

The Imago Dei Initiative: Embracing Cultural Responsibility
Asbury University Quality Enhancement Plan
Executive Summary

The Asbury University 2019-2029 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *The Imago Dei Initiative: Embracing Cultural Responsibility*, aims to foster and cultivate cultural competency as an institutional initiative. After an exhaustive review of relevant data about campus needs, and in conjunction with our institution's 5-year Strategic Priorities document, Imagine2022, our QEP committee concluded that cultural responsibility, as an area of focus, was both relevant and necessary.

The committee chose the following student learning outcomes for the project:

- I. Knowledge
 - a. Students will articulate a Biblical understanding of cultural diversity
 - b. Students will be able to define cultural responsibility
 - c. Students will demonstrate understanding of one's own cultural identity
 - d. Students will be able to interpret one's own direct experience of cultural identity
- II. Skills
 - a. Students will demonstrate empathy and awareness in interpersonal interactions
 - b. Students will be able to effectively engage cultures outside their own
 - c. Students will conduct self-appraisal to enhance cultural awareness
- III. Attitudes
 - a. Students will display humility in inter- and intra-cultural interactions

The Imago Dei Initiative has been crafted to include an array of activities as a means to successfully address and fulfill these student learning outcomes:

- I. The addition of a credit-bearing cultural engagement requirement to the University's Foundations general education program;
- II. The development of an academic curriculum to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes of cultural responsibility; and
- III. The formation of an administrative unit to assist with project implementation, analyze activities and consider additional steps to promote cultural responsibility.

These activities are consonant with, and motivated by, our school's theological understanding grounded within the Wesleyan tradition. Specifically, we believe that all humans bear God's image, that we are both relationally constituted and situated in differing contexts that shape our understanding of the social order, and that the cultivation of "cultural responsibility," wherein we understand and appreciate each other not simply as individuals but as products of these differing cultural contexts, is an earthly development of a heavenly reality. Scripture teaches that humans of every "tongue, tribe, and nation" will exist side-by-side in communal love and worship under the lordship of Christ.

Leadership for *The Imago Dei Initiative* rests on the shoulders of QEP Director Rev. Esther Jadhav, Assistant Vice President for Intercultural Affairs at Asbury University (esther.jadhav@asbury.edu).