

CENTERS OF THE UNIVERSITY

The Centers of the University were established to promote the ideals of different academic departments to deal Christianly with issues. Each Center is headed by a Director, who also serves the University as a faculty member or in other capacities.

Below is a list of the Centers along with their purpose statements and directors.

R. C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies

Director: Ray F. Van Neste

The Center exists to promote the skills of effective Bible study and the art of biblical interpretation among students at Union University as well as members of the broader Body of Christ. The Center houses a model library for inductive study of the Scriptures, hosts an annual conference on interpretation and provides resources for local churches in pursuit of ongoing training in Bible study.

Center for Business and Economic Development

The purpose of this Center is to be the premier provider of economic and business information to Jackson and West Tennessee and to promote avenues that enhance the study and practice of Christian business principles. The Center publishes “Economic Updates” for area Chambers of Commerce, sponsors conferences and provides other services to area businesses such as seminars and employee training.

R. G. Lee Center for Christian Ministry

Director: Jerry Tidwell

The purpose of the R. G. Lee Center for Christian Ministry is to equip bi-vocational pastors, staff, and laity for Christian service by offering the Diploma in Christian Ministry and the Associate of Divinity. Details of these programs can be found under Special Programs, Adult and Evening Studies.

An integral part of the Center is the R. G. Lee Society of Fellows Program whose purpose is to enhance and encourage the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Upon invitation, a pastor builds a sermon from the resources of the R. G. Lee Library. The sermon is published in an anthology by the Center and distributed to Southern Baptist pastors.

Center for Educational Practice

Director: Melinda Clarke

The purpose of the Center for Educational Practice is to:

- (a) Encourage and edify contemporary practice in education
- (b) Foster scholarship in education among faculty at Union University;

- (c) Publish a CEP Research journal as a forum for students, faculty and the community;
- (d) Bring scholars and events in education to the Union University campus.

With national recognition and accreditation of the University’s teacher education programs and burgeoning graduate programs for teachers, the Center exists to assist and coordinate efforts internally and externally to promote the excellence of new ideas in education.

Center for Faculty Development

Director: Barbara McMillin

Associate Director: Nan Thomas

The mission of the Center for Faculty Development is to encourage faculty in:

- (a) Effective and innovative teaching;
- (b) Pursuit of scholarship and professional growth;
- (c) Integration of faith in casual and classroom interactions;
- (d) Integration of faith and learning through spiritual formation.

The Center conducts the new faculty orientation program (Fresh Start), the new faculty mentoring program (Mentor Network) and continual training for all faculty (In the Academy). The Center also sponsors the Newell Innovative Teaching Awards and the Teagle Grant Awards for innovative teaching and scholarship. Twice a year the Center hosts an integration of faith and learning collegium for faculty to learn how to think Christianly about their disciplines and hosts two integration of faith chapel speakers each year.

Center for Excellence in Health Care Practice

Director: Tim Smith

The purpose of the Center of Excellence in Health Care Practice is to demonstrate the Christian worldview of humanity in enhancing the skills and knowledge of students and existing health care practitioners. The Center seeks to demonstrate the Christian worldview of humanity through simulation education, continuing education, information services to the community, and excellence in clinical research.

Center for Media, Faith and Culture

Director: Michael D. Chute

The Center for Media, Faith and Culture is designed to provide Christians serving in various mediums in the field of communications with worldview and skills needed for them to engage the culture as change agents in the 21st century.

Center for Politics and Religion

Director: Micah J. Watson

The Center for Politics and Religion is meant to provide a forum for teaching, research, and discussion about the intersection between politics and religion. The Center sponsors conferences, promotes research, and encourages students to "think Christianly" about how their faith should affect their politics by analyzing the role of religion in America and the world. The Center aims not only to prepare Union students to impact the political world winsomely and effectively for Christ, but also to represent Union in the larger conversation about faith and politics taking place among fellow believers and non-believers alike.

Edward P. Hammons Center for Scientific Studies

Acting Director: Andy Madison

The Edward P. Hammons Center for Scientific Studies was formed to show, by example, how science and Christianity are not only compatible, but also synergistic. Science at Union University is seen from a Christian vantage point.

The Center operates with the presupposition that science as observed truth need not conflict with revealed truth and that science is impossible apart from the recognition that God has created an orderly universe. Accordingly, the Center strives to provide a fertile environment for the exploration of the nature of the universe, in order to afford a greater appreciation of the complexity and glory of God's creation. The Center seeks to accomplish this by the encouragement of excellence in research and publication by our faculty and by sponsorship of conferences, lectures by outstanding scholars, and community outreach programs.

Center for Racial Reconciliation

Director: Roland Porter

The center's mission and purpose is to serve as Union's Hub for discovery, articulation and implementation of Christian Strategies to reverse the unjust consequences of racial discrimination and to prevent their recurrence.