

Northwest University Campus Ministries Spiritual Formation Strategy and Policy

Spiritual Formation Strategy

As a Christian institution, Northwest University is committed to the enterprise of spiritual formation as a core aspect of student development. We intentionally facilitate an environment that encourage all community members to actively grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, and to live in a way that is worthy of their calling. Spiritual formation as a community fosters a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ and His Word, builds His church, and reinforces the common bond that the Holy Spirit uses to unify the generations of alumni who pass through Northwest University.

Northwest University is a learning community committed to spiritual vitality, academic excellence, and empowered engagement with human need. Northwest's Campus Ministries Department exists to cultivate the spiritual vitality of the NU Community and foster the spiritual formation of each member. Campus Ministries accomplishes this by fostering spiritual formation personally, relationally, corporately, and missionally.

What is Spiritual Formation?

Spiritual Formation is the process of shaping the innermost dimension of a person (the heart) into a definitive form or character.

Christian Spiritual Formation is the redemptive, grace-empowered process where people partner with the Holy Spirit to trans(form) the heart (the innermost dimension of a person) to take on the definitive form or character of Jesus, the true human.

How and Where Does this Happen?

Christian Spiritual Formation happens at Northwest University primarily through teaching, community, and practice all by the work of the Holy Spirit. Practically, Campus Ministries provides opportunities for students to grow in four interrelated areas of spiritual formation. They are:

- **Personally** – Communing with Jesus as individuals; facilitated through spiritual disciplines, including devotions, Scriptural study, and prayer.
- **Relationally** – Learning from and encouraging fellow Christ followers in their walk with Christ; facilitated through Life Groups and community gatherings such as the prayer team, Chic Chat and FellaShip, Courageous Conversations, and more.
- **Congregationally** – Gathering together to worship God in hearing the Scripture, sermons, singing, testimony, communion, prayer, confession, generosity, and more; facilitated through gatherings and conferences.

- **Missionally** – Going into environments outside the University to engage in God’s mission, building His Church, and participating in the work of the Kingdom. This is facilitated through local and global missions that engage in evangelism, discipleship, justice, generosity, and others forms of ministry.

In essence, Campus Ministries creates space for spiritual formation through engagement in a diversity of activities:

- Preaching and Teaching
- Scripture Reading, Hearing, and Study
- Corporate Singing
- Sharing of testimony and creative expression
- Confession and Repentance
- Communion and Baptism
- Prayer
- Devotionals/Daily Office and Journaling
- Encouraging church participation
- Short Term Mission Opportunities
- Evangelism Opportunities
- Generosity, Service, Ministry, and Justice Opportunities
- Life Groups
- Mentorship
- Counseling (Wellness Center)

In summary, our work is to help foster the spiritual vitality of our community and the spiritual formation of each member. Spiritual formation is not easily quantified and measured. There is no moment where a person is completely spiritually formed, so our aim is to create opportunities to help students value and participate in their own spiritual formation. By its very nature, spiritual formation cannot be imposed on a person. Our hope is that students engage in opportunities where spiritual formation can happen as they partner with the Holy Spirit’s working in their lives.

The goal in this process is to *facilitate opportunities for spiritual formation within our community*. This is distinct from merely having spiritual community, which does not actively propel our faith into action. It is also distinct from spiritual formation outside of our community, which plays a separate role in the lives our students from the spiritual formation they experience while together at NU.

Philosophy of Chapel Gatherings

A large portion of the spiritual formation that occurs at Northwest University happens in the corporate setting of chapel gatherings. While these gatherings are not the only place for spiritual formation, we see them as a primary expression of the spiritual vitality of our community and core to our DNA. These gathering are essential to affirming and shaping our identity as a Jesus-following community. In order for chapel to accomplish this purpose, the focus must be on core spiritual formation teaching pillars.

We acknowledge that chapel is the primary gathering place for the Northwest community. While there are possible announcements, topics, lectures, and ideas that could be presented in chapel, the Spiritual Formation committee, tasked with maintaining the central focus of chapel, must be selective with what is presented.

The primary purpose of chapel gatherings is to gather in worship, keeping our community spiritually vibrant and each member engaged in spiritual formation. Worship includes, but also extends beyond, the hearing, reading, and teaching of Scripture and the Christian faith, corporate singing, confession, prayer, testimony, partaking in communion, and giving.

Corporate Spiritual Formation Teaching Pillars

A large portion of the spiritual formation that occurs at Northwest University happens in the corporate setting of our chapel gatherings. To ensure that students are exposed to all the foundational aspects of life in Jesus Christ while they attend NU, we have identified six teaching pillars as the basis of our chapel programming each academic year. Each pillar is taught through the lens of a relationship with Jesus and knowledge of Scripture.

These pillars are:

Relationship with God

1. **Gospel:** Humanity was created for relationship with God, but that relationship was severed by sin. The gospel is the good news of how Jesus graciously and sacrificially restored the possibility of relationship through His death and resurrection.
2. **Holy Spirit:** A result of the gospel is that every disciple of Jesus receives the Holy Spirit, who is God living in us. Disciples must learn to “keep in step with the Spirit.” Walking by the Spirit is essential for a vibrant, growing relationship with God. The gifts of the Spirit are given for sanctification, edification, and mission.

Relationship with Self

3. **Practice (Disciplines):** Being a disciple of Jesus is more about training than trying. If we want the life of Jesus, we must adopt the lifestyle, practices, habits, and disciplines of Jesus as a Spirit-empowered response to the gospel.
4. **Apologetics:** Being a disciple of Jesus in a fallen world presents a variety of complexities. As a response to the gospel, apologetics seeks to address the intellectual obstacles to knowing and accepting truth, and the personal obstacles to accepting and deepening trust in Jesus.

Relationship with Others

5. **Community:** The gospel not only provides a personal relationship with God, but also ushers us into a community of disciples: the Church. As we learn to live by the Spirit, we also learn to walk out the gospel well in this complex community.
6. **Mission:** If the news of the relationship we have with God through Jesus is good and true, then it has radical implications for all of creation. Mission is how every disciple partners with God in drawing others to Him and establishing His kingdom in the world.

Spiritual Life Attendance Policy

Requirements and Opportunities

Students must register for one of the two CLIF 1790 Community Life Chapel courses during registration, regardless of how they plan to attain their required spiritual life credits.

- All full-time, traditional undergraduate students are required to attain 35 Spiritual Life credits per semester.
- All full-time, traditional undergraduate students living off campus who have no classes before 1:30pm on chapel days are required to attain 15 Spiritual Life credits per semester.
- All part-time undergraduate students taking 7-11 credits are required to attain 15 Spiritual Life credits per semester.
- All students who have class conflicts due to their major during both chapel hours are required to attain at least 15 Spiritual Life credits per semester through the wide variety of options provided besides chapel.
- The Spiritual Life Credit Appeal form is available on the Campus Ministries Eagle page, and must be filled out and returned to the Campus Ministries office or emailed to slattendance@northwestu.edu by the Friday after the add/drop date to be considered by the Spiritual Life Committee.

Spiritual Formation is a critical part of the Northwest University mission and student experience. Recognizing the complexity of students' lives and spiritual formation, the Campus Ministries Department works to facilitate a diverse assortment of spiritual formation opportunities in which to participate. As with all other required courses at Northwest, it is the student's responsibility to do what is needed to meet the attendance requirements.

The required number of Spiritual Life credits may be appealed for individuals on a case-by-case basis and must be approval by the Spiritual Life Committee. Appeals are not available for homework, busy schedules, lunch, on- or off-campus work schedules, and/or study purposes. The Spiritual Life Credit Appeal form is available on the Campus Ministries Eagle page and must be fully completed with the required signatures and returned to the Campus Ministries office or to slattendance@northwestu.edu for consideration by the Spiritual Life Committee. Students will be notified via email of the committee's decision.

Spiritual Life credit opportunities are formed in such a way as to encourage students to take ownership of all four components of spiritual formation. Students have choices as to how they will reach their 35 spiritual life credits for the semester through the following opportunities:

- Personal Devotions:
 - Students must use the Campus Ministries devotional for the semester they are in, and complete a journal of at least 45 entries by the end of the semester. There must be at least 8 sentences per entry. Journals turned in at the end of the semester to the Campus Ministries office and accepted by the Spiritual Life Committee will count for 5 Spiritual Life credits.
- Life Groups:
 - Meet at various times during the week and cover various topics. Students can attain one Life Group credit per week. More information about Life Groups can be found on the Campus Ministries Eagle page under "Life Groups".
 - UCOR small group attendance does not count as life group credit.

- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Chapels in Butterfield Chapel:
 - CLIF 1790 Section 01 – 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
 - CLIF 1790 Section 02 – 11:20 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.
- Monday Night Pursuit in Butterfield Chapel:
 - 8:30-10:00 p.m.
- Local Missions:
 - Various opportunities offered weekly, as advertised by the Campus Ministries office. Students can attain one Local Missions credit per week.
- Global Missions (Spring Semester Only)
 - Various missions trips offered by the Campus Ministries office. Students can attain five credits upon completing the missions course. Credits are applied upon the booking of each teams' airfare.
- ChicChat and FellaShip
 - Sunday evening gatherings for the women and men of NU to enjoy fellowship.
- Conferences
 - Various conferences hosted by Campus Ministries each semester.
- Extra opportunities:
 - At least 5 opportunities outside the Campus Ministries office will be approved for Spiritual Life credit each semester. These events are proposed by departments, professors, or students. They may be lectures, interactive events, and/or conferences. Requests for Spiritual Life credit for an event can be submitted to the Spiritual Life Attendance Committee using the form on Eagle.

Recording Spiritual Life Attendance

Attendance is recorded through scans or manual entry by appointed leadership on the My Attendance site, which can be found on the Campus Ministries' Eagle page.

- **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Chapel and Pursuit** attendance is taken by each student scanning their card prior to the gathering and scanning it again when the gathering is dismissed. Scanning begins 15 minutes before the gatherings, and ends 15 minutes after. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late will not be scanned. Attendance will be uploaded within 48 hours of a gathering.
- **Life Group** attendance is recorded by Life Group leaders electronically through the MyAttendance site. Updates are visible to group members immediately.
- **Missions and Extra Opportunities** attendance is recorded by the event organizer and turned into the Campus Ministries' office. Students' names and ID numbers are both required. This will be uploaded onto MyAttendance within 48 hours of reception.

If a student scans their ID card at the beginning of chapel, leaves during the gathering, and returns at the end to re-scan their ID card, in an effort to make it appear that they attended chapel, they will receive an immediate Spiritual Life credit failure for the semester.

Campus Ministries is unable to give credit without a student ID card. Should a student forget or lose their card, they will be encouraged to make up that credit through other opportunities. Lost or forgotten cards may be replaced through Information Technology, found in the Barton Building.

Students are expected to keep track of their Spiritual Life Attendance records on the My Attendance site, and have one week to email slattendance@northwestu.edu if they think they mistakenly did not receive credit for a gathering or event that they attended.

Spiritual Life Credit Adjustments

Northwest University does not have a process to excuse absences for personal reasons (e.g., common illnesses, work, appointments). However, a specific chapel session can be excused for participation in athletics or other NU co-curricular activities by request from the faculty advisor and/or coach, if the request is made in advance of the absence and approved through the Provost's office.

Students must manage their schedule to meet the required 35 credits through the available opportunities. The number of opportunities offered covers all eventualities.

An adjustment of required credits may be considered by the Spiritual Life Committee for students who complete the Spiritual Life Credit Adjustment Request (found under Resources and Forms on the Campus Ministries' Eagle page), and return it to the Campus Ministries office or email it to slattendance@northwestu.edu. Students must fill out the full form and include their class schedule from Self-Service. To be considered for an adjustment, students must meet one of the following requirements:

- Off-campus students who do not have classes before 1:30 p.m. on chapel days (M, W, F)
- Student-parents who are responsible for caring for their small child(ren) *during* the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday chapel hours
- Students involved in student teaching, nursing clinicals, or other practicum assignments that conflict with the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday chapel hours
- Students with classes they *must* take during both chapel hours. In these cases, the adjustment request must be signed by their advisor and by the Academic Success and Advising office.

All students are expected to participate in Spiritual Life activities regularly until they are notified of the Spiritual Life Attendance committee's decision regarding their adjustment request.

Spiritual Life Credit Failure

Spiritual Life credit and participation are vital to this Christian community. Therefore, students who choose not to meet the Spiritual Life credit requirement are held accountable through the following process:

All students participating in student leadership programs and athletic teams must maintain a passing Spiritual Life credit record during the semester of participation and the semester immediately prior to participation. Failure to do so will result in reconsideration of the student's scholarship and participation in their student leadership or athletic program.

If, at the end of the semester, a student has less than the required number of Spiritual Life credits, (s)he will be charged \$25 per Spiritual Life credit not attained. This fee will be applied to the

student's account. Registration and ability to receive transcripts may be put on hold until the fee is paid. The maximum fee a student can be charged is \$500 per semester. Students will be notified via email of their failure and the fee applied to their account when the semester concludes. All of the money from the fee goes to the Northwest University Benevolence Fund. More information on the Benevolence Fund can be found [here](#).