

ITEM C.111
FOR ACTION

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
	A. Finance		E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance
	B. Justice		F. PC(USA), A Corporation
X	C. Leadership		G. Audit
	D. Worshiping Communities		H. Executive Committee
			J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
			P. Plenary

Subject: What it means for a school, college or university to be “Presbyterian-related”

Recommendation:

That a school, college or university be considered Presbyterian-related if it can identify as having an historic connection to the Presbyterian Church and demonstrate a commitment to Reformed values through the education it provides. Among these values are a commitment to faith, truth, learning, service, community, character and the dignity and worth of each person.

Background:

Each time the General Assembly meets, it approves a list of schools, colleges and universities that have an historic relationship to the Presbyterian Church (USA). The 220th General Assembly (2012) approved Item 17-08, the 2012 List of colleges and universities as those related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the following comment:

Just as we attempt to be clear on the nature and scope of our church’s relationship with seminaries and covenant partner schools, it is important that we attempt to be similarly clear on the nature and scope of our church’s relationship with Presbyterian affiliated colleges, universities and secondary schools. We would, therefore, request the General Assembly Mission Council, in consultation with the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities, to consider developing a more precise and succinct definition of exactly what it means to be considered “Presbyterian affiliated.” From the 220th General Assembly (2012) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 12, 14, 1507 of the CD).

For a school, college or university to be defined “Presbyterian-related,” that school, college or university needs to be identified as having an historic connection to the Presbyterian Church and demonstrate a commitment to Reformed values through the education it provides. Among these values are a commitment to faith, truth, learning, service, community, character and the dignity and worth of each person.

Because there are no longer structural ties between the PC(USA) and its educational institutions, it is more appropriate to refer to them as “Presbyterian-related,” rather than to use the General Assembly’s language of “Presbyterian affiliated,” as the latter may suggest a legal connection that does not exist. “Related” is the word that has been used to describe these institutions when the mission agency presents the list of schools, colleges, and universities for approval by the General Assembly.

Higher education is the oldest form of Presbyterian Church mission in the United States dating to the early 1700s. Presbyterians were responsible for starting roughly one-fourth of the colleges that existed in

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the United States at the start of the American Civil War. Currently there are 63 colleges and universities and nine secondary schools on the General Assembly's list of related institutions. The list reflects the historic connection the church has with these institutions. It is also used to determine who is eligible to receive financial aid through the Financial Aid for Service Office and Teaching of the Bible Grants. This emphasis on higher education can be traced to the Protestant Reformation and John Calvin, a teacher. It grows out of the Reformed concept of the "priesthood of all believers."

The institutions currently on the list are, and always have been, a diverse group. Some are demonstrably religious, others far more secular. It has never been the practice of the Presbyterian Church to tell its educational institutions what or how to teach. Speaking to the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities' annual college presidents conference in 2009, Dr. John Kuykendall, president emeritus of Davidson College, said the "genius" of the Presbyterian approach to education was that each college was "free to seek its own way" and to discover different ways to associate faith and learning. In 2005, following a year-long self-examination of what it meant to be a college in covenant relationship with the church, a blue ribbon commission at Presbyterian College in South Carolina concluded that "healthy church-relatedness cannot be confined to a check-list. It involves the entire ethos of the school: its spirit, its commitments, its vision and values, and its sustaining relationships." Presbyterian-related schools, colleges and universities reflect their church-relatedness through the educational experience they provide, which, in turn, reflects the values that have long guided them.

In February 2013, the Presbyterian College Chaplains Association was invited to contribute to the discussion of what it means to be Presbyterian-related. The chaplains responded with the following statement and explanation of what it means:

Because we are Presbyterian-related, our institutions value learning, faith, service, and connection to each other, the Church, and the world, honoring the dignity and worth of every person.

- *"Because"*
We don't value learning and all faith traditions represented on our campuses *in spite of* our church-relatedness. It is *because* we are church-related that we value and cherish all inquiry and welcome and encourage all faith communities.
- *"Learning, faith, and service"*
This order is important. We are schools, not churches, and our primary mission is education. Learning comes first. Nevertheless, as church-related institutions we are concerned to educate whole people for the whole world. We strive to graduate students who are not only academically well-prepared but also spiritually and socially mature participants in the religious and civic communities of which they are a part.
- *"Service"*
Although the term "civic engagement" is widely-used on our campuses, we decided that it is not a common term in the life of the Church. We believe "service" communicates this value more clearly to our church partners.
- *"Connection"*
We value our relationships with the Presbyterian Church and with other schools who share a similar relationship. We are not, and do not wish to be, identical institutions. Yet we appreciate our common connections and commitments. We benefit from our mutual relationship, we are all grateful for the historic and ongoing support of the Presbyterian Church, and we are committed to maintaining that relationship.

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- *“World”*
Our connection to the world is both social and environmental. We seek to serve the whole world through our service to each student. We understand ourselves to be part of a global community of teaching, learning, and inquiry. We also work to exhibit, embody, and encourage environmental responsibility on our campuses and beyond. As was stated above, we strive to educate whole people for the whole world.

- *“Honoring”*
Our efforts to live out our commitment to learning, faith, service, and connection take place in the context of our ongoing and pervasive commitment to honor the dignity and worth of all people. Our schools are resources and instruments through which the Presbyterian Church (USA) serves the world as we serve each of our students in all their magnificent variety and particularity.

College presidents attending the 2013 meeting of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities unanimously affirmed this statement.