

*Ratified by the Board of Trustees
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*Adopted by Special Com.
Trustees
F. J. - Dickinson*

STATEMENT ON DISCRIMINATION

Bucknell University was founded by Baptist laymen in 1846 for the education of Christian leadership, both lay and clerical, to meet the needs of the Baptist conventions of Pennsylvania and New Jersey at that time. However, the purpose of the incorporators was not narrowly limited by a doctrinaire theology or by the needs of the Baptist churches. The charter itself expresses what must have been a very liberal attitude for that day-- an attitude which has become a cherished part of the Bucknell tradition. It provides:

"No religious sentiments are to be accounted a disability to hinder the election of an individual to any office among the teachers of the institution, or to debar persons from admittance as pupils, or in any manner to abridge their privileges or immunities as students, in any department of the university."

(Article VI, Section 1)

Interpreted in its setting this clearly establishes Bucknell's position with respect to discrimination because of a religious belief at variance with the tradition which the institution was founded to perpetuate. Bucknell's tradition is not merely one of permissive discussion. More than this, it is the historic American position of freedom of the individual to search for religious truth and the liberal Christian concept which emphasizes that free discussion of divergent religious views, free conversation and debate of religious matters, and free religious decision by the adult mind are important in the development of the mature and educated intellect and are to be encouraged at the college level. It is that tradition which asserts

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that ultimate truth results from free presentation and discussion of ideas, and it is that reverence for the truth, and for the processes by which it is discovered, which results from the liberal Christian conviction that all truth is God's truth.

Bucknell's charter provision does not mean that religious belief is of no consequence at Bucknell. On the contrary, both the original charter and history make it quite clear that the main purpose of the institution is to educate in the Christian tradition. It is a provision designed to guarantee that Bucknell, while remaining a Christian college, will not fall victim to that kind of narrow, doctrinaire or fundamentalist philosophy which sees truth only in one ecclesiastical group, in one theological position, or in a too literal interpretation of scripture.

This means, of course, that while diversity of opinion is to be encouraged--and the charter stipulation is designed to assure this--care must be taken to see to it that Bucknell remains always a Christian college dedicated to the free search for truth. Among other things this means that while those of other faiths are welcome, indeed their presence is essential to maintain the kind of dialogue on religious issues which is deemed desirable, a substantial portion of the faculty and of the student body must be of the Christian persuasion if the aims of the institution are to be met. It is therefore equally as important to see to it that Bucknell has professors and students of the Christian faith as it is to see to it that professors and students are not excluded because of their non-Christian beliefs. To some this may seem a difficult position to

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implement--but it is a position which Bucknell has maintained with dignity and honor in the past, and which it is committed to maintain in the future.

When the charter was written in 1846 there was no recognized problem of discrimination in admission to educational institutions based on race--or on national origin--or indeed on intellectual ability. There was discrimination based on sex, however, and on this problem the incorporators failed to take as liberal a stand. It is to Bucknell's credit that such discrimination was abandoned at a time when women's rights were not generally recognized.

With respect to discrimination based on race or on national origin, Bucknell long ago evidenced its intention to follow the liberal stand which is incorporated in the charter with respect to religious belief. Maung Shawloo, Bucknell's first foreign student, was admitted in 1858. Since that time, Bucknell's doors have been open, and shall remain open, to students, to faculty, and to staff of every race and of every nationality.

The word "discrimination" is sometimes thought to refer only to evil practices. But not all discrimination is evil. For example, in the selection and retention of staff excellence will continue to be favored over incompetence. In the admission of students the well-qualified will continue to be favored over the ill-prepared. To the extent that Bucknell can house more men than women and to the extent that fewer students can be accommodated in some degree programs than in others, Bucknell will necessarily have to favor some applicants over others. To the extent that alumni children are equally as well prepared as other applicants, Bucknell

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will favor their applications. These actions are thoroughly consistent with sound institutional policy.

It is appropriate therefore to distinguish between improper discrimination and those judgments which are wisely discriminating. It is Bucknell's aim to teach its students to be properly and wisely discriminating--to discriminate only on the basis of sound values, the development of which is one of the chief aims of the university. It is likewise Bucknell's aim to teach its students to recognize and reject improper discrimination based on unsound values, bias, prejudice, superstition, myth, illogical assumption, confused application of fact, or failure to recognize reality.

Bucknell deplores improper discrimination based on race, sex, national origin, social status, religious belief, or other mistaken or faulty basis of judgment. Any such improper discrimination within the university is to be strongly discouraged. Beyond the campus Bucknell will endeavor to protect and support its students, its staff, and its guests who may encounter discrimination in any matter which directly affects Bucknell's program. However strongly it may deplore such practices as a matter of principle, Bucknell University as a corporate entity must refrain from becoming involved in controversy over discriminatory practices in matters which are not its direct concern or in connection with the personal activities of university personnel which are not connected with their university responsibilities and which are not sponsored or endorsed by the university.