

# CONSTITUTION OF THE CALVIN CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP

## Article 1. Preamble

Recognizing that our calling as Christian scholars obliges us to contribute, from the vantage point of the Christian faith, to the solution of the complex problems facing humankind today; recognizing further that the Calvin faculty possesses the scholarly ability, as well as the interest, motivation, and calling to deal competently and imaginatively with such problems; and anticipating that the results of such studies will be of benefit not only to the normal teaching and scholarship of faculty members but also to the world beyond the Calvin campus, Calvin College has established the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship.

## Article II. The Purpose of the Center

The Center exists to coordinate and provide leadership for the project of advancing and improving Christian scholarship at Calvin College. Its purpose is to promote rigorous, creative, and articulate scholarship that addresses important theoretical and practical issues. To achieve this purpose, the Center shall provide grants, shall search out grants, and shall encourage and nourish initiatives that lead to Christian scholarship that shall be:

- a) beyond what is usually expected of an undergraduate faculty whose primary responsibility is to its students;
- b) the fruit of interdisciplinary research that can best be conducted by a team of scholars working together, joined whenever feasible and desirable by scholars and others from outside the Calvin community; as well as the fruit of disciplinary research conducted by a team of scholars or individual members of the Calvin College faculty;
- c) of benefit to a broad spectrum of the Calvin community and the world beyond;
- d) focused on areas of life and thought in which it is reasonable to expect that a distinctively Christian position can be worked out; and for which traditional Christian positions have been too parochially expressed, too superficially developed, or too little in accord with the Christian faith.

## Article III. The Activity of the Center

### A. The Scholars

1. In each academic year the Center shall award grants to a variable number of Scholars drawn from both within and from outside the Calvin College faculty. Scholars from outside the Calvin College faculty must apply as part of a team.
2. Teams of Scholars shall have at least one member of the Calvin College faculty. The coordinator of such a team shall be a member of the Calvin College faculty.
3. Reception of a grant by a Calvin College faculty member shall not be considered as either a leave of absence or a sabbatical.
4. A Scholar's level of support may vary according to the approved proposal. A grant involving compensation may be supported through funding for part of an academic year's load, an interim, consecutive summer appointments, or whatever term judged appropriate by both the Scholar and the Governing Board.
5. The Scholars shall work at a schedule approved by the Governing Board of the Center.
6. Scholars supported by the Center shall concentrate their out-of-classroom professional activities on the work of their proposal and not engage in other research activities that interfere with timely completion of the Center project.
7. A Scholar's grant may be terminated by the Governing Board on the grounds of unsatisfactory performance.

### B. The Work

1. The Governing Board of the Center may on a regular basis invite the Calvin College faculty to submit interdisciplinary thematic topics. After examining such topics, the Governing Board may present two at the Fall Faculty Meeting, at which time the faculty will choose one theme for the following academic year.

2. While the Center will especially seek to support proposals that deal with the theme of the academic year, the Center will also seek to support proposals outside of that theme. In all cases the quality of the proposals, and their applicability to the purposes of the center, shall be the principal criteria for the Center's judgement of their worthiness for support.
3. The work of the Scholars is accepted by the Governing Board on behalf of the faculty. This work may be any advanced scholarly, creative, or performance activity judged by the Governing Board to be appropriate to the purpose of the Center: to promote Christian scholarship.

#### C. Communication of Results

1. In the belief that Christian scholarship should, by its nature, enhance the entire academic community, the Scholars shall make presentations of their work to the College Faculty in a form to be proposed by the Scholars and approved by the Governing Board.
2. Since the research is to serve not only the on-campus Calvin community but also the wider Christian and academic communities, publication or public display is essential. Acceptance of the grant from the Calvin Center is acceptance of a commitment to publish or publicly display the results either individually or jointly. Part of this commitment shall involve a presentation to the Calvin College community of research results.

### IV. The Administration of the Center

#### A. Structure

1. The Governing Board shall consist of the President of the College, the Provost, the Director, and the Dean of Research and Scholarship, all of whom serve ex officio, and four faculty members, one of whom shall serve as chair, and one from each of the following: Emeriti and the Board of Trustees.
2. The faculty members shall be appointed by the Committee on Governance for staggered terms of four years. They shall be broadly representative of the divisions of the faculty. The President shall appoint the representative of the Emeriti and set the term of service. The Board of Trustees shall appoint its own representative and set the term of service.

## B. Powers of the Governing Board

1. The Governing Board shall have powers of initiative and exercise a comprehensive control over the activities of the Center.
2. The Governing Board shall solicit proposals for research from the members of the faculty, approve proposals for funding, establish the appropriate budgets for the Center's work, ensure the smooth operation of the Center, and oversee publications and public displays of work.
3. The Governing Board shall have the authority to approve new initiatives by the Calvin Center that promote and encourage Christian scholarship. Such initiatives may come from other Calvin College Centers, for example, or from the academic departments. It shall oversee the organizational structuring and development of such initiatives, and shall create discrete budgets for each initiative. Normally the grant-making funds shall not be used for such new initiatives.
4. These powers shall be exercised in accord with the Bylaws. The faculty shall be informed of any change in the Bylaws.

## C. Criteria for Supporting Projects

1. The Center shall approve topics in accord with its purposes.
2. Topics must utilize recognized competence in the Calvin faculty.
3. Topics must be of clear theoretical or practical significance for the advancement of Christian scholarship.

## D. Criteria for Supporting Scholars

1. Applicants must be committed to the purposes of the Center.
2. Applicants must have the competence to do independent research and to communicate the results of such research in writing or public display.
3. Applicants must have a thorough preliminary understanding of their proposed topics, and present evidence of that competence in the written application.

4. Normally, grants shall be given to those who have completed the terminal degree in their disciplines. Grants are not given for degree-completion projects.

E. The Director of the Center

1. The Director shall represent the Governing Board in the administrative functions of the Center.
2. The Director of the Center shall encourage and monitor the progress of each Scholar. The Director also shall assist them, as need arises, in selecting publishers for the product of the research or an appropriate medium or venue for the public display of the product.
3. The Director, in consultation with the Dean for Research and Scholarship, shall have the authority to pursue grants and outside funding for the Calvin Center's operations and initiatives.

Article V. Amendment

This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the faculty or Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees.

**BYLAWS OF  
THE CALVIN CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP**

I. Proposals

- A. The Governing Board shall annually solicit proposals from the faculty of the college.
- B. Any faculty member may make a proposal for funding by the Center, either as a member of a research team or as an individual. Prior to application, the participants in a team study, whether on-campus or off-campus people, must agree on their proposal, and must assure each other and the Center of their collective willingness to work together under the terms of the proposal. Applicants should note that Calvin College students may be members of research teams and earn course credit for their participation.
- C. Participants must submit a carefully formulated and well-crafted proposal of approximately 2000 words. It should include the following elements:
  - 1. A statement of the principal question(s) to be addressed by the study.
  - 2. A discussion which demonstrates that the topic is in accord with the purpose of the Center as stated in Article II of the CCCS Constitution.
  - 3. A review of the relevant background, including a brief overview of the available literature for the proposal which shows how the study of this topic will be able to build on a sufficient base of resource material but not duplicate work already done.
  - 4. A discussion of the participant's or participants' qualifications, including publications or public displays on relevant subjects.
  - 5. A carefully prepared budget, explaining the need for the funding. Proposals with prudent budgets have a greater likelihood of being funded.
    - a. The proposal should justify clearly, using general informational categories, the ways funding will be used (e.g., salaries, summer stipends, travel, library purchases, etc.).

- b. Funding for salaries applies to Calvin College faculty members only. Other Scholars will not receive salaries from the Center. However, if a Calvin College department would appoint such a Scholar to a reduced-load teaching position, then salary provisions, as with any Calvin College faculty member, obtain.
    - c. Travel and research needs may be funded by the Center.
  - 6. A carefully prepared schedule for the completion and publication or production of the project.
  - 7. Three letters of recommendation as well as a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of scholars who could give advice to the Governing Board on the worth of the proposal and on the likelihood of the success of Scholars in completing the project.
  - 8. A plan for the publication or display of the results of the grant for the College and larger academic community.
- D. Complete proposals should be submitted to the Governing Board by October 15.
- E. The Governing Board will review proposals and make selections for funding. Applicants will be informed in writing by December 15 about projects to be funded beginning the ensuing fiscal year.

## II. Administration

- A. The Governing Board shall prepare a budget request and submit it to the college administration.
- B. The Director will be Budget Officer and will oversee all expenditures of the Center.
- C. The faculty members on the Governing Board shall be exempt from the college rule that no faculty member shall serve on more than one college committee.

### III. Amendment

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Governing Board. The faculty shall be informed of any such amendments.

Constitution and Bylaws revised March 1991

Constitution and Bylaws revised October 1998

Revised and approved by the Committee on Governance: October 2009