



## **Commitment Statement**

### **Office of the President**

**Updated**

**August 2023**

### **American Baptist College Institutional Creed**

The American Baptist College (ABC) institutional creed honors the image of God in all persons (Genesis 1:27). The mission of ABC highlights the institutional priority of educating students about the ministry, teaching, and love ethic of Jesus as it relates to Christian service and social justice in the world. The diversity, potentiality, and gifts each person brings as faculty, staff, and students enrich our academic community.

### **Teaching Philosophy**

The teaching philosophy at American Baptist College aims to help students develop a rigorous spirit of curiosity that connects a biblical worldview to theories of anthropology, sociology, and theology (the liberal arts) in support of student Christian formation and praxis. It also aims to promote community and inclusion and cultivate lifelong learning habits through continuous self-reflection and evaluation. To accomplish these aims, ABC “Educate to Liberate” (body, mind, spirit) to help students grow ethically and spiritually by expanding their biblical and theological worldview, the vision of justice, equity, advocacy, and leadership (Isaiah 61; Luke 4:18) to build their analytical, interpretative skills and practices in both Christian faith communities and the broader society.

ABC is grounded in the biblical worldview as refracted through the Christianity of the Black Church tradition, which is, in turn, grounded as broadly and consistently understood in the Nicene Creed and the mainstream of the protestant Christian tradition. Therefore, under the guidance and authority of the Word of God in Scripture (John 1:1), our academic integrity depends on consistently applying biblical truths of justice, love, salvation, reconciliation, and the principles of God's kingdom, "beloved community."

Thus, ABC's educational mission aims to help students be biblically and theologically sufficiently informed to effectively dialogue and engage religious belief systems, worldviews, self-identification, and cultural orientations that form and shape the world. ABC believes in justice for all and supports the rights of every person to pursue their vocational development for

participation in building a just society. ABC's academic programs foster critical thinking, individuality, and freedom for all to become all God intends for their gifts and the expression of their best selves.

Thus, in the College's mission to offer academic quality, ABC's commitment to families, students, and other communities is grounded in the biblical worldview of justice, love, and spiritual and social transformation. We believe that the biblical values of Christian salvation, personal transformation, justice, and love are inextricably linked to the Nicene Creed and the ABHE tenets of Faith, theologically and contextually applied to the Black Church Christian tradition.

Additionally, ABC believes that the "dignity and divinity" with which God has endowed all persons contributes to student success and that student success contributes to a better, healthier, and more ethical and enlightened progressive society.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Thus, ABC's academic mission and commitment to biblical justice stands against the indoctrination or the teaching of any orthodoxy, ideology, religious or political, that disdain God's creation, promotes injustice, or does harm to persons by not affirming the image of God (Imago Deo) in human beings. ABC does not allow discrimination based on culture, race, age, religion, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. The College will not allow any form of sexual harassment or sexual expression that harms, injures, disrespects others, or dishonors Christian principles. The College is unequivocal in our belief in the sacredness, gifts, and value of each human being, and we are committed to engaging in productive conversations that come from a posture of humility, demonstrate kindness, and seek community.

### **Civic Responsibility**

Recognized by the Federal Government, Department of Education, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), ABC's civic responsibility respects individuals' rights to freedom of speech and religion. The College's approach to biblical higher education may differ from other peer HBCU institutions but respects the right of colleges and individuals to have different political, religious, or theological views. The mission of the College values diversity as an educational resource and opportunity to enrich the learning and lives of students.

President Forrest Harris

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