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Developing Policies and Procedures for Restorative Accountability at Southwestern Assemblies of God University

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ABSTRACT

This project was designed to address a lack of policies and procedures at Southwestern Assemblies of God University that support its restorative accountability approach in addressing student conduct violations. The student handbook provides rights and responsibilities afforded each student as well as the procedures that appointed staff members are to follow in the event that campus policies are violated; however, the language used in the student handbook did not address modern student culture, nor did it procedurally assist staff members in helping students to develop spiritually. The project intervention involved staff members who address student violations with grace as well as students who have been involved in restoring students to good standing to God, the institution, and one to another.

Questions originally arose from focus group data collected among student leaders during the Fall 2018 semester. The students admitted that they were not aware of how they could receive restoration through accountability because the current student handbook policies do not provide that information to them. This led to not only a redesign of the student handbook to make the language relevant to college students, but to also help them understand that following a restorative process involves discipleship for them as a person and member of a community built on a foundation of love and grace. The core of this process is found in the Apostle Paul's theology in 2 Cor 5:11-21 as well as practices found in restorative justice.

Developing Policies and Procedures for Restorative Accountability at
Southwestern Assemblies of God University

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

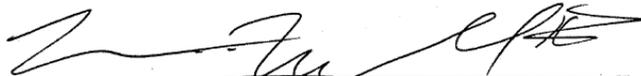
By

W. Lance Meche

May 2022

This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate W. Lance Meche, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

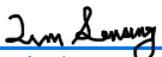
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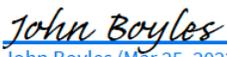
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To the men and women who invest and serve at colleges and universities that see the unlimited potential of young people today.

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showed me how to how to juggle this ministry, but also to enjoy life. President Kermit Bridges, his cabinet, and the SAGU family in general, have given me strength, especially while finishing during the last two years during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis focused on a ministry intervention that invited student and employee stakeholders at Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) to develop policies and procedures for a pre-existing student disciplinary methodology. SAGU Residential Life members formed a project design team who communally discerned how to restore students with grace and help them develop spiritually and mentally through accountability. Chapter 1 describes the ministry context at SAGU along with a brief history of student discipline in American colleges and universities. Additionally, Chapter 1 includes the problem and purpose as well as the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations for this project. Chapter 2 provides the theological drive of the project in addition to the theoretical background of restorative justice. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the intervention and evaluation of the resulting data. Chapter 4 presents an interpretation of data collected from field notes. Lastly, Chapter 5 concludes with thoughts concerning the significance of the project and future applications for other contexts and ministry opportunities.

Ministry Context

Southwestern Assemblies of God University is located in Waxahachie, TX, and is owned by nine districts that govern the Assemblies of God churches within the same region. The Assemblies of God is a fellowship of churches and ministers that began in 1914 at a gathering in Hot Springs, Arkansas, with 300 individuals from a variety of

church traditions. Many were from Evangelical or Holiness movements that desired to be part of the outpourings of the Spirit of God that occurred in the Topeka, KS, revival meetings between 1901 and 1906 through the leadership and teachings of Charles Parham.¹ Since a few years prior to the turn of the twentieth century revivals, Assembly of God adherents trace their history to Topeka, KS, and to the Azusa Street Revivals held in Los Angeles, CA, from 1906 to 1909. These believers had common experiences of speaking in tongues, using spiritual gifts, divine healings, gender equality, racial diversity, and missional endeavors. Calling themselves “Pentecostals,” these members that embraced the newfound experiences of the Holy Spirit and, desired to return to a true biblical view of the New Testament through the lens of an openness to modern-day spiritual experiences.²

In the 1914 conference in Hot Springs, AR, believers wanted to fellowship with more like-minded individuals. It was there that a selection of national leaders occurred and a Presbyterian form of leadership with a congregational style of church settings developed. Early on, pastoral selection occurred by having a call to the local church (a board of trustees leads these churches), were voted on by church members and then were ratified by the board. Sixteen fundamental doctrines came forth which were based on theological views of the Holy Spirit, eschatology, ordinances of the church, the mission of God, and the Holy Trinity. Originally, ministers could obtain credentials by having a call to the local church. Training added later through the headquarters of the Assemblies of God national office. However, this process changed with the establishment of Bible

1. William W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God*, Vol. 1 (Springfield: GPH, 1971), 41.

2. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve*, 49–59.

colleges that facilitated the process of credentialing ministers. Over the course of the last one hundred years, seventeen autonomous and independently operated institutions emerged. Nearly all of these institutions are regionally accredited. Although they aid in providing credentials to men and women called to ministry, they are not the only source for receiving credentials within the Assemblies of God. Many of these institutions also provide liberal arts degrees.

Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) is a conservative Christian university located just south of Dallas, TX, that was birthed out of the merging of three Bible schools, Southern Bible Institute (began in Houston, TX, in 1931), Shield of Faith Bible School (began in Amarillo, TX, in 1931), and Southwestern Bible School (began in Enid, OK, in 1927). The merger of the three schools in 1941 became Southwestern Bible College in Fort Worth, TX. In 1943, relocation to Waxahachie, TX, took place after the purchase of the current campus from Trinity University (formerly Trinity Presbyterian).³ In 1989, SAGU received regional accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.⁴ Due to continued growth and a vision for the future, Southwestern made another name change to Southwestern Assemblies of God University in 1994 and began granting master's degrees in 1996.⁵ In 2015, SAGU began offering its first doctoral program, a Doctor of Ministry degree.

Because many of the students at SAGU come from smaller Assembly of God churches, a significant number are from middle-to lower-income backgrounds. Quite a

3. Mary Jackson, Gary McElhany, and Loyd Uglow, *For the Whole World: A History of Southwestern Assemblies of God University* (Dallas: Walsworth, 2003), 3–13.

4. Jackson, McElhany, and Uglow, *For the Whole World*, 36.

5. Jackson, McElhany, and Uglow, *For the Whole World*, 44–45.

few receive Pell Grants and Texas Equalization Grants. SAGU's demographical makeup tends to be 50-55% Caucasian, 20-25% Hispanic/Latino, approximately 10-15% Black/African-American, and an additional 10% or less that are two or more ethnicities. Less than 25% of the SAGU student population are first-generation college students. The male-to-female ratio living on campus tends to hover around the 52/48% mark, with minor percentage changes from year to year. Typically speaking, student athletes make up 25-30% of the housing population, but in the Fall 2019 semester, they made up 35% of the student population living on campus.⁶ In essence, student athletics draws more male students to the SAGU campus than females, which also raises the percentage of overall males on campus.⁷ More than 45% of the SAGU on-campus student body make up the church ministry and church leadership majors, 14% are business-related majors, 14% are behavioral science majors, 7% are education majors, 12% are general studies, and another 8% are a miscellaneous group of another twenty majors.⁸

In general, SAGU takes a strong sense of pride in the fact that out of all seventeen colleges, universities, and one seminary, it produces nearly double the number of credentialed Assemblies of God ministers than the next highest college or university. The core values of SAGU include Bible-based education, Pentecostal distinction, spiritual formation, academic excellence, missions-mindedness, servant leadership, community and personal wellness. Reflecting non-pejoratively on the Assemblies of God culture as a

6. In Fall 2019, several sports received permission to expand their rosters more than in previous years, which increased the overall athlete enrollment.

7. In any given semester, male students violate student handbook policies more often than females. They also violate policies more often than other groups.

8. Statistical information provided by the Athletics Office and Registrar's Office at SAGU is based on data regarding residential undergraduate students in the Fall 2019 semester.

whole, the political landscape and representation by administrative leadership at SAGU is classically conservative. Many of the SAGU current student body are still conservative in some aspects, but the political landscape of the students arriving on campus has been slowly gravitating to the more moderate arena.

The leadership structure of SAGU is typical to other institutions of higher learning in that the President and his Cabinet of Vice Presidents guide the daily life of the university. Five Vice Presidents make up the Cabinet of the President, and each Cabinet member has Department Directors underneath them, except for the Vice President of Academics who has five of the Academic Deans underneath his leadership. Historically speaking, the President and a majority of the Cabinet members were all Assemblies of God ministers. At this time, four of the Cabinet members, including the President, are credentialed ministers with the Assemblies of God. They represent a variety of backgrounds in higher education, church ministry, and business. The Vice President of Student Development oversees the Residential Life Department as my supervisor, but also supervises four additional Directors, which includes the Athletic Director, Director of the Wellness Center, Student Counseling Center Director, and Director of Campus Safety and Security.

The ministry context in which I operate as the Dean of Students is as a campus minister to the residential undergraduates, which consists of approximately 700 students living in residential halls on campus and 200 or so commuters who live within the local area. SAGU has a total population of approximately 1900 students, which includes two extension campuses, school of ministry sites that focus purely on church leadership degrees in context, and students taking online courses. My role as a minister at SAGU is

comprised of administrative duties, which includes oversight to the residential halls on campus, the five resident directors (referred to as “Dorm Pastors” on the SAGU campus), and the thirty-one resident assistants entrusted to our care for training and leadership development. Part of those administrative duties involves maintaining campus discipline and adherence to the biblical values and community values that SAGU requires its students to abide by. Additional administrative duties include budgetary supervision, development of departmental assessments, oversight of chapel programming and daily attendance, as well as to ensure the proper maintenance of residential facilities.

Other duties related to my position are purely ministerial and include hospital visitation, contacting parents regarding emergencies, and providing momentary pastoral counseling before referring to Counseling Services. My office also provides restorative strategies to students in violation of the SAGU Student Handbook, daily supervision over felt and spiritual needs of students, and giving oversight to the student dorm devotional program led by Dorm Pastors and Resident Assistants.⁹ Additionally, I also preside over student complaints and disputes regarding disciplinary policies through the lens of spiritual formation and Scripture, provide direction in the midst of suicidal ideation assessments, and provide direction in conflict resolution for both students and parents of students. This DMin project focuses on the shift that occurred from a punitive nature to restorative strategies in SAGU’s Student Handbook.

9. SAGU views restoration as the process of returning a student to the standing prior to the offense. Students have an opportunity to restore their standing with the university, an individual, or a group of people by being assigned mentoring and participating in a values-based six-week course called *Phronesis*. Mentors are usually Residential Life staff or student Resident Assistants who check on the spiritual development of the student throughout the course of *Phronesis*, which focuses on using wisdom for better decision-making.

SAGU has always maintained a Student Handbook for its students, which serves as a guide for living in community with other believers, whether they be an on-campus resident or a commuter student. The values of SAGU divide into two categories: Biblical Standards and Community Standards. The Biblical Standards derive from SAGU's interpretations of several biblical positions for matters of morality. Multiple Assemblies of God position papers on certain moral and cultural/social issues influence SAGU's policies.¹⁰ The Community Standards address concerns for the community and are not necessarily scriptural concerns, but they do assist in providing homeostasis to the campus family in matters related to appearance codes, curfew, and other general community related matters. Historically, Community Standards were developed and written into the SAGU Student Handbook within the Office of the Vice President of Student Development, although recommendations for changes come from within the Residential Life Department staff and from SAGU's Student Congress.¹¹ Since its inception, SAGU embraced some form of community standards that have evolved over time due to changes in culture, the church, and society. Some changes have occurred in the SAGU Student Handbook over the years to reflect community values, but most changes have been made over the last eight to ten years, especially in regards to addressing the consequences of standard violations in the lives of students.

Since 2014, SAGU changed the former behavior contract to a restorative covenant. The behavior contract maintained a list of requirements, while the restorative

10. The Assemblies of God website stores all of its doctrinal positions as well as its position papers: www.ag.org.

11. The SAGU student body elects Student Congress officers who serve as student representatives, respond to student opinion and refers those opinions to university leaders.

covenant represents a collaboration and agreement between the institution and the student. The collaborative process encourages involvement in the student's personal and spiritual development. Most often, students agree to participate in a developmental/discipleship-oriented curriculum called *Phronesis*.¹² SAGU's Dorm Pastors direct the *Phronesis* classes for six weeks and provide mentoring to those involved. Because SAGU's paradigm shifted from a judicial methodology without a unifying theology to a restorative format that focuses on Paul's ministry of reconciliation in 2 Cor 5:11–21, the language and policies within the Student Handbook needed revising to reflect that shift.¹³

The Cabinet at SAGU makes all major decisions on campus in addition to having the ability to speak into controversial issues as well as moderate to major policy changes. The President and Vice President of Student Development weigh in on probationary decisions as well as any decision that could lead to suspension. Even though SAGU shows grace without discrimination and is consistent in enforcing policy from student to student, incongruence exists at times between perception of the student and communication of campus staff. The frustration for students at SAGU exists between the content of the SAGU Student Handbook and the process for addressing conduct issues when mistakes and violations occur. SAGU has a restorative accountability approach to student conduct, but it does not have a fully developed system outlined in the official

12. SAGU provides some sort of accountability for every student involved in a conduct issue whether it be extreme or minor (i.e., probation of some sort, suspension from various campus activities or extracurricular activities, an educational opportunity to learn from the situation, or a values-based curriculum that focuses on using wisdom for better decision-making in the future). The Apostle Paul in uses the term "*phronesis*" in Ephesians 1:28 to further explain practical wisdom necessary in decision-making.

13. All references come from the Common English Bible except for references from authors.

policies in the Student Handbook. This makes it challenging for the Resident Directors and Resident Assistants to communicate the student conduct procedures to the student and to navigate difficult conversations in the midst of their struggles. This also contributes to the confusion between student perception and administrative practice.

A Brief History of Student Discipline in America

Even though higher education has a rich history, many changes occurred once it travelled to the Western hemisphere. Glick and Haug explain that prior to the Revolutionary War in America, college life appeared more like secondary schools where faculty, and even college presidents, helped students in many facets of life, including morality.¹⁴ After the Civil War, while America was still adjusting to many new changes in a country torn apart by war, the American collegiate system also saw changes in supervisory structures with the addition of “new positions that became known as dean of women and dean of men.”¹⁵ Even though European universities had already adopted the principles of *in loco parentis*, or “in the place of the parent or instead of the parent” from English common law, American colleges had just begun operating around this time in this particular doctrine.¹⁶ Their goal was to instill the best interests of the college or university into the student since the parents had entrusted their student into the care of the institution.

13. Brian M. Glick and Christopher T. Haug, “Evolution of the Student Conduct Profession,” in *Student Conduct Practice: The Complete Guide for Student Affairs Professionals*, 2nd ed., ed. Diane M. Waryold (Sterling: Stylus, 2020), 6.

14. Glick and Haug, “Evolution of the Student Conduct Profession,” 7.

16. Michael Dannels, *From Discipline to Development: Rethinking Student Conduct in Higher Education*, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report 25, no. 2 (1997): 20.

The early twentieth century saw a slow but steady climb for those attending college, but it was not until after World War II that higher education saw a dramatic increase in attendance. Of course, a climbing attendance rate saw a rise in student conduct violations. This and the case of *Dixon v Alabama State Board of Education* in 1961 and the ratification of the 26th Amendment brought a shift away from *in loco parentis*.¹⁷ This shift coincided with changes in the consumerist views of Americans, human development theory, and contractual law that centered on judicial boards and “due process.”¹⁸ The lowering of the age of majority in most states and the 26th Amendment in 1971 in addition to the development of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in 1974 expanded the idea that a student is a legal adult at 18 years of age and is entitled to those rights as an adult student.¹⁹ Students not only acquired a publicly acknowledged entrance into adulthood, but the rights afforded also carried consequences. Student Affairs departments were created to address the rights and responsibilities of their students.

Dannels describes four theories involved in the arena of student affairs. The aforementioned *contract theory* provides a written record of policies and procedures for the students of a given institution in an individual college catalog, student handbook, or online publication, and requires those students to agree to those requirements as part of

17. Glick and Haug, “Evolution of the Student Conduct Profession,” 7; Dannels, *From Discipline to Development*, 10. In *Dixon vs. Alabama*, the courts defined that a college student had the right to receive notice of the violation and defend claims against them. The 26th Amendment lowered voting age to 18.

18. Dannels, *From Discipline to Development*, 19; Glick and Haug, “Evolution of the Student Conduct Profession,” 9. College conduct proceedings started mimicking legal courts.

19. U. S. Department of Education website. “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act,” <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/ferpa/index.html>

its admissions process.²⁰ *Educational purpose theory* limits the relationship of the institution to behaviors that affect the overall educational mission of the university. *Statutory theory* and *constitutional theory* contrast each other in that the statutory theory provides the university authority to discipline through legislative means, while the constitutional theory provides the legal limits that the institution can enact.

Due to increases in code for legal protections, student disciplinary processes have become judicial in both word and in action in order to match the court systems as closely as possible. Much of this is to protect the institution from litigation and establish due process for the student. Some institutions inadvertently entered into a legalistic mindset due to the system handed down to them over time; however, all cycles need evaluating, even when they do not appear broken. Lake argues that “We need to move beyond legalistic discipline, transform the process of higher education itself, and claim the final victory in a long and painful student rights revolution. . . . Rules beget rules, process more process.”²¹ Current student disciplinary processes need consistent evaluation based on the rights and needs of the student coupled with the rights and needs of the institution.

Educational institutions educate their students in the particular fields they deem worthy; therefore, every aspect of the teaching community needs an educational or development component in their structures, including student disciplinary processes. Wisdom, good judgment, and critical thinking are values that deserve enhancement outside of the classroom as well as inside, which aid students to see themselves not just

20. Dannels, *From Discipline to Development*, 10. As a part of the annual accreditation review by SACSCOC, the institution has to prove that it has publications that detail the rights and responsibilities of the students of SAGU.

21. Peter Lake, *Beyond Discipline: Managing the Modern Higher Education Environment* (Bradenton: Hierophant Enterprises, 2009), 9, 14.

as individuals with rights, but also as people who belong to a larger whole. Moreover, in speaking of institutions that move from a rules-based process to a student-centered process that includes educational motivators, Lake suggests they seek “a collaborative, student-centered, student-empowered approach.”²²

The student affairs era morphed into the student life or student development era of today that promotes partnerships and relationships with students rather than just providing supervisory roles. These relationships promote student connectedness to the values of the university, while maintaining their rights as individuals. Students are stakeholders in their educational pursuits, which also includes their participation in the student conduct process. This opened the door for students to help create their own processes that lead to understanding restoration and personal responsibility through the lens of the community rather than dispensing punishment to an individual who may not understand the values violated. Modern systems of student conduct incorporate conversations with students so they understand that education involves many facets of life that extend beyond the classroom. It is to this end that SAGU decided to embrace restorative practices that reconcile students to God, each other, or to the values of the institution.

Statement of the Problem

The current SAGU Student Handbook has policies and procedures that reveal each student’s rights and responsibilities as well as structures that enforce those policies if violated. SAGU also employs a methodology of showing grace but with consequences. The concern is that the current procedures do not reflect the current written policies,

22. Lake, *Beyond Discipline*, 217.

which serve as a contractual agreement between the student and the university. These questions arose from focus group data collected among student leaders during the Fall 2018 semester. The students admitted that they were not aware of how they could receive restoration through accountability because the current student handbook policies did not provide that information. The problem of this project is that SAGU lacks policies and procedures that support its approach of addressing student conduct through restorative accountability.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop policies and procedures that support the restorative accountability approach of SAGU. The intervention will gather leaders who will help formulate policies for the student handbook that reflects the methodology currently in practice. The leaders also receive input from students regarding the restorative practices at SAGU in addition to how students receive discipline for conduct violations. This will aid in providing communication pieces for the Residential Life staff in dorm orientations and in conversations with students where they can explain that SAGU is an environment that understands when students make mistakes and wants to see them reconciled and restored to the biblical and community values of the institution as well as with fellow believers.

Assumptions

The current policies and procedures do not follow a unified theology and uses a judicial approach in its procedures. The project assumes that the Residential Life staff of SAGU desire to match policy and procedures with current practice. The current practice

uses restorative justice theory along with the method of reconciliation found in 2 Cor 5:11–21.

The project will also assume that the intervention will enhance the SACSCOC next self-study report for regional accreditation for SAGU, which specifically addresses section 12.3 regarding “Student Rights.” The SACSCOC standard in 12.3 states, “The institution publishes clear and appropriate statements of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement(s) to the campus community.”²³ Since the Residential Life Department at SAGU has the responsibility of recommending updates to the SAGU Student Handbook, there is a direct correlation with the Residential Life’s staff role as project participants. The developments made to the SAGU Student Handbook directly correlate to enhancement of SACSCOC standard 12.3.

Additionally, the project assumes that other institutions possessing exemplary policies and procedures with similarities to restorative justice or restorative processes merit consultation. Seeking consultation with other student handbooks from other institutions provides perspective regarding best practice between policies and procedures. It also aids with understanding how other institutions explain their reasoning for the existence of their policies and procedures.

Delimitations

Submissions of major revisions to the SAGU Student Handbook occur by June of each year for review and edits for the next academic school year. This project asks

23. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). *Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 3rd ed. (Decatur: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2018). <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/2018-POA-Resource-Manual.pdf>

project participants to design policies and procedures for the university in restorative accountability in order to enable staff to communicate more effectively with the students of SAGU. Only reviews of policies and procedures related to community standards and biblical standards will occur. Policies and procedures will be approved by the SAGU President and his Cabinet, and on occasion, with legal counsel.

Limitations

Policies and procedures do not restore, reconcile or hold anyone accountable by their nature; therefore, the policies and procedures developed by the design team are limited. The relational aspect of implementing the policies and procedures by trained personnel in a restorative way is integral in the restorative process. Additionally, students must be responsible for their own responses to the enactment of policies and procedures.

Conclusion

SAGU has a rich history of training and developing students spiritually for both ministry and marketplace settings. In order for students to receive such training and spiritual development, they live on campus in a community setting that agrees to particular sets of values. This chapter introduced that history as well as the ministry context in which I serve that addresses those values. This chapter also introduced a brief history of how American colleges have addressed student conduct within the last three hundred years and how those processes have changed over time. Chapter 2 will provide the theological and theoretical understandings regarding the expectations of SAGU for students to dwell in harmony with one another within the community and academic experience of SAGU.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

After describing an area of change needed at Southwestern Assemblies of God University in the first chapter, this chapter offers the theological and theoretical frameworks of the intervention that occur in the third chapter as well as how they integrate for healthier policy change. The retributive model that SAGU currently publicizes implies a practice that also needs to be reconciled. The policies of SAGU speak of people, so the people for whom the policies are designed, have relevance. Even though relevance is a necessary component in renaming and developing policies for a modern generation, maintaining a consistent and timeless message of people's need for reconciliation is also a priority.

Since reconciliation requires looking back at the situation needing to be reconciled, the product we design also looks forward for healing and has a lasting purpose in mind. The verse 2 Cor 5:14 is a key verse—"one died for the sake of all"—which describes Christ's finished work on the cross. This leads to the perspective found in verses 16 and 17 for how those "in Christ" are viewed in light of this lasting work: "So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that [is not] how we know him now. So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation."¹ Since Christ died for the

1. As a part of the new created order.

world to be reconciled to him, we are a “new creation” constantly being transformed to his image. “Ambassadors who represent Christ” (2 Cor 5:20) are those who minister through reconciliation and restoration and must recognize students as a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17) who are still growing in their relationship to God. As students grow in God, they also grow in their relationships with others. It is with this knowledge, that we design a product that helps heal and restore individuals in light of Christ’s finished work on the cross.

The theological foundation of this project centers on Paul’s ministry of reconciliation found in 2 Cor 5:11–21 but will also contextualize those themes that are found throughout 1 and 2 Corinthians. Paul communicates his position as an apostle and provides an account driven by Christ’s love that encourages the giving of grace and ministry of reconciling others. He provides the personal imperative of reconciling with God to shun sin and embrace Christ’s righteousness. Because of Christ’s death and that we are made “new” in him, we not only can be reconciled to God, we can also practice reconciliation with others as well as to help lead conversations between unified people as “ambassadors who represent Christ” in order to be agents of reconciliation.

The long tradition of restorative justice provides another aspect of the foundation for this project. Restorative justice attempts to reconcile people to each other from a social and moral aspect, but does not fully attempt to do so from a biblical one since many restorative justice advocates view restorative justice through a social lens. Some of the practices and ideologies that flow from the social sector lack strong theological support. SAGU does not support some ideologies and practice in general, because they seem to be part of much larger agendas than reconciling students to each other or

reconciling them with policies of the student handbook. Restorative accountability at SAGU, however, seeks to infuse a ministry of reconciliation from the theology of Paul in 2 Cor 5:11–21, along with many of the practices found in restorative justice such as acceptance of responsibility through restitution and accountability, involvement in the process which includes personal development through repentance and discipleship, as well as reintegration. Restorative accountability unites the theological foundation of reconciliation in Paul with insights from restorative justice.

Theological Foundations

The Corinthian Letters

Corinth, a well-known and influential city at the time of Paul, is estimated to have had close to a million residents. The notoriety associated with Corinth was both positive and negative. The size of Corinth and its strategic location provided renowned influence, but it was also known for its level of immoral sexual behavior. Evangelizing this city and planting churches within its boundaries promised many plenty converts for Paul and his associates. Graciously, a man named Gaius hosted the Corinthian church in his own home since he was of a certain means.²

Even though Paul wrote the letters to the Corinthians during his missionary journeys, they came from different locations. First Corinthians was sent while Paul was staying in Ephesus, and he sent 2 Corinthians while in Macedonia. The first letter responded to oral reports from the household of Chloe concerning news about the church

3. Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 4–8.

(1 Cor 1:11–12) as well as responded to a delegation with “various questions” (1 Cor 7:1; cf. 7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12).”³

Sometime after receiving First Corinthians, the believers likely address some of the abuses that Paul wrote about, especially concerning communion (1 Cor 11:17–34) and lawsuits among other believers (1 Cor 6:1–8). Due to the arrival of the Judaizers (2 Cor 11:4, 22), Paul made another visit that he deemed a “painful” (2 Cor 2:1) one, which necessitated his “tearful letter” (2 Cor 2:4).⁴ The goal of the “tearful letter” (2 Cor 2:4) was to bring discipline to a wrongdoer. After Titus delivered the letter, he reported to Paul that the Christians welcomed its contents and felt remorse for allowing the behavior to happen.⁵ Despite scholarly disagreement about whether the letter was possibly written in parts or as several letters, for the purpose of this project, 2 Corinthians will be viewed as a whole.⁶

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to express his joy for the response of Christians in Corinth (2 Cor 7:5–7) who had repented of their offense related to the “painful visit” (2 Cor 2:1) as well as to defend himself to those still unsupportive of his ministry and the offering needed for the believers in Jerusalem.⁷ Since the backdrop of 2 Corinthians includes a previous “painful” visit (2 Cor 2:1; 12:14, 21; 13:1–2) as well as the arrival of

3. Gary M. Burge, Lynn, H. Cohick, Gene L. Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within its Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 299.

4. Burge, Cohick, and Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity*, 313.

6. Murray J. Harris, “Second Corinthians,” Pages 299-406 in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank Gaebelein et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 302, 309.

6. Frank Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster, 2003), 129. Burge, Cohick, and Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity*, 313-314.

8. Harris, “Second Corinthians,” 307-308.

the “super-apostles” (2 Cor 11:5), Paul tries to prepare the Corinthians for another visit.⁸ The way Paul had to defend his calling, the unfinished offering collection, and his style of ministry (working as a tent maker rather than serving in a client/patron relationship) implied a level of disunity that Paul needed to address in his letter.⁹

According to Mitchell, in order for Paul to persuade or address the Corinthians, he specifically used “deliberative rhetoric, the rhetoric of the assembly . . . often primarily concerned with such matters as political stability and unity.”¹⁰ This type of communication addressed important life issues, including the specific pastoral matters concerning the community in Corinth. Mitchell explains that in this rhetorical style “advice in the stricter deliberative sense is specific and occasional and letters of advice, above all, contain arguments that move from past experience and precedent to what is advantageous or disadvantageous.”¹¹ Moreover, Paul uses this technique to present several arguments to the Corinthians informing them that it would be more advantageous to them to follow courses of action that support the community over their own personal desires.¹²

Mitchell also draws attention to “calls to imitation” where the integrity of the speaker is important, in addition to “using oneself as an example” to win over an

9. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 15, 17.

10. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 8, 28.

11. Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: WJK, 1993), 61.

12. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 23.

13. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 36.

audience to their point of view, which are all publicly acceptable practices.¹³ Paul understands this from his awareness of deliberative rhetoric and uses it to his personal advantage in First Corinthians. He does his best to avoid the “commend ourselves” (2 Cor 5:12) accusation again, because apparently, this approach was not successful the first time, which meant he had to address them in a different way in order to bring the ministry of reconciliation to them.

Throughout the Corinthian letters, a variety of themes address issues that lead up to the primary theme of reconciliation found in 2 Cor 5:11–21. Paul identifies where the Corinthians failed in creating unity, but succeeded in creating division. Each theme draws out the strife and division it created, but also reveals how unity finds itself in each instance through the process of reconciliation and draws out its own life application for the Corinthians in their context and culture. Paul makes clear his vision of restoration in 1:10 “Agree with each other and (do not) be divided into rival groups. Instead, be restored with the same mind and the same purpose.” The word “*kartartizo*” (unite) is found in the conclusion of verse 10 and according to Mitchell “is also a verb used in discussion of political division and unity and antiquity. The basic meaning of the root is to adjust, put in order, restore. The word is used in a literal sense as a medical term, denoting the knitting together of broken bones or dislocated joints.”¹⁴ Paul wants the Corinthian believers who had existed as a healthy community at one time to end their divisions and come together in unity once again.

14. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 74.

The discussions surrounding these themes motivated Paul to continue writing and visiting the Corinthians because of his love for them. Despite his frustrations from time to time, he also demonstrated his devotion to them with his persistence and ability to see where transformation took place as well as in his desire to minister to them. This devotion could not be more prevalent than in 2 Cor 5:11–21 in his ministry of reconciliation where he is now an “ambassador,” encouraging the Corinthians to “be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20).

Paul’s Ministry of Reconciliation

The issues in 1 Corinthians, which included court cases against believers, immoral sexual practices, eating food sacrificed to idols, communion, and worship practices, possess a common identity that Paul is trying to correct in 2 Cor 5:11–21. The Corinthians did not grasp the understanding of what it means to be “in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17) nor understand how this fashions them together. This requires them to imitate Christ’s self-emptying kenotic activity and live as a new creation with a connected community of believers. Reconciliation speaks of harmony and unity among people who make things right with each other because of God, “who reconciled us to himself” (2 Cor 5:18).¹⁵ The disunity and factions Paul addresses in his first letter to the Corinthians need reconciling because they lack harmony and the peace of Christ. It is not enough for the Corinthians to be at peace with God, the dimension they missed is the personal “us” that Paul mentions, where believers internalize and apply a restorative ministry for the greater good of the faith community.

15. Martin, Ralph P. *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul’s Theology*, Rev. ed. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1989), 106.

Dunn offers a definition of reconciliation that seems to encompass what Paul was envisioning as “the bringing together of two parties at enmity with each other into a new peace and cooperation.”¹⁶ The assumption is that there exists some type of relational distance or something that has caused disunity needs reconciling. Since the relationship between God and the individual committing the wrong is in conflict, God provided a mediator, “in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17), to restore the relationship between the offended (God) and the offender (humankind). Even though God is the offended party, he intentionally seeks reconciliation with his creation in order to have continued relationship between them. It is with this goal in mind that Paul writes to the Corinthians with the intention of reconciling them from their disunity with each other.

Much discussion has occurred regarding the central theme of Paul’s theology. Some have “identified justification . . . others have looked to the concept of reconciliation, which is at least, another central Pauline theme.”¹⁷ Regardless of his central theology, Paul’s message of reconciliation is summarized in 2 Cor 5:11–21 with three subunits, but four priorities. In verses 11–13, Paul serves God and the church out of fear and reverence. In verses 14–17, Paul describes the death and love of Christ as his motive, driving his ministry of reconciliation. Verses 18–21 describe the “ongoing work of reconciliation,” but the subunit is divided to focus on the explicit meaning of each section. In verses 18–19, Paul explains that this ministry is vital because of sin. Lastly, in

16. James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 328.

17. Wenham, David. *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 59.

verses 20–21, Paul and other believers serve as “ambassadors” by proclaiming a ministry of reconciliation.¹⁸

Reverence for God: Verses 11–13

For Paul knowing and experiencing the fear of the Lord (a respectful appreciation and awe of who God is), intrinsically and reverentially motivated him to remind the Corinthians of his ministerial responsibility concerning the gospel.¹⁹ In verse 11, Paul addresses his hearers with the fact that he knows what it means to “fear the Lord,” based on the antecedent in verse 10. The “since, then,” “so,” or “therefore” (depending on translation), forces the reader back to the previous verse where Paul establishes that everyone will face judgement for his or her actions and states his case as a lawyer in a courtroom would. Paul is confident of the eschatological reality that judgement is coming to all people when they appear before Christ.

Through his use of *phobos*, or “fear,” in verse 11, Paul still portrays a genuine fear of what happens when a person who is out of relationship with him appears before Christ. Nevertheless, due to his motivation by this fear, Paul uses the rhetorical style of the Greco-Roman tradition to persuade (*peitho*) them to the truth, but without fully relying on a gift of persuasion, especially since others excelled in this gift more than he.²⁰ Paul felt the need to defend himself to the believers in Corinth due to the outside influence of the “super-apostles” that preached a rhetoric that was not in line with the

18. Matera, *II Corinthians*, 129.

19. Raymond F. Collins, *Second Corinthians: Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 115; Harris, “2 Corinthians,” 350.

20. Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 235–236.

gospel that Paul had presented to them earlier (11:4–5; 12:11). Since his opponents questioned the way he did not accept financial support and because he experienced suffering for his ministry, Paul desired that the Corinthians would recognize that God is the one that placed him in his apostolic ministry and had legitimate rationale for doing so.²¹

In verse 12, Paul speaks to the teaching style of the opponents he addresses as well as the content of their message.²² Paul explains that he does not attempt to revisit his argument establishing his authority to speak *per se*, but to defend himself “against outsiders” and “in terms of the character of his ministry” so that the Corinthians might have a rightful form of pride in that which comes from the inside of a person rather than in what is put on display.²³ Nevertheless, for these reasons he attempts to “persuade people” that despite questions concerning his integrity, the purpose of his ministry as an apostle is not to display any kind of personal pride in his own abilities through “self-commendation.” Paul is genuinely preoccupied with “people who seem to be more concerned about appearances than what lies within the heart.”²⁴ Paul concerned himself with presenting the gospel and the way it changed his life, not necessarily with his own appearance.

In verse 13, Paul denies his sense of self and everything he has done to be a servant “for God’s sake.”²⁵ Paul uses this verse to reflect back to verses 11–12,

21. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 116.

22. Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 85.

23. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 278.

24. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 116–117.

25. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 351.

highlighted by “crazy” and “rational,” with the former representing his service to God and the latter to the Corinthians. The message Paul delivered, therefore, consists of self-control and not necessarily an outwardly ecstatic format. Paul intentionally did not want to put on the appearance of a performance, but chose to “persuade” (2 Cor 5:11) through the ministry God had given him through the love of Christ. Since the “super-apostles” (2 Cor 11:5) depended upon a different style than the gifts he carried, Paul relied upon the substance of the gospel itself through which he presented intelligently and unselfishly as in, “for your sake” (2 Cor 5:13).²⁶

The Love of Christ: Verses 1417

In verses 1417, Paul now addresses his motive for ministry, which explains how the love of Christ “controls” (2 Cor 5:14). For Paul, this love compels him to consider others above himself. Since “one died for the sake of all, therefore, all died” (2 Cor 5:14). Metaphorically speaking, the death that Paul refers to in “all died” (2 Cor 5:14) is a death to sin, and not necessarily the universality that others believe. Barnett does have a point; however, in that the “one died for the sake of all” from verse 14 “is implicitly Christological” and explicitly literal, not just metaphorical.²⁷ “All died” (2 Cor 5:14) refers only to the people of God who have accepted the gospel of Christ with acknowledgment of the cross, sufferings, and his resurrection, since not everyone lives for God as a new creation. The only death the Corinthians experienced in the moment is the death of Christ and “because all have died in Christ, wrongdoing was separated from

26. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 283, 285.

27. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 119; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 289.

wrongdoers, and wrongdoers' guilt was removed."²⁸ Therefore, since the love of Christ compels Paul to "persuade people" (2 Cor 5:11) by preaching the gospel, the death of Christ for the sin of the world also compels him. This motive, evidenced in his sacrificial style of ministry, directly opposes those false prophets who think of him as "crazy" in verse 13.

Paul exhorts the Christians that they should no longer live for selfish gain in verse 15. Logistically, one perfect and righteous man died so that for all people for all eternity, who are dead in sin, may have life. Even though "death was still inescapable," all who repent and believe are also raised and alive in him.²⁹ Just as much as people receive life, everyone from beginning to end also receives a death. Humans do not possess the power to save themselves from death, much less sin. According to Dunn, "Christ's identification with humankind means that his death spells out the death of all. The one's identification with the all means that the death of the one is the death of all. Only if the all identify with the death of the one can the story go forward."³⁰ The "those who are alive" in verse 15 are the believers who died in verse 14 whom Christ died for. This 'for' occurs three times in this verse and is the same "soteriological 'for' (*hyper*) that brings to mind the language used by Paul when he writes about the death of Christ elsewhere in his correspondence, particularly in Romans 5:8, 'Christ has died for us.'³¹ Paul imitates this model in his own ministry of selflessness by recognizing that because of Christ we live for him.

28. Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 196.

29. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 223.

30. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 211.

31. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 118.

Since Paul (and all believers) died to sin and are now made alive in Christ, he gained a new perspective on life. Due to his confrontation with the gospel and love of Christ, Paul was now able to discern the truth of God, not only in his own life, but also for others as he communicated to them within his evangelistic efforts. Verse 16 “throws light on Paul’s approach to the historical Jesus” and reveals this experience in the life of those “in Christ.” (2 Cor 5:17).³² Paul desired “a transformed community that shares with him the continuing significance of the cross,” an event which personally happened to Paul when he encountered the risen Christ leaving, to both a phenomenological and epistemological reorientation regarding the transforming work of Christ.³³ Because of this experience and a new knowledge of the love of Christ, his system of evaluating things as a former blasphemer and persecutor of Christians is no longer the same. In looking to the future, Paul is no longer interested in a knowledge of the physical Jesus in a human, fleshly way. Paul has shifted interest into the life of faith, which denotes a different kind of knowledge about Christ. N.T. Wright concludes:

‘According to the flesh’ (*kata sarka*) is a regular Pauline phrase denoting, among other things, the status, attitudes and theology of Jews and/or some Jewish Christians. The sort of Messiah they had wanted would be one who would affirm and underwrite their national aspirations. Instead, the true Messiah, Jesus, had been obedient to a different messianic vocation, in which the ‘flesh’ dies in order to rise again. The reason Paul knows this is precisely that he knows about Jesus, and claims that he, and none other, is the true Messiah.³⁴

Paul’s focus is now on the Jesus that heals and restores relationships which aids believers to view people by the standard of Jesus’s relationship with us, rather than just their

32. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1981), 148.

33. Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity*, 143.

34. N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 408.

human existence. We can view people through a lens of hope for restoration rather than through their mistakes alone.

Because of the death and resurrection of Christ, those who are in Christ are as verse 17 describes, “the new creation,” which represents both himself as well as the Corinthian believers he is addressing. In this short, but emphatically theological verse, “Paul is not merely talking about an individual’s subjective experience of renewal through conversion; rather, for Paul, *ktisis* (‘creation’) refers to the whole created order. He is proclaiming the apocalyptic message that through the cross God has nullified the *kosmos* of sin and death and brought a new *kosmos* into being.”³⁵ Even though this is an active concept, it is also an eschatological reality of Christ. This is the very ministry that Paul tries to communicate through reconciliation. Christ, the one who “died for the sake of all” (2 Cor 5:17) and rose to life, is the restorer of former things into new things for “anyone” that is “in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17). This message is exclusive to believers only, yet inclusive to anyone that accepts this promise. According to Hayes, “Paul’s moral vision is intelligible only when his apocalyptic perspective is kept clearly in mind: the church is to find its identity and vocation by recognizing its role within the cosmic drama of God’s reconciliation of the world to himself.”³⁶ Needless to say, if Paul’s conviction is based on his reconciling all people to God through his presentation of the gospel, then the people of God equally have a present-and future-tense role in participating in the same presentation. In the very basic sense, all believers can proclaim the message of

35. Richard B. Hayes, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), 20.

36. Hayes, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 19.

reconciliation because they are part of “the new creation” and now participate in the act of reconciling others who may not yet be transformed (2 Cor 5:17).

The Problem of Sin: Verses 18–19

Some have argued that verses 18 through 21 are a hymn that Paul found and thus are not his own, although Collins notes that it “follows smoothly after the preceding sentence in Paul’s text, it lacks a hymnic structure, and it addresses neither to God nor to his Christ.”³⁷ In verses 18–19, Paul confirms God to be the source of all things, who is both reconciler and giver of reconciliation ministry. Paul makes it very clear that God does the work because Christ, the only sinless and righteous one took on death and came to life, not just to reconcile people to himself, but for people to also minister to each other through reconciliatory efforts. This ministry (*diakonia*) is now a joint effort, even though it originated in the Christ event.³⁸

God’s activity in the world is to reconcile all things to himself, which includes created beings as well as all of his creation, performed through the death of Christ.³⁹ Paul begins verse 19 by explaining the previous verse with “kerygmatic idioms more suited to a preaching of the gospel to unbelievers outside the church.”⁴⁰ The fact remains that Paul directs his message to those inside the church, coming from a pastoral perspective. This verse reminds believers that the “reconciling” work of God through Christ in “the world”

37. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 114, 116.

38. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 121.

40. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 278.

40. Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul’s Theology*, 94.

completed its work with the death and resurrection of Christ so that sins are no longer “counted.”

Even though this is a completed work in verse 19, the work requires our reception as responsible human beings, as evidenced in verse 20. The verb usage of “reconciling” indicates that this work is relational, but that it requires God in order to perform the removal of sin (*hamartia*).⁴¹ Paul intentionally preaches in “reconciling the world” the theological premise of imputed righteousness where people are justified in their sins because of Christ, a premise he also discusses in verse 21. Because of this imputed righteousness, unearned on a human level and available to all that accept it, “God has entrusted to us the word (*logos*) of reconciliation.”⁴² It is this “word” that Paul uses to describe the communication piece of his ministry of reconciliation, one that is not just available to him, but to the world as well. Christians all over the world and through all generations can freely participate in communicating the gospel of Jesus and the healing power of reconciliation.

Ambassadors of Christ: Verses 20–21

It is for all of these reasons, that Paul is self-motivated in verse 20 to be God’s spokesperson, or “ambassador,” in order that his hearers “be reconciled to God.” Paul uses “therefore” or “so” again, to make a point he already made in verses 18 and 19 as well as in his apostolic ministry since 2:14. This ministry includes administrating the ministry of reconciliation through the word spoken by Paul, which is a result of God making him his representative. As a designated representative of God, Paul speaks, “not

41. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 308.

42. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 305.

on the basis of one's own authority but on the basis of the sending authority."⁴³ God, therefore, makes Paul his spokesperson and then communicates this message of reconciliation through him to his people. When the Corinthian believers ignore the message of Paul, they actually ignore God. This imperative, to "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20) is also an encouragement to "be reconciled *by* God," which is an action displayed by God to humanity to receive his true forgiveness.⁴⁴ The gift of reconciliation does not have meaningful application unless the receiver accepts the gift. Reconciliation is merely an abstract experience without both giver and receiver working in relationship together, while the giver (God) maintains the center of the relationship.

Paul closes his argument with a reminder that Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice so that his righteousness adds to us the inheritance of his kingdom. According to Collins, Etymologically, the noun 'reconciliation' (*katallage*) and the verb 'reconcile' (*katallasso*) are related to *allos*, the adjective meaning 'other' or 'another.' The noun means 'exchange,' and the verb means 'change one thing for another.' In antiquity, these words were principally used in reference to the exchange of money, changing money from one currency to another.⁴⁵

In Paul's use of the term, "people who have been reconciled with each other 'exchange' a relationship of enmity and hostility for one of friendship and peace."⁴⁶ This type of exchange is the very heart of what restorative practitioners look for when trying to reconcile people at odds with each other or when reconciling people with institutions. In this way, those involved in processes of reconciliation become "ambassadors who represent Christ."

43. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 124.

44. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 309–311.

45. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 135.

46. Matera, *II Corinthians*, 138.

Verse 21 and the imputed righteousness that Paul describes compares to animal sacrifices found in the history of Israel that were necessary for the Israelite community to obtain forgiveness from sin. The sacrificed life of the animal on the altar provided a means for the sinner to be free of their transgressions against God. In the same way, Christ surrendered his sinless life and took on sin in order for God to give people his “righteousness.” Thompson explains, “In 2 Cor. 5:21 . . . soteriology and Christology are here connected to ecclesiology, for the church is in the process of becoming God’s righteousness, just as it is being ‘transformed into his image’ (3:18) as it shares in the destiny of Jesus. As the community dies with Jesus (5:14-15), it is involved in the process of transformation.”⁴⁷ God is the one who justifies and makes people righteous in him; therefore, God transforms people to obtain a right and active relationship with him. This transformation occurs through the righteousness of God, but also as the community continues to work through conflicts and resolves them because of their mutual love for Christ and for one another.

Theological Conclusion

In the eleven-verse pericope of 5:11–21, Paul eloquently defends his ministry, presents the gospel, and encourages people to reconcile themselves to God. Thompson states, “that the Corinthians are not yet transformed is apparent in the appeal of 5:20b–6:2. Paul’s appeal to be “reconciled” to God (2 Cor 5:20) indicates that their alienation from him is also alienation from God.”⁴⁸ Because this group still needed reconciling, they

47. James Thompson, *The Church According to Paul: Rediscovering the Community Conformed to Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 118.

48. James Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry According to Paul: A Biblical Vision* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 3.

were still alienated from God. Their lack of reconciliation equates to a lack of spiritual transformation through “the new creation” (2 Cor 5:17) experience. Matera explains:

Paul has already spoken of those who are ‘in Christ’ as being a ‘new creation’ (v.17), suggesting that something transformative has happened to them in Christ. Clearly, then, Paul’s thought stands somewhere between these extremes. First, something happens to humanity when God bestows the gift of righteousness, for it becomes a ‘new creation.’ Second, being a new creation does not mean that the justified are morally perfect. Rather, those who have received the righteousness that comes from God have been transformed because they are a new creation in Christ. This transformation, however, will not be completed until the parousia, when the justified are finally saved.⁴⁹

People who have become a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17) have a transformed way of thinking and their thinking transforms their actions. They go through the spiritual development that God lays out for them in the midst of discipleship, which is usually in context of community. Quite often, the community of discipleship includes the individuals or the group with whom they need to be reconciled, which aids in continued healing and forgiveness among the relationships involved. “Ambassadors who represent Christ” (2 Cor 5:20) provide guidance and direction for those needing to be reconciled usually because they recognize like Paul the ministry of reconciliation provided to them.

The first half of this chapter addressed the ministry of reconciliation found in Paul and how his theology in 2 Cor 5:11–21 fuels the restorative accountability practices of SAGU through a motive of fear and reverence for God, love for others, and desire for people to live free from enmity toward God and each other. The next half seeks to establish how restorative justice embraces the relational equity found in reconciliation and funds the theoretical backdrop as well as the practical implications restorative justice provides.

49. Matera, *II Corinthians*, 145.

Theoretical Foundations

Some aspects of restorative justice have commonalities in biblical justice and Paul’s ministry of reconciliation. Biblical justice, in short, concerns itself with Shalom (“all rightness” between individuals and with God”), covenant (“committed relationships”), Torah (“biblical law”), accountability, and the need for forgiveness of sin.⁵⁰ Paul’s ministry of reconciliation emphasizes these characteristics as well although Paul focuses more on the righteousness of God and right relationships with people. The convergences and connections between Paul’s ministry of reconciliation will be discussed at the end of this chapter. Restorative justice has a secular tone to it in that it stems from social justice to a certain extent. SAGU sees restorative justice as more than just a system of ethics with an altruistic mindset. The methods and concepts of restorative justice go beyond the scope of just helping people do the right thing for the right reasons. Even though restorative justice sees the merit in social justice to bring change, restorative justice focuses more on individuals and relationships than systems. SAGU diverges from social justice in terms of its focus on power structures that “result in privilege and oppression” as well as the wider focus of inclusion that goes beyond the foundations of scripture.⁵¹ Addressing these topics is important, but it is not the central focus of how restorative justice functions on the campus of SAGU between individuals in conflict with each other or with individuals who are in conflict with university policy.

50. Chris Marshall, *The Little Book of Biblical Justice* (New York: Good Books, 1989), 10–20.

51. Ryan C. Holmes, Keith Edwards, and Michael M. DeBowes, “Why Objectivity is Not Enough: The Critical Role of Social Justice in Campus Conduct and Conflict Work,” in *Reframing Campus Conflict: Student Conduct Practice through a Social Justice Lens*, ed. Schrage, Jennifer Myer and Nancy Geist Giacomini (Sterling: Stylus, 2009), 52.

Contextual Lens of Restorative Accountability at SAGU

Southwestern Assemblies of God University is an educational institution that trains and provides discipleship for students in the marketplace and in ministry. It has as its foundation the very nature of living in community in order to learn from each other in a type of “iron sharpens iron” experience. In order to live in community together as a body of believers, students learn their rights and responsibilities in order to operate in a spirit of unity according to Scripture as well as within the shared values of the community. The rights and responsibilities found in the SAGU Student Handbook describe the restorative accountability policies in detail and are also posted on the SAGU website.⁵²

One of the purposes of the Residential Life Department is to provide the guidance and direction that Bogue suggests in *Creating Campus Community*: “Ernest Boyer characterized a college or university as . . . ‘a disciplined community . . . a place where individuals accept their obligations to the group and where well-defined governance procedures guide behavior for the common good.’”⁵³ Every institution in America distributes some sort of procedures to their students to not only provide the students’ legal rights, but to also aid in understanding the institution’s expectations for communal living. Violations of policies address behaviors that are important to the institution, whether they be legal, historical, or practical in nature; however, each institution uses a different method regarding how these violations receive attention. Some institutions use a

53. Southwestern Assemblies of God University website. “Student Handbook.” <https://www.sagu.edu/documents/Student%20Life/Student%20Handbook/Student%20Handbook.pdf>

54. E. Grady Bogue, “An Agenda of Common Caring: The Call for Community in Higher Education,” in *Creating Campus Community: In Search of Ernest Boyer’s Legacy*, ed. William M. McDonald and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 8–9.

form of retributive justice or criminal justice, while others are beginning to incorporate a form of restorative justice.

Brief History of Justice

Restorative justice traces its origin back to biblical justice as well as to tribal and nomadic people groups who used a form of community justice in making decisions concerning those who offend the values of their communities. Restorative concepts developed institutionally around the end of the sixth century when Celtic monks developed a form of “private penance with auricular (told privately in the ear) confession.”⁵⁴ As with any other spiritual practice manipulated over time and with wrong motives, this idea evolved so that people could reconcile with God in a private manner instead of having their conflicts put on display in the public square. Supporters of restorative justice encourage the idea that restorative ideas dominated the landscape of the world up until the end of the Dark Ages, when with the onset of the Norman Conquest of Europe crimes were committed against the king or monarch rather than among people.⁵⁵

The Inquisitions that began in the eleventh century carried forward the establishment of the church as the central authority on crimes in order to squelch heresy and to maintain moral order of the church community. This established that the church or the institution was represented as the victim rather than the individual wronged. Zehr notes, “Wrongs were no longer simple. They were sins,” which also meant that the “early

54. John Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice & Responsive Regulation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

55. Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice & Responsive Regulation*, 5.

Christian practice that had emphasized forgiveness of wrongdoing, reconciliation, and redemption began to lose ground.”⁵⁶ Thankfully, remnants of restorative justice remained in areas that maintained familial ties as part of their community values.

Personal vengeance on a private level has always prevailed in different landscapes. The violence and brutality involved in personal vengeance and through feuds and vendettas contrasted with the less consequential public format. Though often confused with acts of vengeance, “the ‘eye for an eye’ portion from the OT was to be proportionally correct and not to escalate the conflict . . . and was seen as compensation, not necessarily retribution.”⁵⁷ Christ abolished the “eye for an eye” methodology with the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:38–39), but that did not eliminate the perceived permissive stance of it during Israel’s history. Regardless, violations of values and crimes demanded justice to restore equilibrium in the society represented, which was the burden of community justice. Even though the importance of relationships characterized the core of community justice, it failed in retaining punishment as a high value. This led to the formalization of common codes of law.⁵⁸

Retributive and Criminal Justice

According to Karp, “Retributive justice wants to know what the college will do to the student to match the harm caused. . . . Restorative Justice wants to know what the college will ask of the student to make things right.”⁵⁹ Criminal justice, or retributive

56. Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses-A New Focus for Crime and Justice*, 3rd ed. (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 2003), 115–117; Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice & Responsive Regulation*, 7.

57. Zehr, *Changing Lenses*, 107.

58. Zehr, *Changing Lenses*, 102–104, 110.

60. David R. Karp, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities, Revised and Updated* (New York: Good Books, 2015), 13.

justice, tends to focus primarily on the violation of whatever policies were created, meaning that whatever system created the policy determines what was violated and how harm can be repaired through punishment or consequences. In essence, criminal justice concentrates more on laws and rules than people, on blame rather than harm that came about from the violation, and on punishment deserved rather than accountability for actions.

Roman law preceded the main tenet of modern criminal law where “justice is defined by the process rather than by the outcome. Procedure overshadowed substance In our society, justice is defined as applying the law. Crime is defined as lawbreaking.”⁶⁰ Trials in criminal courts depend more on a consistency of process where one law applies to all, rather than leaning into relevance for the person. Criminal and restorative processes do have some things in common. Both hope to “balance the scales,” although they may have different paths for doing so. Both acknowledge that wrongdoing occurred and that the victim and offender have responsibilities that deserve a response that reciprocates the original act.⁶¹

Main Tenets of Restorative Justice

The organization of restorative justice as well as the research has evolved over the last forty years or so and is still in its early stages. The most common agreement amongst all restorative justice and social justice practitioners, however, is that retributive justice does not work in today’s society and was never really meant to develop people beyond

60. Zehr, *Changing Lenses*, 81–82.

61. Zehr, Howard. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Revised and updated (New York: Good Books, 2015), 75.

their mistake. The first person given credit with formulating the distinctions between restorative and retributive justice was psychologist Albert Eglash, who first used the term in a paper he presented at a conference in 1975.⁶² Eglash studied imprisoned individuals as a psychologist and recognized the need for them to have accountability for harms caused to others. Inevitably, his pursuits in creative restitution, in addition to the research of countless others, caused a surge of reform in retributive theory over forty years ago.

The commonly used definition of restorative justice coined by practitioner Tony Marshall is “a process whereby all parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future.”⁶³ As a generalized definition, it speaks of a better future and desire for continued refinement, not for only those involved, but for the process as well. The overall values and principles of restorative justice have been formalized over time, while its core of “respect, responsibility, and relationship” as well as “restoration, accountability, and engagement” have remained constant.⁶⁴ Despite the fact that policies do speak for people and deserve adherence, if relationships are more important than policies, relationships suffer most during times of conflict, crime, and disregard to laws. Roche stated that “crime should be understood not as an abstract concept, but as an ‘injury and as a violation of people and relationships.’”⁶⁵ In restorative justice, the aim is to restore relationships to right standing, and if possible, through forgiveness.

62. Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice & Responsive Regulation*, 8.

63. Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice & Responsive Regulation*, 11.

64. Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 79, 91.

65. Declan Roche, *Accountability in Restorative Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 26.

Although proponents of restorative justice often summarize its essential principles in three to five statements, several tenets of those principles and their processes stand out. Due to the success of its processes, additional considerations deserve highlighting, which is an essential part of providing restorative justice a full review of its inclusive nature. Despite the fact that restorative justice is multi-faceted, eight of the tenets present themselves for the purpose of this project. These tenets are linked to each other to where each layer relies on another in order to function properly.

Participation-Oriented

Even though restorative justice possesses many key pieces in its values and principles, one of the main starting points is its inclusive nature in the decision-making process that leads to collaborative outcomes. Facilitators take on the role of a spiritual guide who gives guidance and asks questions when necessary since the one offending and the one harmed are the key players involved.⁶⁶ Facilitators and spiritual mentors at SAGU serve, in a sense, as “ambassadors who represent Christ” (2 Cor 5:20), who recognize when someone wants to reconcile and collaborate with the student requesting restoration and reconciliation.⁶⁷ If review boards or integrity boards are necessary in the process, then the partnership established is among all stakeholders involved (offended and the offending parties); however, occasions exist where the community is also considered a stakeholder and has an earned interest in the outcome. It goes without saying that “restorative justice is best implemented in an environment of partnership and collaboration” and falls directly in line with the goal of hearing panels or integrity boards

66. Karp, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities*, 9; Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 36–37.

67. This concept pre-exists the intervention and has been a longstanding practice.

to involve “a process that encourages trust, emotional expression, and community building.”⁶⁸ One of the significant ways that fosters this collaboration occurs when stakeholders listen respectfully to one another. When individuals talk less and listen more, perspectives often change, and individuals find the opportunity to have their story heard, and listening often equates acceptance of the person speaking.

Acceptance of Responsibility and Accountability

Accountability in restorative justice “is understood in the most general sense as or answering for decisions made.”⁶⁹ Restorative justice requires a proactive accountability in making amends for mistakes and transgressions that does not allow for individuals to let others make isolated decisions. In student conduct proceedings in particular, some institutions use the path of restorative justice only in moments when an offender is remorseful or contrite. Other institutions offer to provide development to the student hoping they eventually take responsibility for their actions; however, the overarching goal is that “the student becomes the arbiter of his or her own fate.”⁷⁰

Accepting responsibility for their actions, as well as for their own growth plan is actually the very starting point for the accountability process for any person that violates trust. Accepting responsibility is incongruent with guilt because guilt often attaches itself to being ashamed. Accountability is both reflective and forward thinking, so when an offender takes responsibility, they are able to see themselves in the bigger picture by recognizing that responsibility is “corporate, systemic, and communal”⁷¹ rather than self-

68. David R. Karp and Tom Allena, *Restorative Justice on the College Campus* (Springfield: Thomas Books, 2004), 58, 29.

69. Roche, *Accountability in Restorative Justice*, 25.

70. Karp, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities*, 72, 38.

isolating fear and shame. When a student at SAGU accepts responsibility, they realize that they “should no longer live for themselves,” but for Christ “who died for them and was raised again” (2 Cor 5:15). Unfortunately, rejected responses to accountability places people at odds with each other and relationships remain strained. Hate and quite often selfish motives create distance between people, and they lost the interconnectedness they experienced.

Restorative justice also concerns itself with accountability in its process as well as with its facilitators. Restorative justice processes as well as those who facilitate conferences and conversations need consistent evaluation in order to ensure that the outcomes originally designed still have relevance to those actively involved. Active evaluation of restorative processes enables facilitators to maintain their responsibility to stakeholders that the product they participate in has lasting merit.⁷² In essence, because facilitators are also accountable, the restorative justice process can be trusted.

Restorative Circles, Conferences, and Conversations

Restorative justice uses a wide range of vernacular for conferencing, such as circles (whether for peacemaking or for circle sentencing), integrity boards, and victim offender mediation as well as different definitions and procedures for each. Although there are secondary education campuses who now embrace some sort of restorative practices, the scope will be limited to student conduct proceedings within the setting of the college institution. The retributive history of student conduct practices in America

71. Jarem Sawatsky, *Justpeace Ethics: A Guide to Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding* (Eugene: Cascade, 2008), 81.

72. Roche, *Accountability in Restorative Justice*, 19.

remains in some institutions and still operate in some practices (although many institutions are pulling away from legality over time) such as aiming for impartial decision-making regarding student behavior. This perspective needs relevance, however, since restorative conversations with students require open and honest conversations while keeping in mind the personal narrative and hermeneutical horizons of everyone involved. “Impartiality is essential only for establishing guilt or culpability” and is not essential for restorative conversations.⁷³ A certain degree of subjectivity is important in evaluating personal narratives as they pertain to incidents that occur. Despite this deep need for relevance to the individual involved, a certain degree of consistency is also important since not every student may agree to every outcome but can appreciate fairness and equality given to all.

The overall aim of restorative circles and conferencing is to allow the victim to address the harm they personally experienced through the issue or concern, while the offender focuses on claiming responsibility and accountability for their actions and wrongs committed. Advocates, fellow students, friends, or family members of both students show support for the student involved when necessary. At a bare minimum, fellow students appear in conferences to encourage transparency and taking responsibility for hearing the narratives of everyone involved. Through the context of agreement in the restorative conference, peacemaking circle, or victim offender mediation, the offending individual explains their action and their opportunities for apology coincide with reparation of harm to begin the healing process for the victim as well as the community.⁷⁴

73. Marshall, *The Little Book of Biblical Justice*, 45.

74. Karp and Allena, *Restorative Justice on the College Campus*, 10–13, 54. Peacemaking circles receive attention more for minor crimes, but usually lie outside of typical student conduct issues. Victim

Integrity boards and conduct committees serve as the typical response to student conduct concerns and address emotional or mental damage, communal damage, or damage to physical property, in addition to harms caused against the values of an institution. Their aim as “Christ’s ambassadors”—those that represent Christ—is to encourage students to “Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20) as participants in the restoration process and for repentance to occur. At the core of human relationships lies a prerequisite to possess a healthy ongoing relationship with God in order to maintain the vitality of all human relationships.⁷⁵ One is dependent upon the other in order for a continued sense of community, which incurs both restoration and cultivation. As discussed below in the section concerning *shalom*, the strength of relationships with God and with others is fully dependent upon the veracity of that relationship to God as well as to the purity of that relationship with others. Individuals are interconnected through relationship to God and other people. It is vital that participants understand this interconnection when they see how their issue, mistake, or sin disconnects them from this union that needs repair.

Once the restorative conversation is complete, the plan of restoration usually follows in order to provide the offender with a developmental process for reintegration back into the community, especially since the student is no longer judged “by human standards” (2 Cor 5:16). Listening to and engaging with the story of another individual often provides background for how or why someone arrives at a particular rationale in his or her decision-making process and helps reveal where that person is coming from as

offender mediation is receiving traction currently in working through restorative situations in Title IX cases at some institutions, although not currently at SAGU.

75. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 387.

well as to see them as a flawed individual. The developmental and restorative plan helps keep the story of the imperfect individual in focus.

Conduct committees and integrity boards also become involved when a student denies fault and refuses responsibility for the harm caused. Typically speaking, many conduct conversations occur between an authority figure and student, and the student receives a decision during the meeting itself or in cases where a conduct committee listens to the narrative of a student, they hand down their decision after private discussion. These conversations sometimes occur when a student does not desire accountability through a restorative process; however, restorative conversations take time and allow the student an opportunity to participate in the decisions concerning their own development as a person.

Sanctions and Restitution

Restorative justice adherents appear inconsistent regarding the use of punishment, or may at least struggle with word choice. Some stray away from the concept of punishment and reward entirely because of their perception is that “they don’t teach” and “promote compliance and little else.”⁷⁶ Restorative justice wants to see the offender learn and develop from the situation that occurred rather than learn how to refuse responsibility based on severity of consequences. Fines exist only as a deterrent and, often fail because the fine does not equate to the level of desired behavior. Performing a certain behavior may outweigh the consequences for doing so. In this way, a person manipulates the

76. Dominique Smith, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey, *Better than Carrots and Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2015), 6.

restorative system itself by choosing to only meet a minimum requirement of membership, rather than reintegrating into community in a wholesome way.

Even though at times accountability has the appearance of punishment, the motives and reasons for adding any kind of sanctions or restitution to the accountability or developmental plan for a student is quite different. Consequently, punishment does not look forward since it lacks an end and serves only as a means. According to Smith, Fisher, and Frey, “Punishments rely on ability to leverage unequal power relationships over children; it puts children in their places by reminding them who’s in charge. Students who are punished will come up with a list of reasons why they are the victims & will channel their negative emotion toward those doing the punishment.”⁷⁷ When an offender is involved as a collaborator in the restorative process; however, they choose their path of development as well as the words in their accountability process. This mutual collaboration between the institution and the offender fosters mutual accountability as well.

Times where an offender denies responsibility and refuses a restorative process result in alternative measures. Even though punishment as a means does not restore relationships, it still has a place in restorative conversations that require restitution. Marshall adds that “specific acts of restitution are prescribed in biblical law, based broadly on equivalence of value (Exod 21:26-36).”⁷⁸ Since restitution involves some kind of monetary payment or service in order to replace material goods, it also possesses the ability to heal damaged relationships by restoring trust.

77. Smith, Fisher, and Frey, *Better than Carrots and Sticks* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2015), 9.

78. Marshall, *The Little Book of Biblical Justice*, 45.

Punishment in the history of Israel provided a way of balancing the scales and may be seen as restitution, not retribution, especially since there were limits on the level of punishment applied. Conduct committees, integrity boards, and sanctioning boards address the various ways that a student answers the following question: “What can be done to restore trust so that we feel confident about the offender’s membership in the community.”⁷⁹ Part of the developmental plan of accountability for the student includes agreed upon sanctions by everyone involved in the restitution agreement. This agreement includes limitations of campus involvement in extracurricular activities, possibilities of community service, and essays designed for personal reflection on the event and processes that occurred during the student’s journey through reconciliation, and ways that everyone involved were affected. Limiting student involvement, performing community service, and writing personal reflection essays aid in reintegrating the student into the community of their peers and authorities because they reflect remorse and develop the ability to think critically concerning the harm they caused.⁸⁰

The premise of restorative justice begins when an individual chooses to make things right with the person or entity who received harm or violation from the conflict. Sadly, however, not everyone desires this posture because not everyone wants to “be reconciled to God” or still “live for themselves.” For times when students do not follow through with their own prescribed plan of accountability, probation sometimes follows, or a student may not be able to register for classes for the next semester until they complete the signed agreement. In the rare event of extreme situations when students fail

79. Karp and Allena, *Restorative Justice on the College Campus*, 36.

80. Karp and Allena, *Restorative Justice on the College Campus*, 11, 35–36.

to complete the agreement or threaten the emotional, mental, or physical safety of the community, “self-suspensions” are necessary.⁸¹

Repentance and Forgiveness

The main founder of restorative justice, Howard Zehr, did not necessarily feel that restorative justice should be primarily concerned with forgiveness, although it could be a by-product of the experience. He focused on having the offender make things right rather than receiving forgiveness from the one offended. He also did not believe that it was an answer to addressing repeat offenses (recidivism), nor was it a detailed plan to follow. Rather, Zehr often referred to restorative justice as a “compass offering direction.”⁸² This echoes the idea that processes and procedures are only vehicles of communicating, but they cannot bring healing themselves through repentance and forgiveness since those things are matters of free will. People can only reconcile and forgive as a matter of choice despite the fact that Christ did not count “people’s sins against them” (2 Cor 5:19). According to Zehr, forgiveness in and of itself is “an expression of responsibility, regret and repentance on part of an offender” and can help a person “move from victim to survivor” although it still does not excuse the offender’s wrongdoing.⁸³ Restorative justice helps repair harm caused, which promotes healing in the offender, victim, and whole community affected. Victims cannot force an apology, and offenders cannot force forgiveness; however, SAGU believes that through its processes power is provided in the reciprocity of forgiveness and in the reconciliation of relationships. According to Volf,

81. Karp and Allena, *Restorative Justice on the College Campus*, 9. Self-suspensions occur when the students suspend themselves by not completing the restorative agreement.

82. Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 13–17.

83. Zehr, *Changing Lenses*, 53.

“Repentance implies not merely a recognition that one has made a bad mistake, but that one has sinned.”⁸⁴ SAGU encourages offending students to acknowledge not only their mistake, but to also acknowledge any sin that has occurred and needs repentance on their part as well as asking forgiveness from another.

Sometimes because of the extremity of a situation, a facilitator may mediate a restorative conversation between two parties without both being present at the same time, which reduces the stress of the situation until one or both parties are able to meet in person. Facilitators who mediate the restorative conversation obviously need discernment in guiding them, but the ending result still leads to healing. Patience is a high commodity when looking forward to healing and forgiveness in broken relationships since some take longer to embrace forgiveness. There are also situations, unfortunately, where someone reverts to a previous path of destruction after obtaining reconciliation and forgiveness. Sawatsky cautions against measuring the success rate of a program by “recidivism rates of offenders” since people are prone to their sinful natures, and some individuals take longer to transform their thinking and life patterns.⁸⁵ Success should be determined based on each individual case or situation and the personal growth and development of those involved rather than the explicit success of a program. When programs focus on the change that occurs with the hearts of the people involved, the experience will be more personal, and the program can qualify itself as meaningful.

84. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 113.

85. Sawatsky, *Justpeace Ethics*, 57.

Developmental and Transformative

Restorative justice seeks to develop and transform, not just the individuals involved, but also the institution as well as society in general, as a result of its ability to heal relationships across the board. Since restorative justice encourages collaboration and active participation, rather than just decisions from university officials, all who participate are jointly accountable and responsible for ensuring the prioritization of development and transformation for the person and the process. Due to the unique nature of restorative justice, the individual's unique nature, often termed, "particularity" also receives priority. Sawatsky writes that "The virtue called particularity respects particular identity. Particularity recognizes that context, culture, and time are all relevant matters of justice."⁸⁶ In essence, particularity recognizes diversity among people and views their differences as that which makes them unique and special. This recognition of particularity abounds in the transforming work of restorative conversations, which then provides opportunities for healing in conflicted relationships and organizations.

Over time, as the church refocused its efforts, Christianity ceased its involvement in social concerns and allowed the state to institutionalize "hospitality to the stranger."⁸⁷ Creating moments of hospitality and welcoming others once dominated the Christian world, and the church itself took care of the marginalized, which included those who committed crimes and violated laws. Inevitably, institutions developed their own procedures for how to deal with offender in the name of risk management. Entities that once used restorative conversations secularized their policies so they assisted the

86. Sawatsky, *Justpeace Ethics*, 19.

87. Sawatsky, *Justpeace Ethics*, 43.

institution rather than the person. Restorative justice seeks to transform these constructs into a vision that will last and that will not only heal those affected from past institutional neglects, but also seeks to transform institutional processes in the future to bring continued healing to lost visions.⁸⁸

The forward-looking nature of restorative justice strives to keep developmental processes as a collaborative and participatory endeavor with those affected by the harms caused in order to “make justice more healing and, ideally, more transformative.”⁸⁹ In essence, more involvement from individuals and institutions in restorative conversations equates to transformation within society in general. “New creation” (2 Cor 5:17) opportunities occur on a daily basis for those involved in restorative justice and restorative accountability.

Shalom

The idea behind restorative justice “in the Hebrew Scriptures, is embedded in the concept of *shalom*, the vision of living in the sense of ‘all-rightness’ with each other, ourselves, God, our enemies, the creator, and the environment.”⁹⁰ If restorative justice seeks to make things right in relationships, then *shalom* is the tree trunk of everything restorative justice does and extends itself to every branch, including the factors that contribute to the causes of harm as well.

Injustice breaks covenants and relationships between others, but justice restores and embraces them.⁹¹ God provided the law as means used to build *shalom*, but the law

88. Sawatsky, *Justpeace Ethics*, 45.

89. Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 48; Sawatsky, *Justpeace Ethics*, 4.

90. Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 29.

91. Sawatsky, *Justpeace Ethics*, 2.

was insufficient. The law created boundaries to establish order, but it could not connect the lives of people to each other in dispute, nor could it create community.⁹² Injustice, therefore, violates the interconnectedness of relationships, so that people and communities becomes its actual victim. Moreover, injustice violates *shalom*, or “peace.”

Shalom refers to the overall well-being of a person in every way, whether financial, relational, political, or ethical. *Shalom* creates more than just a clear conscience and sense of blamelessness. It creates wholeness in every aspect of life, especially in keeping right relationships. Zehr adds, “The basis and primary model of shalom in the Bible is the concept of covenant . . . [which] was a binding agreement made between two parties. Covenants assumed a personal relationship between parties and implied certain reciprocal responsibilities and commitments.”⁹³ Restorative justice embraces *shalom* and the covenantal relationships among people while supporting the fact that the goal of restorative justice practitioners is to establish ways to re-engage those who violate relationships into the community and to restore the covenant of *shalom* between them. Offenders cannot receive restoration or reintegration to the community without making things right with people, the community, or the institution itself against whom the violation occurred and to find peace with their own self. When shalom occurs in relationships, they echo Christ’s healing in reconciliation by “not counting people’s sins against them” (2 Cor 5:19).

92. Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 147.

93. Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 133-134, 136.

Community Reintegration

In the biblical milieu, guilt and accountability were corporate responsibilities, which happens where restorative accountability shares a similar burden. In Exod 18:13–23, Jethro helps Moses understand a better way of establishing shalom in order to have a “right relationship with God, land, self, and stranger.”⁹⁴ Many life lessons occur while living in a college community, or living in community in general, and the community itself can help people develop life-giving principles when the community is willing to take risks by reintegrating those who make mistakes.

Community reintegration goes far beyond signing a covenant and asking people to commit to a signature on a piece of paper. Those in the process of reintegration are viewed as a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17) and they belong to God because they are reconciled to him. Reintegration takes risks on behalf of a person who was once in the community, but now must regain trust in order to belong once again. The God who created everyone in his image, created all people uniquely and differently. People respond and react in different ways, including the way they show remorse as well as how they display their gratitude once given a second chance. Sometimes gratitude and acceptance may appear in untraditional ways. According to Roche, “These gestures of reacceptance can take many forms, either very simple, involving a handshake, a compliment, or a smile. . . The key to securing reintegration, is to separate actions from identity, signifying ‘evil deeds rather than evil persons’ in the Christian tradition of ‘hate the sin and love the sinner.’”⁹⁵ Distinctions, differences, and particularity in the midst of

94. Sawatsky, *Justpeace Ethics*, 30.

95. Roche, *Accountability in Restorative Justice*, 30.

commonality make up our communities. The calling of restorative justice practitioners who maintain the shared values within a community, while providing care and compassion for both victims and offenders proves challenging indeed; however, when a community shares values of restoring individuals for healing through forgiveness and assists with providing love through brokenness, it reflects the grace and *shalom* of God.

Theoretical Conclusion

When people groups or individuals lack forgiveness or reconciliation, they share a relational distance as well as challenges exists because people by their very nature exist to be relational. People are created by the design of God to live in relationship with each other, not disconnected or in disunity with others. These relationships may be complicated due to the selfish nature of sin. Without the redeeming and sanctifying love of Christ, people will respond to their flesh and base desires to live by “human standards.” God’s forgiveness reveals just how human we are and how necessary it is to depend on Christ’s love in order to restore right relationships with each other.

Restoration is a messy and tedious process. In order to teach and develop students with topics and themes that do not exist in the classroom, listening to personal narratives of both victims and offenders is necessary as the life of a community of faith seeks to redeem broken relationships rather than let them exist or grow static. Restorative justice seeks to reconcile relationships among people in order to bring unity to the whole in order to get back to a place of *shalom*. Reintegrating people back to a place of peace within the community is quite often the most challenging step because of the offender’s personal pride and difficulty of admitting wrongs and forgiveness challenges the victim even when the victim is the community itself. Nevertheless, when people sense a calling

to a restorative type of ministry as “ambassadors who represent Christ,” God prepares them for the challenge.

Integration of Theological and Theoretical Foundations at SAGU

Connections and divergences exist between Paul’s ministry of reconciliation and restorative justice methods. Obvious connection pieces including reconciliation among people is vital and fostering relational harmony between people matters. The main divergence between the two methods though is the possibility that restorative justice can potentially exclude God and over-emphasize humanitarian efforts. The goal for restorative justice does not include conforming to a social gospel, but it does rely on the efforts of humans to bring reconciliation to each other and for humanity to bring peace in with its own efforts

The convergence of Paul’s ministry of reconciliation and the restorative accountability practices of SAGU are described in Chapter 5, the result of the overall project; however, the differences are threefold. Paul was not necessarily developing a methodology; rather, he was developing a defense for his ministry as an apostle, which was in the area of reconciliation. Paul presented an argument to the Corinthians with the encouragement of seeing them reconciled to God. SAGU hopes that students will see that grace and forgiveness will be afforded those who want to repent and work through the methodology provided them in this project. Additionally, Paul’s theology relied heavily on the community bond that also drew offense when someone sinned against the community. SAGU does embrace this pattern, but the consequences are different in the way students receive a developmental opportunity to learn and adapt from their mistake, even if the student does not choose to repent. Suspension or disconnection from the

university is not the first response when sin occurs unless the sin is pervasive or causes harm to another individual. When offenses are repeated, it may become apparent that the student no longer wants to embrace the values of the university; however, in isolated or first-time offenses, students may receive opportunities to develop and learn from their mistake with the hope that they may embrace true forgiveness and choose a biblical reconciliation. Lastly, without the grace of God involved in Paul's ministry of reconciliation, even Christians who serve as "ambassadors of Christ" can neither force someone to give forgiveness, nor can they force someone to receive it.

There are also similarities and differences between restorative justice and the restorative accountability approach at SAGU. SAGU uses a version of restorative justice that believes all students should receive dignity and respect and that the overarching goal is to restore and reconcile individuals to each other and to the policies they agree to abide by within community. The difference is that SAGU believes that students can find forgiveness and grace through the restoration process and Paul's reconciliation of ministry since "one died for the sake of all" (2 Cor 5:14) and because Christ forgives all sin and personal mistakes. SAGU chooses to use the word "accountability" instead of "justice" in order to avoid legal jargon, and SAGU's procedures go beyond the scope of simply righting wrongs between people. Since SAGU desires to restore students through grace and accountability between an offending student and the university, Scripture, or between people, the word "justice" did not feel inclusive enough for the SAGU culture. According to the early focus group performed with students, the word "accountability" seemed to describe the way a loving, spiritual mentor would address student violations. There are times, however, when students refuse accountability, do not want to conform to

peaceful reconciliation, or when issues arise to the point where suspension or expulsion will occur. Unfortunately, punitive measures or justice would take precedence for these situations. SAGU sees the necessity for accountability for both the offender and the offended in the actual process of restoration. The offended receives an opportunity to hold the offender accountable and the offender is afforded the opportunity to make things right.

In times of conflict between students, SAGU uses a variation of peacemaking circles in restorative justice, called a solution-focused technique, which is a derivation of solution-focused therapy or solution-focused brief therapy. Solutions-focused technique focuses on solutions rather than problems and, helps the person to define their own resolutions with guidance.⁹⁶ Students often use excuses to dismiss negative and sinful behaviors, but solutions-focused conversations help them to dive into the heart of the issue rather than rely on grace as a gift given without consequence.

Restorative justice “encourages appropriate responsibility for addressing needs and repairing the harm (accountability),” which is honored in restorative accountability at SAGU; however, simply making the offender responsible for harm caused does not always provide an opportunity for learning or provide discipleship for the individual.⁹⁷ SAGU views accountability as an opportunity to have a restorative conversation with a

96. F.P. Bannink et al., “Solution-Focused Brief Therapy,” *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* 37 (2007), 92. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10879-006-9040-y>

97. Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 91. Even though restorative justice citations and language will occur throughout the project, restorative accountability verbiage will transpire since SAGU practices accountability more with its students than justice would.

98. The only situations where restorative accountability would not be an option would be when students refuse to cooperate with the restoration process or when suspension or expulsion is necessary. Suspension or expulsion decisions are based on extreme circumstances or where a student had a string of violations.

student in order to navigate a developmental plan of success through a “Restorative Covenant” where students participate in their own plan for restoration, while entering into a relationship of mutual responsibility.⁹⁸ Oftentimes, students want a mentor’s guidance to help them make better decisions. The mentor then agrees to be an interpretive guide to them for six weeks of the values-based program, *Phronesis*, mentioned earlier. These conference-style discussions help students make better decisions through the practice of wisdom, rather than making rash and impulsive decisions that often lead to negative consequences.⁹⁹ Throughout the course of discussions in *Phronesis*, students have an opportunity to reconcile with their behaviors and issues as well as to be accountable with a mentor who will walk them through their thoughts in order to help them in the future. Since the student is viewed as a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17), the student and the mentor covenant together in order to build a relationship of reciprocity and trust. The institution no longer regards them from a “human standard” (2 Cor 5:16) because they “live not for themselves” (2 Cor 5:15). Even though reconciliation between individuals takes time in order to heal the broken relationship, restoration with God (or the institution) may begin when the student asks for help or for grace through the restorative accountability process.

If a student is non-responsive and does not desire reconciliation with God, reconciliation with the institution, or reconciliation with others, a different type of accountability must to ensue, which usually results in directed consequences rather than mutual respect. The concept of restorative accountability relies on willing participants who want to grow and become a better Christ follower or those who want to receive

99. Zehr, *Changing Lenses*, 137.

Christ and discipleship, even in the midst of making a mistake and needing restoration and reconciliation. Unfortunately, non-responsiveness and repeat offenses often lead to punitive measures or a disconnection with the university. The overarching goal of restorative accountability on the SAGU campus, however, is to restore individuals and provide them with a path for success with mentoring and healthy relationships. Putting or making things right with the harmed individual is at the very core of what restorative accountability is about; nevertheless, SAGU chooses to adapt this model to be “ambassadors who represent Christ” (2 Cor 5:20) in light of Paul’s ministry of reconciliation. Being “ambassadors” provides mentors and restorative justice practitioners at SAGU opportunities to present the Gospel to students who need transformation in their thinking and practice.

Conclusion

The theology of 2 Cor 5:11–21 divides into two parts for the context of SAGU: a disciplinary side that is for policy change, and a community side based on reconciliation within the community. One side speaks into the other and forms a sort of cycle, like a hermeneutical circle that is progressively moving forward as the community both forms the policies and becomes informed by the policies.¹⁰⁰ The idea is to move from an abstract principle to an experience-based principle, which provides room for personal narrative (which can still be interpreted as a part of policy), in light of images regarding the body and community (i.e., worship practices, issues of sexual immorality).

Abstractly, students will often violate policies within the student handbook, and at times,

100. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM, 2016), 109–111; Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 23.

these violations may be biblical principles equating to sin issues; however, when an institution or entity chooses to shift to a model of reconciliation that makes room for grace, the personal narrative is included because the person involved matters. Since policies both involve people and are about people, the subjective experience of the person matters as well. In essence, violations of ideals (community and biblical values), impact others, so those in violation of any morality codes or values that directly affect the community need reconciling as well as accountability.

The scope of this project helps to reframe the language of reconciliation for the college student world. Volf discusses this concept of “renaming and re-making” in

Exclusion and Embrace:

The mission of Jesus consisted not simply in re-naming the behavior that was falsely labeled ‘sinful’ but also in re-making the people who have actually sinned or have suffered misfortune. The double strategy of re-naming and re-making, rooted in the commitment to both the outcast and the sinner, to the victim and the perpetrator, is the proper background against which an adequate notion of sin as exclusion to emerge [sic].¹⁰¹

By re-naming “food sacrificed to idols” (Mark 7:14–23) from “unclean” to “clean” and re-making “clean” things from what was considered “unclean,” Christ changed the boundary for what was acceptable and unacceptable. Societal mores that separated people into categories that marginalized them were re-appropriated in order to include people rather than divide them. This also aided in redefining expressions for not only a different generation of believers, but also for the future church to embrace as normative. Multiple generations on campus have different expressions of “food sacrificed to idols” or different ways of how expressing words and policies that have and do not have value to

101. Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 73.

them. SAGU needs to create space to help students understand the gap between policy's language and its practical usage. This language includes the different ways to describe what students should and should not do while in the midst of living in community with other individuals coming from a variety of backgrounds, including their Christian tradition. As Paul illustrates in verse 15, "He (Christ) died for the sake of all so that those who are alive should live not for themselves but for the one who died for them and was raised." Christians do not live for themselves. Because Christ died, we also die to ourselves for the sake of Christ. SAGU students need policies that helps them envision a community that serves Christ together and lives for Christ together as a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). The overarching goal for this project is to provide SAGU students with written policies relevant to their generation that reflect the restorative practices currently in place, but through the lens of Paul's ministry of reconciliation in 2 Cor 5:11–21.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this project was for a design team to develop policies and procedures for the Student Handbook that describes SAGU's restorative accountability approach with oversight from the President of the university and his Cabinet. Chapter 1 identified the problem for SAGU, which needs written support for its current methodology of addressing student behavior. Chapter 2 offered a theological and theoretical foundation for the project itself. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the intervention, a description of the participants, a summary of the nine sessions, as well as the procedures for data collection and analysis.

Rather than performing surveys and drawing an analysis from statistics and numerical data, the methodology used for this project was qualitative research that involved personal observations and human interactions of a group of people within my ministry context at SAGU.¹ Qualitative research, as a methodology, “involves the utilization of a variety of methods and approaches which enable the researcher to explore the social world in an attempt to access and understand the unique ways that individuals and communities inhabit it.”² Qualitative research provides an opportunity to dive into the stories behind the data and gives it a voice. As a researcher in a Christian academic

1. David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 103.

2. Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 28.

setting, I not only wanted to hear the stories of how students and staff reacted to varying policies, but I also wanted to hear and feel how it affected their livelihoods. This project employed participatory action research, which, according to Patton, involved “solving specific problems within a program, organization, or community. Action research explicitly and purposively becomes part of the change process by engaging the people in the program or organization in studying their own problems in order to solve those problems.”³ The project participants have interests in this study since each person has a responsibility to uphold the policies and procedures located in the SAGU Student Handbook. The participants took on their roles with the understanding that they would have to enforce campus policies, and also with the perspective that they would also be restoring individuals to God.

My ministerial role as Dean of Students at SAGU provides me windows of insight through which to witness how students interact on a daily basis and how staff members address concerns in their lives. Because of this dynamic, I was able to examine and define what the themes emerging from the resulting intervention data. One of the overarching goals when involving stakeholders in participatory action was to involve them in every aspect of the project.⁴ In essence, they become co-researchers and helped to develop the overall product that the intervention produces and participated “not just to describe, understand and explain the world, but also to change it.”⁵ Stringer states that participatory action research is “phenomenological (focusing on people’s actual lived

3. Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2002), 221.

4. Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007), 11.

5. Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 50.

experience), interpretive (focusing on their interpretation of acts and activities), and hermeneutic (incorporating meaning people make of events in their lives).”⁶

Overview of the Project Intervention

The intervention took place once a week for ninety minutes in the Residential Life Conference Room on the SAGU campus over seven weeks. A pre-project session involved a student focus group who had experience as Resident Assistants that address student conduct within the framework of the SAGU Student Handbook. The project participants met in person for the appropriate sessions in the first six weeks. Because of the Texas stay-at-home order associated with COVID-19, sessions seven and eight depended upon email exchange since scheduling became a challenge in March of 2020. This process included connecting with an outside expert from Abilene Christian University as well as evaluating and concluding the final process via email.

Description of the Participants

The project utilized purposive sampling that included individuals who were aware of the Student Handbook. The research conducted included five Resident Directors employed by the University and who are diverse in age, gender, years of experience, and ethnicity (job descriptions are provided in Appendix G).⁷ The pre-project consisted of five students who served as Resident Assistants in the residence halls and were stakeholders as students participating in the daily life of the university. They are also student leaders required to enforce the policies.⁸ Originally, the Residential Life Housing

6. Stringer, *Action Research*, 11.

7. Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Thesis* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 83; See Appendix H.

8. Seann S. Kalagher and Regina D Curran, “Crafting and Revising Your Student

Coordinator, who is also my administrative assistant, was assigned to take meeting notes while I took notes of engagement, body language, and additional responses; however, the administrative assistant resigned and in mid-December, 2019. Consequently, I chose to digitally record the sessions in order to transcribe them later that day, while also taking notes on engagement, facial expressions, and the body language of the participants.⁹

Summary of the Sessions

Pre-Project Focus Group

Prior to the first session, a random sample of five Resident Assistants met to read over copied pages of the SAGU Student Handbook that address the biblical and community standards of the university as well as the procedures that the Residential Life staff follow when addressing violations of the student handbook. The participants signed consent forms while being informed that their participation was voluntary and that anything shared by them would remain anonymous.¹⁰ The participants circled any words that sounded confusing as well as made suggestions in the margins for sections and words to be changed or portions to sound differently than presented. The participants then wrote down any thoughts and questions concerning the student conduct process. Once they wrote down their thoughts and questions, they categorized the themes as a group by order

Conduct Code,” in *Student Conduct Practice: The Complete Guide for Student Affairs Professionals*, 2nd ed., ed. Diane M. Waryold (Sterling: Stylus, 2020), 41.

9. There are limitations to recording sessions digitally and then returning later to transcribe the notes. I was able to take some notes concurrently while the project sessions occurred. Any large gaps of time, however, from when the project session ends to the time of note transcription and interpretation could alter interpretations of the researcher. Recordings increase the possibility of the data not being secure and confidential; therefore, I stored the recordings in two locations on SAGU’s secure and password protected network. I will keep the data secure for three years. I am the only person to have access to the recordings. I garnered consent to record the sessions through the consent forms that each participant signed.

10. See Appendix C.

of importance in how prevalent the themes appeared and by how many questions came forward from each section of the student conduct policies and procedures of SAGU.

I then led a discussion with the five student leaders on what words needed addressing and what policies and procedures needed clarity or editing. One thing in particular needed attending and that was to the Hawthorne Effect, which could be more detrimental with students due to the gap between student and administrator rather than student to staff supervisor.¹¹ I had to be cognizant of the fact that the students may inadvertently try to arrive at conclusions because of our relationship. Since I did not have anyone to record field notes, I recorded the conversations digitally and then transcribed them later that day so that I could record my observations of the behaviors and reactions of the group during the session. Later, I categorized the themes, questions, and concerns of the students.

Session 1

The first session was an orientation with Residential Life staff members that covered how the student accountability practices at SAGU evolved into restorative practices. This session included explanations of the consent forms and going over the schedule. I provided a brief history of the SAGU Student Handbook policies and procedures, explained how SAGU transitioned from following firm standards with legal jargon to practicing restorative accountability using discernment. I then explained how the current Christian student culture perceives institutional standards as well as how staff addresses them.¹² I reminded the team that our goal was to use practical wisdom,

11. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 82.

12. See Appendix D.

phronesis, in order to maintain the balance for what is important in redesigning policies and procedures. According to Osmer, Aristotle saw *phronesis* as “practical reasoning about action, about things that change.”¹³ Our team wanted to be a part of change, but we decided that we needed to approach it through both practical and spiritual means.

Since our team had discussions from the book, *Pursuing God’s Will Together—A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups* by Barton during the Fall semester of 2019, we decided to pray and strategize our future sessions according to group discernment.¹⁴ We knew that we not only needed practical wisdom, we needed to discern what God was saying to us. As spiritual leaders, one of our callings is to help shape meaning through a variety of “cultural resources” such as community, beliefs, values, purposes, narratives, and practices.”¹⁵ Spiritual leaders cannot define meaning for others, but they can only provide the means for interpreting them, which is quite often through a theological foundation used to help their “meaning-making process.”¹⁶ Praying for practical wisdom and discernment aided the group in understanding the depth of our assignment and lasting effect of it on future SAGU students.

13. Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 84.

14. Ruth Hayley Barton, *Pursuing God’s Will Together—A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2012), 10. Ruth Haley Barton says, “Discernment literally means to separate, to discriminate, to determine, to decide or to distinguish between two things.”

15. D. Scott Cormode, *Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 69.

16. James A. Lorello and Jeffrey A. Bates, “Ethics and Decision-Making,” in *Student Conduct Practice: The Complete Guide for Student Affairs Professionals*, 2nd ed., ed. Diane M. Waryold (Sterling: Stylus, 2020), 130.

Session 2

The second session consisted of a guided theological discussion on Paul's ministry of reconciliation in 2 Cor 5:11–21 with the same five staff members. Participants entered into a time of a *lectio divina* of 2 Cor 5:11–21 in order for the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and hearts.¹⁷ The project participants divided into two groups, discussed what Paul was trying to say to the readers of his letter, and then came back together to discuss with the group. The participants learned how Paul's theology of reconciliation could be split into two parts, a disciplinary side that is for policy change and a community side, that is based on community reconciliation. Healthy conversations ensued regarding Paul's emphasis on being "ambassadors who represent Christ" (2 Cor 5:20) and who communicate a ministry of reconciliation. Several participants highlighted that SAGU's restorative accountability policies were deeply theological because students who want to be restored are seen as a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17) because "one died for the sake of all" (2 Cor 5:14).

I then distributed copies of the comments the students made in the pre-project focus group and words they circled from the copied pages of the student handbook for our next discussion. I also provided the coded themes that emerged from the students' notations. The five participants noticed early on that students were concerned about a perceived lack of grace and policies that were more rules-based, than focused on restoration and relationships. The students' observations from the pre-project focus group also centered on the fact that their peers did not know that SAGU uses restorative

17. Enzo Bianchi, *Praying the Word: An Introduction to Lectio Divina*, trans. by James W. Zona (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 37. *Lectio divina* is Latin for "divine reading" where an individual or group take time reading and reflecting on a passage of scripture in order to discern its meaning.

practices. The students seemed excited, however, to participate in a project of reframing language that not only reflected God’s heart of grace and forgiveness, but also reflected how SAGU truly views its students.

We reminded each other of the need for “priestly listening” to ensure that we listen to each other for the sake of what was occurring in the sessions, but also for the benefit of hearing on behalf of those that the policy and procedure changes would affect.¹⁸ The focus of the participants in the second session, centered on how to phrase language and processes that reflected Paul’s ministry of reconciliation based on the students’ observations. The participants felt this would provide a sustainable structure that would offer accountability in the form of discipleship to struggling students.

Session 3

The third session consisted of a brainstorming conversation regarding potential policy and procedure changes that emerged from the previous session’s theological discussion. We began the session with a time of prayer and performed a *lectio divina* of 2 Cor. 5:11–21 again to remind ourselves of the purposes of our conversations. A room full of white boards aided in the brainstorming of ideas and thoughts that evolved from open-ended conversations regarding changes to policies and procedures that needed relativizing for our current generation of students. This session also focused on problem areas based on the themes that emerged from the exercise with the five Resident Assistants. The perspective of the student participants revealed to the staff participants how our students felt about their fear of violating a policy of SAGU. The ministry of reconciliation of Paul helped shed light on areas of the student handbook that needed a

18. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction*, 36.

stronger sense of grace, less legal jargon and stream-lined procedures. I combined the notes on the dry erase boards along with the transcribed field notes later in order to keep the thoughts and conversations fresh in my mind as well as to take the opportunity to sort out and begin coding themes that had begun to emerge.

Session 4

After performing another *lectio divina* of 2 Cor 5:11–21 in the fourth session, the Residential Life staff categorized the policies in the SAGU Student Handbook that needed to change. This conversation was based on the foundation of conversations in the previous three sessions and centered on “new creation” language of Paul in verse 17. Since the participants discerned God at work in framing students’ lives, they believed that the student handbook was also a “new creation” in its redesign. Sections of the student handbook needed reordering based on thoughts that emerged in our discussion and how those ideas played out practically with relevant language for modern-day students. To aid in this process, the group reviewed student handbooks from several other exemplar universities known as institutions that follow restorative practices or something similar in scope to the goals of SAGU.¹⁹ Recognizing and incorporating the wisdom gained from the experiences of other universities helped establish the categories that are healthy and helpful for SAGU. This helped us determine effective policies in other in other institutional cultures without overtly plagiarizing their work. This process helped our group relativize the categories in proper order important to the values of our campus

19. Exemplar student handbooks came from the following institutions: Northwest University, Evangel University, Indiana Wesleyan University, Wayland Baptist University, John Brown University, and Abilene Christian University.

culture at SAGU as well as to discover how other institutions used restorative or reconciling strategies within their procedures.

Session 5

After a fourth *lectio divina* of 2 Cor 5:11–21, the fifth session included the actual design and development of the policies that need revising. The majority of the design portion consisted of reframing language so that is supported current practice and methodology, which included placing 2 Cor 5:11–21 at the theological center while rewriting some of the key pieces. The participants developed the new policies and procedures through a restorative theological context. In order to revisit how student conduct processes work, I briefly explained the order of the different stages in student conduct procedures based on the recommendations of Kalagher and Curran: “report submission, report review, investigation, interim action, forum of resolution, notice, hearing, decision and sanctions, appeal, records retention.”²⁰ I also explained what resulted practically prior to the shift in methodology at SAGU and how we had progressed in recent years. Once everyone understood the typical pathway for conduct proceedings, they were able to revisit the themes categorized in light of the work done in sessions three and four to give further context to how SAGU had shifted from the past.

The participants worked diligently to ensure that the reordering of the new categories made sense to the thought progression of the average student. They also honored the values of the university to maintain consistency of the procedures while replacing antiquated words and phrases with language current students understand. The

20. Kalagher and Curran, “Crafting and Revising Your Student Conduct Code,” 48–53.

participants constantly evaluated the procedures and policies to ensure that Paul's ministry of reconciliation remained the theological nucleus of the revised documents.

The project participants ran out of time in this discussion, so we agreed to address the remaining organizational conversations via email over the course of the next five to seven days. This plan ensured that we did not overthink the process and provided a timeline for us to finish as a group. This plan also helped me to create accurate documentation for those who would then review the materials. Fortunately, the email thread that ensued produced a volume of ideas and recommendations for revisions of the SAGU Student Handbook that not only followed SAGU's restorative practices, but also reflected Paul's ministry of reconciliation.

Session 6

In the sixth session, an outside consultant verified that the new policy designs were synced with the overall positions of SAGU and consistent with legal ramifications and best practices. Chris Riley, Associate Provost for Institutional Research at Abilene Christian University, served as an outside consultant due to his experience with student conduct, legal language, practices befitting regional accreditation, and Title IX policies. Even though the Title IX policies and procedures were not reviewed by the development team, the Residential Life staff members act as designated reporters for the university. Riley assisted in making sure the lines between student conduct and Title IX policies were clearly designated. Because of our physical distance and demanding schedules, we met via email correspondence. The email conversations provided the benefit of a written rather than verbal exchange. After editing comments from my conversations with Riley, I then edited the latest student life portions of the student handbook.

Session 7

The seventh session consisted of formalization of the final documents as well as any edits needing to be completed. The SAGU Office of Student Development under the supervision of Vice Present Terry Phipps and the SAGU Marketing Department provided additional corrections to the student handbook before publishing. Since my supervisor, Vice President Phipps, and I continued to work on campus in April 2020 during COVID-19 “stay-at-home” orders, conversations finalized the edits and provided explanations that included the development team’s rationale for the edits. This occurred in an open space while wearing masks. Vice President Phipps then met with SAGU President, Dr. Kermit Bridges, about the changes to discuss any ramifications that might need further detailed explanations. Dr. Bridges approved all of the changes for the 2020-2021 academic year. It was felt that legal counsel for SAGU would not need consulting since changes made remained within the scope of the last legal review performed by a team of attorneys assisting multiple college campuses within the Assemblies of God denomination. It was determined that the changes made by the project participants did not change the legal ramifications of the most recent review by SAGU’s attorneys and the resulting document received a glowing reception and approval.

Session 8

The last session consisted of an evaluation of the new policies and procedures facilitated by a questionnaire provided to the project participants involved in the study. Since we were still under the COVID-19 stay-at-home order, the questionnaire was

emailed to participants. The participants' comments on the questionnaire summarized the significance of their work.²¹

Evaluation

Procedures for Data Collection

The project collected data from three angles—insider, outsider, and researcher—in order to triangulate the data gathered from all three sources.²² I chose to record the first five sessions digitally, so I could be attentive to the conversations as they occurred. At the end of each session, I summarized the recorded conversations into field notes and added my observations of what occurred during the conversations with the participants. Appendix E provides the protocol for the field notes of the note-taker and Appendix F provides a sample of the notes taken.²³ My office assistant provided checks and balances to make sure the details stayed in proper order. In the third, fourth, and fifth sessions, this person transcribed notes from the digital recordings so I could focus on reorganizing the data. I purposely did not provide the participants with many detailed instructions on what information to provide in order for them to feel free to express as much creativity as possible. Once I began each session with the participants, I encouraged the conversations to stir organically and freely, encouraging them to feel like they could be honest and open about their hopes as well as their concerns. This ensured that the wording and restructuring of the policies and procedures remained within the intentions of student pre-project participants' concerns and comments. All field notes, documents, and digital files

21. See Appendix B.

22. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 72–76.

23. See Appendix E and F.

are stored on a shared SAGU internet employee drive as well as through my personal digital storage files. The field notes combine the pre-project discussion with the student focus group with the insights from the project participants made up of five Residential Life staff members.

The insider angle was based on insights from the project participants provided through a questionnaire in session 8. The choice of using the Residential Life staff members as project participants proved even more beneficial because of their immersion in both the student world as well as their responsibilities that included mitigating student conduct issues on a grassroots level. The experience of the Residential Life staff members proved useful in their general knowledge of the policies and procedures, in addition to their hopeful attitudes in creating a document to initiate change for the betterment of future SAGU students.

The outsider angle was determined by responses provided by the outside consultant who evaluated the policy and procedure changes that the development team created. Chris Riley and I corresponded via email over a two-week period in which Riley provided meaningful insights into several items that required adjustment in order to avoid confusion between Title IX policies and procedures and the conduct policies under the purview of student life personnel. Riley also helped with readdressing a few wording issues that welcomed legal concerns.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Triangulation supplied several data sources in order to provide as accurate a narrative as possible for research purposes. The process of coding themes helped in determine correlated patterns that acknowledged the silences within an angle of

evaluation, and noted any slippages that were incongruent within the data gathered.²⁴ Significant theological themes from Paul’s ministry of reconciliation came forward in the development of Chapter 2. The theological themes that gathered along with the theoretical themes of restorative justice found in Chapter 2 provided a “thick description” of the research performed.²⁵ I temporarily coded them prior to the project to allow the themes from the sessions to come forward organically. The initial theological themes were sin, reconciliation, new creation, and that Christ died for all. Some of the initial theoretical themes included personal responsibility and accountability, sanctions, repentance and forgiveness, developmental consequences, goals for peace making, and reintegration back into community.

Field Notes

The digital recordings of the sessions were transcribed into field notes after each session, along with my comments about participant behaviors and interactions provided themes that needing coding. This established the researcher angle.²⁶ I took as many detailed notes as possible while each participant took turns speaking. I made my own comments based on participants’ facial expressions, long pauses, body posture, the inability to respond to particular questions or comments, and any kind of negativity or struggles toward a specific policy or procedure. I highlighted places where themes began to repeat and then coded them based on how often certain themes developed. I verified

24. Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2008), 173.

25. Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 117.

26. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 202–205, 75–77. Coding is a way of grouping data sets according to patterns and themes.

the transcripts myself by listening to the conversations and crosschecking the notes provided.

Insider Participants

Upon completion of the first seven sessions, a questionnaire evaluated the Residential Life Staff opinions of the final product. This questionnaire provided the insider angle where they made comments regarding the relevance and helpfulness of the changes made to the SAGU Student Handbook for the students of SAGU. Coding the comments on the helpfulness of the project was the first step in analyzing the themes that arose. I then coded the themes based on the ways in which similar procedures would have helped them as students, as a reflection point. Lastly, I coded the themes based on responses to whether or not making additional changes were necessary. The questionnaire revealed that the participants were generally comfortable with leaving the project in its current revised state. The Vice President of Student Development at SAGU along with the SAGU Marketing Department provided additional edits and revisions before adding the final product to the SAGU website.

Outside Expert

The outsider angle consisted of comments from a consultant outside of the project participants. Following the orientation and five developmental sessions, Chris Riley at ACU ensured that SACSCOC federal requirements for reaccreditation in Section 12.3 regarding “Student Rights and Responsibilities” were met.²⁷ Riley received an email with the policy and procedure changes for review and provided a critique regarding those

27. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) website. *Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 117–118. <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/2018-POA-Resource-Manual.pdf>

changes. Riley's comments were recorded and themed based on importance and then compared to the insider comments and to my field notes. Riley's comments proved quite valuable since Riley has expertise in student life as well as in developing policies and procedures for students and for the institution of ACU. I then organized the coded themes into my overall notes and evaluations.

Conclusion

After analyzing all three angles (insider, outsider, researcher), I was able to triangulate what was consistent between the data patterns, code them, and then established the major themes that emerged from the coded data patterns. The three angles provided different perspectives in how the intervention affected the outcomes. The next chapter seeks to present the findings discovered through these three angles of research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This chapter will review the results of an intervention performed using qualitative research and more specifically, participant action research through a triangulation of my field notes from the intervention sessions, a questionnaire with inside participants, and conversations with an expert in the field of policies and procedures. The policies and procedures of SAGU maintained the focus of the conversations and all resulting data, although every person involved communally discerned that the policies and procedures redesigned were for people and was not just an abstract concept or arbitrary idea. Care for students of SAGU represents the purpose of the intervention and resulting thesis.

Description of the Results

Prior to the intervention, I hoped the design team would be excited about a redesign of the student handbook that would infuse reconciliation into the accountability practices currently in place. I did not expect such a high level of interest and individual immersion. Staff participants shared that former students and recent alumni expressed concerns to them that SAGU had displayed a lack of empathy for students who make a mistake or violate a policy of the SAGU Student Handbook. These revelations occurred during the policy development stages and subsequent discussions. This was important because the project participants believed that the handbook redesign could reach far beyond local SAGU student culture. The potential impact could reach stakeholders who were SAGU alumni. The students from the pre-project focus group were glad to know

that SAGU considers each person uniquely created and loved by God and that there are ways to restore individuals to each other as well as to the institution. Even though themes came from 2 Cor 5:11–21 and the restorative justice practices from the development sessions, all of the themes discussed are organized within the following major themes below.

Reconciliation and Restoration

The first major themes that emerged from the data—and were intentionally involved in every major theme and conversation as well—concerned Paul’s ministry of reconciliation and the restorative processes at SAGU. The participants mentioned the importance of restoring individuals who want to repent and move toward healing. They mentioned that having mentors to walk these individuals through their mistakes with grace and accountability is vital for a student’s personal and spiritual development. The participants stressed that if “the love of Christ” compelled Paul to have a ministry of reconciliation, then SAGU needs to practice this ministry to see students as a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17), but to also view them as someone who “should live not for themselves” (2 Cor 5:15). Since Christ “died for them and was raised” (2 Cor 5:15), they could not “recognize people by human standards” (2 Cor 5:16). The participants emphasized that if Christ forgives, then SAGU should practice forgiveness; however, they also believe that mentors at SAGU should invest in students and disciple them in better ways to live as Christians in the world today. The participants felt that students would understand that restoration and reconciliation are not overnight processes, but that if they were disciplined and communicated, then the students would feel cared for and loved rather than feeling ashamed for the wrong committed.

Open Communication

The second main theme to emerge from the three angles concerned communication. The project participants believe the culture of SAGU is now at a place where they can publicize that current policies are now more grace-oriented than the previous punitive-oriented policies. Historically, there has been external pressure in a discipleship-oriented environment to exhibit a low tolerance for student mistakes and errors in judgement. Thankfully, the ecclesiology that SAGU represents is changing, and discipleship-oriented institutions are embracing restorative conversations and practices. Now that SAGU has paired restorative theology with its methodology, open communication can occur about how a student receives restoration when they desire it although accompanied by accountability in most cases.

The student focus group discussed the need for SAGU leaders to open the doors of communication by welcoming conversations between students and institutional leaders. The group named hospitality, a welcoming presence, as one of the ways this goal may be accomplished. Dialogue often occurs in the SAGU dining areas on campus when people share a meal together and see each other as equals; another option is through conversations with faculty and staff. Resident Directors communicate the practicalities of the policies and procedures at their dorm orientations and when conduct situations arise; however, organic and honest conversations tend to create space where students feel safe to express their fears and frustrations. One of the best ways to communicate the practices of SAGU however, is by listening to the stories of students and the struggles of their peers and by relaying information about how SAGU desires to restore individuals rather than merely discipline them. The participants added that when students have open doors

of communication with campus leaders in a welcoming environment, they feel heard and that their questions that will receive a response. Through word of mouth, which tends to have a much wider reception than listening to a one-hour orientation, and by consistent, open communication through relationship-building, leaders at SAGU can infuse the SAGU student culture with restorative conversations that will bring a much greater return on investment.

Relevant Language and Practice

Another major theme that emerged from the development sessions focused on the language in the policies and procedures for student conduct in the SAGU student handbook which included words and phrases that students did not understand. Several of the words and phrases used legal terminology and sounded legalistic to students. The participants do not believe that SAGU is legalistic because they have seen the heart of the campus and know the motives of their leaders. Anecdotal comments heard from students reveal that they do not have the same experiences as the majority and sometimes have negative reflections of the campus and leadership involved.¹ The participants felt that if the confusing words and phrases received a relevant rewording and explanations where applicable, this would prove to be a significant first step in helping with student perception.² Much discussion occurred over the usage of the word “restitution,” since it seemed like more legal terminology; however, once a few project team members spoke into the idea that some legal terminology needed to remain in order to protect the rights

1. Focus groups performed in Fall 2018 reflected these sentiments.

2. Student perception has created concern for the Residential Life department in recent years. Responses in student focus groups concerning chapel requirements as well as campus policies in general signified the need for revisiting policies from a student perspective.

of students, the rest of the group understood. They also agreed that some degree of consistency with particular words is healthy, but the choice to remove the word “fine” or “fines” in lieu of the word restitution was a better alternative. The outside expert agreed with these perspectives, but issued a word of caution toward addressing conduct issues in the same manner between on-campus and commuter students. The outside expert added that their institution stopped enforcing violations that occurred off campus with commuter students due to liability. SAGU decided, however, to maintain its policies regardless of a student’s on-campus or off-campus status. The project participants; however, explicitly asked for explanations concerning those specific areas involving “restitution” terminologies, especially since relevance is one of the intervention focuses, and today’s student generation sees these terminologies as foreign terms in their culture. The idea is to explain that restitution creates peace and wholeness (*shalom*) between parties when there is sometimes a lack of agreement, or when the issue is a lesser degree of offense.

Even though the project participants agreed that evaluating the language in the policies and procedures every year is vital to ensuring relevance, they discussed that some degree of consistency is equally important. They felt that many of procedures needed to remain the same from student-to-student so that the handbook itself remains consistent. The participants understood that different situations require relevance because the way a person responds and their personal narrative matters in the outcome; however, they did not want to see particular students receiving favor because of their status. In essence, the group did not want to see discrimination among certain students, but are also

aware that there will be a certain degree of difference due to how many violations a student has committed or how they owned up to their particular issue.

Developmental Focus

The fourth major theme that emerged from the intervention sessions as well as the survey questionnaires involved the idea that the restoration process needs a developmental focus where students learn from their mistakes. The restoration process gives grace when a student is in a position of wanting to receive grace and forgiveness. Even though the leaders of the university that facilitate the policies and procedures do not operate as individuals dispensing penance, they do assist with caring conversations that support students by understanding grace and walking in grace. They also facilitate conversations when wrongs are committed between individuals as well as when the violation committed is against a school policy rather than an individual.

The project participants felt that since SAGU is an educational entity, educational or developmental components are necessary in order to create additional awareness for the student of understanding truth, shared values, and grace. In the written restorative covenant that the student signs and adheres to, the focus is not heavy-handed; however, it is consequential based on the depth of the issue and on repeat occurrences. The group felt that the developmental plan for each student requires subjectivity in that not every student will have the same structure; however, some components would be consistent among them such as the *Phronesis* class described in Chapter 1. The project participants also felt that having a developmental focus would seem less punitive to the students.

Student Participation

The last main theme that emerged from the three angles of triangulation was the need for students to be participators or “co-engineers” of their own developmental outcomes in restorative covenant conversations and to be participants in the consistent restructuring of the policies and procedures. The project participants indicated that many students often feel they receive treatment as “kids,” notwithstanding SAGU’s consistent statements that it must treat them as adults when it comes to owning their personal mistakes. If students feel led to co-create their own development plan of accountability in collaboration with SAGU leadership, then the student perspective may also change as they recognize the need for resolving their own external conflicts with others as well as their own internal conflicts within themselves. The group felt that dialoguing with students concerning their own developmental plan for restoration and reintegration within the community creates opportunities for personal growth and ownership. The outside expert, who is also experienced as a legal counselor, agreed with the assessments of the development team; however, he stressed that students not only need to be aware of how they play a part in the restorative conversation, but the restorative covenant also needs to include language that the student participated and agreed to the procedure.

The project participants also stressed the importance of including multiple perspectives as often as possible when reviewing the policies and procedures in order to include several generations’ viewpoints when interpreting the relevance and consistency of the product. In this way, the group felt that the circle of students evaluating their own policies and procedures every three to five years completes the cycle. Having these perspectives in check also results in more accountability for the policies created. Students

and staff alike will now be accountable to ensure that the policies and procedures that affect so many have a theological and theoretical foundation as well as ongoing methodology for multiple generations of interpretation and enactment.

Evaluation Conclusions

Based on the method of using triangulation to extract and interpret data sets from the perspective of insiders, including an outside expert, as well as my own perspectives from notes and interviews, I was able to evaluate areas in which the data is congruent, divergent, or silent.³ All three angles affirmed the major themes noted above regarding open communication of the restorative practices of the university and that language and practice needs to be both relevant and restorative. Additionally, all three areas agreed that the outcome of the restorative conversation needs a developmental focus and that students desire to be participants in the developmental outcomes they are obligated to agree to and follow. The centrality of these themes aided the overall design of the final product involved in the project.

The major themes emerged in many of the conversations and overlapped in every session with the development team discussions; however, there were also a few slippages where there was a divergence in the data in addition to a silence discovered during times of discovery and evaluation.⁴ One instance where the data diverged from the rest occurred during one of the sessions where the project participants received information concerning student involvement in the pre-project session. Two of the project participants raised a concern that the student participants are aware of the policies and procedures

3. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 197–202.

4. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 197–198.

involving student conduct because of some of their personal experiences as well as their own reading of the student handbook. The concern noted that because of privacy concerns the student participants involved in the pre-project session do not generally participate in the outcome of the proceedings in which a student has a restorative accountability conversation and signs a restorative covenant. Respectful conversation resulted over this topic, but the group agreed that the concern was irrelevant since the student participants are generally aware of the proceedings and are FERPA trained in writing incident reports as part of SAGU's student conduct policy.⁵ The students' purpose in participating in the pre-project session was only to provide direction for relevant language in developing new policies and procedures. After much deliberation, the project team members received this suggestion unanimously.

Another slippage mentioned by a participant noted that many students do not read the student handbook. This often results in students saying, "I was not aware of the policies because I have not read them." This topic became a distraction and was ultimately dismissed by several of the members, because the participants (Dorm Pastors) host a one-hour dorm orientation with their dorm residents at the beginning of each Fall for new and returning students and again at the beginning of the Spring. The purpose of this meeting is to address a bullet point list of items that students need to be aware of concerning their rights and responsibilities as a student. The orientation is multi-faceted

5. U.S. Department of Education website. "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act," <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>. Due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the university has to decide what an individual needs to know as part of the educational experience of a student. SAGU has chosen not to have Resident Assistants present in detailed conversations concerning student conduct unless there is some sort of accountability with the RA that is required.

and often aids in defusing many anxieties concerning the values of the university and what constitutes a conversation with a Residential Life staff member concerning a conflict toward the values mentioned in the student handbook. During the summer, students also receive an email with a digital copy of the student handbook and a short summary of any changes highlighted for the next academic year. There are several other awareness points where the policies and procedures of the university are available to the campus community. Discussions continually occur regarding how to improve the communications of the policies; however, the common sentiment of the participants was that this theme had a different purpose than the development sessions of the intervention.

There was only one silence noted while gathering data from the questionnaire. The five participants were not able to speak about their own experience. Those involved in the project had never participated in a conduct conversation due to a violation of campus policies during their own college experience. In fact, none of the participants had even received minor consequences or accountability due to an unwise decision. This observation did not necessarily skew the data or any of their particular perspectives toward what information needed updating, but it did add a surprising element that may be helpful to consider in the future.

One slippage occurred with the outside expert, Chris Riley, in that ACU does not address violations of their student handbook, but SAGU does. Riley noted that addressing off-campus violations to the same veracity as ones that occur on campus could present legal problems for the university, unless tied to actual laws. SAGU, however, continues to address some biblical value violations although they are not illegal.

The findings from the three data angles revealed that this project was an effective method for developing policies and procedures that support the restorative practices for the students of SAGU. It is with this premise in mind that I conclude the last chapter of this project with reflections and interpretations for the future.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This project began with an identified need to develop policies and procedures that support the current restorative accountability practices of SAGU. I identified this need through focus group conversations performed in the Fall 2018 semester regarding student perception on campus policies and procedures found in the SAGU Student Handbook. As described in the previous chapters above, I established a theological and theoretical basis for the restorative practices employed in the policies and procedures found in the student handbook. Through data analysis and triangulation of the data presented, I am now able to present my interpretations and implications of the overall project.

Interpretations

Southwestern Assemblies of God University is responsible for providing documentation of the rights and responsibilities for every student, interpreted within the SAGU Student Handbook. SAGU consistently provides this documentation in multiple forms. Through an eight-week intervention of discussion and evaluation with five project participants and a consultation with an outside expert, we recognize that the policies and procedures that the Residential Life staff of SAGU practiced need to be enhanced in order to better communicate through dorm orientations and ongoing realities with student conversations.¹

1. Slight adjustments in the session timeline toward the end occurred due to conversations occurring during the early stages of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, which caused SAGU to finish the Spring 2020 semester through a hybrid format.

The final design of the project development team, which resulted in changes within the SAGU Student Handbook, directly resulted from several main themes that emerged from conversations in the development sessions. Paul's ministry of reconciliation lies at the very core of SAGU's restorative accountability practices, but was also a major theme that arose from the project sessions. The theology in 2 Cor 5:11–21 from Paul places emphasis on “what it means to fear the Lord” (2 Cor 5:11), the “love of Christ,” the “new creation” of those “in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17), “by not counting people's sins against them” (2 Cor 5:19), and serving as “ambassadors who represent Christ” (2 Cor 5:20). These verses directly affected how SAGU restores students to God, the institution, or to one another.

As someone who has worked for twenty-three years in student ministry and has immersed myself in student culture, requests for open communication from students will always be common; however, university staff and faculty need to embrace the reality that students need the welcoming presence of their hospitality.² Informal conversations occur around the lunch table in the cafeteria as well as over coffee from a local coffee shop, which invites students to open up about their concerns and struggles. In turn, opportunities exist for communication to occur and spread regarding the restorative practices of SAGU outside of formal communication methods.

SAGU has provided relevant student conduct practices for its students for the last ten years or so; however, recent students viewed language within the written policies and procedures as antiquated, causing fear to occur in some.³ SAGU students and employees

2. Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 12, 29.

alike need a consistent, yet relevant methodology for redesigning policies and procedures for contemporary generations to come, while not forcing consistency or relevance to become idols in the life of the community. Consistency can also provide a layer of accountability to help insulate the community from allowing “impacts of structural privileges and disadvantages that exist within the institution.”⁴

Thirdly, since the university encourages the use of outcomes for students to follow in its assessments, outcomes not only occur in restorative conversations, but also occur in the restorative covenant itself through collaboration of the Dean of Students or Resident Director and the student. A need exists for a developmental nature that fuels grace and personal growth rather than punishment when the individual positions their heart to receive it.⁵ A developmental focus could result in an increased awareness of the values of the university as well as an increase of wisdom and discernment in the current and future life of the student.

Lastly, including students as participants in both the developmental outcomes and in any future redesigning and restructuring of the policies and procedures may prove to be a fruitful exercise. When students participate in their own conflict resolution, as well as with assisting their peers in designing policies and procedures to address conflicts

3. Fran’Cee L Brown-McClure and Catherine L Cocks, “The Philosophy of Student Conduct and the Student Conduct Professional,” in *Student Conduct Practice: The Complete Guide for Student Affairs Professionals*, 2nd ed., ed. Diane M. Waryold (Sterling: Stylus, 2020), 29.

4. Simone Himbeault Taylor and Donica Thomas Varner, “When Student Learning and Law Merge to Create Educational Student Conflict Resolution and Effective Conduct Management Programs,” in *Reframing Campus Conflict: Student Conduct Practice Through a Social Justice Lens*, ed. Schrage, Jennifer Myer and Nancy Geist Giacomini (Sterling: Stylus, 2009), 37.

5. Stephen W. Smith. *Inside Job: Doing the Work within the Work*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2015, 48.

between the student and the values of the university, shared ownership occurs and partnerships arise.⁶ This is the main reason that SAGU changed the former documentation of a “behavior contract” to a Restorative Covenant. Since a covenant is an agreement between two entities, the other person signing the covenant agrees to not only hold the student accountable, but also agrees to maintain a relationship with that student so that someone walks with them throughout the restorative process. Because of student involvement and participation in the process of evaluating their own procedures, a hermeneutical circle develops where students constantly reframe relevant language and practices as they practice them and then return to developing them once again.⁷

Implementation of this project occurred in July of 2020 by including the new policies into the 2020-2021 SAGU Student Handbook. The next implementation phase includes communicating the revised policies and procedures to the student body, and more importantly, encouraging the student culture of the campus to embody these policies.

Trustworthiness

Even though qualitative research is often subjective, the overall goal is to present sound findings from different angles of research to make it significant to those receiving it as well as to prove that “the reader can ‘trust’ the findings and that the study is worth

6. Tosheka Robinson, “Moving Toward a Healthier Climate for Conflict Resolution through Dialogue,” in *Reframing Campus Conflict: Student Conduct Practice through a Social Justice Lens*, ed. Schrage, Jennifer Myer and Nancy Geist Giacomini (Sterling: Stylus, 2009), 90.

7. Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 109–11.

paying attention to.”⁸ The trustworthiness of this project presents itself through the lenses of applicability, dependability, credibility, and reflexivity.⁹

Applicability

Because the theological core of this project draws upon the ministry of reconciliation, found in the theology of Paul in 2 Cor 5:11–21, as well as including a restorative practice, and the way it depends on action steps, the project is both transferable and applicable. Due to the excitement surrounding the potential use of restorative justice in current college settings, it was easy to stimulate additional conversations and to discover a high level of interest. Other institutions and entities could replicate the methods and practices used and have similar results. Even though SAGU devised a method specific in some forms that fit the values of the community on our campus, there are possibilities that some of the principles could still resonate with other campuses or institutions.

Dependability

Dependability depends on the accuracy of research in recording its collection of data and procedural analysis, giving credibility to the methodology followed. Throughout the duration of this project, I kept a highly organized system of maintaining the recordings of the sessions and transcriptions that followed, reflecting and adding in my observations during the discussions as well as during the transcription process, in addition to the coding records I developed throughout the process. By maintaining these records, I established a level of transparency in my research that enabled a truthful

8. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 214.

9. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 214–225.

analysis and avoided as much subjectivity as possible, thus making it stable and dependable.

Credibility

Since this qualitative research project involved the triangulation process through the questionnaire given to insiders, the consultation with an outside expert, as well as through my own extrapolation of the data, it is an honest and transparent representation of the experiences of the participants, therefore, making it credible to readers. The purposive sampling of those involved in the development team, as well as the inclusion of several layers of ethnic diversity, age, years of experience, and theological tradition, provided inclusion and credibility in the study itself. I intentionally sought after objectivity in my research with consistent “member checking” by sending revised documents to the participants in the development team, thus ensuring their words and intentions came through in the data as well as in the development of the project.¹⁰

Reflexivity

Reflexivity involves the way researchers “study themselves” and “give up the role of expert, and become a learner again.”¹¹ My personal perspectives and years of studying Restorative Justice, in addition to my desire to see the policies and procedures involving student conduct at SAGU revitalized, created an atmosphere where I was far more knowledgeable than the participants involved in this study. By default, the burden and desires I carried also created bias as a researcher. Adding to this bias is the fact that I am

10. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 221.

11. Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 31, 142.

also the director supervisor to the staff members involved as well as the administrator over the students involved.

As excited and eager that the participants were, I had to diligently insulate the development sessions from my over-involvement as well as providing open space in the discussion during the policy and procedure times. I leaned into the practice of “reflective listening” and did my best to be a non-participant observer while discussions ensued.¹² Bonhoeffer said it best when speaking of Christians and ministers: “The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. . . . They forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking.”¹³ By listening more, rather than talking or teaching, it was easier to take notes, but also attend to the words and emotions shared during the discussions. By consistently redistributing revisions and revisiting discussions with team members after subsequent sessions, I also attended to the importance and relevance of the words and actions of each individual. Inevitably, this also caused team members to possess a sense of belonging that validated their participation in the intervention portion and, encouraged them to participate even more. According to the evaluations at the end of the project, several team members felt honored to play a part in the project and noted they felt heard throughout the process.

Significance and Implications

Sustainability

This project sought to develop policies and procedures that support the restorative accountability approach of SAGU. With permission and guidance of our President and

12. Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 13.

13. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, Translated by John W Doberstein (HarperOne: New York, 1954), 97.

his Cabinet, the desire of the development team and Residential Life Department is to communicate the heart of the policy and procedural changes to the students of SAGU in order to show that SAGU cares more about the individual involved in our community more than it does about policy. It is essential to explain the ways that SAGU is willing to practice grace and restoration, but is also equipped to provide helpful accountability which enables students to understand why a policy exists and how it affects people and the way they live together in community. Other communications pieces will be researched and evaluated; however, communicating the policies publicly to all current stakeholders, including current students, alumni, the Board of Regents, and constituents within the owning districts of SAGU is vital to the ongoing sustainability of this program.

Personal Significance

As the Dean of Students and as a minister within the Assemblies of God, this project had personal significance to me. From day one, when I began the Doctor of Ministry program, my sense of awareness increased significantly. Not only did I become more aware of another faith tradition through the Churches of Christ, I grew more aware of the burdens and research endeavors of others in my field as well as in my cohort to see the church grow, not only numerically but also in spiritual health and vitality. I learned a significant amount through a sense of openness to what God was doing in my life by embracing the newness of everything around me, which caused me to respond adaptively rather than by reacting and overreacting.

I learned to develop a “balcony perspective” and to separate myself from the practices and life of my organization, while staying immersed in it.¹⁴ This momentary

14. Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School, 2002) 13, 64.

detachment from the organization taught me that desiring to learn new things and view life with a different pair of lenses provides a healthy sense differentiation. It is easy to grow attachments to the places in which we work and serve, in addition to the people we work with, but these things often cause anxiety when not kept in check. According to Friedman, “Differentiation . . . includes the capacity to maintain a (relatively) non-anxious presence in the midst of anxious systems, to take maximum responsibility for one’s own destiny and emotional being.”¹⁵ Differentiating myself from my organization and taking a balcony perspective opened me up to areas of my ministry that still need work and revitalizing as well as within my own soul.

Prior to my time with ACU and the Doctor of Ministry program, I did not consider myself a researcher. I was not aware of the implications involved in developing a theology of practice within my ministry context until now. I was not aware that I had already involved myself, as a Dean of Students and minister, in ethnographic research. I consider myself a “student of students” in that I like to learn as much as I can about their culture, behaviors, habits, and daily lives. I immerse myself into their world.¹⁶ Even though it feels like I have been involved in ethnography for what seems like a long time, I was not aware of the full ramifications involved in listening to the stories of others and the empowering aspects of how they influence growth and change in the world and in our little world at SAGU.

15. Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. (New York: Guilford Press, 1985), 27.

16. Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 51; Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 4.

Theological Significance

The theological significance of this project embodies its practice. The theology Paul established in 2 Cor 5:11–21 provides a view into what Paul was saying regarding how believers and the Church are to embody a ministry of reconciliation. How people lived within the context of communal relationships dominated the period of the early church. Rules and laws did not determine the status of a broken covenant, however, “the end came when it became clear the relationship, not the rules, was broken.”¹⁷ Relationships between individuals within a community matter and the rules that govern them matter because of people, not purely for the sake of having rules.

The policies and procedures for addressing student conduct of SAGU needed revising to reflect the restorative practices it currently uses. Essentially, this project also sought to restore the theological foundation of SAGU in understanding the relational aspects of the community of faith in working with students who struggle with violations of Scripture, relationships with others on campus, as well as against the values of the institution. Thus, the theological significance of this project for SAGU is the reinstatement of restorative accountability and reconciliation through communal relationships, not merely rules and laws.

Further Research

Once the restorative accountability structure is in place for a year, evaluation surveys will go out to the Resident Assistants and Residential Life staff to determine its usefulness. Surveying for effectiveness is a challenging concept because those on the

17. E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O’Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012), 160, 166.

receiving end of their involvement in restorative accountability need evaluating. At the very least, the Restorative Covenant and the effectiveness of the *Phronesis* program need evaluating to determine if any details require adjustments. These are the next step items the Residential Life staff plans to navigate and develop.

In order to expand the reach by communicating the restorative practices of SAGU, there is a need for student focus groups to help determine what mediums to use. In essence, the effectiveness and usefulness of the policies correlate to how much the average student knows about the practices the university promotes.

As stated previously, one of the most innovative forms of navigating conduct issues with college students is through restorative justice. Even though SAGU chose to use a hybrid of restorative justice, it does not have the same type of restorative structure as other institutions. The effectiveness of other programs and their differences from SAGU's offer other possibilities worth considering. Restorative justice is still a young concept, but research needs to determine the availability of longitudinal data from other institutions or secondary schools that use any of its concepts or methodologies.

Implementation of Intervention

Implementation of the project occurred over the summer of 2020 with the reformatting of the policies and procedures into the SAGU Student Handbook. The Residential Life Department communicated the changes in policies and procedures during dorm orientation in the Fall as well as in individual conversations with students and in the devotional gatherings in the residence halls. Unfortunately, the additional responsibilities regarding mitigation of COVID-19 guidelines on behalf of the university, including contact tracing, ensuring adherence to safety protocols, and delivering meals

students in quarantine, the ability to communicate the restorative accountability theory, theology, and practices did not occur as we hoped.

Due to the primary focus on mitigating and providing maintenance regarding COVID-19 guidelines, the Residential Life team decided to that when I came in to preach at their dorm devotional gatherings throughout the course of the 2021-2022 academic year, that I would speak on the theology of restorative accountability. The premise was to communicate the restorative practices that are now embraced by the university. The students received the messages with joy and appreciation, resulting in many conversations with students after the services. Likewise, more conversations are forthcoming.

Conclusion

This project intervention would not exist if it were not for a community of students who love taking classes, going to chapel, participating in activities, and living in residence halls on the Southwestern Assemblies of God University campus.

Bonhoeffer said in *Life Together* that, “Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. . . . We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.”¹⁸ Southwestern Assemblies of God University is a wonderful place to grow academically, personally, and spiritually in a community with other believers.

Community is not just a place where people dwell together relationally, but where love and grace abound in those relationships, which quite often occur through restoration and accountability. Bogue offered a definition of community that echoes the heart of the restorative practices of SAGU:

18. Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 21.

Community is a laboratory of discovery in which we come to value the possibilities found in mistake and error and serendipitous moments. (And) community is a venture in human learning and association, where moral meaning – concepts of justice and fairness, of human goodness and depravity, of rights and responsibility – may be factored from moments that can be both elevating and wrenching to the human spirit.¹⁹

The students that come to SAGU to discover more about God and their identities need a community of faith that challenges, yet encourages them to move forward during times of success as well as during moments of setback. God created us for relationships and for those relationships to thrive, knowing fully well we are prone for failure. The community we choose to share life with not only needs our presence, it also needs our forgiveness as Christ forgave us.

19. Bogue. “An Agenda of Common Caring,” 67.

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APPENDIX A
IRB Approval Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Harlin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885



November 7, 2019

Lance Meche
Department of Ministry
Abilene Christian University

Dear Lance,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Developing Policies and Procedures for Restorative Accountability at Southwestern Assemblies of God University",

(IRB# 19-116) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects as:

- Non-research, and
- Non-human research

Based on:

The study does not involve a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge [45 CFR 46.102(d)].

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX B

Development Team Exit Questionnaire

Do you believe the changes made to the policies and procedures to the SAGU Student Handbook will help students understand the process of restoration at SAGU? Why or why not?

If you were aware of these changes when you were a college student, what are some ways it could have assisted you in your understanding of grace restoration?

Are there any additional changes that you feel need to be made regarding the changes made by the developmental group?

APPENDIX C

Staff Consent Form

Introduction: Developing Policies and Procedures for Restorative Accountability at Southwestern Assemblies of God University

You may be eligible to take part in a study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you, the potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions that you may have regarding the procedures, your involvement, and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member.

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION: SAGU lacks policies and procedures that support its approach of addressing student conduct through restorative accountability. The purpose of this project is to develop policies and procedures that support that approach through a restructuring of SAGU's Student Handbook.

If selected for participation, you will be asked to attend 9 visits with the study staff over the course of 9 weeks. Each visit will take approximately 90 minutes. During the course of these visits, you will be asked to participate in the following procedures: orientation (including consent form and schedule) for transforming student accountability practices, a guided theological discussion on 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, a brainstorming exercise on potential policy and procedure changes that emerge from the theological discussion, four more sessions where policies and procedures will be developed, and then an evaluation of the policies and procedures developed will be performed.

RISKS & BENEFITS: There are risks to taking part in this study. Below is a list of the foreseeable risks, including the seriousness of those risks and how likely they are to occur: social and psychological risks are not likely to occur and are not serious in nature since project meetings will be private and will benefit the student body of SAGU positively.

There are potential benefits to participating in this study. Such benefits may include enhancement of SAGU's policies and procedures, which will directly correlate to positively enhancing participants' ministry as staff members of SAGU in addition to developing policies and procedures to benefit SAGU students in the future. You cannot be guaranteed that you will experience any personal benefits from participating in this study.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY: Information collected about you will be handled in a confidential manner in accordance with the law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the ACU Institutional Review Board. Aside from these required disclosures, your confidentiality will be protected by only documenting data and not participants names or any information that would identify participants.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed outside of this focus group. While measures to protect your identity and responses are outlined above, we cannot guarantee that other focus group participants will do the same. We encourage all participants to maintain the confidentiality of other participants in the group. Our request is that you do not share any private information obtained during your participation or any other information that may identify the other participants unless you are legally required to do so.

Participants are encouraged to consider the limitations of confidentiality in the focus group setting. Participation is voluntary. At any time, you may decide not to share information or you may discontinue participating in the group altogether.

CONTACTS: If you have questions about the study, the Principal Investigator is Lance Meche and may be contacted at 972.989.5194 or email: imeche@sagu.edu. If you are unable to reach the Principal Investigator or wish to speak to someone other than the Principal Investigator, you may contact Dr. Tim Sensing, Faculty Advisor, sensingt@acu.edu. If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general questions about your rights as a study participant, you may contact ACU's Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Executive Director of Research, Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be reached at

(325) 674-2885
megan.roth@acu.edu
320 Hardin Administration Bldg, ACU Box 29103
Abilene, TX 79699

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Additional Information

There are 5 participants enrolled in this study in addition to the Primary Investigator. There may be unforeseeable risks associated with your participation in this study and some of those may be serious. We will notify you if any such risks are identified throughout the course of the study, which may affect your willingness to participate; however, this study involved low-level risk.

Your participation may be terminated early by the investigators under certain conditions, such as if you no longer meet the eligibility criteria, we believe it is no longer in your best interest to

continue participating, you do not follow the instructions provided, or the study is discontinued. You will be contacted by the investigators and given further instructions in the event that you are withdrawn by the investigators.

A reward of \$50 will be provided to each participant in the form of a meal at a Dallas restaurant once the 8 weeks are completed.

Consent Signature Section

Please sign this form if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Sign only after you have read all of the information provided and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You should receive a copy of this signed consent form. You do not waive any legal rights by signing this form.

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date

APPENDIX D

Protocol for Field Notes

1. Every week, take record for the participants in attendance. The first session will include demographical information and any contextual variations that are important.
2. The note-taker will record all observations on an independently formatted note format. The Primary Investigator will record observations periodically during discussion, but following the session will compare personal notes/observations in sync with note-taker's observations.
3. Notes can be taken in short-hand and summary form, but with identification of each speaker along with short summary of thoughts shared, while including any kind of observations on body language, tone of voice, or posture changes according to information shared.
4. Highlight words and themes that are repeated and where participants begin to be symbiotic.
5. All notes will be turned into the Primary Investigator at the end of the session.

APPENDIX E

Sample of Field Note from Session 3

Primary Investigator: (11:40)

Alright, thoughts from you guys?

Participant #1: (11:43)

We talked about that there has to be a change to the person that when you're reconciled, something in you has been changed to be more like Christ.

Participant #2: (12:08)

Um, I think I kind that yeah, everything just ties around to that. About how, like even going back to Romans, like the ability to have the transformation of our minds and our spirits and the reconciliation and the things that are far from in this passage. Having that position ourselves to have that opportunity.

Participant #3: (12:30)

And then as we were reconciled to him and he's doing that work in us, then we are messengers and we are helping and leading others into that. As we're continually reconciled to him, we're helping bring others into being reconciled.

Participant #1: (12:44)

And we also said, like the part of not counting people's sins against them. It's more that the sin hasn't happened. But it's what do we do from that point? What are you going to do about that now? How can we help you be reconciled to Christ?

Participant #4: (13:09)

We've talked about what said before regarding transformation was the word that came to mind that it's all about like actual change. Um, kind of what you guys were saying that like change has to happen. And then, we talked a lot about like being an ambassador and that word like really stood out to me. Um, and that it's, we're ambassadors for the reconciliation that we present, which is what you were just talking about. That we receive reconciliation from God and now we have to go out and show that to other people too. And that, um, when we've received it, it becomes like our identity and that's who we are. And now we have to go out and represent that to everyone else, but also help them to experience it too. And then eventually they can experience it and become ambassadors themselves.

APPENDIX F

Dorm Pastor Job Description (Resident Director)

PRIMARY FUNCTION

The Supervisor of Residence Hall serves as the pastor/administrator of the Residence Hall hired.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

To promote a campus environment in which students can develop Christian ideals, social graces, character training and leadership skills

To model maturity, courtesy, integrity, spirituality, and respect for others in every facet of personal life including but not limited to: personal spiritual life; personal ethical/moral conduct; handling pressure; church and chapel attendance

To recruit, train, and mentor Resident Assistants in an effective program of pastoral ministry to students

To communicate and encourage the application of school policy

ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to and is accountable to the Dean of Students

Administers

Residence Hall Operation

Residence Hall Life

Residence Hall Ministry

Committees

As appointed by the University Administration

QUALIFICATIONS

Pastoral heart for people

College degree preferred (Counseling courses helpful, but not mandatory)

Ability to manage residence hall life and facility

Ability to resolve conflict and communicate biblical principles

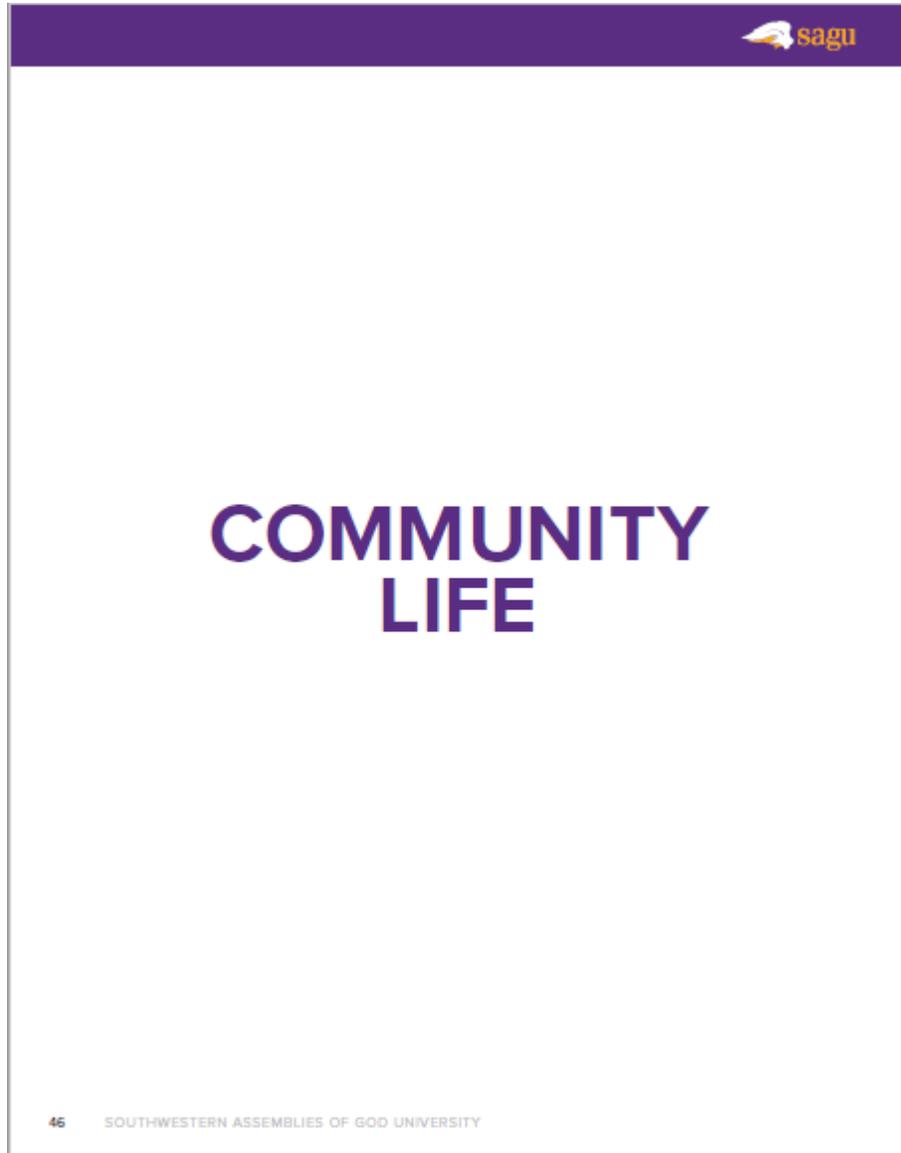
Understanding of and love for university life (academic, social, spiritual)

Ability to relate to the general concerns of ministry within the Assemblies of God

Ability to relate well to students, faculty, and staff

Appendix G

Restorative Accountability Practices for SAGU



COMMUNITY LIFE

DIVERSITY OF BACKGROUNDS AND DISCIPLESHIP

Community life at SAGU is a path of discipleship that reflects biblical principles and Christian teaching that encourages students to be loving and civil to one another. The heart of biblical discipleship at SAGU is to value individuality and personal growth within the context of community in light of personal responsibility toward oneself as well as respect for others. SAGU students are able to participate in spiritual formation within a discipleship setting which promotes academic success. We recognize that there is diversity among our student body in terms of our individuality and cultural backgrounds; however, we expect that our students submit themselves to the ideals unique to this community while continuously enrolled at SAGU.

COVENANT OF FAITH AND CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

Students agree to be included into SAGU's community upon entrance through application for admission when they sign a Covenant of Faith that summarizes the Biblical and Community Values listed in the SAGU Student Handbook (available online or through the Residential Life Department). The Covenant of Faith explains that attendance at SAGU is voluntary and is a privilege, not a right, and that SAGU may employ necessary measures to safeguard the ideals and values of the university. Students reaffirm their commitment each semester by clicking "I agree" to their student bill that includes a statement saying they will continue to hold to the same Biblical and Community values that SAGU affirms that help students live in harmony and unity. Faculty and staff of the University have the right to address students when necessary to insure proper student behavior. The University reserves the right to declare an issue unsuitable for the campus community or environment as well as reserves the right to update the Student Handbook online for edits and pertinent information.

RESTORATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES

SAGU's desire is to provide its students and employees with a healthy Christ-honoring community, which requires accountability to the biblical values supported by scripture, as well as the community values that represent the SAGU family. Our aim is to be gracious and loving, while harmonizing accountability with restoration. Accountability is required for those who contradict SAGU's values; however, SAGU also supports the fact that people are part of God's creation who make mistakes while also possessing the need for reconciliation. Therefore, SAGU addresses student conduct concerns through restorative and developmental procedures. Our heart is to bring restoration in the midst of conflict and distress within relationships to focus on spiritual health and wholeness in order to accomplish the goals God has called students to fulfill. The purpose of restorative accountability at SAGU is to provide an atmosphere of truth and grace while promoting the academic integrity and mission of SAGU's historical foundation. In light of this, individual rights are protected, while personal responsibility is expected. Since SAGU provides educational opportunities as one its main functions, students will be reconciled to God and scripture, the student handbook and university, in addition to individuals and/or groups represented by the university and local community through accountability structures. Students choosing to reject restorative accountability or be involved in unlawful activities could be held to a standard outside of the restorative accountability process, depending on the issue and its severity.

BIBLICAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE POLICIES

Upon enrollment at the University each student makes a serious and spiritual commitment to follow the biblical and community values of SAGU, to take care of University property, and to assume all obligations as a student with discipline and integrity. All values of the university and admissions standards apply during the entirety of the student's enrollment including breaks between semester and summer break.

Wisdom and discernment concerning adherence of biblical and community values are given to Faculty and Staff. Should a specific item or situation arise that is not denoted in the Student Handbook, Faculty and Staff have the discretion to request students and residents to comply, and be adhered to in the spirit of Christian maturity and mutual submission.

SAGU considers the following behaviors to be unacceptable for its students. Engaging in these activities is a contradiction of the values of the University and could result in being held to a variety of restorative accountability practices or requirements beyond those practices put in place for the community as a whole.

Biblical Values

We avoid the following in view of scriptural values and principles concerning living lives of worship unto God, which

includes all breaks and holidays and whether the student or employee is on or off campus:

- Possession or use of any illegal drug, mind-altering substance (including medical marijuana), and/or drug paraphernalia (see page 44).
- Any Scripturally prohibited sexual behavior including: adultery, fornication, any physical contact producing sexual stimulation, homosexuality, lesbianism, transgenderism, or romanticized same-sex relationships, visiting sexually oriented businesses, sexting through email, text, cellphone, digital apps or any other form of communication (see page 54).
- Dishonesty, cheating, falsifying testimony, falsifying chapel attendance or falsification of documents, including but not limited to applications for admissions (see page 19, 24 and 26).
- Stealing/possessing another person's property without permission (see page 56).
- Using profanity, obscenity, racist communication, slander, and gossip in speech or written materials, including use of acronyms (see page 36 and 55).
- Possession or use of books, literature, magazines, audio/visual materials and websites that are pornographic or inappropriate due to sexual content, obscene language, and/or violence as well as material promoting occult practices, witchcraft, or Satanism (see page 55).
- Causing physical, verbal, or mental harm to another person, including threats and harassment (see page 44).
- Violation of any civil or criminal law (local, state, federal), including but not limited to abortion, sexual violence, domestic violence, and dating violence (see page 39-43 and 56).
- Drinking alcohol, attending bars or places where men/women are sexually exploited, possession or use of tobacco or anything containing nicotine, including e-cigarettes or vapes, whether nicotine is used or not (see page 56).
- Gambling in any form (see page 57).
- Dancing at nightclubs, dance halls and bars, as well as sexually explicit dancing.
- Entertainment of any type that has a rating of "R" or higher is prohibited on campus. The University reserves the right to declare any entertainment inappropriate (see page 55).

Community Values

We avoid the following in light of the values held by the SAGU community when a student is in context of being in that community environment

- Unauthorized student visits to the room/residence of opposite gender, including mixed gender company off campus, including on campus and off campus students. (see page 62)
- Disruptions of chapel, classroom, cafeteria, dormitories, or other school events on or off campus.
- Disrespect to University authorities as well as failure to produce I.D. when requested by appropriate school personnel.
- Failure to respond to an official summons/notice sent by University. (see page 49)
- Possession of firearms, fireworks, or any device that burns or causes a fire, including but not limited to matches, candles, lighters, and illegal appliances. (see page 35)
- Tripping or tampering with fire equipment of any kind, including fire alarms, security alarms, thermostats, fire extinguishers, or lights.
- Defacing, destruction, or unauthorized removal/moving of school property.
- Having University property illegally in your room or possession; such as, unauthorized possession of an examination, campus keys, another's ID card, cafeteria dinnerware, University inventory tags, etc.
- Failure to comply with Fire or Weather alarm or drill. (see page 36 and 38)
- Failure to properly check out of Residence Halls properly at the end of each semester or out of the dorm overnight (see

page 62)

- Throwing items, including water, from Residence Hall windows.
- Pranks and/or hazing as well as failing to report incidents where hazing has occurred (see page 36, 40-41)
- Inappropriate use of windows or exits (including fire exits/escapes, roofs, cat walks, and hatches) before or after curfew (see page 63)
- Attempting to use a room that is unoccupied or empty in any form.
- Excessive noise or loud music during quiet hour (10 pm-10 am), disturbing the peace. (see page 62)
- Public display of affection (see page 54)
- Appearance policy violations (see page 57-59)
- Non pre-approved dancing/choreography.
- Poor clean room inspection (see page 60)
- Failure to report church attendance (see page 20)
- Having pets or animals in the Residence Hall.
- Having water fights, water balloons, or water guns in Residence Halls
- Grace minutes violation or coming in after curfew without signing in appropriately with dorm personnel or SAGU Security (see page 61)

BIBLICAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE PROCEDURES

Responding to Official Notice

A student is expected to make an immediate response to an official summons/notice from the Dorm Pastor, the Dean of Students, Director of Security and Safety Services, Faculty member, or any Administrative office of the University. Disregarding an official summons/notice may constitute grounds for further accountability.

Restorative Accountability Procedures

SAGU hopes to restore students who are out of alignment with the Biblical and Community Values described in the Student Handbook through restorative accountability. Restorative Accountability has a goal of reconciling individuals according to scripture when students come forward on their own or are remorseful and contrite concerning their issues and concerns when called in; however, there may be times when there may be a stronger consideration made between coming forward and being called in to review a student's conduct issue.

Final decisions concerning the requirements a student will receive in a Restorative Covenant will be based on:

- 1) number of occurrences during a student's tenure at SAGU
- 2) whether a Biblical or Community Value has been violated and the level of severity

A Restorative Covenant is an agreement between the student and SAGU (followed through by Residential Life personnel or its designees) that will encompass educational programming and/or accountability structures by restoring the student according to one or more of the following:

- 1) God and the scriptures
- 2) the SAGU Student Handbook and university
- 3) groups and individuals within the SAGU community

The aim of educational programming is to aid the student in learning from the mistake, while the aim of the accountability structure given is for the student to make amends and restore any harm caused. SAGU reserves the right to develop additional educational programming opportunities as well as accountability structures beyond what is listed in this handbook for the betterment of the individual.

If a student has violated a major Biblical Value, a Title IX violation, or has had multiple occurrences of maligning the Community Values, they could face suspension or expulsion from the university. In the event a student is suspended for a specified amount of time, the Dean of Students will design a Restorative Covenant for the student to agree to and sign in order to return to SAGU once the requirements listed are fulfilled, or the Dean of Students will recommend the student to the Student Conduct Committee for further review. Students who reject the recommendations provided by the Dean of Students in a Restorative Covenant for suspension can appeal to the Student Conduct Committee to present their side of the event or issue that occurred.

All major Title IX cases are reviewed by a separate procedure through the Title IX Committee, which is led by Dr. Fred Gore, SAGU's official Title IX Coordinator.

Transcript Notation

Texas State law requires all higher education institutions to include a notation on the transcript of any student "ineligible to reenroll in the institution for a reason other than an academic or financial reason." If the student chooses to withdraw from the institution during a serious disciplinary matter, the law requires the institutions to proceed with investigations. Notations on transcripts will be made for the duration of the suspension and coded according to the nature of the violation.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Warnings/Directed Conversations

Most first offense issues can be resolved through a warning and a conversation with the Dorm Pastor or Dean of Students, if necessary. Guidance according to biblical principles or from ethical/communal standpoints is often provided, yet the conversation is documented in the form of an incident report and placed in a student's disciplinary file stored in the Residential Life Office in order to track how many incidents any given student has during their tenure at SAGU. Many times, restorative accountability is met within the first conversation, however.

Phronesis

Students who offend a Biblical Value or major Community Value of the university may be required to attend Phronesis for 6 weeks. Phronesis is a values-based curriculum for either new students attending for the first time or for seasoned students that promotes the importance of practical wisdom, using discernment, and making better decisions for the future. Through the discipleship involved in Phronesis, the individual will have a better understanding of who they are and who they would like to become. The Dorm Pastors lead the discussions and provide any material required to complete over the course of the 6 weeks during the chapel hour when there is not a scheduled chapel. Phronesis is also used at times as a mentoring program for admissions applicants who admit to struggles with Biblical Values up to three years prior to applying to SAGU.

Reflective Assignments

Students may be required to read and/or research relevant material regarding the potential legal, ethical, or spiritual ramifications of the activity in question and write a report concerning the implication to a believer's lifestyle or community value.

Restorative Conversations/Apologies

In order to have a healthy community and not walk in offense, students in disagreement with one another may be required to have a restorative conversation or be involved in a formal apology to another student or employee of the university. Dorm Pastors and RAs are trained using solutions-focused techniques in order to perform conflict resolution. Peace and reconciliation are the goals for settling any conflict on the SAGU campus.

Spiritual Direction/Mentoring

SAGU is a firm supporter of spiritual direction and/or mentoring in the lives of its students. Students could be mandated to a mentor or spiritual director in the event of failing to follow the Biblical or Community Values of SAGU. Most of the time, mentoring and spiritual direction will accompany Phronesis, but the student could be assigned their RA, Dorm Pastor, or another faculty/staff member on the SAGU campus.

Counseling

There are times when a student has an issue that needs to be addressed within the arena of Christian counseling through the Counseling Services located in Bridges Hall. This is not to demean or demoralize the student, but to provide them care needed in order to bring life and empathy to them in the midst of their struggle.

Drug/Alcohol Education

Students found using drugs or alcohol or found in the presence of drugs or alcohol in any form could be mandated drug and alcohol awareness classes offered in the city of Waxahachie that are offered to the public at minimal costs. If mandated, the student will incur the cost in order to pay restitution for the offence or issue.

ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURES

Housing Review

If a student is under a housing review, they could end up not being permitted to live in or visit a particular dorm or hall or not be allowed to have a particular roommate. They could be required to live on campus if they are commuting, not be allowed to live in housing for a certain time, or have additional housing reconsiderations that fit the situation.

Loss of Privilege

Students given a "loss of privilege" requirement in a Restorative Covenant means they cannot be in a particular building, involved in a campus activity, have a loss of grace minutes, have an early curfew, or something similar regarding a loss of privilege.

Community Service

Students who are not able to pay restitution or a fine, are able to opt for community service, estimated at \$10/hour of service. Some students may be required to perform community service as part of their accountability requirement. Community service will be determined by the Dean of Students and the Dorm Pastors and could be served either on or off of the SAGU campus.

Fines/Restitution

When a student violates the values of Southwestern Assemblies of God University he/ she may be assessed a means of providing restitution (restoring harm) in terms of a fine. Any fine should be resolved within the semester the violation has been committed. It is to be paid at the office of Student Billing in 1st Wing Davis. In some cases, a student could be allowed to perform "community service" as a form of restitution instead of restitution or a fine. All restitution and fines are placed in a SAGU general account for replacement of broken items, destruction, etc.

Drug Screening/Testing

In the event that a student admits to or is found guilty of drug possession, distributing, in the presence of, or usage of, they may be mandated to a particular amount of drug tests for a specified time on a Restorative Covenant. If the student fails any drug screenings/tests, the student will be in violation of their Restorative Covenant and could face suspension.

Disciplinary Probation

A student may be placed on "disciplinary probation" for a major issue or the accumulation of several minor issues.

1. A student could be placed on "disciplinary probation" for a major issue or accumulating several minor violations of the biblical and community values of SAGU. The student could face the Student Conduct Committee as well.
2. If under 18 years of age, whenever a student comes under "disciplinary probation" the Dean of students contacts the parents or guardian explaining the circumstances.
3. Students under "disciplinary probation" are not permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities, such as traveling groups, varsity sports, club sports, chapel leadership/music, school musicals/programs, summer/holiday tours, hold an office in clubs, classes, SMA or Student Congress, or engage in a school activity or external ministry which puts them in a visible, public role.
4. If a student under "disciplinary probation" commits another issue, major or minor, that student could be required to appear before the Student Conduct Committee.
5. Any student who incurs disciplinary probation two semesters in a row will be suspended.
6. Probation will cease based on the time period prescribed or requirements requested of the student to complete.

Campusing

Under the supervision of the Dean of Students a student may be "campused" as a part of accountability. Campusing is defined in two ways:

1. "Full camping" means that a student is restricted to the campus at all times and is confined to the dorm room except for church attendance, employment, meals, classes, chapel services, or when going to the Barnes Student Center to check his/her mail. Other than the assigned roommate, visitors are not allowed.
2. "Regular camping" means that a student is confined to his/her room for a specific time until an ending point is reached by the Dean of Students.

Withdrawal

A student who does not cooperate with the aims and ideals of the university could be asked to withdraw or be denied re-admission whenever the general welfare demands it, even though there may be no specific breach of conduct. Students with extremely poor mental health needing professional help beyond the scope of the university could be asked to withdraw with proper guidance and pastoral care with a potential success plan to return.

Disciplinary Suspension

A student's tenure could be interrupted for a specific length of time in such cases where, in the opinion of the University, it will benefit the student or preserve the Biblical and Community Values of the institution. SAGU reserves the right to suspend students because of low levels of scholarship or a conflict of values with those which the university seeks to maintain.

In the event a student is suspended from the institution, he/she will be required to contact his/her parent or guardian immediately. A refund of room and board charges will follow standard refund policies applicable to student withdrawal. All students re-admitted after suspension for disciplinary reasons are placed on disciplinary probation for the first semester after their return. Further violations could result in suspension of the student.

Students who are suspended could be required to vacate the campus community no later than 24 hours after the decision to suspend has been rendered. Suspended students are not allowed on campus or at any University sponsored event off campus, including athletic events unless given special permission from the Dean of Students and are viewed as trespassers subject to arrest and prosecution.

Suspended or students who are withdrawn and who support the endeavor, can be called by their Dorm Pastor to maintain contact and continue a pastoral relationship.

Expulsion

Students who have committed such an offense that the overall safety and security of SAGU students or SAGU employees are in jeopardy, could face expulsion and not be permitted to return to SAGU or attend SAGU events (on or off campus) for an indefinite period of time.

Student Conduct Committee Procedures

SAGU holds that every student, upon signing the university application form, is under moral covenant to the university to abide by its values. Consequently, each student is responsible to exercise self-discipline to live within the limits of those values. Because the student body is composed of persons who are devoted to Christ and who consider mutual submission and Christian humility valuable assets to the building of strong character, this should not be a concern.

In the case of a serious violation of the values of the university, the Dean of Students will initiate the following process:

1. The Dean of Students will notify the student to appear before the Student Conduct Committee that is made up of SAGU Faculty and Residential Life staff members.
2. The Committee will discuss the violation(s) with the student and the student will be permitted to explain his/her behavior.
3. The Committee has the right to suspend or expel a student when the members are convinced that a major violation of school values has been committed or terms of disciplinary probation have been violated.
4. In the event of suspension or expulsion, the student must leave campus within 24 hours. Any student denied admission or suspended for disciplinary reasons is banned from the campus except by special permission from the Dean of Students.
5. The decision of the Student Conduct Committee is communicated to the student by the Chairman of the Committee and the Committee will then have prayer with the student.
6. The decision of the Student Conduct Committee is communicated to the parents or guardian of a dependent student under 18 years of age, by the Dean of Students.

7. A student suspended by the Student Conduct Committee can choose to appeal the decision of the Committee. The appeal process is as follows:

a. The student must file a formal written appeal to the Appeals Committee through the Vice President for Student Development no later than 5:00 pm on the following day after the Student Conduct Committee meeting. If no formal appeal has been filed by 5:00 pm on the following day, the Student Conduct Committee decision will be final.

The Vice President for Student Development shall refer the appeal to the Appeals Committee within twenty-four hours with any additional information pertaining to the matter in question. The Appeals Committee is made up of select members of the Administration as appointed by the President.

b. The decision of the Appeals Committee is communicated to the parents or guardians of the dependent student less than 18 years of age, by the Vice President for Student Development.

c. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be considered final.

8. The Appeals Committee has the prerogative to consider all decisions made by the student conduct committee and to:

a. Reaffirm the action of the Student Conduct Committee, or

b. Lessen the severity of the action taken by the Student Conduct Committee, or

c. Increase the severity of the action taken by the Student Conduct Committee.

Information for Crime Victims about Disciplinary Proceedings

Disclosure Requirement Information provided to victim of crime HECA Sec. 493(b) (1)(A) amended HEA Sec. 487(j) 20 U.S.C. 109(i) (26) Southwestern Assemblies of God University. Upon written request, discloses to the alleged victim of any crime of violence, or a non-forcible sex offense, the results of any disciplinary proceeding conducted by the University against a student who is the alleged perpetrator of such crime or offense. If the alleged victim is deceased because of the crime or offense, the information shall be provided upon request to the next of kin of the alleged victim. For more information, please contact the Dean of Students, 972.825.4747.

Student Complaints

The University regards general complaints with appropriate attention. The student body is regularly polled with respect to academics and student life. Faculty members, College Deans, and the Vice President for Academics are approachable concerning classroom and curricular matters. Student Congress executive officers regularly share student concerns with the Vice President for Student Development. Students are welcomed to visit with the Vice President for Student Development to make personal concerns known. Formal written complaints may be filed with the Vice President for Student Development.

Initiating and Processing a Complaint

Any student that wishes to log a complaint must first discuss it with the Dean of Students with the objective of resolving the matter informally. Should this informal discussion fail to satisfy the student, then a formal written complaint must be filed with the Vice President for Student Development. No complaint will be received in which the complainant refuses to commit to written record. All persons against whom a complaint has been filed will be notified of the allegations. A complaint may be withdrawn at any step without prejudice and cannot be reopened.

Procedure

Step 1: The complainant shall file a formal written complaint with the Vice President for Student Development using the Student Complaint Form that can be acquired from the Student Development office, or on the SAGU website (www.sagu.edu/complaintform). This form should be filed no later than 10 days after the incident involved in the complaint.

Step 2: Upon evaluation by the Vice President for Student Development, an investigation will be conducted. The investigation may include interviews of all parties involved in the complaint and the gathering of all available evidence. In the event that the matter involves academics, the complaint will be turned over to the Vice President for Academics for investigation and processed according to academic policy.

Step 3: Once the matter has been investigated, The Vice President for Student Development will inform the complainant of the

resolution. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution, they may appeal to the President of the University. The President will appoint a minimum of three university personnel as a final appeals committee that will review a complete written history of the case. The decision of the appeals committee shall be final.

In the event that a student believes he/she has been unfairly treated, or has issues with the University that cannot be resolved by the methods outlined above, he/she has the right to contact our accrediting agencies and/or various state and other governmental agencies (www.sagu.edu/campus-life/complaint-procedure).

For students attending SAGU Visitor in Griffin, Georgia, in the event your issues with the University cannot be resolved by the methods outlined above, you may contact the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission, 2082 E. Exchange Pl. #220, Tucker, GA 30084-5334; 770.414.3300; www.gnpoc.org.

DESCRIPTIONS OF BIBLICAL VALUES

Public Behavior for Relationships

Public behavior is that behavior with the opposite sex that is considered appropriate in places understood to be public and in places occupied, open to and in full view of others. (Note: Apart from a student's dorm room, the entire campus at SAGU is considered public.)

The following is considered appropriate public behavior by couples at SAGU: sitting together, holding hands, a woman taking the arm of her date, and a discreet, brief "good-night" kiss.

The following is considered inappropriate public behavior by couples at SAGU, including but not limited to: leaning or lying on each other, patting, fondling or caressing each other, extended periods of kissing and body massages.

Private Behavior for Relationships

Private behavior is that behavior with the opposite sex that is considered appropriate in places not designated as public or commonly understood as public. Places that are private in character and nature – times when a couple is alone, not in the presence of another person or couple, away from others.

It is understood and recognized that private behavior will not be governed by the same guidelines as public behavior. At the same time, however, it is expected that Christian couples will always conduct themselves in a way that avoids undue temptation and is glorifying to God. In light of that, the following things will be considered inappropriate private behavior for couples at SAGU: laying on each other, patting, fondling or caressing each other, extended periods of heavy kissing or hugging, visiting in each other's residence, sexual relations of any kind or degree outside of marriage are strictly forbidden, or body massages.

NOTE: The Vice President for Student Development, the Dean of Students, Dorm Pastors, Resident Assistants, Faculty, Staff, and Administrative Personnel have the authority to interpret, apply and enforce these guidelines. Students who violate them may be reported to Administrative Personnel, Staff, Faculty, Resident Assistants, Dorm Pastors, the Dean of Students, and the Vice President for Student Development who may initiate disciplinary action.

Sexual Identity/Transgenderism

Southwestern Assemblies of God University is a Bible-based institution for theological and professional studies. Affiliated with the General Council of the Assemblies of God, SAGU embraces and supports its doctrinal teachings. Further, SAGU embraces standards of conduct that are the same as those generally accepted by the Assemblies of God. Additionally, the University has established a biblically and morally based Standard of Conduct that guides expected behavior while a student is enrolled.

The University believes that God created mankind in His image, both male and female (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4-5.) We further believe that God established an individual's gender at birth. Any advocacy, expressions of sentiment or practices otherwise are out of harmony with the religious convictions of SAGU. Thus transgenderism is disapproved. The same standard applies to all administration, faculty, staff, and students. (See also the A/G paper on <http://ag.org/Bullet/Position-Papers/>).

Sexual Behaviors

SAGU does not support any Scripturally prohibited sexual behavior as described in Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 6:32; Matthew 5:27-28; Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 13:9; I Timothy 18:11; and I Corinthians 6:13, 6:18 including: adultery, fornication (which by scriptural definition encompasses intercourse and oral sex), any physical contact producing sexual stimulation, homosexuality, lesbianism, transgenderism, visiting sexually oriented businesses as described in Galatians 5:19-21; I Thessalonians 4:3; and

Hebrews 13:4, sexting i.e. creating or sending images or videos of a sexual nature via email, text, cellphone or any other form of communication. Students may not engage in romanticized same-sex relationships or be engaged in any sexual relationships. Any student struggling with same-sex attraction is encouraged to seek counseling at the Student Counseling center. (See also the A/G papers at <https://tg.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers>).

Dating Relationships

Students are encouraged to follow the teachings of the Word of God when dating so that their conduct does not bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. Students are warned against any practices which might be interpreted as stalking or sexual harassment. It is expected that students will demonstrate public and private behavior in their dating and friendships that is glorifying to God and in keeping with a Christian testimony. They need to be sensitive to those around them and should not conduct themselves in an offensive or inappropriate fashion. SAGU strongly disapproves of private visitations by opposite gender students in either party's residence.

Employee-Student Relationships: Faculty and/or staff members may date students only after consultation with their area administrator and the Vice President for Student Development.

Engagement and Marriage

Hasty engagements and marriages are discouraged. Students contemplating marriage are encouraged to participate in the Engaged & Pre-Engaged Seminars.

Married students should exercise all caution to protect their family relationships. Discipline and character are important to have while facing the rigorous challenges of higher education. (See also the A/G paper on <https://tg.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers>).

Divorced Students

Individuals who are divorced but not remarried and whose former spouse is still alive, may be admitted under the following conditions:

1. The divorce must have been legally finalized for at least three months before Enrollment.
2. Divorce students must agree to a pre-registration interview with the Dean of Students, or his designate, as well as a session with a university counselor.
3. The student may be required to live off-campus.
4. Individuals who are separated from their spouses are not permitted.

Communication

Using profanity or obscenity in your speech or written materials, including but not limited to text messaging, smart phone apps, online messaging and social media. This includes using acronyms to describe inappropriate speech or profanity (Matthew 15:19;

Ephesians 5:3, 5:4; and Colossians 3:8-10) as well as possessing material on occult practices, witchcraft, Satanism as described in Galatians 5:19-21.

Dishonesty, cheating, falsifying testimony, falsifying chapel attendance or falsification of documents, including but not limited to applications for Admissions as described in Jeremiah 7:9-10; Matthew 15:19; and Mark 7:21-23 (see also p. 30, Academic Dishonesty/Cheating).

Social Networking

Internet sites like Twitter, Facebook and others, have provided numerous ways for individuals to connect and stay in touch. Students must be careful that the material that is posted on their account falls within the biblical and community standards of SAGU. Any illegal or inappropriate behavior or language posted online violating standards of the University can be used as evidence for disciplinary actions by the University. Vulgar language and low images are improper for a person of moral integrity. In addition, students need to be aware that the material on their site is open to public viewing and potential employers, graduate schools and others can obtain access to postings.

Entertainment and Media

SAGU recognizes the legitimacy of a wide variety of tastes in media acceptable to Christians. People from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and levels of spiritual maturity must live with each other in a harmonious Christian campus community. Use of media

should inspire, not depress; edify, not tear down; promote healthy, holy values; not attack them. No unrated, X-rated, NC-17, MA or R-rated media will be allowed on campus.

The appropriateness of media will be determined by: loudness, lyrics and atmospheric effects within the campus community. Students are to show consideration for others in the way media is played. Those repeatedly offending the dormitory community by inconsiderate use of their media equipment are subject to having that equipment impounded by the Dorm Pastor. Media which portrays negative themes and activities or themes offending the Biblical and Community Values of the university, together with their covers or posters are not to be brought to campus. Those discovered on campus may be impounded by the Dorm Pastor.

All personnel involved on the campus, including administration, faculty, staff, and students, are subject to the ethical, moral, social, and spiritual standards of conduct approved by the Assemblies of God. All are expected to evaluate all forms of entertainment in light of their faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. External rating systems are inadequate for developing discernment but can be used as a point of reference. All individuals are encouraged to think seriously about the moral implications of what is watched without relying solely on the entertainment industry's rating standards. All entertainment choices (e.g. television, video, movies, internet, computer games, music, publications, comedy clubs, theatre productions, etc.) should be limited to those which contribute to healthy spiritual, intellectual and social development. Activities and entertainment that are of questionable value or diminish a person's moral sensitivity should be avoided. Entertainment that has a rating of "R" or higher is prohibited on campus. The university reserves the right to declare any entertainment inappropriate.

No SAGU student may make any audio or video recordings or take any pictures of another person(s) anywhere on the SAGU campus where there is an expectation of privacy. Students should respect any reasonable expectations of privacy concerning another member of the SAGU community.

Violation of Civil or Criminal Law

Stealing (possession of another person's property without permission) as described in Jeremiah 7:9-10; Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-23; and Ephesians 4:28 is not permitted in any form. Violation of any civil or criminal law - local, state, federal (including but not limited to spouse or child abuse, child neglect, sexual harassment, stalking) as described in Hebrews 12:14 - Students under criminal investigation can be placed on probation or suspension until cleared of all charges.

Pregnancy

SAGU strongly believes in the sanctity of all human life including an unborn child conceived in or outside of marriage. The university encourages students to carry their child to full term and strongly opposes abortion. Students are encouraged to seek support through resources such as the Residential Life Department including dorm pastors and the Dean of Students as well as the Student Counseling Department. Both departments are committed to helping students navigate the complex needs of pregnancy. In the event the pregnancy is outside of marriage, the student is still encouraged to communicate in light of the sensitive situation through the same avenues. In honoring SAGU's redemptive model, the university will pursue the best course of action for all those involved (the expectant parents, the unborn child, and the SAGU community). We aim to respond in grace and love while maintaining a high-level of confidentiality.

Abortion

We believe in the sanctity of life and support a student's (married and unmarried) decision to carry her unborn child to birth. We strongly oppose abortion (as described in Romans 13:9 and 1 Timothy 18:11) to terminate a pregnancy. (See also the A/G paper on [https://ag.org/Beliefs/ Position-Papers](https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers)).

Alcohol, Attending Bars/Clubs, Use of Nicotine

A thorough review of Scripture reveals stern warning against intoxicating drink and a call to separation from such drink. The spirit and intent of Scripture emphasize the consequences of recreational consumption of alcohol. Students are prohibited from possessing, drinking alcohol, being in the presence of, or attending bars (places where the primary function is serving alcohol or hookah, and/or dancing) or attending places where men/women are sexually exploited. A business may be a bar/lounge/club if it (a) requires an ID for admission, (b) advertises alcoholic beverages, and/or (c) provides social dancing and drinking (See also the A/G paper <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers>) and that certain products are a danger to one's physical and psychological well-being, possession or use of tobacco or anything containing nicotine (including e-cigarettes or vapes, whether nicotine is used or not) or medicinal marijuana is prohibited.

Dancing in a setting in which alcohol is a primary influence, as well as sexually explicit dancing, is prohibited in view of the expectation that we honor God with our body as a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:18-20). This prohibition would include,

but not be limited to nightclubs, dance halls and bars.

Alcohol and Drug Testing

SAGU does not permit the possession, use, or being in the presence of any illegal drug, mind-altering substance, and/or drug paraphernalia (See also the A/G paper at <http://ag.org/Bollets/Position-Papers>). Under the Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008, federal law requires the university to notify students that a criminal conviction for any drug offense may result in the student losing his/her financial assistance related to any Title IV, HEA grant, loan, or work-study programs. Therefore, a student's ability to obtain financial assistance upon returning to the university after completion of a suspension may be impacted.

Those in violation of University standards, city ordinances or state or federal statutes regarding (a) the manufacture, possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs, synthetic drugs (K2 and other synthetic cannabinoids, bath salts, or products used in a similar manner), alcoholic beverages or tobacco products or (b) the abuse of medications not prescribed to the individual and use of alcohol on or off campus will be subject to disciplinary action, including possible suspension from the university. Students at SAGU are considered "in possession" and responsible for alcoholic beverages, illegal substances and prescription drugs not prescribed to the individual that have been determined to be on their person, in their possession, in their residence, or their vehicle.

SAGU reserves the right to check for compliance with its alcohol/drug policy by various means, including active and passive alcohol sensors, random drug tests, and room searches (see room search section for procedures regarding room searches). Any member of the University community who refuses to take a breathalyzer test and/or drug test, and/or refused to provide consent for SAGU to be provided results of such tests (paid for by the student), will be considered to be in violation of the University's Alcohol and Other Drug Policy and could face possible suspension.

The University will consider testing when there is a reasonable cause. "Reasonable cause" for alcohol tests may include the odor of alcohol on a person's breath, slurred speech, glassy eyes, being unsteady or unstable on a person's feet and/or similar observations. Reasonable grounds for drug testing may include, but are not limited to: incoherent, erratic or violent behavior; drug-related odors on person, clothing, room or vehicle; sudden unexplainable drop in academic or work performance; possession of drug paraphernalia; previous positive drug screen results; being cited for substance abuse violations by University or legal authorities; a report that is provided by a reliable and credible source regarding use of illegal substance. All test costs will be the responsibility of the student.

If a student is suspected of being involved in any alcohol or drug-related behavior, the following steps may be taken:

1. A test will be given immediately and if results are positive, the following may occur, depending on the severity and number of occurrences:
 - A. Student will be placed on immediate probation and duration will be determined.
 - B. Up to 2 random tests during the current semester
 - C. 2 random tests during the next semester (blood alcohol content tests and/or drug tests)
 - D. Refusing to take drug or alcohol testing will result in an appearance before the Student Conduct Committee for further action. Student will be immediately suspended if positive.
2. If any future tests return positive, student will face Student Conduct Committee or immediate suspension.
3. If the test result is negative, SAGU will reimburse the student for the cost of the test.

Gambling

Gambling is defined as "any activity in which wealth exchanges hands, mainly on the basis of chance and with risk to the gambler." Scripture is clear regarding a believer's responsibility to be a careful steward of one's life and resources; therefore, students are restricted from participating in all forms of gambling. This includes internet poker/gambling (See also the A/G paper <http://ag.org/Bollets/Position-Papers>)

DESCRIPTIONS OF COMMUNITY VALUES

Appearance Policies

SAGU's statement of purpose and core values reflect an intention to provide students a comprehensive educational experience that prepares them mentally, spiritually, physically and socially. The University's appearance standards are, first, designed to create an environment that encourages spiritual formation; and secondly, to prepare students for success in the professional workplace.

A follower of Christ desiring to successfully serve in vocational ministry, counseling, corporate business, etc., must understand what clothing, hair style, and adornment is appropriate for different settings. As a follower of Jesus Christ, our appearance should be modest and not call attention to oneself (1 Peter 3:3-4).

SAGU expects all students to be clean, neat, dressed in good taste, and avoiding bizarre or extreme styles, including form-fitting clothing. Shoes must be worn at all times in public areas. All types of head coverings, ear buds or headphones are to be removed in chapel.

All appearance standards specified below are to be observed campus-wide with no exceptions. They apply to all students, single or married, living on-campus or off-campus. The dress code is in effect at the beginning of each semester, during finals, during summer sessions, and to all students on campus during vacation and holiday periods. Under all circumstances, modesty is the standard for all occasions.

The university reserves the right to declare any single piece of clothing or decoration as unsuitable attire for any occasion.

Chapel/Travel Ministry Attire

Students may be involved in chapel ministry. The following guide concerns acceptable platform wear under normal circumstances. Its application pertains to student speakers, worship leaders, musicians, singers, choir members and other platform leadership roles.

Men

Dress slacks, jeans (no holes) and shirts with a collar (no shorts, flip flops, tennis shoes, or earrings).

Women

Dress slacks, jeans (no holes), dresses, skirts of a modest length (no slits above the knee) and shirts with a collar or blouses (no shorts, flip flops, tennis shoes, or nose rings).

Community Attire

Men

Full-length shirts, sweaters, sweat shirts, or t-shirts with acceptable/appropriate logos are acceptable. Sleeveless types are permitted outside of class and chapel provided they are cut close under the arm and not made of see-through material (for chapel and class, tank tops of any kind, are not permitted). Slacks, jeans (holes permitted up to the knee), sweat pants or shorts (mid-thigh) are acceptable (spandex or any other form-fitting clothing is not allowed). Pajama items are not acceptable as outerwear at any time. Ear rings are permitted, gauges are not permitted. Bizarre hairstyles are not permitted.

Women

Dresses, skirts or hemlines no higher than 2 inches above the knee in length will be permitted for class or chapel. Proper undergarments are required. Since a regular brassiere is to be worn, no skin lower than this undergarment should be exposed in the front or back. The dress is required to have a decent neckline. No dress should have holes cut out of the material in the front or back. The dress should not be molded to the body, and if the dress is made of sheer material, it must be fully lined.

Full-length shirts, blouses, sweaters, sweat shirts, or t-shirts with acceptable/appropriate logos are acceptable. Sleeveless types are permitted outside of class and chapel provided they have a two-inch width shoulder, are cut close under the arm and not made of see-through material (for chapel and class, tank tops of any kind, are not permitted). No midriffs allowed. Slacks, jeans (holes permitted up to the knee), jogging suits (with proper undergarments) or shorts (mid-thigh) are acceptable (spandex or form-fitting shorts are not permitted). If wearing yoga pants, tights, or leggings, shirts must go down to fingertip length. Pajama items are not acceptable as outerwear at any time. A nose ring is permitted, but gauges are not permitted. Bizarre hairstyles are not permitted.

While the above policy reflects broad parameters for community attire, individual sponsors, faculty and staff members may have additional specific standards for students while participating in particular university sponsored events or programs.

Athletic Attire for Participants

Men

Full-length t-shirts, sweatshirts with sweat pants, or tank tops with uniform shorts or those approved for an activity (spandex or any

other form-fitting clothing worn by itself is not permitted). Athletic attire must be modest in length and fit.

Women

Full-length t-shirts or sweatshirt (sleeveless types not permitted) with sweat pants, uniform shorts or those approved for an activity (spandex or any other form-fitting clothing worn by itself is not permitted). If wearing yoga pants, tights, or leggings, shirts must go down to fingertip length. Athletic attire must be modest in length and fit.

Varsity Sports for Men and Women

Uniforms will be modest and appropriate. Uniforms will be chosen and approved for each sport. Practice clothing may be similar, but not briefer than team uniforms.

Special Occasions

The following is approved dress code for special occasions such as Homecoming, Class Night and the Athletic Banquet. See Dorm Pastor for guidelines.

Men

The platform ministry attire offers a basic guideline for attire. Tuxedos are also acceptable. Outfits that are wild or bizarre in design or color will not be permitted. Participants/Students are recommended to wear a suit that is a dark color. All attire must meet expectations or the candidate will not be able to participate.

Women

Dresses, skirts or hemlines no higher than 2 inches above the knee in length. Spaghetti strap gowns are allowed, provided they meet the modesty guidelines. See Dorm Pastor for guidelines. Proper undergarments are required. Since a regular brassiere is to be worn, no skin lower than this undergarment should be exposed in the front or back. The dress is required to have a decent neckline. No dress should have holes cut out of the material in the front or back. The dress should not be molded to the body, and if the dress is made of sheer material, it must be fully lined. All attire must meet these stated expectations or the student will not be able to participate.

Private Time

For the privacy of their rooms students discretely choose their own dress. Students are permitted to follow the leisure dress code in dorm lobbies. At no time are students permitted to stand in their room window or have their dorm door open when inappropriately attired.

Summary of Appearance Policies

While the above policies reflect broad parameters for community attire, individual sponsors, faculty and staff members may have additional specific standards for students while participating in particular university sponsored events or programs. Failure to comply with these policies may result in loss of ministry opportunity by decision of the Chapel Worship Director, Sponsor, the Dorm Pastor, the Dean of Students, Administration, Faculty or Staff. Further explanation will be provided during Dorm Orientation.

HOUSING AND ON-CAMPUS POLICIES

Residence Halls

SAGU fosters a community life on its campus that will properly reflect a Christian attitude. Cooperation, respect for the rights of others, respect for property, respect for authority, cleanliness and good personal habits are factors that are important in Residence Hall life. Violations of these values could result in loss of rights and/or privileges. .

Each room in the Residence Halls is equipped with a microfridge unit (refrigerator/freezer/microwave), access to a telephone and phone number (upon request), and computer network access.

An on-campus student is any student living in a Residence Hall. All students under 23 years of age are expected to live in one of the Residence Halls. All students who are 23 years of age or older must be approved by the Dean of Students to reside in a Residence Hall. Any exceptions to this policy requires approval of an application by Residential Life.

Room Reservation

All new students and incoming transfer students are charged a \$150 non-refundable room fee. Each semester, returning students wishing to reserve a room will pay in advance a non-refundable reservation fee of \$50. These reservations are taken during the last

months of each semester. After the first three weeks of this reservation period, all remaining rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis. This \$50 fee will be credited to the student's account at the close of late registration upon proof of dormitory occupancy.

Room selection is only guaranteed until the close of the first day of registration unless the student verifies to the Residential Life office that they are returning or not returning. All reserved rooms that are unclaimed could be given away by the first day of classes.

If the returning student pre-registers for the following semester classes, the \$50 fee is waived.

Room Consolidations: At times, reservations are made for new students or returning students which are not filled by that individual. As we are informed that a room reservation is not going to be filled by said individual, the individual who has arrived and properly checked in may be required to consolidate to or with another single student. It is our sincere desire to have all rooms and residents set by the first Monday after classes begin. Should a resident refuse to move or graciously accommodate a roommate being placed in his/her room, the University reserves the right to add an additional room fee at half of the cost of another person for the room.

Single Room Fee: Requests for a single room are based on availability. Requests can be made during the time of room reservations; however, if a situation arises when the room is needed, SAGU deems the right to fill the empty bed(s) as necessary. The single room charge will be placed on the student's bill during the late registration time period and will be an additional 50% of the room fee.

Room Usage

The room will be taken care of by its occupants. Decorations and pictures may be hung after receiving approval from Dorm Pastor. Nails or the equivalent should not be driven into the walls, closets, or furniture. Tape with hooks should be used to hang pictures. Curtains should be hung under the direction of the Dorm Pastor. Do not glue mirrors or cork to the walls. Fines will be levied if permission and approval is not sought and the student may be required to have the room repainted in an appropriate fashion at their own expense. A \$1 fee will be assessed for reentry of student's dorm room. Students or guests are not permitted to arbitrarily use rooms that are designated as empty or unoccupied.

Room Furniture

Every student is provided with a dresser or chest of drawers, desk, chair, bed and a microwave/fridge combo (to be shared with one other roommate). Students are expected to take care of University furniture. When assuming occupancy, the student becomes responsible for the room furniture.

Students will be charged for defacing or destruction of room furniture.

Furniture must not be moved from one room to another or one dormitory to another or taken apart without permission from the Dorm Pastor.

Dorm residents are permitted to personalize their rooms with their own furnishings—except for what is provided for the student by SAGU (i.e., bed, microfridge, etc.)—however, they are not permitted to have any outward facing objects (i.e., flags, posters, signs, etc.) visible from the window to the outside. Beds have to be separated by a dresser or at least a 2 foot space, so that no two beds are pushed together side-by-side. Residents are encouraged to remember rooms are limited in size and roommates share an equal right to personalize their room.

Room/School Property

Students will be charged for the repair of any damage done to school property. Students have the opportunity to list any prior damages to their room or furniture on their occupancy voucher upon check-in at the beginning of each semester. The Director of Maintenance will assess the damage and make recommendation to the Dean of Students. Student Life will notify the student in writing and inform the Accounting office, who will add the charges to the student's school bill.

Room Cleanliness

A direct relationship exists between the way rooms are maintained and student attitudes. Each student is responsible for the daily care and cleaning of the room to promote a healthy community as well as harmony between roommates and subtenants. A planned room inspection occurs once a week. Unannounced room checks will be made periodically to ensure that rooms are kept neat and clean.

Campus Days

This is an extraordinary event held on campus several times a year. Dormitory residents should expect to share their rooms and

minister to prospective students who visit classes and participate in school devotions. Everyone works hard to make the event special for both our current and future students. Since hospitality is a mark of Christian leadership (1 Pet. 4:9 "Be hospitable to one another without complaint"; also Heb. 13:2; Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2), this is a great opportunity for SAGU Lions to shine for the Lord and touch lives through courtesy, care and compassion.

Loss of Personal Property

For one's own protection, rooms should be locked at all times when not occupied. The University is not responsible for the loss of personal belongings of students in any building. Students may check with the Office of Safety and Security for any lost items.

SAGU assumes no responsibility for any loss of or damage to personal items, supplies, clothing, personal furniture, carpets, etc. due to fire, theft, inclement weather or otherwise. Students desiring to protect personal property should contact their insurance carrier to purchase "renters type" insurance. The Business office may be contacted for a referral to an insurance carrier, if needed.

Residence Hall Lobby

Furniture is not to be rearranged in Residence Hall lobbies without permission from the Dorm Pastor. Students are required to observe the lobby regulations each Dorm Pastor establishes for his/her lobby. Students are to treat the lobby furnishings with respect, and will be charged for any damage to lobby furnishings. Lobbies are considered "closed" during all chapel services, regular times for Sunday church services and during Dorm Devo times.

Residence Hall lobbies will close during the following times for worship services:

Sunday Morning: 9:30 am - Noon
Monday Evening: During Devos

Room Changes

A student may not change dorm rooms without the specific and written approval of the Dorm Pastor and Dean of Students. A form is provided for this transaction. Room changes must be completed by the first Monday after classes begin or with direct permission from the Dean of Students.

Moving from one Residence Hall to Another

This is prohibited unless approved in writing by both Dorm Pastors and the Dean of Students. A form is available in the Residential Life office. All moves must be made by the first Monday after classes begin.

Curfew*

Beginning last day of registration, SAGU follows this schedule:

Sunday - Thursday	12:00 Midnight
Friday - Saturday	1:00 am

(Each night the gymnasium and volleyball court will close no later than 1/2 hour before curfew, and/or earlier as posted.)

Since the security of SAGU is a matter of utmost importance, Residence Hall entrances are locked promptly at curfew. Students are expected to be in their Residence Hall by curfew. All students arriving after curfew will report with their ID Card to the Security Station. After logging in, the student(s) will then be escorted to their respective dorm and given entry. No persons will be given entry to the dorms after curfew who are not residents of the dorm of entry. Students within the dorms are not authorized to give other students late entry. Reports of late entry will be forwarded to the Dean of Students. Failure to comply with proper procedure will result in disciplinary action.

*Seniors who are in good standing with the university have no curfew.

Grace Minutes

Grace times are as follows:

Freshmen	75 minutes per semester
Sophomores	90 minutes per semester
Juniors	105 minutes per semester
Seniors	120 minutes per semester

Exceeding grace time will result in the following fines:

1-20 minutes	\$10
21-40 minutes	\$15
41-60 minutes	\$20
Over 60 minutes	\$40 + automatic visit with the Dean of Students for further disciplinary action

Late Permission

If a student needs to be out of the Residence Hall after curfew, written permission needs to be received from the Dorm Pastor. Since attendance at Dorm Devotions is a required portion of chapel attendance, work release must be approved by the Residential Life office with a Chapel Release Form.

Working Students

If a student needs to be out of the Residence Hall after curfew due to employment, that student must file with the Dorm Pastor a "Work Card" indicating the place of employment and the hours scheduled for work. Any change in work hours/employment requires submitting a new work card.

Overnight Visit/Weekend Off-Campus

All Residence Hall students must sign out to stay off campus during a school term, even breaks and holidays. This can be done by filling out the overnight visit/weekend off-campus form found online in every student's MySAGU student portal. The online sign-out form, however, is not native to a smart phone. It must be completed on a computer. A residential address and name of the individual the student is staying with must be provided. Signing out to go camping or staying in a hotel (with members of the same sex only will be considered) must be approved by the Dean of Students. Signing out to a place of business (i.e. restaurant, coffee house, etc.) is not permissible.

In order to have a single person of the opposite sex in his/her home, the student must fill out the overnight visit/ weekend off-campus form found online and provide contact information for the student(s) parents in order that the Dorm Pastor may follow up and contact the host parent. Students are not permitted to be out overnight in mixed company in private (or public without permission) settings (including, but not limited to campers, tents, homes, apartments, vehicles, hotel rooms, or residence room) without approval from the Dean of Students.

Single Student Visits in Residences of Opposite Sex

Single students are not permitted in the residences of single students of the opposite sex. Students who are found to have been in the residence of a member of the opposite sex may be terminated from enrollment at SAGU. This applies to all students whether they reside on or off campus. (See the Dean of Students for special permission to visit in the residence of single students of the opposite sex).

Students in Room of a Member of the Opposite Sex

Students who are found to have been in the room of a member of the opposite sex may be terminated from enrollment at SAGU. Permission may be obtained from the Dorm Pastor for special circumstances.

Room Guests

1. Guests who are not part of the specific Dorm community are expected to leave the Residence Hall at curfew unless the Dorm Pastor has received and approved a written request for them to stay in the Residence Hall.
2. If the overnight guest of an on-campus student is an off-campus student, family member, a personal friend from out of town, or an alumnus of SAGU, the student must obtain written approval from the Dorm Pastor for his/her guest(s). The guest(s) may stay a maximum limit of (3) nights per semester without charge. Student hosts are responsible for their guests' actions. Any actions deemed inappropriate by SAGU will result in loss of privileges by the student and the removal of guest from the premises. If the guest(s) stay longer than (3) nights, approval must be given and the student or guest must pay \$15 per night to the Dorm Pastor. During the summer session all room guests pay the \$15 overnight fee.
3. If the guest of an on-campus student is not approved by the Dorm Pastor, the student is charged for the nights the guest has stayed in the Residence Hall and the guest may be required to leave.

4. Dorm residents who desire to spend the night in another Residence Hall must receive clearance from the Dorm Pastor of the Residence they wish to stay the night in by 10:00 pm. Also, students must sign out of their own Residence Hall. Failure to gain permission may result in a fine.

Quiet Hours

Quiet hours are from 10:00 pm - 10:00 am in each of the Residence Halls and are to be respected in the immediate areas around the building itself. Any activity deemed to be a distraction to the enforcement of Quiet Hour could be moved or ceased by Residential Life. Therefore, the following guidelines will be enforced:

1. Students must learn to live in mutual respect. SAGU is an institution of higher learning and students should respect one another's need for study and appropriate sleep.
2. Stereos, TVs and musical instruments may be used but the noise level must not be heard outside the room during Quiet Hour. Drums are strictly prohibited from being played in the dorms.

Prohibited Items

Toasters, electric skillets, George Foreman tabletop grills, rice cookers, woks or any other cooking appliances are not permitted. Candles or any items that can produce fire or have an exposed heating element are not permitted. Pets (including fish) of any kind are not permitted. Coffee makers will be allowed. Violation of this safety policy will result in the impoundment of the appliance, item or animal.

Firearms/ Fireworks Prohibited

All firearms, fireworks and unlawful weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited on campus and school sponsored events. Any items, including, but not limited to handguns, shotguns, rifles, knives, swords, daggers, katana, clubs, paintball guns, pellet and/or BB guns, archery equipment, homemade devices, and any other items deemed dangerous by the University are prohibited. If any prohibited item(s) are found, they will be confiscated by Campus Security. SAGU acknowledges that under Texas law, a student who holds a valid concealed handgun license may store a concealed firearm in a locked, privately owned motor vehicle parked on a street or driveway or in a SAGU parking lot.

Secure Doors, Windows, Alarms, Thermostats, & Electrical Panels

Unauthorized use of windows, exits and secured doors in non-emergency situations is not permitted. Setting off or tampering with security alarms, thermostats, and electrical panels is strictly forbidden. Talking, whistling, gesturing, or yelling out of windows is prohibited at all times, in all buildings. Students are not permitted to open lobby or hall doors for any individual to gain access after curfew. All students coming back to campus after curfew must check in with Campus Security. Those violating this guideline could be required to face consequences through the accountability process.

Telephone Use

Telephones are available for all rooms, upon request. A phone number is assigned to each phone. Phone features include room to room, campus, and local calling. All roommates are responsible for unreasonable wear and/or damage to the phone assigned to their room. Retail, off-the-shelf phones, will not work. For the latest information and assistance, please stop by the Information Technology offices located in the Davis Building or call Extension 4751.

Laundry

Washers and dryers are provided to students for use as part of student fees paid in relation to student housing during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Commuter students are not permitted to use laundry centers in resident halls without permission. Students using laundry in resident halls should provide fairness and stewardship to their fellow students in making sure to not extend the usage beyond the normal time to perform laundry and must use the name tags provided to them to identify the machines they are using. Clothing left in laundry rooms for over 24 hours will be confiscated by the RA. Laundry taken by someone other than the owner will be considered theft.

Dancing

In view of our primary goal of creating an atmosphere contributing to spiritual formation, the University does not sponsor dances/dancing except for pre-approved choreography within a supervised campus production. Modest dancing with non-suggestive movements or attire may be participated in at church, formal, cultural, family, and/or other approved off-campus celebratory events. The general guide is to represent a higher standard of respect for self, the University, and the Lord.

Searches

Room searches are seldom performed. If a serious need warrants it, Campus Security and the Dorm Pastor may search any or all rooms only with approval from the Dean of Students. If illegal drugs, alcohol or weapons are found in the dorm room Campus Security will search the occupant's vehicle. If the occupant cannot be notified, and/or is not present, the

Dorm Pastor shall be accompanied by two witnesses in addition to Campus Security personnel.

Dorm Meetings

All on-campus students are required to attend all announced meetings. The Dorm Pastor must approve any exception. Failure to attend may result in disciplinary action.

Illnesses

Any illness is to be reported to the Residence Assistant and/or the Dorm Pastor who will help give guidance to the student regarding care and/or referrals to local health care agencies. A list of suggested health care givers within the local area is provided by the Dorm Pastors, as well as, in the Residential Life office located on the first floor of Toetler Hall, which include, but are not limited to: Ten Clinic of Waxahachie, Expedian Urgent Care, Altus Emergency Center Waxahachie, and Baylor Scott and White, Waxahachie.

Checking In and Out of the Residence Halls

Rooms must be completely vacated and cleaned out by noon the day the Residence Halls close (see Calendar). The only exceptions will be students who contract to reside on campus for the summer. If rooms are not left clean and in good repair, the student's account may be fined up to \$150 for cleaning and minor repairs. Anything left in the room becomes the property of SAGU and will be discarded. Failure to properly check out of the Residence Hall will result in additional restitution being assessed.

Summer Storage and Abandoned Possessions

Regrettably, due to space limitations, annual maintenance, and use of the University facilities by many outside groups, summer storage of student possessions is a service which cannot be offered. Student possessions left on campus during the summer will be disposed of within 72 hours from the time of dorm check-out. This includes bicycles left on bike racks.

Summer Housing

The University offers summer housing. The summer contract is available through the Residential Life office. This contract shares the pertinent information for an agreeable living arrangement for the summer. It also includes cost information.

Note the following procedures:

1. Obtain a contract from the Residential Life office.
2. Read in full and sign, then turn in to the Residential Life office.
3. When the countersigned document is returned to the student, the student is to pay the summer fee in advance at the cashier's window.
4. The cashier will validate on the student's contract that the fee has been paid.
5. The student will take the validation to the Residential Life office for room assignment.

Off-Campus Housing

The University's Board of Regents has an established criterion for its resident program. All undergraduate single students under 23 years of age taking seven (7) or more hours are required to live in the Residence Halls, unless approved for off-campus. Off-campus applications for the upcoming semester are only accepted during the scheduled reservation time. Approved off-campus applications must be renewed annually. Students that reside off-campus are required to abide by all of SAGU's guidelines contained in the Student Handbook. Senior students who qualify may be allowed to reside in the Regents Apartments. See the Housing Department in Toetler Hall for applications and qualification guidelines.

BRIEF VITA

Lance Meche was born on October 2, 1972 in Winnie, TX. He graduated from Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) with a Bachelor of Science degree in Church Ministries in 1998 with concentrations in Bible and Counseling/Psychology. He received a Master of Theology Degree from SAGU in 2006 and a Master of Divinity degree from SAGU in 2008. Lance was married to Roxanne Ellison in 1998 of Thorsby, Alabama. Lance and Roxanne have three children, Anna (2010), Faith (2010), and Jase (2013). Lance served as the Youth Minister at Freedom Church in Tallahassee, Florida from 1998 to 2004. He then accepted the role as Resident Director (Dorm Pastor) at SAGU in 2004 and then served in the role of Assistant Dean of Students in 2007. In 2010, Lance started his current role as Dean of Students at SAGU where he has also taught several undergraduate courses within the Church Leadership degree program (2006-current). He enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program at Abilene Christian University in 2018.