

Engaging with a Proposed Policy on Diversity

Lisa Beatty

Executive Director, ABHE Commission on Accreditation

February 2023 ABHE Annual Meeting



Why a Policy on Diversity...?

In October 2021, CHEA updated its recognition standards to include the following:

Standard 3. Accreditation Structure and Organization

A recognized accrediting organization demonstrates that it:

3.A. manifests a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

CHEA Guidance

3.A. EXAMPLES OF **SUGGESTED** EVIDENCE:

- Make-up of staff, board, committee, and site review team rosters reflecting membership diversity.
- Standards that foster diversity of theories, points of view, and experiences in academic programs.
- Inclusion of value statement regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in its official mission statement.
- Evidence of integration of DEI in its policies and procedures.

OTHER GUIDANCE:

- The agency must define these terms within its own mission.
- Purpose for Standard is STUDENT SUCCESS.
- Strong emphasis on addressing achievement gaps related to race/ethnicity.



DEI Reflected in Current Standards

- An **institutional culture** that fosters respect for diverse backgrounds and perspectives consistent with the institution's mission (Standard 3, EE 4).
- A **governing board** appropriate in size to operate efficiently and sufficiently diverse in ethnicity, gender (where theologically appropriate), and professional competencies to serve the constituency effectively (Standard 4, EE 8).
- Policies and practices that support **employee** diversity appropriate to the institution's theological and cultural context (Standard 6a, EE 4).
- **Student** recruitment policies and practices that encourage ethnic and gender diversity appropriate to the institution's theological and cultural context (Standard 7a, EE 4).
- Services that address diverse **student** needs, abilities, and cultures (Standard 8, EE 3).
- A **faculty** that is representative of the diversity of the constituency and consistent with institutional theological distinctives (Standard 9, EE 11).
- A **curriculum** taught with sensitivity to the cultural context in which students serve or may serve (Standard 11a, EE 4).



Taskforce Members

Lisa Beatty, Chair, Executive Director, ABHE Commission on Accreditation

Jena Dunn – Stark College (TX)/Commission Member

Terrance Ford – Southern Bible Institute and College (TX)

Amy Huber – Pillar College (NJ)/ABHE Board Member

Seonmook Shin – World Mission University (CA)

Leon Miles – Institute for Lutheran Theology (SD)

Joe Parle – College of Biblical Studies (TX)

Christen Price – ABHE Board Public Member/Attorney (formerly with ADF)

Aaron Profitt – God's Bible School and College (OH)

LaTanya Tyson – Carolina Christian College (NC)/Commission Member

Josiah Stephan – South Florida Bible College (FL)

Coreen Esplin – Indian Bible College (AZ)



Rationale for a Policy on Diversity DRAFT

Inestimable Value of the Individual

God created human beings in His image. The breadth of the love of God includes every human being across all of history, and its depth is measured by God's willingness to send His only Son as an atoning sacrifice for sin.

Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.

I John 3:16, 18 (NIV)

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

I John 4:10-11 (NIV)

This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.



Rationale for a Policy on Diversity DRAFT

Commitment to the Scope of the Gospel

God loves the world and calls His people to serve all tongues, tribes, peoples, and nations with the hope of the gospel.

Genesis 22:17, 18 (NIV)

I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

John 3:16 (NIV)

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.



Rationale for a Policy on Diversity DRAFT

Commitment to Unity in the Body of Christ

The universal Church is one body; a family; a household; a people, a priesthood and nation; a temple; one flock. The Trinity reflects unity and diversity within the Godhead that provides a model for Christian unity.

Galatians 3:26-28 (NIV)

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4:3-5 (NIV)

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

Revelation 7:9 (NIV)

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.



Rationale for a Policy on Diversity DRAFT

Commitment to Hospitality and Care

God is a loving and caring God, providing compassion and hospitality and care for all. He expects that same commitment from His followers.

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 (NIV)

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.

Matthew 25:34-40 (NIV)

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

1 Peter 4:8-10 (NIV)

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.



Rationale for a Policy on Diversity DRAFT

Commitment to Justice and Mercy

The Bible describes God as just, compassionate, and merciful. He expects that same commitment from His followers.

Deuteronomy 32:4 (NIV)

He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just, a faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He.

Zechariah 7:9-10 (NIV)

“This is what the Lord Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.’

James 2:1, 9, 12-13 (NIV)

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism... But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers... Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.



Rationale for a Policy on Diversity DRAFT

Commitment to fostering institutional cultures of belonging

Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) institutions reflect a vast array of differences with respect to diversity categories of race, ethnicity, sex, age, and disability. ABHE seeks to foster institutional cultures of belonging through its standards, policies, and processes. ***Based on the profound theological truths above, our aspiration is that diversity characteristics will not be predictors of students', employees', or trustees' sense of belonging at ABHE institutions.***

Commitment to the success of every ABHE student

ABHE has long been committed to the success of every student enrolled at ABHE institutions and seeks to foster student success through its standards, policies, and processes. ***Based on the profound theological truths above, our aspiration is that diversity characteristics will not be predictors of student success at ABHE institutions.***



Rationale for a Policy on Diversity DRAFT

Compliance with CHEA Recognition Standards

In October 2021, CHEA updated its recognition standards to include the following:

Standard 3. Accreditation Structure and Organization

A recognized accrediting organization demonstrates that it:

3.A. manifests a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In its December 2025 CHEA report, ABHE will be required to demonstrate compliance with this standard. Development of an approved policy provides opportunity to engage ABHE constituents in describing diversity, equity, and inclusion ***contextualized within the mission and theological convictions of biblical higher education*** and to highlight actions manifesting ABHE's commitments to biblically-informed diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion DRAFT

The Association for Biblical Higher Education's (ABHE's) commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is rooted in and guided by its mission and the ABHE Tenets of Faith. In the context of biblical higher education, DEI is viewed as the degree to which an institution, consistent with its theological commitments,

- (1) reflects differences within its constituency in alignment with its admission, hiring, and nominating policies;
- (2) supports the efforts of every student to achieve a common definition of success; and
- (3) manifests a culture of belonging that includes access to institutional opportunities and resources regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, age, or disability.



Policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion DRAFT

Commitment to fostering institutional cultures of belonging

ABHE institutions reflect a vast array of differences with respect to diversity categories of race, ethnicity, sex, age, and disability. ABHE seeks to foster institutional cultures of belonging through its standards, policies, and processes. *Our aspiration is that diversity characteristics will not be predictors of students', employees', or trustees' sense of belonging at ABHE institutions.*

Commitment to the success of every ABHE student

ABHE has long been committed to the success of every student enrolled at ABHE institutions and seeks to foster student success through its standards, policies, and processes. *Our aspiration is that diversity characteristics will not be predictors of student success at ABHE institutions.*



Policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion DRAFT

ABHE will manifest a commitment to DEI through:

1. Accreditation standards and policies that foster institutional cultures of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the context of biblical higher education*.
2. Accreditation standards and policies requiring institutions to identify missional difference categories present in their learning communities and demonstrate a commitment to supporting the success of all students.
3. Accreditation standards and policies requiring institutions to assess student success with regard to institutional and program outcomes.
4. Agency collection and disaggregation of Annual Institutional Update (AIU) data to assess its effectiveness in supporting student success at ABHE institutions based on race, ethnicity, and sex.
5. ABHE leadership (Board of Trustees, Commission on Accreditation, and staff) that reflects differences in race, ethnicity, and sex within Association membership in alignment with hiring and nominating policies.
6. ABHE conference and annual meeting presenters that reflect differences in race, ethnicity, and sex within its membership.
7. Commission on Accreditation team evaluator and appeal pools that reflect differences in race, ethnicity, and sex within COA-accredited membership.



Areas of Discussion to Date

- Policy name?
- Define each term or summarize how DEI is viewed in the ABHE context?
- Student-focus or institution-wide focus?
- Success alone or success and belonging?
- Terms for diversity categories?
- Broad list of diversity categories present at ABHE schools or narrower list (race, ethnicity, sex, age, disability)?
- Additional actions that manifest a commitment to DEI?

**Your thoughts, questions,
comments...**