

Title: FAQs about the Community Covenant
Effective: 07/2019
Responsible Staff: VP for Student Development
Responsible Office: Student Development
Student Handbook: Yes
Student Body: UG

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY COVENANT

These questions and responses are provided to clarify the meaning of the Community Covenant. By providing this information we want to encourage Wheaton students to the high calling of Christ in Christian community.

When does my covenant commitment to the members of the Wheaton College community begin and end?

Your commitment to your fellow members begins when classes are in session and/or when participating in any college program on or off-campus; it ends after all final coursework and/or program requirements are completed (including all Commencement exercises for graduating students) and you have moved out of campus housing or left the program site.

How do I relate to the Community Covenant over Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring, and Summer breaks?

When students voluntarily enroll at Wheaton College, they also dedicate themselves to the full intention of living with integrity under the Community Covenant's provisions as well as the policy expectations within the Student Handbook.

Students remain enrolled during Thanksgiving and Spring breaks, which means that your commitment to the Wheaton College community continues uninterrupted. If students are not enrolled or participating in any college related program on or off campus over Christmas or Summer breaks, they are encouraged but not required to continue pursuing the vision for holy and healthy living described in the Community Covenant.

Is consuming wine while taking Holy Communion a violation of the Community Covenant?

No, students are encouraged to take Holy Communion as an act of worship, according to the practices of each local church.

Can I drink a glass of wine if I am eating a meal at home with my parents?

In short, "no." We hope your parents will applaud the integrity you display in a mature commitment to the Wheaton College community. You live out that commitment wherever you go, including at home with your parents.

Must I abide by the Community Covenant if I don't necessarily agree with all of its content?

Yes, enrolling as a student at Wheaton College and signing the Covenant indicates your desire to live according to its good vision. Disagreement with certain portions of the Community Covenant provides no grounds for failing to keep your word. If you experience fundamental disagreement with Wheaton's

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Community Covenant, it should be addressed with a Dean in Student Development or the Athletics Director before you sign it.

If the disagreement cannot be resolved, you may wish to transfer to another institution that more closely matches your convictions.

When do I renew my commitment to the members of the Wheaton College Community regarding my intent to follow the Community Covenant?

You re-affirm your commitment to the Wheaton community each semester when you register or enroll for classes and during the spring housing selection process.

Why does Wheaton's Community Covenant seem to focus so heavily on the issues of alcohol and dancing? What about issues such as greed, pride, or gossip?

The Community Covenant—which seeks to cultivate a biblically-balanced Christian lifestyle—is structured around “Affirming Biblical Standards,” “Living the Christian Life,” “Exercising Responsible Freedom,” and “Embracing College Standards.” The majority of its content encourages every member of our voluntary Christ-centered community to have a Christ-centered heart that seeks to love God and people.

The section entitled “Living the Christian Life” addresses sins against others and/or against God (such as greed, gossip, and pride) primarily as heart issues that also have implications for Christian community. By God’s kindness we grow in these areas through the Holy Spirit and at times through the gentle correction of other followers of Jesus, leading to repentance and change.

The prohibitions against alcohol, tobacco consumption, and illicit drugs (as well as against non-college sponsored dances) are described in the section called “Embracing College Standards.” We set these boundaries to prevent distractions to fostering a Christ-centered learning, living, and working environment. The fact that we correct violations of our voluntary agreement not to engage in such distractions may influence the perception that the College focuses more on these areas, when in fact the Community Covenant makes a clear distinction between core principles of biblical ethics and the prudential rules we have as a campus.

The Community Covenant mentions illegal drugs; does marijuana fall into that category since it will be a legal drug in Illinois as of January 2020?

Yes, although possession and use of marijuana will no longer be a crime according to the State of Illinois, the possession and use of marijuana remains illegal under federal law. Consistent with federal law, including the Controlled Substances Act and the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, the use and/or

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possession of marijuana (smoked or edible) continues to be prohibited for all Wheaton students on or off campus. Furthermore, the use of marijuana under medical marijuana laws will not be permitted. .

Why does the Community Covenant refer to behaviors that are not found in Scripture?

Wheaton College desires to cultivate a campus atmosphere that reflects a devotion to Christ and celebrates the richness and breadth that exists within the body of Christ. Given the heritage and historical contexts of lifestyle issues within the evangelical church, the College has established behavioral guidelines that will, in the leadership's judgement, foster a Christ-honoring environment for learning, living and working. While there may be differing perspectives on lifestyle issues, it is essential that we have clarity on what is expected for every member of the College community.

Why are the SAO and OMD the only departments that can sponsor dances on campus?

The Community Covenant's standards regarding dancing are designed to promote positive dimensions of social dancing without importing what is negative. Student Engagement is mandated to implement these godly priorities by planning and sponsoring campus-wide social activities that are fun, wholesome, and community-building activities that befit a community that claims to exist "for Christ and His Kingdom." As members of Student Engagement, the SAO and OMD offices have the knowledge and experience to plan and host campus dances for the College.

What should I do if I am aware that another student has fallen short in upholding his/her commitment to the Wheaton College community?

You are encouraged to follow Christ's principles (Matthew 18:15-20) when engaging another student with concerns. This means lovingly and honestly approaching another person with your concerns, individually at first, then with one or two fellow believers if the concerns persist. If these conversations do not yield satisfactory outcomes or if students are reluctant to initiate these conversations, then consultation with the Dean of Counseling & Wellness, the Dean of Residence Life, the Dean for Student Engagement or a Residence Life staff member is recommended. When addressing the concerns, the emphasis should be on a redemptive, restorative process that encourages the growth of the individual while respecting our commitment to one another in the Community Covenant.

What will happen if I confess to violating my commitment to the Community Covenant or other college policies?

Students are encouraged to self-report or confess their misconduct to a Dean in Student Development or to the Athletics Director in an effort to seek help, find support, and receive forgiveness. The College celebrates these confessional steps and encourages students to walk in freedom not in fear. When a student self-reports to violating a Student Handbook policy or the vision for holy living described in the Community Covenant, the College will respond with care and support resources as well as with a reduced consequence when appropriate in order to honor the repentant heart.