

Report of Hope College

Affiliated with the Reformed Church in America since its founding in 1866, Hope College is known for our invitational, ecumenical Christian atmosphere, friendly campus community, and outstanding academic and co-curricular offerings. We are intentional about our mission to educate students for lives of leadership and service in the context of the historic Christian faith.

Christian Life

Hope College is a Christian community that invites all its members into a holistic and robust engagement with the historic Christian faith and a personal encounter with the living Christ through the Holy Spirit. Our Christian identity is described by these three aspirations:

Hope Aspires to be Faithful

The college's board, faculty, administration, and staff are committed to the historic Christian faith as expressed in the ecumenical creeds of the ancient church, especially the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds, which Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox hold in common. The variety of expressions of the Christian faith we hold in common contributes to the vitality of Hope College.

Hope Aspires to be Welcoming

Hospitality is a hallmark of the Christian faith. Hope seeks to be a community that affirms the dignity of all persons as bearers of God's image. We are a community where all come together to offer their gifts of understanding to one another. Students of all faiths—or no faith at all—are welcomed at Hope. We invite our students to join a vibrant, caring academic community where the Christian faith and the pursuit of knowledge intersect and where the full humanity of all may flourish. All at Hope are invited to experience the love and good news of God's forgiveness found in Jesus Christ.

Hope Aspires to be Transformational

Hope was established as a college in the Reformed tradition, which affirms the centrality of Scripture and the importance of learning. We are committed to freedom of inquiry in the pursuit of truth and knowledge in every field of study, confident that all truth is God's truth. We also affirm that knowledge is not an end in itself. Scripture urges us to "be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2). The whole Hope community is encouraged in a lifelong commitment to grow in God's grace and to pursue vocations through which the world so loved by God is renewed.

Academic Excellence and Collaborative Research

Grounded in a general liberal arts education, Hope offers specialized study in more than 90 majors, minors, and pre-professional programs. Our students are presented with a rigorous intellectual experience, and their engagement with faculty often leads to the life-changing discovery of an academic passion or a professional calling.

Our faculty are active teacher-scholars, committed to their students. We are a recognized leader in undergraduate research with our students and faculty carrying out high quality research projects that are challenging, meaningful, and contribute to exciting new knowledge in a broad

range of disciplines. For decades, our students have benefited from this “graduate-level undergraduate experience.” This experience is transformational, giving students the opportunity to conduct research, publish their findings in peer-reviewed journals (sometimes as primary author), present their work at conferences, and perform in front of audiences around the world.

Creative Performance

Hope College was the first private, liberal arts college to hold national accreditation in art, dance, music, and theatre, and is the only liberal arts school in Michigan with an accredited art program.

- In addition to superior art facilities, our art students have the benefit of an extensive exhibition program that regularly crosses cultural and historical boundaries.
- We believe in the transformative power of dance, and our dance program is a place where our students grow artistically, intellectually, physically, and spiritually.
- A student’s passion for music speaks to the world, and we believe music is the language that communicates to everyone. Music students at Hope practice in state-of-the-art facilities and perform in acoustically-superior spaces.
- The Hope College theatre program is one of recognized excellence that develops students as practicing theatre artists and engaged audience members. Both theatre majors and non-majors participate in all aspects of theatre work.

There is a strong interdivisional collaboration among our art, dance, music, and theatre programs that contributes to the success of each. Hope students work with nationally known writers, musicians, performers, and artists on stage, in the gallery, in the concert hall, and in the classroom.

Athletics

In addition to excelling in scholarship, research, and artistic performance, our students also excel in athletics. We believe that intercollegiate sport is a powerful vehicle for education as well as for personal development. Our athletics program is part of our Kinesiology Department and is guided by a community of coaches, scholars, and leaders who prioritize excellence and the student athlete experience. The members of our athletics program are committed to the utmost integrity in competition, engagement in Christian faith formation, and are dedicated to excelling in sports, academics, and life.

Last summer, the college created a chaplain of athletics position, funded by a \$2 million endowment. The chaplain of athletics serves approximately 550 student athletes, 17 full-time coaches, and over 50 assistant coaches. The mission of the athletics ministry is to provide student athletes and coaches the opportunity to encounter God through the integration of faith and sport, providing pastoral care grounded in understanding the student athlete’s experience and sometimes-unique concerns.

Calling and Career

Hope’s Boerigter Center for Calling and Career (BCCC) is a college-wide initiative engaging our students and alumni in lifelong practices for career development beginning in a student’s freshman year. The BCCC is more than a resource for reaching career goals: it is a process, a plan, and a guided journey over four-plus years. Interests, strengths, and values are assessed, and students become part of the Hope network. Integrated into the academic program of the

college, the BCCC includes and expands upon the work of our former Career Development office. Staff members from Academic Advising, Career Development, and Alumni and Family Engagement combine to help students ascertain clear next steps and prepare for graduate school and the workplace.

Campus Culture

Hope College has an institutional vision for inclusive excellence and a campus culture in which each person can thrive through the promotion of inclusivity, access, and opportunity; community engagement; and intercultural proficiency. We invite input from every employee to gain an understanding of our strengths and to know where we need to invest in order to create a supportive, inclusive, and meaningful work experience for all our employees.

A Culture Task Force has been created and the strategic work of the group over the coming months will be to articulate what our aspirational culture should be, audit what our culture is today, and build a roadmap for how we get from where we are today to where we would wish to be.

The Hope-Western Prison Education Program (HWEP)

Conceived as an extension of our mission beyond Holland, the prison education program is currently a partnership between Hope College and Western Theological Seminary, operating under a series of six-month memorandums of understanding with the Michigan Department of Corrections. Over 50 faculty members from the two institutions have expressed interest in teaching in this program. Twenty-three non-degree-seeking students at the Muskegon Correctional Facility have each taken four courses to date.

College education programs in prisons have proven to lower violence by up to 80 percent, lower recidivism by 45 percent, lower costs to taxpayers, improve education to traditional students, engage hard-to-reach donors, transform prisoners' hearts and minds, and unify faculty across different perspectives.

Town-Gown Relationship

Hope enjoys a prominent and enviable town-gown relationship with the greater Holland area, the result of intentional efforts by the city and college over several decades. To be sure, we share a common heritage in that both were founded through the visionary leadership of Albertus C. VanRaalte. To many, we are not just neighbors, but family! The college provides many outstanding opportunities to the community in the form of cultural, educational, spiritual, and athletic events, and contributes to the local economy.

Conclusion

Hope College is a Christian community offering a liberal arts curriculum, graduate school-style research, hands-on opportunities, creative performance opportunities, competitive athletics, and challenging collaborations. Our students learn through experience in more than 300 study abroad programs and countless internships available locally and throughout the U.S. Ours is an environment of the highest standards where students have a sense of belonging, can explore, and become all that God intends them to be.