

KWU DIVERSITY POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

The object of a democratic education is not merely to make an individual an intelligent participant in the life of his immediate group, but to bring the various groups into such constant interaction that no individual, no economic group, could presume to live independently of others.

- John Dewey (1916; *Democracy and Education*)

The mission statement of Kansas Wesleyan University (KWU) *is to promote and integrate academic excellence, spiritual development, personal well-being, and social responsibility. Kansas Wesleyan provides an educational program characterized by excellence, within a caring community, rooted in the liberal arts tradition. The call of the University is to develop both intellect and character, to stimulate creativity and discover, to nurture the whole person – body, mind, and spirit. Diversity is embraced in curriculum, faculty, and students* (excerpt; <http://www.kwu.edu/about-kwu/mission>).

KWU's *Statement of Connection* (<http://www.kwu.edu/about-kwu/statement-of-connection>) refers to the many institutional transformations throughout the institution's history. The one constant has been the University's dedication to education as part of the redemptive work of the Church and to embrace the vision of the National Association of Schools and Colleges of the United Methodist Church through Five Faith Commitments. One such commitment includes the institution's resolve to *prepare students, regardless of social standing, ethnic identity, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation, for lives of intellectual vigor, moral integrity, spiritual fulfillment, and for personal and societal benefit.*

Kansas Wesleyan University endeavors to make academic excellence inclusive by sustaining a community of free inquiry in which people of diverse race, ethnicity, veteran status, marital status, socio-economic level, national origin, religious or ethical value, physical ability or attribute, sexual orientation, age, social class, political ideology, gender, gender identity and expression participate in, contribute to, and benefit equally, from the academic community. A diverse campus environment, in which differences are respected and appreciated, promotes more effective teaching, produces greater learning outcomes, and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and pluralistic society (Kuh, G.; 2005; *Student Success in College*).

Consequently, the University acknowledges the educational benefits of diversity in education and is committed to maintaining a diverse student body at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as perpetuating initiatives that enhance the diversity of the campus climate, curriculum, student body, faculty, staff, and administration.

It is through valuing diversity that the University acknowledges the uniqueness of all individuals, their commonalities as well as differences, all of which have shaped their lives in meaningful ways. Diversity is demonstrated by appreciating all members of the university community. Therefore, the institution embraces uniqueness, similarities, and differences. Diversity initiatives strengthen the university community and demonstrates its commitment to *nurture the whole person – body, mind, and spirit.*

As a result of these positions, KWU aims to engage members of its community as active citizens in a multicultural world. The University: seeks to build an academic community whose members have diverse cultures, backgrounds and life experiences; believes that diverse backgrounds and ideas are crucial to academic excellence; honors freedom of expression and civility of discourse as fundamental educational cornerstones; strives to safeguard the well-being of all its members; and endeavors to foster a just, equitable, and inclusive culture so that “*no individual, no economic group, could presume to live independently of others*” (Dewey, J.; 1916; *Democracy and Education*).

