

AN ACADEMIC VISION FOR INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Indiana Wesleyan University Mission: Indiana Wesleyan University is a Christ-centered academic community committed to changing the world by developing students in character, scholarship, and leadership.

Indiana Wesleyan University Vision: Indiana Wesleyan University is a truly great Christian university serving the world.

Indiana Wesleyan University Academic Vision: The transformation of students, through communities of learning rooted in a Wesleyan worldview, to engage in the work of reconciliation through service in their vocations and as Christ-like global citizens.

Philosophy of Education:

Central to the academic vision of Indiana Wesleyan University is the concept of transformation. As an educational institution, Indiana Wesleyan is obviously concerned with the intellectual and cognitive development of students. As a university embedded in a Wesleyan understanding of the world, however, we seek a richer, more robust set of outcomes for our students. We desire that the totality of the human person be impacted by the educational experience and learning environment that our students encounter at Indiana Wesleyan, regardless of whether the student is enrolled in classes on the residential campus or is in an adult online program. This more holistic philosophy of education includes, in addition to students' intellectual development, the growth of their spiritual and moral character, the transformation of their relationships to the social and natural worlds, and the cultivation of their ability to, in turn, be transformers of culture (Lennox, 2014).

Foundational to this philosophy is Indiana Wesleyan's rootedness in Scripture. Biblical teachings challenge our understanding and interpretation of our academic disciplines. Truths gleaned from our academic study, in turn, inform our faith perspective. In addition to Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience contribute to our understanding of God's Truth. As Wesleyans, we also believe that this faith integration is more complex than simply "right belief or doctrine." It must also include "right practice" and "right heart" (Thorsen, 2014, p. 245).

Upon this Scriptural foundation, Indiana Wesleyan places four key pillars. These include –

- an understanding of the educational process as a communal activity, not an individual one (Lennox, 2017): students learn best when they are challenged and supported by not only their classroom instructors, but also by fellow students and when their co-curricular experiences reinforce their courses of study;

- a belief that learning continues throughout life, rather than being limited to one particular time in the life course (Best, 2012): not only can learning occur throughout one's life, individuals should be able to begin the educational process and/or re-enter it wherever and whenever they may be in life;
- a view that education is not to be an endeavor limited to one strata of society, but rather one bringing many different groups together to reflect the diversity of God's kingdom (Wright, 2016): the most effective learning environment incorporates numerous voices. Such a learning environment is not only critical to students' success as global citizens, but also to their richer understanding of God's kingdom; and
- an optimistic stance toward individuals and the world (Lennox, 2017): while recognizing that sin has broken our relationship with God, we believe strongly that individuals can be reconciled to God, to themselves, to one another, and to God's creation. Both individuals and the world they inhabit have the capacity for change.

The purpose of the educational experience is not simply to prepare students for better careers or higher incomes, or even to serve more effectively in their professions. Rather, education must be an instrument for transforming both the individual and society (Best, 2012; Payette, 2003). As people are transformed, they gain a new identity, one providing "a clear vocation as stewards, allowing a greater understanding of and appreciation for their education and enabling graduates to take their place as change agents in the world and for eternity" (Lennox, 2014, p. 8).

Academic Goals:

The following five goals are intended to facilitate the accomplishment of Indiana Wesleyan's academic vision.

- Goal 1:** Incorporate transformational learning and faith integration into each academic program.
- Goal 2:** Ensure that programs and processes promote academic excellence.
- Goal 3:** Facilitate systematic improvement of student learning.
- Goal 4:** Strengthen diversity and inclusion within the academic curriculum, the student experience, and the hiring, retaining, and mentoring of faculty.
- Goal 5:** Develop faculty expertise as educators and scholars embedded in a Wesleyan understanding of higher education.

Implementation:

With regard to each of these goals, the Office of the Provost is responsible for the following –

- metrics each academic unit is expected to achieve;
- resources to aid in the attainment of the goal;
- parameters inside which each unit is expected to operate; and, at times,
- specific programming

Within the overarching framework provided by the Provost's Office, each academic unit is encouraged, even expected, to maximize its unique strengths and culture of innovation, as appropriate to its student population, model of education, historical development, and future prospects, in the attainment of the goals and ultimately Indiana Wesleyan's larger academic vision.

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