with the wider scholarly community through publication or oral presentation, and the spirit which generated these discoveries is highly valued.

A devotion to Christian moral and ethical values based upon a personal spiritual commitment. The power of these values is dependent upon an honest allegiance to them. Consequently, Seaver College, as an independent, church-related institution, gathers scholars who are themselves unreservedly committed to such values and who discipline their own lives by them. Most Seaver faculty members base their commitment to such values, and their daily lives, on a personal faith in Jesus Christ, and live out that faith in their churches and communities.

A sense of servanthood. One of the paramount Christian values is this: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." While it is the responsibility of the University to provide adequate support and compensation to the faculty, excellence in the respected serving professions comes from within. This fact not only influences the activities of the Seaver faculty within the University but also results in service to the larger community through the religious, civic, political, social, and cultural life of the local communities in which faculty members live.

C. DIVERSITY

The strength of the Seaver faculty consists not only in its commitment to shared values, but also in its diversity. This diversity broadens the students' horizons and contributes to an objective search for truth. The faculty exhibits a balance between age and youth, varied levels of experience, and differing rank and tenure status. Men and women are both represented. Faculty members have varied undergraduate and graduate experiences, cultural and racial heritages, and areas of special interest and expertise. Individual faculty members excel in various ways and with varying combinations of teaching, research, and service. The makeup of the faculty reflects the university's strong historic relationship to the Churches of Christ while fully recognizing the valuable contributions of those who, while not members of the Churches of Christ, complement and share a commitment to the mission of Seaver

College.

1.3.5. THE SEAVER STUDENT

Seaver College is committed to the concept that the total development of the student is the heart of the educational enterprise. The student body of Seaver College consists primarily of full-time residential students. A description of the Seaver student must include both those qualities that initially won admission to a selective program and those that the student and society at large should expect the college to add or to enhance during the period of matriculation.

A. All incoming students should share the following characteristics:

- An outstanding record of academic performance and service activities that indicates emerging maturity and promise of continuing growth.
- Strong moral character evidenced by past actions, such as explicit examples of mature ethical and moral decision-making, responsible and productive behavior, exhibition of a spirit of servanthood, and commitment to volunteer participation in institutions such as church, school, and nonprofit public service agencies and projects.
- An inquisitive mind and a willingness to learn.
- Creativity and special talents, especially the capacity for leadership – professional, personal, and social.

Exposure to intellectual, social, and cultural diversity is also essential in the liberating process of education. The student body of Seaver should therefore include persons of differing economic and social status; geographical origins, both foreign and domestic; and racial and cultural heritage. The Seaver student body should represent a diversity of religious heritages, Christian and non-Christian, while at the same time reflecting the University's Christian character and its relationship with Churches of Christ.

The Seaver curriculum emphasizes both breadth (through general education) and depth (through a concentration in one discipline).

B. All graduating students should share the following characteristics:

- The ability to continue the quest for knowledge and insight and to adapt to constant changes spurred on by the excitement of discovery and aided by an

understanding of the nature and techniques of intellectual research.

- The ability to think clearly, logically, independently, and critically – to synthesize and integrate knowledge, not simply to accumulate it.
- The ability to communicate and to understand the communication of others: to read, to listen, to speak, and to write effectively.
- A broad cultural perspective, defined by an exposure sufficiently broad to ensure familiarity with the history, literature, philosophy, and achievements of Western culture, as well as a sense of the global interaction between Western and non-Western civilizations. This would naturally include a developed aesthetic sense capable of appreciating the arts, a grasp of the basic process of scientific discovery, and knowledge of the present state of human understanding of the physical and social world.
- Moral integrity and a sense of personal values, seen as a capacity and willingness to make value judgments based on a serious consideration of Christian ethics. While students may or may not accept these views as their own, they will be encouraged to consider seriously the question of Christian values in making life decisions.
- An enhanced potential for service in a chosen profession, in public life, and in the support of cultural life of a chosen community. Seaver students will be leaders – leaders, however, of a special kind, exercising leadership for the common good rather than for mere personal or material gain.