

## Chapter 3

### "Olivet Nazarene University . . . for the purpose of personal development . . ."

The purpose of this section is to . . .

- (1) clarify the university's strategies for the development of personal and social poise, firm convictions, and consideration for the rights and feelings of others.
- (2) foster an understanding of the philosophies behind policies affecting residential life, student activities, and leadership development.

Olivet is an academic institution. As such, students will find similarities between their tenure at the University and their prior years of education. The need still exists to participate in classroom discussions, to do homework, and to study. What happens in the classroom is important. We celebrate it. Olivet is the kind of place, however, where we are interested in more than just textbook knowledge. We espouse an education with a Christian purpose and provide opportunities for students' personal development.

During their years of study, students are confronted with opportunities to solidify their spiritual integrity, disciplined character, and moral standards. Olivet's president, Dr. John Bowling, has been quoted as saying, "Students can excel in the classroom yet fail in life if they don't learn to make wise choices." One of the marks of every successful person, regardless of his or her endeavors, field of study, or profession, is the ability to choose well: to weigh alternatives and to delay immediate gratification for a longer term benefit. Many voices clamor around us for our attention. Although the world around us does not look to God for direction, we deserve God's best, and He offers it to us. But, we must choose.

A postcard received recently attributed a quotation to Southern novelist Ellen Glasgow, who wisely expressed the view that change is not necessarily growth, as all movement is not necessarily forward. Often advertisements for *cruises to nowhere* can be found in oceanfront towns. Rather than setting sail for an exotic location, passengers leave the pier and travel in circles for a couple of days while dining on sumptuous meals, lounging around the pool, enjoying the shows and participating in onboard activities.

In his book, *The Success Journey*, John Maxwell warns of the dangers of a life that reflects a cruise to nowhere. "They're on a trip with no set destination. They're in a holding pattern, and they occupy their time pursuing pleasures or engaging in activities that don't have any lasting benefit for themselves or others. Meanwhile, they travel in circles. In the end, they finish no better than they started (Maxwell, 1997, p. 25 ). Words engraved in the east lobby wall of Hills Hall (Olivet's upperclassmen dorm) challenge passersby that 'tis not the gale, but the set of the

sail that determines our destination. We need to identify and choose to sail toward our destination.

Each day is filled with choices. Some choices affect our immediate future: to get up now or to sleep in a little longer. Other choices impact our longer-term future: what college to attend or in what field of study to major. Choices are inevitable and help to set the course that our lives will travel. As opportunity comes, God says choose, and we must choose. Motivational speaker and time management authority Stephen Covey magnifies our human endowment to choose as he writes, "Between stimulus and response is our greatest power, the freedom to choose" (Covey, 1989, p. 70 ). He continues, "Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions . . . Look at the word responsibility — 'response-ability' — the ability to choose your response. Highly proactive people recognize that responsibility" (Covey, 1989, p. 70 ).

Virtually every biblical metaphor of Christian development alludes to a long-term process: a process of preparing the soil for good seed to grow, planting the seed, helping it to take root, and nurturing its growth. During your years at Olivet, you will have many opportunities to develop not only academically, but also personally and socially. Whether by participating in campus activities, spontaneously creating memories with classmates, attending co-curricular training, or seeking counsel from caring professionals, you will make choices that, along with your underlying values, will forever become a part of your life. At Olivet, principle will be integrated into character (University Life Handbook, 1997, 30-32).

As a Christian community, Olivetians attempt to develop and interpret all we do from a Christian vantage point. We operate from the conviction that God has created men and women to operate in an orderly and purposeful fashion in concert with His intent for the world. Thus, a Christian community must develop regulations as guides to obtain its mission. Regulations help the University community to put into practice its basic moral and social principles.

We have adopted campus regulations that emerge from our theological and moral perspectives as well as sociocultural influences. We regard the Bible as the foundation of faith and practice and believe that it must serve as our viewfinder in the development of our regulations. It is hoped that members of the University will enjoy unparalleled liberty through their relationship with Jesus Christ and that this liberty will serve as the basis for academic and social freedom. The spirit of community trust serves as one of the principle features that makes ONU a unique educational institution. We prize integrity and personal responsibility, and when students join ONU they become a part of a community seeking the Truth. The community has been designed to help students to obtain high levels of maturity through their interaction with others. We think the teaching and learning processes flourish best in a Christian environment where trust and respect form the bedrock of relationships within the community. Students attending Olivet Nazarene University must realize that our commitment to the development of a Christian community is firm, and we welcome anyone who can contribute to our principles.

The Bible regards some things as right and some things as wrong (Exodus 21:17; Psalm 19; Matthew 5:17-20; Romans 7:7-8:8; I Timothy 3:16,17). Extramarital sex, drunkenness, social injustice, and violence are as wrong today as in biblical times. It is also wrong to disobey the government except in the most unusual circumstances where civil obedience would conflict with

obedience to God. Civil laws are as binding on the Christian today as they were in biblical times (Romans 12:1-7, I Peter 2:11-17).

Some things are not intrinsically wrong, but may be inexpedient or imprudent because of their damaging consequences. Christian liberty must act wisely in these matters by going the second mile in love (Acts 15: 1-31, Romans 14, I Corinthians 8-10). Some of our rules reflect judgments based on consideration of the consequences to the individual or the community rather than on the intrinsic right or wrong of a practice. The Christian community of Olivet Nazarene University believes that there is a biblical basis for moral law, civil law, and prudence. All three of these categories are based on the value of persons created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-31, Psalm 8). We believe that the moral law of God is an expression of love and justice, that the civil law is an attempt to structure a just and benevolent society, and prudence is an attempt to act justly out of love. In practice, love is a spiritual law and goes beyond the requirements of the law because of the value it places on persons (Matthew 27:37-39, Romans 13:8-10, John 3). Regulations are not intended as legalistic impositions for the purpose of control or manipulation. Rather they are meant to put love in action and to help us glorify God. It is only through God's grace and the indwelling Holy Spirit that men and women can be motivated to spiritual life (1 Corinthians 6:15-20, Romans 8:2-5). It is our intent to avoid the appearance of legalism that makes conformity an end in itself. On the other hand, we must avoid a tendency to regard love as needing no structure and as itself the replacement of all other moral law.

ONU regulations must not be evaluated on the misconception that love and liberty need no regulations, but on the presupposition that we must individually and as a Christian community order our lives with love and justice. We do not pretend that our regulations are perfect, nor do we judge other Christians whose judgments are different from our own. It is our intent that regulations assist the community to develop a deeper relationship with God. A Christian community endeavors to apply scripture to contemporary life. We must keep in mind that prudence involves concern for our influence on the University and surrounding community. Some of our regulations reflect a concern to avoid needless offense to others who are more sensitive about some things than we may be ourselves (I Corinthians 8-10). Disagreement about such regulations is to be expected and reflects the kind of tension between conformity and change that characterizes any creative society. We do not claim "immaculate perception", nor do we expect unanimity regarding the appropriateness of all of our regulations. Instead, we expect understanding of why we have certain regulations. Finally, we hope the Christian community that created our regulations and is created by our regulations facilitates a maturing Christian who hungers for God's truth.

In summary, our regulations fall within these broad categories:

1. Some regulations reflect God's moral law. For example, cheating is a form of stealing, and extramarital sex is adultery. The scripture explicitly forbids immoral acts such as murder, extramarital sex, and stealing.
2. Some regulations reflect the civil law. For example, possession and use of illegal drugs are civil offenses.

3. Some regulations involve judgments and prudence about the effects of certain practices. For example, we have regulations governing residence halls and general campus behavior. We have regulations regarding our bodily well-being such as refraining from the use of tobacco and intoxicating beverages. Finally, we have regulations regarding our moral well-being. For example, gambling and pornography are considered morally degrading, and we are expected to be discerning in the use of TV, movies, and other entertainment.

## **Residential Life**

Campus living is regarded as an important aspect of the Christian academic community that Olivet seeks to foster. For educational and developmental reasons, the University requires non-married students under the age of 23 who are enrolled for seven hours or more per semester to live in University residence halls and participate in the board plan. Olivet's gender-specific housing includes two freshmen residence halls, six upperclassmen residence halls and several apartment-style accommodations for qualified junior and senior students. Each residential living area has a Resident Director (RD) and a team of resident assistants (RAs) who possesses the managerial and relational skills necessary to care for a residence hall community.

Olivet's traditional residence halls house at least one RA per floor. Each spring semester, a student committee sifts through RA applications and recommends applicants based upon several criteria. The RA teams provide enforcement of policies, support and encouragement, and community-building activities within the residence halls.

Residential living policies reflect a goal of promoting a purposeful, just, and caring community. Personalities, lifestyles, and priorities vary from resident to resident. The diversity presents challenges for RA teams when it comes to enforcing policy and maintaining a sense of community. Olivet clearly communicates and consistently enforces expectations for dorm cleanliness, quiet hours, dress code, lifestyle choices, as well as other residence living issues. A special report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching reinforces the need for community expectations when it asserts, "A community of learning, at its best, is guided by standards of student conduct that define acceptable behavior and integrate the academic and nonacademic dimensions of campus life" (The Carnegie Foundation, 1990, p. 37 ). The intent of Olivet's residential living expectations is not to unreasonably limit students, but rather to establish a commonality in the community. The same Carnegie report recorded a paradox when it quoted a university student as saying, "We don't want the university to be involved in our lives, but we would like someone to be concerned occasionally about our lives" (The Carnegie Foundation, 1990, p. 47 ).

Although RAs consistently uphold what they believe to be fair and reasonable policies for the community, regular interaction with residents communicates that they do care more about the individual than the particular policies they uphold. RAs heed author Anne McCaffrey's advice to "make no judgments where you have no compassion." By focusing on relationships, effective confrontation begins before a student's poor choice. It is vital for RAs to be available and willing to assist floor residents with varying needs. The shared living experiences and relational support strengthen feelings of affirmation and acceptance. The aforementioned Carnegie report seems to affirm the RA goal by proclaiming that a university should be "a place where the well-being of

each member is sensitively supported and where service to others is encouraged” (The Carnegie Foundation, 1990, p. 47).

The challenges of successfully managing a residence hall takes a team. Success, however, is not measured in terms of dorm cleanliness, floor noise levels, general maintenance, or even enforcement of university policy. Success depends upon the number of lives encouraged toward Christian development. On average, residents spend 25 to 50 percent of every day within the walls of their residence halls. It should be more than a place for students to study, rest, and physically prepare for a new day. It should be, and is, used as one more vehicle of ministry: one more example of a purposeful, just Christian community and genuine, caring relationships. Residential living can be labeled successful only in light of its impact on the lives of tomorrow.

## **Student Activities**

With the assistance of student leaders, the Office of Student Activities organizes campus activities throughout the academic year. The planned activities are publicized in the weekly *TigerTalk*, in monthly published activities calendars as well as on flyers posted in campus buildings and typically can be categorized as one of three activities: campus entertainment, leadership, or co-curricular training activities.

- **Entertainment**

The Office of Student Activities, along with the Associated Student Council, fosters wholesome social activities on the campus. Student organizations responsibly create and implement social activities for the student body that fall within the parameters of appropriateness for our campus community. By definition, communities possess identifiable values that justify required, acceptable, or prohibited behavior in particular circumstances (Stark, 1989). American society has undergone basic changes over the generations. The basic standards of Christian morality that were culturally embraced in the past are much more vague today. God has given us the power of choice. Rather than society taking on the values and priorities of the kingdom of God, just the opposite is happening. With his first command to humanity, God identified himself as a moral being and clearly marked the difference between right and wrong as he drew a line around the tree. A former vice president of marketing for IBM wrote, "Once you make a commitment to a belief, a person, or a task, it's imperative that you honor it down to the smallest detail" (Rogers, 1987, p. 24). The Olivet community holds firm to the conviction that not all forms of entertainment are appropriate or healthy. We attempt to promote fun activities that embody Christian values such as integrity, morality, and modesty and that reflect the denominational standards of the Church of the Nazarene.

In addition to planned evening and weekend social activities, for student involvement, Olivet's Director of Intramurals provides an active, year-round intramural program. At any point during the academic calendar, students may participate in a variety of inter-campus athletic leagues. The intramural program includes coed competitions in tennis, basketball, sand and indoor volleyball, outdoor and indoor soccer, softball, table tennis, Rook and chess. Schedules for and results of competitions are posted daily on the Intramural Board in Ludwig Center and weekly in the *TigerTalk*.

- **Leadership Development**

Olivet president emeritus Harold W. Reed established the International Reed Institute Advanced Study of Leadership based upon the premise that "leaders are made, not born" (Reed, 1982, p. 5). The qualities of a successful leader, according to Dr. Reed, can be developed through commitment and experience. Students at Olivet possess the opportunity to choose their level of involvement in extracurricular programs and, therefore, opportunities for leadership development. A designated Club Day during the first few weeks of each academic year allows students to sign-up for membership in any campus clubs. Following is a list of campus clubs and organizations:

The Academy (history club)  
AURORA (yearbook)  
Business Club  
Capitol Hill Gang (political issues)  
Computer Club  
Contemporary Music Society (CMS)  
Diakonia (social work)  
Dialog (theology club)  
Engineering Club  
Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)  
*GlimmerGlass* (student newspaper)  
Green Room (drama)  
International Club  
Kappa Omicron Nu  
Men's Residents (MRA)  
Nursing Students (NSA)  
Off-campus Olivetians (OCO)  
Olivet Geological Society  
Phi Alpha Theta  
Psychology Club  
Student Education Assoc. (SEA)  
Family & Consumer Science (SAFAC)  
Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE)  
Sigma Tau Delta (literature club)  
Women's Residence (WRA)  
Class Officers  
Associated Student Council Officers

During the same time period, freshmen can also choose to run for an elected class office. Elections for other class officers and Associated Student Council positions are held in late March.

- **Co-curricular Training**

Since leaders are made and not born, Olivet opens training initiatives to all students who wish to avail themselves of opportunities to develop leadership skills. In his book, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, John C. Maxwell stresses the importance of "spending the time to train leaders and providing potential leaders with the tools and resources needed" (Maxwell, 1995, p. 27). In one initiative to embrace Maxwell's admonition to provide training and resourcing to potential leaders, Olivet's 1996-'97 academic calendar marked the inception year of the Real Life Seminar Series sponsored by the Office of Student Development. The bimonthly, informative programs supplement the Olivet educational experience by exposing students to practical living issues that may not be covered in the college classroom.

The Office of Student Activities works with six separate committees comprised of resident directors and resident assistants to identify topics, choose presenters, and plan programs that will help equip students for real life, life outside the walls of Olivet. Past programs, publicized and open to all students, include discussions on dating relationships, personal finances, political ideologies, substance abuse, and coping with grief.

### **Counseling and Career Services**

Recognizing that students have a wide variety of issues and with the total student as its main concern, the University offers students comprehensive counseling and career services staffed by competent professionals. The mission is to provide Christian-oriented counseling and personal assistance in the areas of vocational/planning placement, academic planning/advising, and social and personal problem resolution. Services are provided for the voluntary use of students.

Olivet provides student job placement assistance. Students seeking part-time or full-time employment may register with the Counseling and Career Center. Personalized assistance, information, and counseling are available in the following areas:

- Assistance in finding part-time employment
- Defining career goals and personal values
- Testing and interpretation
- Career information
- Vocational literature
- Development of personal job-finding skills and techniques
- Resume and credential information
- Locating prospective employees

Students are urged to take advantage of the many services offered by the Counseling and Career Center. Knowing more about oneself and one's chosen field of work or service enhances Christian stewardship and life planning. Students will find ready acceptance from the counseling staff.

While Olivet attempts to provide an environment conducive to personal development, choices are personal and active. Decisions concerning activities such as lounging in the residence hall, participating in a weekend activity, or extracurricular involvement test our commitment to our values. Our actions define us. Joshua said, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15, NIV, 1997). The choices you make will make all the difference.

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