



Mission

We prepare students in our Christian academic community to excel as thoughtful, resourceful, and responsible citizens with a passion for serving God, the Church, and the world.

We accomplish this through excellent teaching, high expectations, worthwhile example, and fidelity to our Presbyterian heritage. Our mission is the same for all campuses, sites, and online, and for all programs, curricular and extracurricular, graduate and undergraduate.

Vision

We aim to be the preeminent small to medium-sized Christian university in the Upper South, with a reputation earned there and beyond as a school serious about its Christian commitment, focused on student success, dedicated to academic excellence, and successful in producing graduates who excel wherever they live, work, and serve.

Identity

King is a Christian university in the Presbyterian and Reformed traditions with the core belief that because God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of all life, our knowledge of self, the world, and God are interrelated. As the reformer John Calvin affirms in the opening words of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, “Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” A Christian education, thus, is one that integrates faith, learning, and life.

The purpose of the vigorous and broad education at King is to educate students so that they may excel as thoughtful, resourceful, and responsible citizens with a passion for serving God, the Church, and the world. By excelling in our chosen fields of study and later in vocations and careers, we respond to the divine calling of using God-given talents and abilities to their full potential.

By seeking to transform our culture in Christ, we respond to the cultural mandate of the Creator who calls us to be stewards of God’s creation, agents of peace and justice, lovers of truth and justice, creators of beauty, and servants of reconciliation. Transformation of culture in Christ requires the community of learners—students, faculty, and staff—to think critically about western and non-western cultures, to examine their own cultural captivities, to interact with diverse peoples, to be challenged by suffering and injustice, to understand belief systems hostile or indifferent to a Christian worldview, and to participate in civil society.

King positions itself as a missional university that prepares students to engage the world and nurtures students in vital Christian faith, rather than as a university with an inward focus that attempts to protect and separate students from the larger culture and world.

Philosophy of Education

A King education is one that values excellent teaching, high expectations, worthwhile example, and fidelity to our Presbyterian heritage in keeping with the mission and identity of

the institution. This education seeks to provide opportunities for students to become competent in their chosen fields of study, to grow toward maturity in their understanding of Christian faith, and to make personal commitments for responsible service and stewardship in the world. It maintains high academic standards while supporting the development of skills essential for success in a rigorous academic program.

The King General Education, or Core Curriculum, is the academic foundation for the King experience. It gives all students the skills, ideas, and knowledge they need to pursue their major and minor programs with confidence and good judgment. Through general education, King seeks to develop a student's intellectual and practical skills, create an understanding of human culture and the natural and physical world, foster an appreciation for human creative products, and create an awareness of thoughtful, resourceful, and responsible citizenship.

Teaching and learning expectations should recognize the variability of student talent, background, and preparation. Consequently, the King education is committed to providing personal attention, meaning that all educators—faculty and staff—seek to understand the needs of students and to be accessible and available to them while striving to provide an environment that encourages social, spiritual, and academic maturity. Furthermore, the institution is concerned for the balanced growth of the individual, recognizing that intellectual learning does not take place in isolation from other aspects of personal development and affirming the role of all members of the King community in the teaching and learning process.

King holds that knowledge of self, the world, and God are connected and, therefore, that learning and intellectual inquiry are acts of worship. King seeks to maintain an atmosphere in which learners have the privilege and responsibility of exploring the full range of questions raised in and beyond the classroom. The institution seeks to foster an ethos that stresses the importance of exploration, personal initiative, character and integrity, collegiality, humane instincts, aesthetic sensitivities, and leadership. The community of learners at the institution seeks to embrace the values of Christian community through lives of scholarship, service, and spiritual formation.

Spiritual Formation

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:5)

“Let this, then, be the first step, to abandon ourselves, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God.” –John Calvin

The philosophy of education at King states that as a community of learners we seek “to embrace the values of Christian community through lives of scholarship, service, and spiritual formation.” As a result, a King education seeks to integrate faith, learning, and life in keeping with the mission and vision of the institution.

In general, spiritual formation is the process of the human spirit taking on a definite form or character. Regardless of a secular or religious orientation, all persons ultimately are engaged in a process of spiritual formation that shapes character in the depths of their beings. Such a process can be negative or positive, destructive or beneficial. In the context of a university, however, the process of spiritual formation should be one that helps shape the human spirit toward the truly good, wise, just, and beneficent.

For a university whose core values are Christian, the process of spiritual formation should shape the character of each student toward the truly good, wise, just, and beneficent, and be

reflective of the person and work of Jesus Christ. This will be done best as the institution draws on its vast resources of curricula, extra-curricular programs, service and mission projects, administrative policies, and community life in such a way that they promote the process of character formation in the direction of faithful, prudential, paradigms, and domains. Because true education is about the whole person—body, mind, and spirit—the institution facilitates not only study and scholarship, but also reflection and prayer, service and worship, virtue and ethics, honor and integrity, justice and peace, vocation and calling, and an integrated world and life view.

The goal of spiritual formation at King is to develop each student’s character so that the individual may excel as a thoughtful, resourceful, and responsible citizen with a passion for serving God, the Church, and the world. The institution stresses praxis as well as intellectual achievement, for it is understood that the “mind of Christ” is about both the love of God and the love of neighbor. If we do not love our neighbor, whom we can see, in just and beneficent ways, we cannot honestly say that we love God, whom we cannot see.

Although the institution has core values that are distinctly Christian, we have historically been open to all students of quality regardless of their religious persuasions. We serve students from the various segments of the Christian family, both Protestant and Catholic, but also students from other religions or from secular perspectives. Our mission and vision is to serve all students and assist them in their spiritual formation, encouraging their spiritual growth and character development toward the truly good, wise, just, and beneficent.

Spiritual formation will be reviewed by the student’s participation in and evaluation of the following activities:

- Regular academic offerings;
- Service and mission projects;
- Traditional spiritual disciplines such as worship, service, prayer, and study; and
- Cross-cultural and study abroad programs.

Commitments

We affirm the Reformed understanding of a world created good by God, distorted by sin, redeemed in Jesus Christ, and awaiting the fullness of God’s reign. We profess the authority of Holy Scripture as the Word of God, and uphold the historic witness of the ecumenical creeds of the Christian Church. We aim to maintain a Christian academic community characterized by mercy, justice, and integrity that includes corporate worship, Bible study, Christian fellowship, mission outreach, prayer, and pastoral care. We commit to hiring faculty, administrators, and staff of superior competence and mature Christian faith. We require that all trustees be women and men who have excelled in their vocations and who give evidence of their Christian faith upon selection to the board.

Context

King was founded in 1867 by Presbyterians who resolved to create a college of “such high order as will greatly elevate the standard of classical and scientific instruction in East Tennessee.” King is an independently governed institution with covenant affiliations to the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Consistent with its historic motto *Ecclesiae et Litteris*, for the church and for learning, the Christian character of the institution is expressed in a program intentionally built on a foundation of the classic Presbyterian tradition, the authority of Scripture, and personal commitment to Jesus and His service.

The institution is committed to a regional, national, and international constituency. King strives to enrich the collegiate experience and broaden its service by having an ethnically and geographically diverse student body. Applicants are accepted into the institution upon evidence of academic qualifications and are admitted without regard for ethnic or religious background.