Furman University was founded by Baptists in 1826. Even before it opened its doors, Richard Furman outlined the character and values of the institution he envisioned: "The course of education and government will be conducted with a sacred regard to the interests of morality and religion, according to the conscientious sentiments of the founders; yet on principles of Christian liberality, and in favor of private judgment." The Latin motto of the university, *Christo et Doctrinae (For Christ and Learning)*, underlines the interrelationship of faith and learning.

Each subsequent generation has sought to reassess Furman University’s character and values as it has evolved from an academy to a denominational college to an independent liberal arts college. The university has sought to remain faithful to its Judeo-Christian heritage by encouraging students, faculty, administration and staff to grow in faith as they grow in knowledge and to express their faith through lives of service.

In 1990 Furman University separated from the South Carolina Baptist Convention. The University became a self-governing institution in order to preserve its values in a religious atmosphere that had become highly combative and increasingly restrictive. In light of this event the purpose of this statement is to identify and clarify the university’s character and values once more to its faculty and administration, its staff and students, and the wider community.

As a community of liberal learning, Furman University maintains its commitment to freedom of inquiry and excellence in the quest for truth. The university is a community that encourages and nurtures individuals as they search for truth with passion, integrity, and rigorous intellectual discipline. The university must zealously guard its freedom to look for truth wherever it is to be found. Furthermore, the university understands its mission to be not only the transmission of knowledge, attitudes, and values, but also their examination and correction in the light of continuing discovery and the integration of knowledge. The university, which is the natural arena for such an engagement, is committed to securing a diverse faculty who find learning exciting and can communicate such excitement to students who are intellectually and emotionally prepared to respond to the challenge. Conscious of the crucial importance of the teacher to the achievement of its goals, Furman seeks faculty members who combine scholarly achievement, a life of faith, high moral principles, concern for students, and a sympathetic awareness of Furman’s tradition and purposes.

Furman is a person-centered community, emphasizing the prime worth of persons and encouraging concern for others. Development of the proper regard for the rights and feelings of others is one of our primary values. The imperative to love our neighbors as ourselves is expressed in the Furman community through

- an appreciation for its diversity
• a concern for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of each person

• a continuing effort to strengthen community ties through open communication and mutual respect

• the appropriate involvement of all members of the community in decision-making

• the commitment to excellence at every level of our life together, and

• an appreciation for the university’s heritage and the contributions of those who have shaped the institution

Furman students are recruited from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The university seeks to nurture their development into mature, integrated persons by encouraging all students to develop a mature understanding of their own identities, to establish meaningful personal goals, and to understand their own faith and outlook. Furman celebrates freedom of conscience and opposes efforts to impose beliefs on students. Furman is a learning community where faith is cherished but not coerced. The university makes its own spiritual commitments explicit through faculty, staff, and administrators who provide models of faith, academic excellence, maturity and wisdom.

Furman also conveys its concern for the character and well being of members of the community through reasonable, negotiable and enforceable regulations. Such standards should reflect the nature of the institution, the wider community of which it is a part, and the reality that the university itself is made up of persons of diverse views and backgrounds. Rules express the university’s belief that the undisciplined life is self-destructive and intrusive upon the rights of others. The application of regulations should reflect the effort to encourage personal responsibility, which alone liberates. The administration of justice is always aimed at being redemptive rather than punitive.

The university recognizes its responsibility both inside and outside the classroom to encourage students to confront the problems of contemporary society and to exercise moral judgment in the use of knowledge. To this end, Furman fosters in its students a sense of social justice and encourages them to exercise their civic responsibility in creating a fair and equitable order. Students are educated to solve human problems rather than to use their knowledge as a means of gaining further advantage over those who are disadvantaged.

Furman University affirms the worth of both the life of learning and the life of faith and integrity. The occasion of receiving a university degree should become a genuine commencement for graduates to continue their education, to engage in moral reflection, and to deepen their civic involvement "with a sacred regard to the interests of morality and religion.”

Approved by Furman University Board of Trustees, February 15, 2003