

Community Covenant

PSR COMMUNITY COVENANT

For the 2015-16 Academic Year

PREAMBLE/PROLOGUE

Pacific School of Religion – students, staff, faculty, and trustees – seeks to inspire a world of abundance, compassion and justice where all can thrive and flourish. To that end, the following Covenant presents qualities we seek to uphold in our life and work together.

Building on a foundation of truth, love and our identity as an institution of spiritual faith and practice, PSR desires to create and sustain an environment of “fearless welcome and radical hospitality.” Based on our belief that each individual is divinely empowered to create this community of inclusion and affirmation, we witness this co-creative enterprise to honor and value our diversity as a source of communal strength. We further commit ourselves to doing the difficult work together, supported by God’s grace, when living into this reality exceeds our realm of comfort and human capacity.

PSR is an ecosystem of interdependent connections – which includes not just our human relationships, but our connections to animals and the land and environment upon and within which we exist. Thus, we also affirm these covenantal intentions to respect and engage with PSR’s existing and evolving policies and practices, as they have been developed to express our institutional values and to foster safe, healthy and sustainable community.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS & ATTITUDES (*Romans 12: 4, 5, & 18*)

WE COVENANT TO:

- . Respect and celebrate our unique and diverse identities, perspectives and pathways, and to practice an attitude of “fearless welcome and hospitality,” embracing all of who we are— through both self-acceptance and acceptance of others.
- . Practice “drawing the circle of community wider” to include rather than exclude
- . Celebrate our growing edges by listening and speaking authentically
- . Remember our common humanity and practice forgiveness with generosity and discernment
- . Honor and support the value of our own self-care and that of others

COMMUNICATION (*Ephesians 4:15*)

WE COVENANT TO:

- . Communicate in ways that foster a community of respect, safety, intellectual growth and vibrant spirituality
- . Communicate with conscious awareness of our inter-connectedness in body, mind, and spirit and seek to “understand as well as be understood”
- . Build and affirm the safety of our community by practicing patience and speaking our truth directly and compassionately
- . Invite every person in our community to enter dialogue, assuming the best of intentions of all involved
- . Engage our communications around topics and issues rather than personalities

NEGOTIATING CONFLICT (*Romans 12: 17 – 18*)

WE COVENANT TO:

- . Create spaces safe enough to risk truth-sharing
- . Step out of [or Avoid] hiding in silence when difficulties arise
- . Find value in differing perspectives
- . Approach one another as allies and not enemies
- . Be committed to healing and reconciliation
- . When appropriate, engage institutional policies and processes designed to mediate conflict

“POST-AMBLE”/“EPILOGUE”

This covenant is a living document which we will revisit each year and adapt as community needs and expectations grow and change. We are committed to infusing awareness and practice of this covenant into the full institutional life of our seminary – spiritual, theological, academic, social, and environmental – thereby engaging the entire community in “covenant keeping.”

That being said, we understand and expect that there will be times when our Covenant is broken. In such cases, we will seek to have our responses to alleged or confirmed fractures be guided by pastoral concern and practice. Every effort will be made to resolve breaches in a manner intended to be respectful, reconciling, restorative, liberating and healing.

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In preparing this document we reviewed Covenants and/or Codes of Conduct from the following institutions: Auburn Theological Seminary, Andover Newton, Brite Divinity School, Candler School of Theology, Chicago Theological Seminary, Claremont School of Theology, Drew, Harvard, Lexington, Seattle University, United Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt, Wake Forest, Wesley, and Yale.

Our Covenant was also influenced by prior work of the Unitarian Universalist Association in helping their congregations develop "Covenants of Right Relations."

Updated 12/15/16