



Standards for guiding our life together

Established in 1894, Goshen College is a national liberal arts college rooted in the Anabaptist-Mennonite churches, one of the historic peace faiths. We develop servant leaders for the church and the world.

Our basic affirmation

Goshen College is affiliated with the Mennonite Church, which believes that it is responsible to call all people to accept Christ as Savior and Lord. Those who accept and believe should then live as followers of Christ.

We believe it is important that you understand what kind of community Goshen College is and is striving to become. Please read this section carefully to find out what we are saying about our life together. Then consider where you find yourself. We hope you will join us in our continuing search for community.

We expect you to understand the standards statement and consider its relation to your own habits, goals and lifestyle. We assume that many of these standards are a reflection of personally held values. You are welcome at Goshen College, even though your own convictions may not agree with the standards at every point, as long as you will abide by the rules and act in harmony with the standards to the best of your ability while here.

When you register you will be given the opportunity to discuss any of these standards with college officials. Please ask your questions in the registration interview.

Toward Christian maturity

Goshen College tries to serve the Mennonite Church and worldwide Christian fellowship by helping each student toward intellectual, social, moral and spiritual maturity. The college does this in part as it offers the student a quality education in the context of a community of Christian scholars. Further, it provides the setting where the student is faced with questions that go beyond those normally considered to be "academic." Here, questions of faith can be explored and alternative lifestyles can be tested in thought and experience. This probing takes place within the context of Christian understandings and together with other seekers committed to Christian ideals.

This means maturing not only as an individual, but also through interaction with others, as each of us

relates to this academic community, to the larger group of Mennonite brothers and sisters and to the Christian church/community.

Thus, the individual's search can't be entirely self-centered. In community with Christians, we all need to show sensitivity and concern for others' struggles and sincere convictions. For the welfare of each individual as well as of the whole community, we must share of ourselves and support one another. And as mature Christians, we should be ready to respect the convictions of other, as long as this doesn't compromise our own beliefs. In this way, we express genuine care and concern for the spirit and unity of the entire community.

Our life together is a dynamic process. So the standards which guide our lives also change to reflect growth and positive changes as they occur. The standards we affirm here do not necessarily reflect absolute moral truths. But they are held widely enough in the peoplehood of which Goshen College is a part that we regard them as vital to our continuing productive life and work together.

What difference does this make in campus life?

Goshen College claims to be somewhat different from many other excellent institutions of higher education precisely because it is operated by the Mennonite Church and because of the Christian principles it holds as a result. In this peoplehood relationship, basic beliefs affirmed by college and church shape our life on campus in important ways.

A good example is the approach to group living outlined in these standards. We feel that it makes possible a lifestyle significantly different from other options offered by our contemporary culture. You are invited to make that possibility become a reality.

Differences

Because we welcome to the campus people of diverse backgrounds and opinions, not all may agree on moral issues. But in order to live and work together effectively as an academic community, we need certain common understandings and agreements. Each member of our community is expected to affirm and show serious intent to live according to these standards, as a basic, minimal step pledged by all.

Obligations

While not all members of our total campus community are committed to Christ, we are all

agreed to carry out in our behavior the spirit of this standards statement. This involves two basic obligations: (1) to ourselves, as we periodically review our commitment to the standards, and (2) to others, as we recognize our need to remind and support each other in trying to meet these attitudinal and behavioral expectations.

Violations

When violations occur, we can freely confront one another if the goal is restoration and calling ourselves to a renewed commitment to the standards. Where such confrontation doesn't occur, or is ineffective in changing behavior, other structures exist to work at the problem. These resources include residence life staff and a campus judicial system. All correction cases should be characterized by a spirit of genuine caring and a desire to encourage positive growth. The infrequent case that can't be resolved in this framework may call into question a continued relationship with the college.

Care for each other is the key

We begin with a vital concern for the welfare of all community members, wherever they are, although specific standards cannot be consistently enforced off campus. When someone's behavior has direct implications for the campus community, there is cause for community involvement, regardless of where it occurs. Whether on or off campus, all members of the college community are expected to demonstrate exemplary conduct. In all situations, we are personally responsible to show consideration for the beliefs and feelings of others, to keep our behavior within generally accepted limits of morality, to maintain a sense of campus decorum and to observe safety and legal restrictions. Several specific examples follow:

Sexuality

We believe that sexuality is integral to the personality and reflects who we are as individuals. To care for another person includes honoring and respecting that person as a sexual being. Sexuality cannot be separated from the other dimensions of our lives.

Sexual discrimination, sexual coercion, exploitation and abuse are detrimental to both relationships and self-esteem; they are destructive behaviors that violate the caring nature of our community. Goshen College is firmly opposed to sexual discrimination, sexual coercion, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Specifically, we believe the clear intent of New Testament Scripture is to place sexual intercourse within the covenant of marriage; Goshen College therefore opposes nonmarital sexual intercourse.

Sexual misconduct of any kind will be dealt with as a serious violation of campus standards. The goal of confrontation in these matters, as in all others, will be reconciliation, correction, forgiveness and redemption.

Our counseling and health-service personnel are available to students wishing to discuss issues regarding sexuality or sexual behavior. These conversations will be held in strict confidence.

Racism

Goshen College creates a social and academic environment where students develop awareness of racial issues, sensitivity to minority persons and intercultural understanding. The campus reflects God's world: multicultural, multiracial and multiethnic. We believe that racist attitudes and actions violate the inclusive intention of the mission of Goshen College.

Racism is a set of attitudes or beliefs which hold particular racial or ethnic groups superior to others, often resulting in justification of discriminatory treatment or other racist acts. Racism denies the humanity of others and denies the truth that all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God.

As an institution of the Mennonite Church, Goshen College believes that racism is contrary to Christian theology and is inconsistent with the life and teachings of Christ. Therefore, we will resist the pervasive racism of our society by identifying and confronting its evidence among us, whether subtle or overt. Racial intolerance of any kind will be addressed as a serious violation of campus standards.

Tobacco use

The use of tobacco imposes a serious and unnecessary burden upon the health of the user. Smoking in the presence of nonsmokers shows disrespect for the rights of many who dislike being forced to breathe smoke-filled air, or who are offended by smoking on campus. It also constitutes a fire hazard in some cases. The chewing of tobacco is known to be associated with oral cancer and other health problems. Use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on campus or at any off-campus official college activity and strongly discouraged elsewhere. Those who choose to use tobacco close to campus are asked to respect neighbors and campus community by not littering or loitering in front of their homes or on the walks and curbs across from the campus.

Alcohol and illegal drug use

Goshen College considers the use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs detrimental to individual

and community health. Not only is the use of alcohol illegal for minors, but alcohol and illegal drugs also, by their nature:

- tend to create dependencies
- invite an unhealthy escapism
- waste money, abuse health and take lives
- generate behavior offensive to other people and publics

Goshen College does not consider it possible to have a wholesome campus community if alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are used. Abstinence may be an effective witness against these practices so widely condoned in our culture. For these reasons, Goshen College recommends nonuse as the most appropriate lifestyle choice. Alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are prohibited from the campus and all college-related functions.

Dancing

Dancing is permitted at Goshen College as long as established guidelines are observed. These guidelines are available from the student activities office.

Firearms and fireworks

Out of legal and safety considerations alone, without involving the moral, the possession or use of firearms or fireworks is prohibited on campus.

Serious intent

Every Goshen College student is expected to show serious intent to live according to these standards.

Discipline process

Discipline is a necessary part of the total educational process and of community living; it helps guide imperfect human beings toward the vision of the standards. The administration of corrective discipline occurs when individuals violate their commitment and responsibility to the college community and to themselves. When an individual deviates from the ideals of our community, the tension between the person's desire for greater individualistic freedom and the standards established by the community must be resolved through genuine interaction among all relevant segments of the Goshen College community.

Philosophy of discipline

The judicial process is a positive, dynamic means of assisting individuals in achieving their goals by developing a greater sense of Christian responsibility and maturity. In short, the goal is personal growth, resolution of the problems and reconciliation where alienation has occurred. When the behavior changes, the problem is resolved. If an individual does not change behavior, then separation from the community, by mutual consent if at all possible, will result.

This process assists individuals in moving away from dependence on external controls to internal ones. It is hoped that by the senior year few students will need to rely heavily on external controls.

Judicial organization

Residence Hall Council – The Residence Hall Council is composed of the director of residence life, two resident directors and students appointed by the Student Senate.

The council meets with resident students who are involved in their first violation of college standards and makes decisions about appropriate disciplinary responses.

Decisions made by the council are shared with the dean of students, provost and the president. Any decision made by the council can be appealed to the Campus Judicial Board.

Campus Judicial Board – The Campus Judicial Board is composed of five members: the dean of students, two faculty members elected by the faculty and two students chosen by Student Senate. The dean of students (or, if absent, the president of the college) appoints other college faculty members, administrators or students to constitute the board when one or more of the members of the regularly constituted board cannot meet, if action by this board is deemed necessary by the dean of students or the president of the college.

The Campus Judicial Board takes any necessary action that is appropriate in the discipline of the student involved in the disciplinary process.

Any action by the Campus Judicial Board may be appealed in writing by following the formal process procedures described in the *Goshen College Grievance Policy and Procedure* brochure. The appeal letter should be given to the director of human resources.

Judicial process for violations

What should happen when individuals violate a community standard? Any witness to the violation should confront the violator or violators and together work out a resolution that is in keeping with the standards. If the violators refuse to work out an agreement, then the appropriate person in charge (R.A., R.D., director of residence life or the dean of students) will be brought into the discussion. One of these individuals will process the allegation with the violator to determine the facts and present them before the appropriate judicial body.