

Resources for the Faith Element of the Search Process

Whitworth's Identity: Whitworth has identified three pillars of its theological identity – Evangelical, Ecumenical and Reformed – but we have our nuanced definitions of what each of those mean for Whitworth.

- [Video](#) for prospective staff and faculty outlining the three pillars.
- Videos from the Colloquy on Whitworth's Theological Identity from 2013 – [Reformed](#), [Evangelical](#), [Ecumenical](#).

Indicators of a Candidate's Readiness to Support and Flourish in Whitworth's Faith Environment (Evangelical, Ecumenical and Reformed Pillars in Action):

- Some way of affirming a commitment to the **Lordship of Jesus Christ** in their lives (recognizing that different streams of the Christian tradition use different language to describe that Lordship).
- Indicators of an **active** and ongoing element of their Christian faith (not simply a family background, experience at camp as a young person, etc.). (Note: This does not preclude seasons of wrestling with faith or doubt within that active pursuit of the Christian faith.)
- A demonstrable **willingness to integrate their faith into their work** (as staff or faculty). Although some candidates (e.g., from non-faith-based institutions) may not have had the opportunity to do so, they must be willing.
- A willingness to **work alongside Christians with whom they might not agree** on a range of biblical questions beyond the central tenets of the Christian faith as affirmed in the ecumenical creeds (see below).

Potential Faith-Centered Questions for Search Committees:

- 1) Tell us more about your journey of faith and what your faith means to you.
- 2) What are some ways that you practice your faith on a daily or weekly basis?
- 3) If a student asked you what it means to be a Christian, what are some things you would make sure to share?
- 4) Who is Jesus Christ to you?
- 5) One of the enriching and challenging elements of working at Whitworth is the ecumenical nature of our staff and faculty. Although we all affirm the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives, we characterize the diverse Body of Christ in our variety of denominational affiliations and expressions of Christian faith in our daily lives. Can you tell us about a time that you interacted with a person who practiced their Christian faith different from you? What was challenging, and what did you learn?
- 6) As you consider the integration of your faith into your teaching or work, what excites you most? What seems most challenging or intimidating?
- 7) Having watched the video on the Whitworth Faith Statement webpage about Whitworth's Christian mission, what particularly resonates with you? Do you have any questions?

Other Resources:

- **Existing faculty handbook language regarding faith (see also [Employee Handbook for Faculty and Staff, pages 7-8](#)):**
 - 5.1.2.1 - An essential part of all enduring wisdom comes from God-given disclosures and that collegiate education must be built upon such foundations.
 - 5.1.2.2 - Because it holds knowledge and wisdom to be aspects of an indivisible whole, Whitworth believes that it must provide faculty members who are dedicated to a reverent search for truth, who accept by faith the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, who by His help attempt to live and teach in His spirit, and who accept excellence in scholarship, instruction and student guidance as their divine calling.
 - 5.1.2.3 - Whitworth University confesses the historic faith of the Church and stands unequivocally for its fundamental principles. We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We believe in the sovereignty of God, in the deity of Jesus Christ, our only Savior and Lord, in His work of redemption on the Cross, and in the Holy Spirit who dwells in every believer and who guides the church in its mission to the world.
- **What do we mean by “historic faith of the Church”?**
 - We mean the central tenets of the Christian faith, drawn from the Christian Bible and affirmed in the ecumenical creeds that all Christian churches affirm, namely, the [Apostle’s Creed](#) and the [Nicene Creed](#).
- **Jehovah’s Witnesses, Church of Latter-day Saints and Unitarian candidates?**
 - Even though many people with these faiths may have beautiful hearts, sincere faith, and even use language that seems very similar to the rest of the Christian tradition (e.g., “worship,” “relationship with God,” etc.), they cannot affirm the creedal beliefs of the universal Christian Church. For example, they would not ascribe to the unique divinity of the Son or the Triune nature of God.
- **Spiritual but not religious?**
 - Recent trends are seeing an increase in those who identify as “spiritual but not religious.” That vague descriptor would be worthy of further exploration, particularly inquiring into the candidate’s commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the active nature of that faith commitment, as noted above.
- **More questions?**
 - Whitworth’s campus pastors are happy to be a resource. Feel free to contact the dean of spiritual life with any questions or for a second opinion on a faith statement. It is beneficial to ask in advance rather than discover a concern when a finalist is on campus!

Rationale: *In response to requests to support search committees at Whitworth, this living document was created that reflects Whitworth’s current (but sometimes unstated) practices for searches. Any questions or suggestions for improving this resource can be directed to Whitworth’s dean of spiritual life.*