

# **STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION CHURCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

**Board Approved: 12 June 2019**

Religious education holds a unique and cherished place in the mission of each institution of higher education in the Church Educational System (CES). It stands at the very center of each institution's purpose.

In CES institutions every class in every subject should be taught with the Spirit of God by faculty who bathe their subjects in the light of the gospel and who are role models of faithful discipleship. What gives religious education its distinctive character is its focus on teaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ directly and devotedly.

Religious education has a critical role to play in strengthening the faith and deepening the conversion of CES students. Strengthening religious education will help our students know and understand the gospel more deeply in their minds, feel and cherish it more deeply in their hearts, and do better and be better in living its eternal principles.

## **The Purpose of Religious Education**

The purpose of religious education is to teach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ from the scriptures and modern prophets in a way that helps each student

- Develop faith in and a testimony of
  - Heavenly Father and His “great plan,”
  - The Savior, Jesus Christ, and His infinite atoning sacrifice, and
  - The restored gospel of Jesus Christ, including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the Prophet, Joseph Smith; and the other modern prophets, seers, and revelators.
- Become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ, who make and keep covenants, who love God and others, and who are able, willing, and committed to gather Israel on both sides of the veil.
- Strengthen their ability to find answers, resolve doubts, respond with faith, and give reason for the hope within them in whatever challenges they may face.

These purposes and outcomes will continue to be pursued not only by the full-time religion faculty but also by those faculty members from other disciplines who will continue to be selected, welcomed, and encouraged to teach religious education courses. This practice underscores that strengthening faith in the Savior and testimony of his restored gospel is the central function and privilege of the entire faculty of the institution, whatever one's home department or college.

## **Principles and Guidelines**

The statement of purpose defines the overarching objective that should govern all teaching and scholarship in religious education. The following principles and guidelines provide a framework for assessing the work of the faculty and for making decisions about faculty hiring and promotion. The specific application of these principles and guidelines will be determined by each university.

### *The Work of the Faculty*

1. Excellent teaching of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that helps each student achieve the objectives envisioned in the statement of purpose is the primary professional responsibility of each member of the faculty. Teaching includes classroom learning experiences as well as advising and mentoring students outside the class. Teaching should be the main component of a faculty member's workload.
2. Scholarship is important but secondary in two ways: (1) the allocation of faculty time, and (2) scholarship's role in supporting student learning and development. Therefore, scholarship in religious education should be defined broadly and may include (a) gospel scholarship directed primarily to Latter-day Saints, (b) academic research and publishing directed primarily to an academic audience, and (c) pedagogical scholarship aimed at improving teaching and learning. While directed at different audiences, each type of scholarship must be of high quality and must advance the purposes of religious education. Gospel scholarship directed primarily to Latter-day Saints should be a part of any assigned scholarship responsibility. The exact weight to be given each type of scholarship, as determined by each university, can vary by individual and by university.

### *Faculty Hiring in Religious Education*

Religious education should seek to hire individuals who meet the following standards:

1. As for all faculty at the university, the candidate for appointment to the religious education faculty must have the personal character, faith, testimony, and qualities of life that are a powerful role model for our students. Candidates must also be sound doctrinally.
2. The candidate demonstrates unusual potential for excellent teaching of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. This will often, but not always, be demonstrated by teaching experience in religious education in CES.
3. The candidate demonstrates potential for scholarly work as determined by the university and in ways that are consistent with item 2 in the section on *The Work of the Faculty*.

### *Faculty Promotion in Religious Education*

Promotion of faculty to continuing faculty status in religious education will be based on the following standards:

1. The candidate has become a powerful role model for our students in matters of character, faith, testimony, and qualities of life.
2. The candidate is an excellent teacher of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ whose teaching centers on the scriptures and modern prophets in a way that helps each student develop faith and testimony.
3. The candidate produces scholarly work consistent with item 2 in the section on *The Work of the Faculty*.

### **Annual Review**

Presidents will be responsible for an annual review of religious education at each institution. Presidents will review the results with the CES Commissioner and the Board in a pattern similar to annual budget reviews.