

# CALVIN

College



## From Every Nation



*Revised Comprehensive Plan  
For Racial Justice, Reconciliation,  
and Cross-cultural Engagement  
at Calvin College*

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and Cross-cultural Engagement  
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*“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.”*

REVELATION 7:9

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## CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

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In 1985 Calvin College adopted its Comprehensive Plan for Integrating North American Ethnic Minority Persons and Their Interests into Every Facet of Calvin's Institutional Life. For nearly twenty years, this Comprehensive Plan has served as one of the college's principal road maps toward the goal, in the authors' words, of a “genuinely multicultural Christian academic community.”

Over time that goal has become both broader and, in some respects, more elusive. Calvin's growing leadership as a center of Christian higher education has brought it into ever-closer relationship with academic and community partners around the world, thereby multiplying opportunities for intercultural and multicultural engagement on a global scale. At the same time it is clear that a commitment to racial justice and reconciliation cannot be pursued in isolation from other justice issues, and the college has invested considerable effort to address concerns such as gender equity and the accommodation of persons with disabilities. Within North American society, meanwhile, racial categories once regarded as self-evident have begun to blur, while a steady influx of new migrants and refugee groups has created additional layers of diversity in an already multi-ethnic and multicultural society. Calvin's supporting denomination, the Christian Reformed Church, once ethnically homogeneous, now includes members from a colorful array of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic traditions. The Reformed confessional community of which it is a part includes denominations in all parts of the

world, a majority of them in the Southern Hemisphere and several of them substantially larger than the CRC itself. Calvin's student body now represents an equally colorful array of communities and traditions from throughout North America as well as over 30 countries around the globe. The college's core curriculum now identifies cross-cultural engagement as an integral component of a liberal arts education, and hundreds of students avail themselves of overseas study opportunities each year. For the Comprehensive Plan to be truly comprehensive, it must take account of the increasingly global nature of Calvin's commitments as well as the increasing diversity of identities and experiences represented by "North American ethnic minority persons." It must also take account of the diversity of attitudes regarding priorities in the pursuit of racial justice. And it must be sensitive to possible points of intersection as well as points of tension with other demands for justice and community.

If the context for the Comprehensive Plan has grown more complex, the goals themselves remain elusive. Despite continuing efforts, both institutional and individual, it is evident that major elements of the original plan remain unrealized in whole or in part. To be sure, there has been significant progress in a number of areas. Programming initiatives, both on-campus and community-based, have increased exponentially, and recent retention rates for ethnic minority students resemble those for the student body at large. Even so, it is clear that the college will fall far short of achieving one of the principal targets of the 1985 plan—namely, that persons of color should constitute 15 percent of the faculty, staff, and student body by 2003-2004. Faculty and students of color, whether North American or international, continue to report that they encounter significant cultural and communication barriers to full participation in the Calvin community. If Calvin is serious in its intention to become "a more effective agent of God's *shalom* in its educational partnerships, both at home and abroad," as the current (2002-2007) Strategic Plan insists, then much work clearly remains to be done. The pursuit of *shalom* calls not only for concerted efforts to promote racial reconciliation and Christian community but also for deliberate measures to identify and address practices, structures, and attitudes, both institutional and personal, that may

militate against those efforts. It calls not only for a reassessment of existing goals but also for an evaluation of reasons that those goals are not being met.

All of these factors make a review and revision of the original Comprehensive Plan both timely and necessary. One preliminary review can be found in the 1998 volume *The One in the Many: Christian Identity in a Multicultural World* (ed. Thomas R. Thompson, University Press of America). In 1999, the Calvin Anti-Racism Team (CART) was formed to augment the work of the Multicultural Affairs Committee and to participate in a wider denominational effort to address racism. This team submitted a report in September of 1999 that the Multicultural Affairs Committee commended to the Faculty Senate. In response, the Planning and Priorities Committee created a task force to review the Comprehensive Plan. That group concluded, among other things, that the plan would be strengthened by a more explicitly antiracist orientation, a deeper sense of urgency and commitment, and more effective accountability mechanisms (“Becoming an Anti-Racist Institution: A Faculty/Staff Review of Calvin College’s Comprehensive Plan,” 2000). In light of these suggestions, the Planning and Priorities Committee appointed a new task force in 2001 and charged it with rewriting the Comprehensive Plan. This proposed revision is the result.

The aim of “Comprehensive Plan II” is not so much to replace the original plan as it is to expand and re-cast it based on the insights and experiences of the last fifteen years. It begins, like its predecessor, with an extended statement of vision that reflects on the relationship between the declared goal of multicultural community and Calvin’s basic institutional mission, notably as articulated in *An Expanded Statement of the Mission of Calvin College: Vision, Purpose, Commitment* (1992), as well as in the detailed anti-racism analyses that have been conducted by the college since the late 1990s.

Three interlocking themes that emerge from this analysis provide the strategic framework for a reformulated plan. The first theme, multicultural citizenship, emphasizes the importance of expanding cross-cultural experiences and cultivating intercultural sensitivities if we are to become effective agents of renewal in a “global village.” The second theme, anti-racism and

accountability, emphasizes the need for a continuing effort to identify the sin of racism and its effects-institutional no less than personal-at Calvin College, and the attendant need to make structural changes that will promote greater accountability and enable us to escape and avoid the traps of institutional racism. The third theme, reconciliation and restoration, testifies to the positive vision of shalom toward which we as a Christian academic community aspire and which we seek to model in our institutional practice.

After a brief review of existing policies and structures that continue to provide a foundation upon which to build an anti-racist, reconciling, and restoring Christian community, reformulated goals and strategies are set out within each of the major areas of action identified in the original plan. Each set of goals and strategies also specifies the particular administrators and committees to be assigned operational responsibility for ensuring that the goal in question is achieved. These recommendations are designed to complement and extend existing policies and structures, with the aim of transforming Calvin into a college that is always vigilant in recognizing racism, always conscientious in promoting reconciliation, and always active in the work of restoring healthy multicultural community.

## VISION

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### **The Comprehensive Plan and Calvin's Mission**

The original Comprehensive Plan set forth the guiding vision of “a Christian community that celebrates cultural diversity and is shaped by the biblical vision of the kingdom of God, a kingdom formed ‘. . .from every tribe and language and people and nation’” (Revelation 5:9, 10). It called upon Calvin to play a “prophetic role. . . in bearing witness to that kingdom.” As the authors wrote:

We envision a kingdom community in which cultural diversity is seen as normal; a Christian “family”<sup>4</sup> that transcends ethnic, cultural, racial, and class boundaries: a communion of saints in which “each member should consider it his duty to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members” (Lord's Day 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism); a community in which Reformed Christians from all of these groups see Calvin as their college. It is the biblical vision of Pentecost rather than the vision of Babel (p. 5).

Subsequent college documents make clear that Calvin embraces this vision of Reformed multicultural community as integral to its institutional purpose. The Expanded Statement of Mission, for example, commits the college to “[strive] for ethnic diversity; while also acknowledging its own ethnic roots,” and it

bases this commitment squarely on Calvin's expanding role in a global Christian community:

The goal of an ethnically diverse community recognizes that the Christian community transcends cultural and geographical boundaries and we live in a world community. Moreover, a multicultural community will assist in the educational goals of understanding different cultures and promoting understanding between people (p. 35).

In 1993 the faculty endorsed a definition of an academic multicultural community in a document developed by the Multicultural Affairs Committee that emphasizes both the opportunities and the obligations implied by this vision. The document in question notes that the College's Mission Statement commits members of the Calvin community to "seek to be agents of renewal in the academy, church, and society," a mission that calls for "vigorous liberal arts education that promotes lifelong Christian service" and for "substantial and challenging art and scholarship," but that also calls upon us "to perform all our tasks as a caring and diverse educational community."

This understanding of mission, the document continues, echoing the Comprehensive Plan, is clearly related to the increasingly focused efforts of the college to become a "genuinely multicultural Christian academic community." To be such a community is to affirm the worth of all human beings and to affirm the value and significance of the human cultures and communities that have developed over the centuries; it is to affirm a biblical vision of the Kingdom of God, in which people from "every tribe and language and people and nation" are gathered, purchased by Christ's sacrifice (Revelation 5:9). It is also to acknowledge how far short all human communities are from this Kingdom ideal, and to acknowledge the extent to which racism and other sins have contributed, and continue to contribute, to this failure within our own academic community.

As the current Strategic Plan acknowledges, it is not enough simply to celebrate the "rich diversity of God's people," both locally and internationally. It is also necessary to address "the tensions that arise with diversity, especially while combating racism and transforming the campus into a more just and inclu-

sive place for persons of color” (p. 3). Our pursuit of racial justice and reconciliation must be informed both by a Pentecost vision of community and also by an honest reckoning of where, how, and why we fail to act in accordance with that vision. As Justo Gonzalez declared in his convocation address launching Calvin's 1996-1997 Multicultural Year:

The multicultural vision is sweet, but there is also a bitter side to it. . . [It] involves much more than bringing in a bit of color and folklore into our classrooms and our worship services: it also involves radical changes in the way we understand ourselves and in the way we conduct our business.<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate goal, as Gonzalez suggests, is “a working together or synergism of saints who own their respective traditions” (p. 6). The immediate challenge is to create an environment in which this can become a living reality within the framework of a shared Reformed commitment.

## **A Biblical Model: Justice and Transformation**

Working toward a multicultural Kingdom of God is not simply a high-minded ideal; it is a dictate of biblical justice. If Christ came to “proclaim justice to the nations” (Matt. 12:18, quoting Is. 42:1), then those who have been reconciled to God in Christ do not have the luxury of remaining neutral when it comes to pursuing reconciliation with one another. As Reformed theologian Russel Botman has pointed out, with reference to post-apartheid South Africa, the call to discipleship does not allow for any artificial separation between orthodoxy and orthopraxis.<sup>2</sup> The New Testament vision of Pentecost and the new Jerusalem is set against the prophet Amos's warning against a piety that fails to “let justice roll on like a river, righteousness

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<sup>1</sup> “For the Healing of the Nations: The Book of Revelation and Our Multicultural Calling,” in Thomas Thompson, ed., *The One in the Many*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> “‘Dutch’ and Reformed and ‘Black’ and Reformed in South Africa: A Tale of Two Traditions on the Move to Unity and Responsibility,” in Ronald Wells, ed., *Keeping Faith: Embracing the Tensions in Christian Higher Education* (Eerdmans, 1996), p. 92.

like a never-failing stream” (Amos 5:24). Shalom, as Nicholas Wolterstorff has argued, “is an ethical community that. . . is wounded when justice is absent.” It is “both God's cause in the world and our human calling.”<sup>3</sup>

If Christians, including Reformed Christians, have a compelling biblical-theological warrant for seeking justice and celebrating multicultural community, why does our practice so often fall short of what we profess? And what is the relationship between a specifically Reformed identity and the identity every believer shares as a “new creation” in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17)?

In a paper presented at the concluding symposium for the Multicultural Year,<sup>4</sup> Professor Tom Thompson reflects on the extent to which even sincere Christians can become witting or unwitting carriers of racism. He concludes that “if we in the Christian church are ungraceful about affirming others because we stumble over distinctions of race, ethnicity, or culture, then it is quite possible that we have too tight of a grip on our own lives, a false (i.e., insecure) image of ourselves, which we may have to learn to ungrasp” (p. 23). In response, he suggests that multicultural encounters should be seen as “an imperative of basic Christian discipleship,” rooted in the life of Christ, “who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the very nature of a servant...” (Philippians 2:6-7).

Self-emptying or ungrasping ourselves as imitators of Christ is risky, suggests Thompson, because it threatens to call into question cherished personal identities. Our personal identities may include the baggage of cultural superiority; or, conversely, they may be scarred and fragile because of racism or other forms of injustice. Yet as Matthew 10:39 reminds us, “If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give it up for Me, you will save it” (Living New Testament). It is this posture—and the risk it entails—that undergird the cross-cultural engagement we require of our students in the core curriculum, and it is no less

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<sup>3</sup> Until Justice and Peace Embrace (Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 71, 72.

<sup>4</sup> “Ungrasping Ourselves: A Kenotic Model of Multicultural Encounter,” in Thomas Thompson, ed., *The One in the Many*, pp. 9-24.

essential for members of the college's faculty, administration, and staff.

This same “ungrasping” may suggest a prescription for institutional identity as well. What is the core of our institutional identity? In what ways might we be attempting to maintain too tight a grip on that identity, a grip that threatens to obscure our identity in Christ?

An answer to the first question can be found in the Expanded Statement of Mission, which declares that our “identity as a Reformed Christian educational institution. . . means that our approach to education is set within a tradition of biblical interpretation, worship, and Christian practice expressed in the creeds of the Reformed-Presbyterian churches having their roots in the Protestant Reformation” (p. 14). Many college documents, including the Expanded Statement of Mission, describe the contours of the robust confessional vision that draws sustenance from this tradition—the familiar redemptive-historical pattern of creation, fall, redemption, and fulfillment that frames the Reformed community's self-understanding and its terms of engagement with society and culture.

An answer to the second question calls for careful discernment and may provide fertile ground for disagreement among people who all share the same passionate commitment to Calvin's mission and to a vision of multicultural community. As President Byker reminded us in his inaugural address, there are some tensions that we need to embrace. What must be emphasized, in any case, is that the call to “ungrasp” an inherited institutional identity is by no means a call to compromise, let alone abandon, the Reformed character of Calvin College. Nor is it a call to create some undifferentiated, common-denominator identity unconnected to the lived experience of community members. Rather, it is a call to grapple honestly with the risks that may be entailed in attempting to distinguish between negotiable cultural expressions and the non-negotiable core identity in Christ testified to in the historic confessions—in the willingness, as the Expanded Statement of Mission puts it, to “live as the visible embodiment of [God's] covenant promises. . . [manifesting] the universal scope of divine love” (p. 17). It is a call to discernment and a posture of imitation, a posture that grows out of a spirit of

humility rather than of cultural superiority, whatever its source. The confessions themselves can point us toward such discernment and reexamination. As the Expanded Statement of Mission notes:

At their best, confessions provide a community of faith with a prophetic voice that the world can hear. Used appropriately, they are guides in a continuing common effort of reexamining the scriptures to hear God's call. . . . The confessing community forms the principal witness to the awakening reign of God, and provides a vision of spiritual liberation that also requires liberation from injustice and bondage (pp. 15, 18).

An expanded vision for the Comprehensive Plan takes into account the entire scope of the biblical drama. It affirms the values and strengths of inherited traditions but also bears witness to a holy impatience for change and renewal. It expresses the recognition that no single ethnic group or theological position within Christianity represents the last word on God's will for human community. It suggests a posture of encounter, both personal and institutional, that is modeled after Christ's self-emptying, and it insists that fidelity to our confessional identity not only allows for but positively demands a continuing reexamination of our cultural identity. This biblical and confessional foundation establishes the context and also underscores the need for a critical analysis that can make us more sensitive to subtle, structural forms of racism that, if left unaddressed, will continue to distort the college's vision and impede progress toward genuine multicultural community. To be sure, race is by no means the only factor that needs to be considered in shaping Calvin's institutional priorities, even where multicultural identity is concerned, and it would be a mistake to reduce the complexities of race to a simple dialectic between "whites" and "persons of color." Nevertheless, an informed sensitivity to racial dynamics, particularly within our immediate North American context, can help lend focus and direction to the pursuit of Christian community in other cross-cultural and interpersonal arenas as well.

## **A Critical Analysis of Racism**

Over the last several years the Christian Reformed Church in North America, using a model developed by Crossroads Ministries (Chicago), has undertaken an anti-racist analysis of its agencies and has invited the college to do the same. In response, Calvin assembled the Calvin Anti-Racism Team, or CART. This team has engaged in extensive analysis and has shared its insights with the Calvin community in workshops, training sessions, and other venues.

CART's anti-racist approach focuses primarily on North American history and experience; it does not address all of the global challenges and opportunities that a multicultural vision entails. As such, it is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, nor is it intended to foreclose continued discussion, or even debate, about specific prescriptions or points of emphasis. Two of the broad themes of this anti-racist analysis, however, have immediate relevance for the commitment to multicultural community articulated in the Comprehensive Plan. One is the complex legacy of the college's peculiar ethnic heritage and its relationship to a pluralistic American culture. The other is the no less complex relationship between race and institutional power, particularly the ways in which structural and systemic forces can operate, often independent of conscious attitudes or intent, to marginalize or denigrate persons from other ethnic groups, particularly persons of color, in a community historically defined and largely controlled by a single (white) ethnic group.

### ***Immigrant Ethnicity and American Society***

From the very start, matters of ethnicity and Christian witness in a pluralistic culture have been at the forefront of the college's identity and mission. Calvin College's commitment to a normative vision for learning and living based on Reformed Christian principles was deeply bound up in practice with the Dutch-American ethnicity of its founders, and these two considerations historically sustained each other. Like many other communities of European immigrants in the United States and Canada, the Christian Reformed Dutch sought to fashion an ethno-religious subculture in which they could practice their

faith, teach their children, and promote their common welfare according to their own convictions. *Onze school for onze kinderen* (our school for our children) was the operating description of both the college and the Christian day schools that they established.

The original purpose of the college was to provide Christian Reformed young people with a liberal arts education based on a Reformed Christian worldview and to equip them for Christian service. Although the college's officers certainly practiced religious exclusion in their hiring practices and in the way they privileged certain bodies of thought, these actions were not overtly exclusionary on the basis of race. They expressed the supporting community's determination to sustain its religious principles and outlook and to protect itself from being absorbed and co-opted by the American society and state. Calvin College did "welcome the stranger" on the rare occasions that one entered its gates. Even before the college received its degree-granting authority, one entry in a college document from 1918 noted that the College enrolled a "Navajo man and a Russian Jew."

Despite its founders' ambivalence toward American society and values, Calvin College was an American institution, and as such it bore the stamp of the supporting community's experience of the larger historic racial dynamics at play in the United States. While the Civil War may have ended slavery as an institution, both law and custom continued to impose forms of economic, social, and political subjugation on African Americans. The same was true for Native Americans, for most Hispanics, and for Asians, who first arrived as labor conscripts. Although European immigrants, including the Dutch, also endured economic hardships and frequently experienced ethnic prejudice, they nevertheless went to the head of the line for factory jobs. They also benefited from the expanding American systems of public education and health care, and from the modernization of urban infrastructure, from which persons of color long remained excluded. Whether they were aware of it or not, the early builders of the Christian Reformed Church and Calvin College benefited from this racial differentiation, and in the process they inherited a national legacy of white privilege and the subjugation of people of color.

Against this background it is hardly surprising that, by the 1920s, groups such as the Christian Reformed Dutch found themselves wrestling with conflicting impulses to sustain their separate community identity while at the same time encouraging their children to prosper and become good citizens in their adopted country. And ever since the Second World War, these communities have been confronted with powerful new forces for national integration. Under postwar leaders who were inspired by an expansive vision for Reformed witness in this changing environment, both Calvin College and the Christian Reformed Church gradually altered their missions. Both set aside an implicit agenda of ethnic separatism and increasingly sought to include people from the wider North American society and beyond who were attracted to their Reformed Christian message and mission. With this opening to an American mainstream that was itself becoming steadily more diverse, an exclusive focus on the Dutch Christian Reformed community appeared increasingly uncharitable and impractical. There were many other evangelical Christians, college officers came to realize, who might benefit from a Reformed Christian college education. Moreover, opportunities for expanded partnerships with Reformed believers around the globe became increasingly numerous and compelling.

The college and the denomination had been tied to the life of a particular ethnic subculture for so long, however, that the process of inclusion and re-forming the lines of community remained slow and fraught with tension. As late as 1970, the Calvin student body was still almost exclusively white and 90 percent Christian Reformed. Yet both the college and the denomination, responding to the challenge of the civil rights movement and the new opportunities opened up by globalization, came to see the inclusion of people of color as a gospel mandate. Since the 1970s the college has responded with a variety of initiatives in recruiting, community action, and on-campus programming. However, while Calvin has had considerable success in appealing to a wider spectrum of white evangelicals, progress toward becoming a more inclusive and multicultural institution for people of color has remained modest and halting. The college's ethnic and denominational legacy has had enduring effects on its structures and ethos, even if these are now more

residual and implicit than they were just a generation ago. The campus climate still works to limit ready entry by persons of color and to alienate and marginalize many of those who do accept the invitation to teach, work, or enroll here.

### ***Race, Institutional Power, and Multicultural Community***

Racism has often been associated primarily with personal prejudice and bigotry—destructive attitudes and behavior by members of one race toward those of another. This is certainly an important dimension of the problem. Racism involves much more than this, however. At its profoundest and most consequential level, it takes the form of a systemic and institutionalized misuse of power.

The concept of institutional racism calls attention to the dynamics by which institutions that, in theory, exist to serve and represent everyone in a society equally and equitably—governmental agencies, business enterprises, educational systems, cultural organizations, and so on—may, in practice, function in ways that benefit some and oppress or exploit others. In the past, discriminatory practices were often conscious, deliberate, and direct: legislated segregation, exclusionary policies in employment, and the denial of voting rights, to mention only a few examples. Today, such discrimination is more likely to be unconscious and indirect, a product of structural forces and relationships more than of intentional policy. But the effects of past policies linger in these structural relationships. A tradition of substandard education, for example, may result in a lack of educational qualifications needed for many present-day occupations, thus denying access to job opportunities and reinforcing continued economic and social inequality even in the absence of any conscious policy of discrimination. It is these differential, structurally determined discriminatory effects, more than deliberate actions, that constitute the misuse of power associated with institutional racism.

This misuse of power operates in three essential ways. First, it serves to disempower and control the persons against whom it is directed. Second, it serves to allocate power and privilege to a dominant racial group by fostering systems and structures that serve the economic, cultural, and psychological interests of that

group. Third, and perhaps most insidiously, institutionalized racism carries the potential to imprison both dominant and minority groups at a deep psychological and spiritual level. It implants notions of superiority and prerogative in the hearts and minds of white people, while it tempts persons of color to engage in self-destructive attitudes and behavior. It reminds us that, as the Apostle Paul put it, followers of Christ wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the deeply embedded evil that can infuse this world's institutions.

The power of systemic racism arises from the fact that it consigns us all, regardless of race, to roles we do not choose, and no one can fully escape its effects. None of us can undo the fact that the United States, from its colonial origins through its founding, favored white settlers and allowed the subjugation, enslavement, and exploitation of persons of color. Over the decades, to be sure, much has changed. People of color have resisted, discriminatory laws have been removed, and the nation's noblest democratic and Christian ideals have been invoked to construct a hopeful image of what America could become. Yet America's racist legacy continues to haunt us and to shape our daily relationships in ways of which we may be largely unaware.

So how and where does this legacy manifest itself at Calvin College today? On one level it can be seen in the extent to which people of color at Calvin still perceive their status to be essentially that of tolerated guests in an institution that has not historically encouraged their participation. Even many white students and employees who are not Dutch and/or Christian Reformed have reported that they have felt like guests in someone else's institution. It is therefore understandable that for persons of color, whether from North America or abroad, the reminders of difference are virtually constant, for unlike their white counterparts, they cannot easily "blend in" to a crowd of overwhelmingly Euro-American faces. Whether or not they are subjected to overt harassment, persons of color must wear their difference at all times. The ongoing sense of being "unusual" is a particular burden for Calvin's students of color. Going to class, working on campus, and hanging out in the dorms become acts of diplomacy, occasions that require the wearing of one's public

face. Calvin College does not feel like home for these students, for it has not been designed with them in mind.

On another level, existing programs designed to promote racial inclusivity, affirmative action, and multiculturalism have confined themselves largely if not exclusively to first-order effects of racism. They have aimed at changing policies to make them more inclusive and welcoming to persons of color, or at trying to recruit more faculty, staff and students of color. However laudable and necessary such efforts may be in themselves, they do not systematically address the deeper structures of the institution—leadership, governance, constituency, and accountability—and have not sought to achieve more deep-seated change.

That these multicultural initiatives have not yet altered fundamental structures of the college is evident from a survey of leadership and decision-making structures. While several persons of color now serve on the Board of Trustees, and while several persons of color hold or have held lower-level leadership positions such as department chair or program director, all executive-level positions at Calvin College continue to be held by white people. Currently, every member of the President's Cabinet is white, every member of the Professional Status Committee is white, and all “middle-management” positions, which report directly to the president or a vice president, are held by white people—this despite the stipulation in the original Comprehensive Plan “that two criteria for hiring new vice presidents and other supervisory personnel be, first, a commitment to the development of a multicultural Calvin community and, second, significant experience with ethnic minority people” (p. 14).

Similarly, the College has only limited accountability to external communities of color, even those within the Christian Reformed Church itself. Although there are more and more people of color in the denomination, the congregations to which they most frequently belong have rarely had a close relationship with the college. Calvin faculty and administrators tend to join churches that sizeable numbers of Calvin faculty and administrators already attend, not churches whose membership includes larger numbers of persons of color. When Calvin groups are sent out, they tend to go to larger white Christian Reformed churches;

only occasionally do they visit small reservation churches or Asian, African-American, and Spanish-speaking churches in large urban areas. Though this may be understandable from many perspectives, the practical effect is that people of color and their churches often remain on the periphery of Calvin's institutional vision, and the college feels little pressure to attend to those who are not a central focus of its efforts. Conversely, young people from these churches feel little pressure to attend Calvin in significant numbers. Instead, they come one by one, and they have few collective accountability advocates outside the college to leverage their concerns.

As a result, and without deliberate intent, the college continues to participate in the second form of racist power—granting privilege to white people because of leadership, structures of governance, constituency, and accountability. Even though the college's decision makers may be persons of goodwill who abhor racism, they have few if any collegial checks and balances to challenge customary patterns of catering to whites. Calvin may not consciously intend to exclude persons of color—indeed, it may intend quite the opposite—but it remains designed primarily for the middle-class white student and professor. More often than not, white people's lifestyles, cultural expressions, outlooks, values, learning habits, teaching styles, and assumptions about what is normal and regular continue to prevail in dormitories, classrooms, offices, and worship services.

On a still deeper level, the relative absence of persons of color in positions of authority and responsibility on campus serves, by default, to convey the impression that white people have more natural ability for these roles. The scarcity of people of color in campus life at Calvin can subtly reinforce the sinful notion that white people must be smarter and better equipped to dominate the “knowledge industry,” the learned professions, and society more generally. A relative neglect of intellectual and artistic achievements outside Europe and North America, and of the role of people of color in shaping our own civilization and professing our common faith, reinforces the notion that white people are the producers of the “best and brightest” of our cultural expressions. By setting the intellectual, cultural, and worship tone of the campus overwhelmingly in a white mode, Calvin

helps to perpetuate the notion that the white, Euro-American way of life should indeed be normative for all.

Moreover, the college has not avoided a stereotype that persons of color tend to be less able and that they therefore require extra help. The Comprehensive Plan, for example, coupled calls for greater diversity with a pledge to maintain academic excellence and not to lower standards—as if these goals were implicitly or potentially in tension. To the extent that “we” treat persons of color as special guests within “our” institution, Calvin perpetuates the racist formula that “we” have much to offer “them,” but “they” have little to offer “us.” Such implications have not been lost on communities of color in West Michigan, congregations of color within the Christian Reformed Church, and other potential constituents of color across North America and beyond.

The cumulative effect of these institutional habits of mind is to suggest to students and faculty of color that they are fundamentally disadvantaged and voiceless. For their part, people of color perceive strong pressures to assimilate into a predominantly white campus culture, to sacrifice personal identity and racial pride for the sake of companionship and getting along. By providing few faculty and staff of color to serve as role models, Calvin reinforces in students of color the racist notion that academic and vocational achievement is rare and unusual for people like them.

## **Anti-Racism, Reconciliation, and the Way Forward**

The foregoing brief illustrations of ways in which the college's structures and climate may work to foster white privilege and marginalize people of color suggest just how deep and daunting the problem of racial injustice and alienation can be. In a society as prone to individualism as our own, it is very difficult to face that fact. Members of the majority culture, in particular, are tempted to claim that they harbor no racist attitudes; if confronted with actions that reveal these attitudes deep within them, they want to believe that personal repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation can make everything right. The truth, however, is that the principalities and powers still hold us,

as individuals and as an institution, within societal and cultural structures that are charged with racism. So what can be done? Is this a counsel for despair, an invitation to cynicism?

Not at all. Although it would be illusory to believe that we will ever be totally free, until the day of Jesus Christ, from the racist principalities and powers at work in the world, there are positive things that we can do to combat racism. Remembering that racism includes the misuse of power in relationships, we can work to transform the power relationships that abet racism in our own institutional home. We can work toward making Calvin College an anti-racist institution. The more we commit ourselves to the goal of racial reconciliation and shalom, the more determined our anti-racism efforts will likely be. And the more determined these efforts are, the more effective we are likely to become in achieving our larger vision of a community that is both authentically Reformed and authentically multicultural.

In this context, the language of anti-racism may sound excessively militant or negative to some ears. It may smack of ideological compulsion and conformist responses. That is not the intent. Certainly, it is not enough to focus on simply attacking and resisting racism, however defined. Reconciliation and renewal are what we seek, and there is no single formula for achieving that goal. However, careful reflection suggests that *anti-racist* can be a useful and, indeed, positive term. It alerts us that progress toward the ultimate end—a genuinely multicultural Christian community—requires more than eloquent rhetoric and good intentions. It also requires combating deeply engrained impediments to interracial justice, reconciliation, and partnership. The use of anti-racist terminology is not a mere matter of putting on the rhetorical berets and bandoleers of political correctness. It arises out of a sober recognition of what Abraham Kuyper called the “antithesis,” the radical gap between the Kingdom of God and the powers of this world. The Reformed tradition has long recognized that sin and brokenness are more than just a matter of the individual heart; they infect the entire created order, including human institutions and relationships. An analysis that emphasizes the structural and institutional nature of racism, therefore, resonates naturally with Reformed convictions about reality. Like Calvin's founders, who claimed that

“neutrality was frowned upon,” we are convinced that there is no benignly neutral, “non-racialist” ground on which to stand, least of all in America. Racism runs too deep to allow us the luxury of simply refusing to give it credence. Because it is woven into the basic structures of our lives, it requires us to take an intentional anti-racist stand in response. Because it takes such a variety of forms, it requires us to consider, and indeed welcome, a variety of strategies for implementing that response.

Members of CART have reported that whenever they took a break from engaging in their initial training and orientation and checked in with each other's thoughts and feelings, the white members of the team felt discouraged. However, their colleagues of color—African Americans, in this case—felt encouraged and hopeful. The first step toward overcoming racism, they pointed out, was gaining the proper perspective and seeing the problem's true depth and power. Now we are seeing the world more on the same terms, they assured the white members.

That would be scant comfort if it did not also provide realistic hope for change and practical tools for effecting change. The hopeful fact is that Calvin College does indeed have resources for effecting change, and a positive trend of change is already underway. This community does have the capacity to develop an anti-racist and multicultural identity, and it can make racial equality and partnership a central feature of campus life. Faculty, staff, and students of the college can learn and embrace the basic elements of an anti-racist analysis and orientation. Calvin can subject its deep structures to a thorough search for policies and practices that support racism, and it can change those structures to reflect its professed commitments to racial justice, reconciliation, and partnership.

The college has come to recognize, for example, that while faculty requirements are one of the essential ways through which Calvin defines and implements its core confessional identity, these requirements may place a disproportionate burden on some faculty members of color because of the lingering effects of historical and institutional structures of racism. Accordingly, Calvin recently amended the faculty handbook to include race as a factor in decisions to grant exceptions to the faculty Christian school requirement, recognizing that making a judgment in such cases

involves a balancing of individual and institutional needs and goals and is best made on a case-by-case basis. In recent years, to cite another example, the college has begun working to develop new accountability relationships with a number of targeted congregations, including mixed-race and international Christian Reformed churches as well as predominantly African-American and Latino congregations with other denominational or non-denominational affiliations. If a sense of trust and mutual interest can be developed with these churches, and if they can become a steady and reliable source of students, they will gain influence with college leaders and can more readily demand accountability from them.

Such changes will not happen quickly or easily. They will demand intentional commitments and concrete initiatives, both individual and institutional. Institutions tend to stay the course and provide continuity, and they do not change quickly. Yet it would be difficult to find an institution more resolutely committed than Calvin College to governing all that it does by a firm sense of mission and biblical-theological moorings. Inspired by a biblical model that invites us to reaffirm the college's mission and to hold fast to our confessional identity, while at the same time enjoining us to embrace the discerning task of "ungrasping ourselves," with all the reorientation that this may require, we have both an opportunity and an obligation to focus our collective energies on the effort to make Calvin College a Reformed academic community that is genuinely anti-racist, reconciling, and restoring.



## THEMES

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Three broad themes inform this revision of the Comprehensive Plan: the need for cross-cultural and intercultural competencies in a global environment, the need for enhanced institutional accountability, and the need to be agents of reconciliation and restoration. These themes do not function sequentially but rather simultaneously; they are interwoven, each illuminating and complementing the others. It would be a mistake to assume that the task of combating institutional and personal racism is one we can ever hope to complete. But it would be equally mistaken to assume that we must first solve all the problems of racism before we can hope to engage fruitfully in the work of reconciliation and multicultural community-building. Anti-racist accountability cannot be divorced from the pursuit of reconciliation and restoration; one will always be incomplete without the other, and the successful cultivation of cross-cultural and intercultural competencies depends on both.

### **Multicultural Citizenship**

When the original Comprehensive Plan was formulated, the college's primary focus of concern was North America—specifically, the United States. Over the intervening years, that focus has broadened dramatically. Thanks to increased migration and mobility, many once homogeneous communities are taking on an increasingly international flavor. The number of different nation

alities, ethnicities, and cultural traditions to be found within Calvin's student body and faculty continues to multiply. Foreign travel and study have become commonplace; students increasingly find careers with international agencies and multinational businesses, both here and abroad. The college continues to expand its engagement with individual and institutional partners across Asia and Africa as well as Europe and South America.

If we are serious about equipping ourselves and our students to become effective agents of renewal and shalom in contemporary society, we owe it to ourselves as well as to our global neighbors, here and elsewhere, to improve our abilities to build community, understanding, and justice across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines—in dorms, classrooms, the workplace, the church, and the public arena. Given the increasingly global environment in which we find ourselves, the scope of the Comprehensive Plan cannot be limited solely to relations between the college's traditional constituencies and those sisters and brothers referred to in the original plan as “North American ethnic minorities.” The plan must also take account of the much wider spectrum of peoples and tribes that make up the body of Christ, in Grand Rapids and around the world. At the same time, however, the fact that the college is located where it is, in the United States, means that all endeavors to promote cross-cultural justice and understanding are inevitably affected in some way by this nation's peculiar racial history and dynamics. Hence, while the scope of the plan may expand, its basic thrust and focus remain unchanged.

## **Anti-Racism and Accountability**

To the extent that racism is ultimately a matter of systemic and institutionalized misuse of power, an effective strategy to promote racial justice requires addressing each of the three dimensions of misdirected power identified previously:

1. structures and practices that disempower and control the persons at whom they are aimed;
2. structures and practices that allocate power and privilege to the dominant racial group;

3. structures and practices that implant notions of superiority in the hearts and minds of white people.

In order to combat institutional racism, this revised Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the need for enhanced accountability. When there are persons of color occupying positions of authority, there will be greater potential for identifying ways in which power is being misused for racist ends. Therefore, many of the goals, strategies, and recommendations in this plan seek, implicitly or explicitly, to achieve structural changes that will hold the college more accountable to individuals and communities of color and also to empower those who have previously been disempowered in ways that will permit Calvin College to operate in an actively anti-racist manner.

This emphasis on institutional racism and accountability should not be taken to mean that the specific anti-racist approach presented here represents the only way to analyze or address the issues in question. As a matter of both academic freedom and Christian liberty, faculty, staff, and students have the right to debate specific assumptions, conclusions, and suggested policies and to offer alternative analyses and alternative means of accomplishing particular goals. Mutual accountability for the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan does not preclude, and in fact encourages, multiple ways of promoting justice and contributing to these goals.

## **Reconciliation and Restoration**

A theme of this revised Comprehensive Plan is the need to pursue the twin purposes of reconciliation and restoration. This theme finds expression, for example, in suggested strategies for training faculty, administration, and staff of the college not simply to confront personal and institutional racism, but, more importantly, to become active agents of racial reconciliation.

Although there are many possible models of reconciliation, the posture of self-emptying discussed earlier undergirds this revision. This posture cannot simply be legislated or engineered. Like many of the virtues enumerated in the rationale for the new core curriculum, it is something that is largely “caught, not

taught.” If members of the faculty, administration, and staff truly become agents of reconciliation, they will also serve as powerful models of reconciliation for students.

Restoration—the establishment of a genuinely multicultural community—is hardly a new emphasis; it is inherent in the bold vision of the original Comprehensive Plan. That plan proposed specific implementation strategies and measurable goals for achieving such a community; it also emphasized the need for specific administrative authority and responsibility in working toward these goals. The current revision continues to advocate strategies for institutional restructuring, but it shifts the emphasis from boldness to earnestness: rather than setting out specific quantitative goals and objectives, it establishes general policy directions, while assigning operational responsibility for establishing specific criteria and monitoring compliance to designated committees and administrators.

The goal of racial reconciliation and restoration—a goal that rests upon an active commitment to identify and root out racism—remains paramount. In the words of the original Comprehensive Plan, we must continue to strive toward “integrating North American ethnic minority persons and their interests into every facet of Calvin’s institutional life.” At the same time, as noted earlier, we must recognize that this North American focus is only part of the larger commitment to justice and multicultural community that is incumbent upon us as citizens of an increasingly interdependent global society and a truly global Kingdom of God. In the pursuit of this commitment, there is no need to pit one set of goals against another. The sensitivities and attitudes engendered by a focused commitment to anti-racism should work to foster genuine multicultural community not only for “North American ethnic minority persons” but also for international students and faculty, and even for white students and faculty who may have felt alienated by Dutch-CRC exclusionism in the past. And the pursuit of restoration in racial and cultural relations should work to reinforce, even as it is reinforced by, the pursuit of restoration in other areas such as gender and class relations.

Guided by these interlocking themes—multicultural citizenship, anti-racism, reconciliation and restoration—we will seek to remain faithful to the institutional calling enunciated in Calvin's Mission Statement: “Through our learning we seek to be agents of renewal in the academy, church, and society. We pledge fidelity to Jesus Christ, offering our hearts and lives to do God's work in God's world.”



## GOAL SETTING: LOOKING BACK

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The authors of the original Comprehensive Plan organized their recommendations around four “critical areas” for action: “faculty and staff recruitment, retention, and community life; student recruitment and student life; the broader Christian community; and curriculum.” They observed that “in some of these areas. . . there are policies already in place,” whereas in other areas “it is generally recognized that the approach has been piecemeal and that success has been elusive” Cp. 6).

Nearly two decades later, this observation remains largely valid. The goals and strategies of the original plan have been unevenly implemented, and many of those strategies that have been implemented have achieved uneven results. Whether specific goals took sufficient account of demographic and social constraints—for example, the severely limited pool of minority faculty candidates in many disciplines—may be open to debate. In recent years the percentage of students of color in the Calvin student body has been virtually identical to national averages for peer institutions, and has been very little different from averages for all four-year colleges, an index of wider structural challenges that the original plan only partially addressed. Nevertheless, very real progress has been made since 1985, and it should not be minimized. The following checklist summarizes the various initiatives undertaken in support of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, with the year proposed or begun in parenthesis and brief comments about the current status of the effort. Taken together, these policies and structures provide a

solid foundation upon which to continue building in the context of a revised plan.

### **A. Multicultural Affairs Committee (Established as a standing committee in 1987, replacing the ad hoc Minority Concerns Task Force.)**

1. Oversee and evaluate ethnic minority faculty recruitment guidelines and assist in the implementation of these guidelines.
2. Oversee and evaluate five-year divisional plans (and annual updates) for recruitment and hiring of ethnic minority personnel and assist in their implementation.
3. Oversee and evaluate five-year plans (and annual updates) of the Admissions Office for ethnic minority student recruitment and assist in their implementation.
4. Promote campus activities (among faculty, administration, staff, and students) that enhance cross-cultural communication and multicultural community living.
5. Oversee and evaluate the efforts of the college to retain ethnic minority students.
6. Oversee and evaluate the curriculum and assist appropriate committees and departments in curricular change to ensure that the curriculum equips students to interact effectively with people from cultures other than their own.
7. Review any college policy that may have negative effects on ethnic minority persons.
8. Recommend policy changes to appropriate standing committees in all the above areas.
9. Hold responsibility for the supervision and overall conduct of the Multicultural Lectureship, using the current mandate of the Multicultural Lectureship Committee as a guideline.

### **B. Faculty Recruitment**

1. Candidates of color may be given full consideration for a position irrespective of existing department staffing

requirements (1979). *Used periodically.*

2. Whenever an individual is recommended for any type of appointment to the college faculty, procedures followed to actively recruit persons of color must also be reported (1979). *Continues to be used; somewhat pro forma in some departments.*
3. Faculty exchanges to promote the presence of faculty of color (1979) and establishment of Visiting Professorships (1984). *Used occasionally since 1988, including 2000-2001 and 2001-2002.*
4. Multicultural Lecturer (1984); converted to the Multicultural Lectureship Fund in the late 1980s-early 1990s to permit hosting numerous lectures/lecturers each year. *Continues as amended.*
5. Graduate Fellowship Program (1984). *Continues.*
6. Director of Academic Multicultural Affairs position established, including job responsibility for recruitment of faculty (1985). *Continues; upgraded to a dean-level position in 2002. New dean assumed responsibilities in January 2004.*

### **C. Administration and Staff**

1. Director of Human Resources mandated to develop and oversee recruitment and placement procedures for persons of color (1985). *Tailored to individual searches.*
2. Training and development workshops; in-service workshops and seminars (1985). *Implemented through 4-5 grant and CART; now included in new staff orientation as well.*
3. Orientation seminars for all new employees (1985). *Recently begun.*
4. Support systems for employees of color (1985). *No formal structures in place.*
5. Apprenticeship program for training promising persons of color (1985). *Not initiated.*

## D. Student Recruitment

1. Minority Student Admissions Counselor position (1984). *Continues as Associate Director of Multicultural Admissions and Community Development (1998).*
2. Entrada Program (1987). *Continues as Entrada Scholars Program.*
3. Multicultural Mosaic Scholarships to attract academically gifted students of color (1989). *Continues.*
4. Pre-College Programs/Office of Pre-College Programs (1993/1997). *Continues.*
5. Sun Valley Bridge Program (2000). *Continues.*
6. Assistant Director for International Admissions (1996). *Continues.*
7. Immigration Coordinator (part-time) (2001). *Continues.*

## E. Student Retention

1. Advisor to students of color (1985). *Originally included in the job description of the Director of Academic Multicultural Affairs; made a separate position in 1988; changed to Coordinator/Director of Multicultural Student Development in 1993/1995; since 2001, Assistant Dean for Multicultural Student Development.*
2. Academic counselor for students of color (1993). *Continues.*
3. Mosaic Community (1996). *Continues.*
4. Mentoring Program (1997). *Continues.*
5. Assistantship program within work-study (1999). *Continues.*
6. International Student Advisor. *Evolved since the 1980s out of ESL position in Student Academic Services.*

## F. Student Development and Curriculum

1. Service-Learning Center programs and Education Department programs in schools in which persons of color are the majority (longstanding). *Continue.*

2. Graduate Fellowship Program for Resident Directors. *Never formalized, but used once.*
3. Off-campus programs in Spain (1983), Hungary (1994), New Mexico (1995), Honduras—two programs (1996 and 2001), China (1999), France (2001), Ghana (2001). *Continue.*
4. Involvement of students in the National Christian Multicultural Student Leaders Conference, with leadership contributions (1986). *Continues; conferences hosted at Calvin in 1995 and 2001.*
5. Third World Studies minor (1993) and Asian Studies minor (2000). *Continue.*
6. Director/Assistant Dean of Multicultural Student Development (1993; see above). *Continues.*
7. Mosaic Community (1996; see above). *Continues.*
8. International students' Rangeela (1996). *Continues.*
9. Calvin@BurtonHeights COPC/HUD Partnership (2001). *Continues.*
10. Cross-Cultural Engagement core requirement (2001). *Under implementation; ongoing.*
11. Prelude Program (2001). *Under implementation; ongoing.*
12. International partnership initiatives, recent and longstanding: Daystar University, Hilltop University, Russian-American Christian University, South African partnerships, Korean partnerships, others. *Ongoing.*
13. Commitment to offer Interim opportunities for cross cultural experiences (longstanding). *Continues.*

## **G. External Communities**

1. President's Multicultural Advisory Committee (1993). *Continues.*
2. Pre-college partnerships with ethnic and multi-ethnic churches in Detroit (1993), Muskegon and Grand Rapids (1996), Sun Valley (1997), and Classis Red Mesa (2001), including STEP conferences at Calvin (1993) and other sites (Red Mesa, 1998; Los Angeles, 2000). *Continue.*
3. Multicultural Year (1997-1998). *Alarabara aims*

*continue.*

4. Scholarship partnerships with the Black Educational Excellence Program, Grand Rapids Urban League, Free the Children Foundation, and Pathways to Possibilities network of churches (1998). *Continue.*

## GOAL SETTING: LOOKING AHEAD

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Whereas the original Comprehensive Plan emphasized quantitative goals and objectives, this revision emphasizes direction-setting and administrative accountability. In addition to identifying goals and recommending strategies in each of the four “critical areas” mentioned above, therefore, we also specify the particular administrator(s), office(s), and/or committee(s) responsible for seeing that the goals are met. This in itself does not represent a substantive departure from the original plan. What is new; perhaps, is the assumption that accountability calls for annual reporting to and monitoring by the Multicultural Affairs Committee. It is anticipated that the Multicultural Affairs Committee will ask offices, units, and departments to provide annual progress reports each spring on goals and initiatives in their areas. The committee will incorporate this material into its own annual report, which will be presented at the first meeting of Faculty Senate each fall and will provide feedback and suggestions to other units where appropriate.

The annual reports of the Multicultural Affairs Committee—documenting trends, achievements, and areas of concern—are intended to provide the foundation for the structure of enhanced accountability we hope to establish. We also expect that the President’s Multicultural Advisory Council will review these reports and provide reactions and advice to the President and other campus leaders. This annual cycle of reporting and feedback should also allow for greater flexibility in implementing goals and strategies. By encouraging systematic evaluation and review, we hope to provide a stimulus to reformulate particular strategies

and, where appropriate, to explore new or alternative strategies, in response to practical experience and changing circumstances. In that spirit, we recommend that every five years the Multicultural Affairs Committee conduct an overall review of the plan itself to determine whether it is serving its intended purposes and/or whether further revision is needed.

## **A. Personnel**

### 1. Faculty and Administrators with Faculty Status

#### a. Goal

Calvin College will develop a more racially and culturally diverse faculty, one that increasingly reflects the multiracial and multicultural character of the Body of Christ, a faculty able to discern and counter racism in all its forms and to embody the reconciling power of the Gospel.

#### b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) The Professional Status Committee will have the authority to recommend that a proposed faculty opening not be approved if the office or department in question cannot demonstrate a satisfactory record of past efforts to recruit persons of color, both North American and international.

*Rationale: If Calvin College is to develop a racially and culturally diverse faculty, the college must actively monitor its efforts, provide appropriate protocols and incentives, and establish consequences for failure to conduct faculty searches in conformity with the declared goals.*

- 2) In five years the Professional Status Committee will review the impact of the policy for granting exceptions to the faculty membership requirements on the recruitment and retention of faculty of color.

GOAL SETTING: LOOKING AHEAD

*Rationale: Faculty membership requirements have often been cited as roadblocks to increased faculty diversity.*

- 3) Professional Status Committee will ensure that departments communicate the relevant policies to prospective faculty. It will encourage and support each department in initiating educational opportunities (e.g., special speakers, departmental colloquia, and training) for its faculty and students to consider matters of race and ethnicity in the context of the department's discipline and the College's mission. It expects that faculty members will participate in these departmental initiatives. Departments must report annually on their activities in their State of the Department reports.

*Rationale: Both departments and individual faculty members will benefit from ongoing reflection and honing of skills as they work to become more effective agents of racial justice and reconciliation.*

- 4) The Academic Division will find ways to provide encouragement, strategies, and financial support for departmental initiatives and faculty development in these areas.

*Rationale: The College should balance procedural expectations and requirements with appropriate guidance, resources, and incentives.*

- 5) The President's Cabinet will ensure that the relevant policies are communicated to prospective senior level administrators with faculty status. It will encourage and support educational opportunities (e.g., special speakers, departmental colloquia, and training) for these administrators to consider matters of race and ethnicity in the context of the division's role and the College's mission. It expects that senior-level administrators with faculty status will participate in these initiatives. The Multicultural Affairs

#### GOAL SETTING: LOOKING AHEAD

Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

*Rationale: Both divisions and individual senior-level administrators will benefit from ongoing reflection and honing of skills as they work to become more effective agents of racial justice and reconciliation.*

#### c. Accountability

The Professional Status Committee and academic deans are primarily responsible for seeing that this goal is met; the Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

### 2. Administrators (without Faculty Status) and Staff

#### a. Goal

Calvin College will develop a more ethnically diverse and welcoming staff and administration, one that increasingly reflects the multiracial and multicultural character of the Body of Christ, able to discern and counter racism in all its forms and to embody the reconciling power of the Gospel.

#### b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) The Human Resources Office, in cooperation with other administrators involved in the approval process, will have the authority to recommend that an opening not be approved or that a search be re” structured if the office in question cannot demonstrate a satisfactory record of efforts in previous searches to recruit persons of color.

*Rationale: For staff as for faculty, the goal of a racially and culturally diverse workforce requires active monitoring of efforts as well as clear consequences in the event that offices fail to observe established protocols.*

- 2) A Higher Education Fellowship Program, analogous to the current Minority Graduate Fellowship, will be developed for entry-level professional and administrative positions.

*Rationale: The College should provide appropriate career incentives and pathways for promising staff members. The proposed strategy promises to be more effective than the apprenticeship program envisioned in the original plan but never initiated.*

- 3) The Director of Human Resources will ensure that relevant policies are communicated, that mentoring opportunities are made available, and that new and continuing staff members participate in professional development regarding matters of race and ethnicity [and document this participation periodically in performance reviews.]

*Rationale: Staff members, like faculty members, will benefit from ongoing reflection and honing of skills as they work to become more effective agents of racial justice and reconciliation.*

- 4) The President's Cabinet will ensure that the relevant policies are communicated to prospective senior-level directors without faculty status. It will encourage and support educational opportunities (e.g., special speakers, departmental colloquia, and training) for these directors to consider matters of race and ethnicity in the context of their department's role and the Colleges mission. It expects that senior-level directors without faculty status will participate in these initiatives. The Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

*Rationale: Both departments and individual senior - level directors will benefit from ongoing reflection and honing of skills as they work to become more*

*effective agents of racial justice and reconciliation.*

c. **Accountability**

The Human Resources Office is primarily responsible for monitoring and advising the President's Cabinet and for reporting to the Multicultural Affairs Committee; the Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

**B. Students**

1. **New Student Recruitment and Admissions**

a. **Goal**

Calvin College will develop a more racially and culturally diverse student body, one that increasingly reflects the multiracial and multicultural character of the Body of Christ.

b. **Recommended Strategies**

- 1) The Admissions Office will continue working to increase the number of students of color admitted to Calvin, both North American and international, and other offices and personnel will work to improve retention and graduation rates for students of color.

*Rationale: Increasing the number of students of color is crucial if Calvin is to become a more racially diverse and culturally sensitive academic community.*

- 2) The college will support and, where necessary, develop institutional programs and relationships to attract and retain students of color.

*Rationale: Achieving the long-term goal of greater ethnic and cultural diversity will require specially targeted recruitment and retention initiatives in the short term.*

- 3) Those charged with achieving these goals will participate in professional development regarding matters of race and ethnicity.

*Rationale: It is particularly important that staff members with a role in introducing prospective students to Calvin become sensitive to the racial and cultural dynamics that affect these students.*

- c. Accountability

The Vice President for Enrollment and External Relations is primarily responsible for seeing that operational goals are met. The Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

## 2. Student Life

- a. Goal

Calvin College will develop a more racially and culturally sensitive student body, equipped to resist racism, embody reconciliation, and live together in Christian community.

- b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) Anti-racism and diversity training will be woven into the curriculum and co-curriculum.

*Rationale: In an academic community, student learning is a crucial element in achieving institutional goals.*

- 2) The college will support and, where necessary, enhance student services designed to promote a more ethnically and culturally diverse campus.

*Rationale: The goals of racial justice and reconciliation can be achieved most effectively by setting special targets and goals within the context of existing programs.*

- 3) Offices that provide services to students should include persons of color on their staffs whenever possible.

*Rationale: Including persons of color in the staffing of offices that serve students will allow for a greater variety of cultural approaches and make these offices more responsive to and understanding of students of color and their needs.*

- c. Accountability

The Vice President for Student Life is primarily responsible for seeing that operational goals are met. The Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

## **C. Curriculum and Instruction**

1. Prelude Program and the Core Curriculum

- a. Goal

Calvin College's core curriculum will introduce students to global perspectives, cultivate the virtue of discernment, and impart a commitment to counter racism in all its forms and to embody the reconciling power of the Gospel.

- b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) Faculty members should include global perspectives and themes of racial justice in their course materials wherever these are appropriate to the discipline and meet the requirements of the core category.

*Rationale: It is important to provide students with multiple exposures to issues of global diversity and racial justice throughout the curriculum.*

- 2) The Cross-Cultural Engagement and Global-Historical Studies requirements of the core curriculum will be fully implemented.

*Rationale: These core categories bear directly on the goals of global understanding and racial justice.*

- 3) The Quest, Prelude, and DCM programs will include an emphasis on racial justice, anti-racism, and reconciliation from a variety of perspectives.

*Rationale: These programs can help prepare students to engage more intensively with issues of racial justice and reconciliation elsewhere in the curriculum.*

c. Accountability

The Educational Policy Committee is primarily responsible for achieving this goal. The Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

2. Major Concentrations and Professional Programs

a. Goal

Major programs of study at Calvin College will introduce students to global perspectives, cultivate the virtue of discernment, and impart a commitment to counter racism in all its forms and to embody the reconciling power of the Gospel.

b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) Each academic department will be mandated to identify opportunities for cross-cultural engagement that are appropriate to the discipline.

*Rationale: Students should have opportunities to encounter international and cross-cultural perspectives both in the core curriculum and within majors and programs. By mandating each department to identify options for cross-cultural engagement experiences,*

GOAL SETTING: LOOKING AHEAD

*ownership of this requirement can be extended from the core curriculum to individual programs and majors.*

- 2) International study opportunities and area studies programs (e.g., Asian Studies, African Studies, and Latin American Studies) will be enhanced.

*Rationale: Educating for cultural diversity and international understanding should involve opportunities for intellectual as well as experiential engagement.*

- 3) Each department will take these goals into account in developing its assessment program.

*Rationale: Other all-college objectives, such as those of the Writing Program, have specific implications for each department's assessment program. So, too, should the all-college commitment to racial justice and reconciliation.*

c. Accountability

The Educational Policy Committee is primarily responsible for achieving this goal. The Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

3. Teaching and Faculty Development

a. Goal

Instruction at Calvin College will reflect significant sensitivity to racial and cultural diversity and will model the ability to discern and counter racism in all its forms and to embody the reconciling power of the Gospel.

b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) The college will regularly offer faculty development workshops that promote this goal.

#### GOAL SETTING: LOOKING AHEAD

*Rationale: Many of the instructional decisions that faculty members make from selecting reading assignments to choosing variables for analysis, have the potential to further or hinder efforts to promote diversity and reconciliation. Faculty workshops can help encourage the former and minimize the latter.*

- 2) Departments and individual faculty members will identify ways to promote racial justice and reconciliation in curriculum and teaching.

*Rationale: Pedagogically as well as personally, faculty members will benefit from ongoing reflection and honing of skills regarding race and ethnicity in the context of their particular disciplines.*

- c. Accountability

The Faculty Development Committee and Professional Status Committee are responsible for achieving this goal. The Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting on these efforts annually.

#### 4. The Co-Curriculum and Other Academic Programs

- a. Goal

College programming will celebrate Calvin's international commitments and will reflect, at a minimum, the diversity present in the student body. Such programming includes, but is not limited to, the January Series, the Honors Program, athletic programs, Student Academic Services, Commencement, Opening Convocation and Honors Convocation, off-campus programs, Student Activities Office programs, and speaker and arts series.

b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) Those in charge of co-curricular and other academic programs will be required to monitor and analyze efforts to achieve this goal.

*Rationale: The persons directly responsible for particular programs are in the best position to take the lead in analyzing their own programs.*

- 2) Wherever possible and appropriate, planning committees and offices will include representatives who reflect the diversity of the campus community.

*Rationale: It is important to ensure that persons of color play appropriate roles in planning and implementing programs that affect their campus experience.*

- 3) The Multicultural Affairs Committee will offer suggestions and encouragement and will review co-curricular and other academic programs to identify opportunities for improvement.

*Rationale: While co-curricular programs often have a direct impact on student learning, they do not receive the same degree of external review as do the core curriculum and departmental programs. It is appropriate to provide for some degree of outside evaluation from the perspective of diversity and reconciliation. The role of the Multicultural Affairs Committee in this regard should be to provide advice and encouragement as well as to monitor conformity with expectations.*

c. Accountability

The Multicultural Affairs Committee is responsible for working with appropriate offices, departments, and committees to achieve this goal.

## D. Partners and Constituencies

### 1. Immediate Constituency: Board, Alumni, and the Christian Reformed Church

#### a. Goal

All of the constituencies that support the college will perceive, understand, and embrace Calvin's commitment to racial justice and reconciliation.

#### b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) The Board of Trustees will affirm the college's commitment to racial justice and reconciliation and regularly review its own efforts to support that commitment.

*Rationale: Since the Board of Trustees plays a significant role in college direction-setting, it is important for trustees to understand and support the College's efforts to promote racial justice and reconciliation.*

- 2) The Calvin Alumni Association will undertake an intentional educational initiative for national board members and local chapters to acquaint them with and enlist them in the college's efforts to promote racial justice and reconciliation.

*Rationale: Given the important role that alumni play in the support and advancement of the College, it is appropriate for the Calvin Alumni Association to become involved in the effort to promote racial justice and reconciliation.*

- 3) The College will continue its partnership with the Christian Reformed Church in anti-racism efforts.

*Rationale: This commitment provides a concrete expression of the reciprocal relationship between the*

*College and the Christian Reformed Church  
reaffirmed in the Expanded Statement of Mission.*

c. Accountability

The President will provide information on Board of Trustees' initiatives and relations with the Christian Reformed Church. The Vice President for Enrollment and External Relations is primarily responsible for operational goals involving alumni. The Multicultural Affairs Committee will report annually on these areas.

2. Local Neighbors and Global Networks

a. Goal

Calvin College will become an effective agent of racial justice and harmony in its external partnerships.

b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) The Enrollment and External Relations Division will continue to cultivate current partnerships and work to develop new ones.

*Rationale: Community partnerships are an important way for the College to bear witness to the reconciling power of the Gospel among its neighbors, both here and abroad.*

- 2) The College will continue to cultivate current educational outreach and bridge programs to communities of color and will work to develop new ones.

*Rationale: Such programs not only promote partnership with the communities in question but represent a potentially significant source of students of color for the College.*

- 3) Academic departments, the Service-Learning Center, and the Off-Campus Programs Office will work to cultivate and develop partnerships with communities in this country and abroad.

*Rationale: Cultivating these partnerships should be a shared responsibility, not left to the initiative of a single office or person.*

c. Accountability

The Vice President for Enrollment and External Relations is primarily responsible for seeing that partnership goals are met. The Committee on Off-Campus Programs is responsible for overseeing off-campus initiatives; the Provost's Office is responsible for overseeing other initiatives related to this goal. The Multicultural Affairs Committee will report annually on these areas.

3. Communication with Internal and External Constituencies

a. Goal

The Public Relations and Media Relations offices of the College will communicate Calvin's efforts to become an effective agent of racial justice and harmony to internal and external constituencies through every appropriate medium.

b. Recommended Strategies

- 1) The Public Relations and Media Relations offices will take the initiative to provide news releases and other forms of publicity about persons and events related to the college's efforts to combat racism and promote reconciliation.

*Rationale: Communicating the colleges efforts to a wider audience can itself be a means of promoting racial justice and reconciliation.*

- 2) These offices will develop and use Web resources to further the exchange of information about these activities, both internally and externally.

GOAL SETTING: LOOKING AHEAD

*Rationale: The Web provides a convenient means of accessing and tracking relevant exchanges of information for both internal and external purposes.*

c. Accountability

The Vice President for Enrollment and External Relations is primarily responsible for seeing that operational goals are met. The Multicultural Affairs Committee will report annually on progress in this area.

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