

# **InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Elon University**

## **Chapter Constitution and Bylaws**

*Revised June 1, 2019*

### **Article I. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship**

The name of the community ministry will be InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Elon University (“InterVarsity at Elon”), a campus chapter of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA (<https://intervarsity.org>). InterVarsity at Elon is an affiliate Community Ministry, not an Elon University program, that is authorized by Elon University to work on campus in accordance with Elon University policies.

### **Article II. Purpose**

The purpose of InterVarsity at Elon is to live out on Elon’s campus the purpose of the national organization:

In response to God's love, grace, and truth:

The Purpose of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA is to establish and advance at colleges and universities witnessing communities of students and faculty who follow Jesus as Savior and Lord:  
growing in love for God,  
God's Word,  
God's people of every ethnicity and culture,  
and God's purposes in the world.

### **Article III. What We Believe**

**Section 1. Statement of Faith:** InterVarsity at Elon affirms the Statement of Faith of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA. All staff and student leaders are required to affirm and follow this Statement of Faith:

We Believe

The only true God, the almighty Creator of all things,  
existing eternally in three persons  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit full of love and glory.

The unique divine inspiration,  
entire trustworthiness  
and authority of the Bible.

The value and dignity of all people:  
created in God’s image to live in love and holiness,  
but alienated from God and each other because of our sin and guilt,  
and justly subject to God’s wrath.

Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine,  
who lived as a perfect example,  
who assumed the judgment due sinners by dying in our place,  
and who was bodily raised from the dead and ascended as Savior and Lord.

Justification by God's grace to all who repent  
and put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

The indwelling presence and transforming power of the Holy Spirit,  
who gives to all believers a new life and a new calling to obedient service.

The unity of all believers in Jesus Christ,  
manifest in worshiping and witnessing churches  
making disciples throughout the world.

The victorious reign and future personal return of Jesus Christ,  
who will judge all people with justice and mercy,  
giving over the unrepentant to eternal condemnation  
but receiving the redeemed into eternal life.

**Section 2. Core Values, Commitments, and Teachings:** InterVarsity at Elon affirms and practices the core values, commitments, and teachings of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA. This includes the expectation that student leaders will exemplify Christ-like character and conduct and agree (or not firmly disagree) with InterVarsity's core teachings and doctrinal positions.

**Section 3. Sexuality:** As required by Elon University, this constitution includes a summary of our beliefs around human sexuality. While extending welcome to all students, regardless of their beliefs or identities, InterVarsity at Elon affirms and teaches the positions on sexuality articulated by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA in the position paper "A Theological Summary of Human Sexuality." This paper includes the following affirmations which have been paraphrased for this document:

**God's Design for Human Sexuality and Relationships:** Sexuality is God's idea, his wonderful and beautiful gift intended for our well-being and his glory. From the beginning, healthy human genital sexual activity was designed to be pleasurable and to be experienced in the context of a life-long commitment between a husband and wife; to express and to increase that relationship's intimacy; to represent the coming together of male and female; and to be nurtured by the safety and trust that comes from monogamy. We simultaneously reject the common belief that sexual experience and fulfillment is integral to human flourishing.

**Sexual Activity Outside of Marriage:** Sexual activity outside of marriage falls short of God's intentions. It seeks pleasure but does not offer life-long commitment. It seeks intimacy but withholds the trust and safety of life-long

monogamy. It endangers the trust and intimacy of the partners' actual marriage relationship (if that occurs in the future).

**Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault:** Sexual harassment and sexual assault are unacceptable in any form because they violate the dignity, value, and agency of human beings who are made in God's image.

**Pornography and Masturbation:** Both the use of pornography and compulsive masturbation run counter to God's design for genital sexual activity in similar ways: They train us to think of and to pursue sex for self-pleasure, rather than as a means of increasing connection, trust, and intimacy with another. They reduce the body – whether our own or the one on the screen – to an object to be used and consumed. They foster behavior that Jesus condemns when he states that we are responsible for our imagined behaviors as much as our physical behaviors.

**Same-Sex Sexual Activity:** We acknowledge with shame and contrition that Christians have too often excluded, shamed, or attacked the LGBTQI community. We also recognize we have remained silent when hatred has been expressed toward them. We humbly own our past failures. We affirm that God offers everyone – without regard to their sexual orientation – the same invitation to love, forgiveness, transformation, and belonging. We believe that true Christian community should do the same. We also believe, consistent with what has been written above, that genital sexual activity is reserved for monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

Student members and participants do not need to agree with these, or any, InterVarsity theological positions, but student leaders are expected to agree (or not firmly disagree) and follow these teachings.

#### **Article IV. Membership**

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone officially connected to the Elon University as faculty, staff, or registered student. An Active Member is a currently enrolled student at Elon University who has attended meetings of the Chapter for at least two (2) months and then consistently attends at least 50% of chapter meetings thereafter. Any student in good standing may attend any public event and be an active member of the Chapter, regardless of belief or identities.

#### **Article V. Leadership**

**Section 1. Professional Staff:** InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA may appoint professional staff to direct and oversee InterVarsity at Elon in collaboration with student leaders. Area or Regional InterVarsity staff may also offer support and direction to the Chapter. All InterVarsity staff must be approved by the Elon University Chaplain as Community Affiliates before they begin work with students. InterVarsity staff are

employees of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, not Elon University. They are subject to all policies of Elon University and the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, which may review or revoke their authorization to work on campus at any time.

**Section 2. Coordinating Team:** A Coordinating Team (C-Team) of staff and student leaders will guide the Chapter each year. The number of leaders and the positions will vary each year depending on current membership and the needs of the fellowship. One student leader (often the President) will be designated as the primary contact on Phoenix Connect, and one leader (not necessarily on the C-Team) will serve as InterVarsity's representative on the Truitt Center's Multifaith Council of Student Organizations and Community Ministries. InterVarsity Staff direct the C-Team in collaboration with the student President. The standing C-Team, which includes InterVarsity Staff, will determine positions each year. The C-Team will be responsible for organizing all meetings, activities and events of the Chapter in order to fulfill the Purpose of the Chapter (see Article II), and for submitting all Chapter events into Phoenix Connect in accordance with University policy.

**Section 3. Other Student Leaders:** The C-Team may create secondary leadership positions and ministry teams, and select leaders to fill these positions, to serve the Chapter each year as needed. These secondary leaders may include small group leaders, worship team leaders, retreat team leaders, etc.

**Section 4. Leadership Commitment:** Leadership of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Elon University involves significant spiritual commitment. Chapter leaders are expected to indicate their agreement with InterVarsity's Statement of Faith (Article III, Section 1) and to agree (or not firmly disagree) with InterVarsity's other core teachings and values (Article III, Sections 2 and 3). Chapter leaders are expected to exemplify Christ-like character, conduct, and leadership (see 1 Peter 5:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Galatians 5:19-26; and 1 Corinthians 6: 7-11), as explained in the student Leadership Agreement (see Appendix 1). Student leaders are required to fulfill the duties and commitments associated with their respective roles, as defined by the C-Team in the Leadership Application materials, and leaders are required to remain active members, to attend all required leadership meetings, and to participate regularly in a small group.

**Section 5. Advisor:** If needed or desired, the C-Team may invite a full-time faculty or staff member of Elon University to serve as an Advisor to the group. An Advisor is encouraged, especially if the group does not have current InterVarsity staff on campus. The Advisor serves as a resource and mentor, at the invitation of the C-Team, in whatever manner is most helpful for the group.

## **Article VI. Leadership Selection**

**Section 1. Criteria for Leadership:** Candidates for student leadership must be active members in good standing who exhibit Christ-like character and Christian commitment and who possess the gifts and potential to be effective leaders. Student leaders are

expected to affirm InterVarsity's Purpose (Article II) and Statement of Faith (Article III, Section 1), to agree (or not firmly disagree) with InterVarsity's other core teachings and values (Article III, Sections 2 and 3), and to affirm and follow InterVarsity's Leadership Agreement (Appendix 1). All candidates for leadership must complete a Leadership Application and interview, where they will be asked to express their views on matters that are necessary for advancing the purpose and core beliefs of the Chapter and for discerning their spiritual commitment and potential for leadership.

**Section 2. Pre-Leadership Training:** Potential leaders will be invited to participate in some form of pre-leadership training, often a multi-week training course, to help them learn about the mission of InterVarsity on campus and to take some initial leadership risks to discern their suitability for leadership. After this training course, potential leaders will be invited to formally apply for leadership by completing and signing the Leadership Application and Leadership Agreement.

**Section 3. Selection:** The C-Team will review applications and arrange interviews, or appoint a smaller selection committee to do this, with the advice and direction of InterVarsity staff. The current C-Team, staff and student leaders together, will select student leaders and positions, including leaders and positions for the new C-Team and all other student leaders and ministry teams as needed.

**Section 4. Leadership Term:** The standard term for all leadership positions is one (1) year. C-Team application and selection happens in the fall, with the new C-Team beginning its term in the new calendar year. C-Team will set the exact beginning and end date for other leadership positions.

**Section 5. Vacancies:** The C-Team may create new positions and fill vacancies as needed throughout the year. Any new student leader will be required to complete and sign a Leadership Application and Leadership Agreement.

**Section 6. Removal of Leaders:** Leaders may be removed from their position by InterVarsity staff or by a simple majority of the C-Team. Any member of the Chapter may make a complaint against any leader in the Chapter, including a member of the C-Team. In cases where discretion is necessary, InterVarsity Staff may choose to address the complaint confidentially with the complaining individual and the accused leader. In most cases, the C-Team will consider and address the complaint. The C-Team shall meet to confer with the Chapter's InterVarsity Staff for advice and counsel, and they will meet with both the complaining individual and the accused leader. Prior to removal, any accused leader must be provided with a written statement explaining the complaint and the grounds for removal. No leader may be removed without first receiving a full and fair hearing from InterVarsity Staff or from the C-Team. Any accused C-Team leader may not vote on their own possible removal. Misrepresentation on the Leadership Application shall be grounds for the immediate removal of the leader by the C-Team.

**Article VII. Finances:** The Chapter will obtain funding for events, conferences, and retreats through event fees paid by student participants and through private donations collected by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA or by Elon University. A member of the Coordinating Team will be responsible for the Chapter's finances, under the direction and supervision of InterVarsity staff, and in accordance with Elon University and Truitt Center policies.

**Article VIII. Amendments**

This Constitution may be revised or amended by a 3/4<sup>th</sup> vote of the C-Team. Any proposed Amendment must first be approved by the Truitt Center to assure compliance with Elon University and Truitt Center policies. The Chapter may not amend Article II, Article III or Article VI of this Constitution without the express, written permission of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA.

## **Appendix 1. Leadership Agreement**

*In addition to the leadership commitment and criteria specified in InterVarsity at Elon's Constitution (Article V, Section 4; Article VI, Section 1), leaders are required to affirm and follow a Leadership Agreement, or a commitment to exemplify Christ-like character, conduct, and leadership, in accordance with scripture. The Leadership Agreement is affirmed as part of the Leadership Application. Included in this Appendix is the Leadership Agreement in effect when this Constitution was revised (June 2019).*

### **Leadership Agreement**

As a prospective leader of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Elon University, you have the opportunity to show others ways that Jesus is changing you from the inside out! You will be looked to as an example, and your life will speak volumes about who God is and what it means to follow him. This is a serious responsibility, and also a great joy.

Please consider the following passages from scripture that give us a picture of a Christ-like character and conduct expected for those in leadership:

#### **1 Peter 5:1-7 (ESV)**

*"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."*

#### **1 Timothy 3:1-13 (ESV)**

*"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*

*8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

#### **Galatians 5:19-26 (ESV)**

*Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy,*

*drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

*25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

### **1 Corinthians 6:7-11 (MSG)**

*7-8 These court cases are an ugly blot on your community. Wouldn't it be far better to just take it, to let yourselves be wronged and forget it? All you're doing is providing fuel for more wrong, more injustice, bringing more hurt to the people of your own spiritual family.*

*9-11 Don't you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom. A number of you know from experience what I'm talking about, for not so long ago you were on that list. Since then, you've been cleaned up and given a fresh start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the Spirit.*

God's grace is abundant in this journey. We are not looking for perfect people; none of us are. If you have, or even are, struggling with any of these things, you can still be on leadership. What we are looking for is a lifestyle of repentance and faith leading to change as God works in each of us.

Also, we feel it is important to note that **all are welcomed** and accepted as they are in our community. These expectations pertain only to those who as **leaders** are tasked with the responsibility of setting an example for others.

We are not intending to burden you with a "law" by which to earn spiritual favor in God's sight. This agreement is intended to serve as a starting point for conversation as we all seek deeper transformation through the power of the Spirit, leading to an obedience that comes by faith. We desire to journey alongside you well, which we believe this document will help for us to do.

Given our college context, there are several issues that many in leadership will be likely to face. To make sure we are in agreement on these, we have decided to list our expectations for leaders in these areas:

1. Submit to God as Lord and submit to his Holy Scripture.
2. Commitment to personal spiritual growth
  - Spend regular time with Jesus
  - Regular time in the Scripture
  - Regular church attendance
  - Be discipled
3. Treat those in our community and on our campus with dignity and respect:
  - Refrain from gossip
  - Handle disputes and misunderstandings according to biblical standards
  - Give and receive forgiveness and grace from one another when we fail

4. Conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel:
  - Abstain from illegal drug use
  - Abstain from alcohol under the age of 21
  - Exercise wise judgment concerning the use of alcohol if you are over the age of 21
  - Abstain from drunkenness
  
5. Seek purity and accountability in relationships
  - Abstinence from sex outside of marriage
  - Refrain from the use of pornography
  - Seek healthy physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries in all relationships
  
6. Commitment to the campus
  - To be a witness on campus
  - To love and pray for the campus
  - To seek to reach every corner of the campus
  
8. Commitment to those I am specifically called to lead
  - Follow through on leadership responsibilities
  - Regular attendance at small group, leadership meetings, chapter events, and leadership training
  - Pray for and care for my small group members and/or others in my sphere of leadership responsibility

Bearing in mind these qualifications (and the fact that all believers are in the process of becoming more Christ-like and have not yet reached perfection), can you in good conscience make yourself available for a leadership position?