

Averett University: Honoring our Christian Heritage

Our Heritage

The institution now known as Averett University was founded in 1859 by Baptists interested in providing high quality education for the young women of the region. By founding an educational institute for women in the mid-nineteenth century, the Baptists of Southside Virginia displayed courage and foresight, taking a bold step that was radical at the time.

In the spring of 2006, the 147-year relationship between Averett and the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) came to a close. While the Board of Trustees of Averett University agreed that the time had arrived to separate from the BGAV, the board also affirmed that Averett's roots in Christian principles would nourish its future. Averett was not to follow the course taken by other institutions that severed ties with a founding denomination, becoming a secular college devoid of religious sensibility or sensitivity. We now declare that Averett will continue to operate distinctively as a university based on Christian principles.

Our Vision

- Averett University **does not** demand of any individual member of the community to subscribe to any creed.
- Averett University takes seriously the historical and religious significance of the Bible and uses the tools of modern scholarship to discover the meanings that may be constructive and uplifting.
- Averett will be a safe haven for exploration.
- All discussions are to be understood as dialogues with colleagues rather than debates against opponents.
- The authentic respect for all members of the Averett community is rooted in these principles:
 - All are autonomous individuals with a right to personal beliefs
 - All should be contributing members of the dialogue
 - All deserve the courtesy of being challenged

A Place for Dialogue

Averett University will not merely endorse what students have learned before. Neither will Averett disseminate "The Truth," to be written down, memorized, and regurgitated on exams. All students will be expected to engage in the process of inquiry and discovery. Rooted in the Christian articulation of principles of the worth of all persons, Averett welcomes all who wish to join in a true dialogue of ideas. People of all faiths and people of no faith will be respected, and their contributions to any discussion will be valued. Averett will be a place where questions are honored and the individual's right to choose a path authentic to her or him will be protected. This includes the principle of academic freedom for all members of Averett's learning community—students, staff, faculty and alumni. Personal beliefs and expressions will be protected and academic discussions will be ruled only by the accepted standards of the disciplines. We might summarize by suggesting that Averett's motto will be: "Where all are challenged in a common search for Truth and Meaning."