

A Philosophical and Practical Introduction to Chambers College

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*Chambers College
Press*

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Part I

Philosophy of Education

Introduction

Every institution has both a distinct personality and a unique vision. The goal of this booklet is to introduce the student to the personality and vision of Chambers College.

In a sense, this orientation booklet is like a pre-concert talk offered before a symphony plays its program. A pre-concert talk tells an audience what to listen for and gives background about why and how an orchestral work was written. In the same way, we hope this booklet will serve as a pre-academic talk before the grand endeavor of a college education, giving each student a better understanding of the expectations and rationale behind the academic environment at Chambers



College, as well as equipping the student with practical tips for achieving academic excellence.

Briefly, we desire to train scholars to become followers of Jesus Christ, capable of doing good works. Therefore we are more concerned to know that we have been effective in training true disciples than to know that the world validates our achievements.

The Vision and Mission

The goal of Chambers College is to assist the student's growth in his walk with Jesus Christ through increasing his wisdom and knowledge of God. Instructors are both mentors and tutors as they guide the student through

the courses of instruction, always beginning with the doctrine of the fear of God and the supremacy of biblical truth, and proceeding to develop the student's mental faculties of discernment and analysis through application of the Bible's teaching. Each program is precisely matched to the unique skills, abilities, and aspirations of the student to achieve the final aim: that the student is effective and fully equipped to live for Christ, and that he does well in anything he puts his hand and mind to.

The vision that drives Chambers College is essentially the same vision that inspired the founders of the early colleges in America's first 100 years, from the founding of the first college, Harvard, in 1636, to the founding of Princeton in 1746.¹

Our college provides a high quality, biblical education for any person intent on being more effective for the LORD. The program is designed to give a foundation for all professions, including, but not limited to, full-time vocational Christian ministries (e.g. pastoral ministry and missions).

The Chambers College Student

What type of student will thrive at Chambers College? A person who has a desire to make a difference for Jesus Christ in this world will belong at Chambers College, for this student will find his faith strengthened, his apologetics sharpened, his walk with God deepened, his spiritual understanding broadened, and his desire to serve the Lord given practical channels and fulfilling results. Though this spiritual maturity is the most valuable characteristic of a Chambers College student, academically bright students will also find Chambers College a stimulating and perfect fit. In fact, students here will be learning with, working with, and in some ways, competing with, some of the brightest minds in the world. Some students previously enrolled at Chambers College have achieved a perfect score on portions of the SAT and ACT tests.

We are looking for those who want to obtain an excellent education for the purpose of serving Christ to the fullest extent. More specifically, this student will desire to:

- ! learn more about being like Christ.
- ! become more effective in serving Christ.
- ! become more effective in proclaiming Christ.
- ! become more effective in utilizing Biblical principles.

The entering student's primary desire should not simply be to obtain a degree. Our college program is structured to help students glorify Christ more effectively, no matter what vocational calling they desire to pursue.

A Comprehensive Biblical Worldview Also Known as Christian Liberal Arts

The Enduring Relevance of Liberal Arts

With this being the vision determined for the college, the founders of Chambers College sought to discover the method most suited to making this vision reality. They surveyed the founding of several historically well-known and prestigious colleges, seeking to discover what had made these colleges distinct in their educational approach and effective in their training of disciples for Christ. These included Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, University of Chicago, and Columbia, all of which had begun as Christian institutions with the same desire to glorify God through the education of young people. This research revealed that a method called the "Christian liberal arts program" was used by each of these colleges, and the founders of Chambers College determined it to be the most suited for the vision and mission of Chambers College, as well as the best response to today's fast-changing vocational society.

At the heart of this program is the understanding that God desires Christians to be well-rounded in knowledge and wisdom so they can be effective workers for Him. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 uses the term "equipped" to describe a well-rounded Christian:



All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

A liberal arts education focuses on equipping the scholar “for every good work.” The term “liberal” has a broad range of meanings. Used in the context of “liberal arts,” it does not include the usual political connotations that are often associated with the term. *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* defines “liberal arts” as: studies... in a college or university intended to provide chiefly general knowledge and to develop the general intellectual capacities (as reason and judgment) as opposed to professional or vocational skills.²

As Leland Ryken points out, this was the standard form of education for the Puritans, who were doctrinally sound and spiritually devout Christians as well as leaders of their generation. In his book, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were*, he shares:

The Puritan emphasis on the Christian element in education will surprise no one. That emphasis, however, is only half of the picture. The other half is not nearly so well known. While the aim of Puritan education was religious, its content was the liberal arts. Puritan colleges were established primarily to provide an educated clergy, but this did not mean they were seminaries or Bible colleges. They were Christian liberal arts colleges.

This concern for a broad education in all subjects was influenced by the Continental Reformers, especially Luther and Calvin.

...For the Reformers and their heirs, the Puritans, no education was complete if it included only religious knowledge.³

Liberal Arts is suited for all vocations

History’s great Christian scholars and world-changers knew how the Bible applied to all areas of life. A few of these were Wycliff, Tyndale, Knox, Luther, Calvin, and Spurgeon, all of whom read broadly and delighted to see God’s handiwork in the world. However, the liberal arts education is not limited to theologians. In fact, every academic discipline should have great men and women of God who aspire to excellence in all they do: people such as C. S. Lewis in literature, Rembrandt in art, Johann Sebastian Bach in music, William Wilberforce in statesmanship, and LeTourneau in engineering. We see, from the influence of these men, that a person need not hold a traditional Christian vocation of pastor, missionary, or Christian school teacher to be effective for God’s Kingdom.

Historically, the liberal arts approach was chosen by Christian leaders as the best way to train scholarly and effective servants for God. With this in mind, the Chambers College liberal arts education surveys the biblical foundations of the major arenas of life --e.g. philosophy, fine arts, science, law, and theology-- giving the student a cultural context in which to apply

the foundational biblical philosophies of each subject. A person fully trained in the liberal arts is sometimes known affectionately as “a Renaissance Man” for his broad and ample wisdom pertaining to every area of life. From a Christian perspective, he would be better titled, “a Reformer.”

The Adaptability of a Liberal Arts Degree

The Chambers College liberal arts program is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of major disciplines to prepare them for all of life. Students may pursue a four-year Bachelor of Arts of Christian Ministry degree, or they may pursue a two-year Associate of Arts of Christian Ministry degree.



Suited for a Rapidly changing job market

Recent surveys and business research indicate that a student entering the current job market will make five to seven career changes in a lifetime. This is not the same job environment of previous generations, in which many of our fathers found a specific occupation early in life and worked in that occupation until retirement. In this rapidly changing society, however, employers look for individuals who are able to learn quickly and thoroughly, to reason and make sound decisions, to be adaptable to fluctuating needs, to communicate clearly and effectively, and who hold to high standards of character and dependability. The broad educational approach of the liberal arts program has become even more well-suited to today’s rapidly changing society than it was to the societies of previous centuries.

Maximum Adaptability with Marketable Skills

Not only is the current job market rapidly changing, but many jobs are becoming more narrow in scope and technically specialized. Many higher educational programs have adjusted to this narrowing of technical arenas by focusing on early training for a specific trade, rather than on cultivating a broad understanding of how the world operates in relationship to general principles. Because of this, a person trained for a specific vocation may be ill-prepared for entering a new vocation when all his specific training becomes irrelevant. Ironically, the best way to prepare for this new, highly technical culture is to be broadly trained and have the ability learn quickly and to adapt to new situations. This is precisely what a liberal arts degree

provides. It trains one how to think, research, and be able to navigate in new arenas quickly.

Some of the prestigious “white collar” trades, e.g. law, medicine, and science, require a great intake of data in order to handle the technical procedures required by the trade. Many collegiate programs concentrate solely on imparting the specifics of those professional trades while excluding the broader and more foundational elements that, according to Oxford scholar, Alan Ryan, are essential to a complete education.

“...a liberal education will give its beneficiaries skills that are useful in almost every walk of life, and increasingly so in the modern world and the so-called knowledge economy. Recent governments have become obsessed with transferable skills; a liberal education provides them under another name, and always has done. The ability to read exactly and absorb information swiftly and in recapturable form; the ability to speak and write coherently and lucidly so that new information or a new step in an argument follows transparently from its predecessor and leads transparently to its successor; the ability to see the implications of numerical data and to elicit them from different presentations – these are what a liberally educated person can do, and what almost any white-collar occupation makes some use of.”⁴

There are many institutions of distinction that prefer new students to have a liberal education before they enter the college for training in the specific skills of a particular profession. For example, the prestigious graduate school of business at the University of Chicago looks for students who have not previously majored in business, but possess a major in a different field of study. These institutions know that a well-rounded student will ultimately be the most likely to succeed.

Students may choose a major in a particular discipline at Chambers College, but they will most likely need additional specific training if they choose to go into a technical field. Our liberal arts program does include electives pertaining to specific skills, but its goal is not to give the student a limited technical degree as in academia’s “hard sciences.” Employers are more than willing to invest in additional technical training for individuals who are well rounded in the liberal arts.

The Challenge of the Liberal Arts Degree

The full benefit of a Christian liberal arts education is not easy to achieve. Broad study in many subjects can be compared to cross training in sports. The student will have to learn and assimilate knowledge in a wide variety

of intellectual subjects, and there will certainly be areas for which some will have no predilection and thus will have less natural motivation.

For example, those with a penchant for hard sciences may struggle with courses in literature and fine arts. Those attracted to fine arts may not have much interest in economics and politics. Chambers College desires its students to enjoy all their college pursuits, but each will be stretched to develop knowledge in a variety of disciplines, some of which will be harder for a student than others.

It is the goal of Chambers College to provide its students with the ability to navigate in any arena with excellence by giving foundational tools to help each quickly grasp and become proficient in any new endeavor.

The Beauty of the Christian Liberal Arts Education

The beauty of the liberal arts education is in its broad, extensive scope of many realms of knowledge, giving the student the biblical and intellectual bedrock needed in order to handle a wide range of challenges. This expansive knowledge base may also help each student relate to diverse groups of people, providing points of common ground with almost anyone he talks to and offering many opportunities to share the gospel. Academically, the student's broad background will facilitate becoming "all things to all people."



The liberal arts degree is for the hardworking scholar who desires to utilize his Biblical thinking skills for all of life --beyond just working a job. The Christian liberal arts approach is life-oriented instead of job-oriented.

Our Style of Liberal Arts

Our eclectic approach at Chambers College is a blend of qualities we have derived from diverse academic institutions: the English university system, Protestant Dissenters' academies, early Princeton College, and Oswald Chambers' Bible Training College.

The English University System: Oxford/Cambridge

Since the founding of these two prestigious university systems, they have lost their Christian convictions, but their methodologies are nonetheless effective. The following account outlines some of the system's early history.

The first of the Oxford colleges were born in the thirteenth century. "There shall be a constant succession of scholars devoted to the study of letters... Some of the discreetest of the Scholars [are] to be selected; and they... must undertake the care of the younger sort and see to their proficiency in study and good behaviour... Care and a diligent solicitude must be taken that no persons be admitted but those who are of good conduct, chaste, peaceable, humble, indigent, of ability for study, and desirous of improvement."⁵



Chambers College has borrowed two features from the English Oxford/Cambridge system:

1. The tutorial approach to training the student, which involves one-on-one interaction between the student and instructor while the student presents and defends his position and the instructor guides and challenges it.
2. The academic environment of elegance and excellence, which Chambers College has incorporated through its high standards of professionalism, its inclusion of historic fine arts in the college facility, and its frequent formal events.

One implementation of the elegant Oxford environment is Chambers College's formal dinners, hosted twice a semester for the students and faculty. These black-tie banquets combine the sophistication and state of the Oxford atmosphere with the relational component of the Dissenter's colleges' table-talks. These discourses are similar to the ones Martin Luther and Oswald Chambers gave to their own students during college dinners, and usually elaborate on spiritual themes in historical academia.

The Protestant Dissenters' Academies

Few are familiar with the Dissenters' academies that existed in England from 1660 to 1800. England had both a nationalized religion and educational system during this time, and the Clarendon act required the populace not only to worship at the established Anglican church but to attend the Anglican-approved universities, such as Oxford and Cambridge.⁶

As a result, colleges called "academies" sprang up which did not have official national accreditation. The Dissenters who founded these academies endured the social and financial cost of rejecting government sanction and funding. Because of this, these independent colleges were free to innovate a more effective educational approach because they did not have to satisfy the requirements of the Crown or the established church.⁷

Notable leaders and teachers under this system include: Isaac Watts, who was the author of many hymns as well as education and logic books that were used as textbooks at Oxford and Cambridge (though each of these universities had denied him admission); Joseph Priestly, who discovered oxygen and wrote an early English grammar; and Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Chambers College has employed the pioneer spirit found in these dissenters' academies through:

1. Protecting the integrity of the conscience by providing an alternative to enrolling in government-controlled colleges, which consistently indoctrinate students in the state religion of humanism.

2. Pioneering and charting new, effective styles of education while enduring the disdain of the government-established educational system.

Chambers College has carefully considered federally-authorized accreditation and found it too costly. In terms of freedom and distortion of our Christian focus, as well as in large financial expense for the small benefits we would achieve, federally-authorized accreditation is not worth the compromise. Chambers College has chosen to confirm it's worthiness by the performance of its students rather than by the certification of a

corrupted system. In these ways, we are educating in the spirit of the Protestant dissenters' academies.

Princeton University (Formerly College of New Jersey)

Chambers College also seeks to emulate two qualities of Princeton's program, practiced at the time of its sixth president, John Witherspoon, during the era of the War for Independence:

1. An emphasis on effective communication. The student body at Princeton was expected to be able to speak and debate effectively. Graduation day was filled with powerful rhetoric and stimulating discourses. This was also the standard for many other Ivy League colleges in the 19th century.⁸
2. A desire to properly influence the civil arena. Princeton carried out the Biblical admonition of being "a city set on a hill" by influencing the founding of America in profound ways. The primary author of the Constitution, James Madison, was a student of John Witherspoon, as well as five of the fifty-five members of the Constitutional Convention of 1778 and ninety-six statesmen ranking from congressmen to president. The biblical ideals acquired at Princeton under Witherspoon's leadership are infused throughout the Christian founding of the United States.

The Bible Training College of London

Chambers College has drawn most heavily on our namesake, Oswald Chambers, and his institution of higher education, the Bible Training College at Clapham Common. This college was only in existence for four short years because Chambers closed the college to minister in Egypt as a chaplain during WWI, a prime example of how he lived his Christian faith and practiced the principles he taught, even though it required a personal sacrifice. The evidence of Oswald Chambers' Christian integrity is a primary reason why the educational approach at the Bible Training College has had the greatest influence on Chambers College. The Bible Training College gave us three important features of sound Christian education:



1. The importance of the relationship of the faculty with the students. This was also the method of Jesus Christ, who lived and worked with the disciples. The relationship of the mentor to the student has proven to be an important element in the holistic development of the student.

2. A course structure which is Biblically founded and centered. There is a difference between adding Bible verses to an already developed course and starting with the Bible to develop the course. Most of the courses at the Bible Training College were developed by Oswald Chambers himself and began entirely with the Bible. Our liberal arts approach features a program in which the student is guided to discover the Biblical foundational principles of each discipline of study for himself.

An emphasis on learning to think biblically. This is a trademark of all good colleges, and was a defining characteristic of the Bible Training College. An account from the biography of Oswald Chambers illustrates this aspect:

Chambers stressed that an active mind was essential to vital spiritual experience. In many of his lectures he sounded a constant warning to people who said, "Thank God I'm saved and sanctified, now it's all right." The result of resting on experience, according to Oswald, was "fixed ideas, moral deterioration and utter ignorance of God's book. Always beware of the danger of finality."

Oswald led his students one step at a time into the Bible and its application to daily living. Life, not intellect, was his final objective, but the road to this goal required strenuous mental effort.

When assignments seemed overwhelming, he assured students that the pains they felt were signs that their brains were working. "With a little practice," he laughed, "the pain will pass away."

His study principles were simple and direct:

"Always have a dictionary and a concordance by you."

"Never intend to look up a word, do it now."

"A quarter of an hour a day on any subject will make you the master of that subject. Consistency is the key."⁹

Achieving the Liberal Arts Perspective

In our pursuit to help each student be well prepared for a successful Christian life, we have included courses that are essential to a full-orbed Christian worldview. Some of these subjects are overlooked in other institutions because they are not considered “academic” enough, although they are crucial for a successful life. Two of the most important are courses on evangelism and prayer; any obedient, growing Christian needs to know how to communicate with God in prayer and how to communicate the gospel to others. Other courses, including Doctrines of the Church, and Bible Study Methods, will deepen the student’s relationship with God and strengthen him to live a fruitful Christian life.

Understanding the Family as a Spiritual Unit

Another unique feature of Chambers College’s liberal arts program is its emphasis on God’s establishment of the family as a spiritual unit for His service.

We train the student on the importance of the husband and wife complementing each other in service, keeping the marriage vows as a covenant before the Lord, fulfilling God’s specific commands regarding each spouse’s role in marriage, and training children in God’s ways, so families can work effectively in proclaiming Christ. (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6)

The Chambers College Biographies 1 course is designed to help students prepare for a successful marriage so they can advance the cause of Christ as a team.

The Role of the Bible in Economics and Medicine

There is hardly a law that is passed that does not have economic ramifications. There is hardly a family that does not face personal financial challenges. Students need to learn the Biblical foundations of economics because every family will face challenges to their personal finances which will best be resolved by the application of Biblical principles.

Not only will everyone face economic and financial decisions, but they will also face crucial health decisions. That is why Chambers College offers a course on Biblical health. The Bible has many principles relating to physical and spiritual health, as well as to making wise medical decisions.

An International Perspective

The Chambers liberal arts program also includes a multi-cultural dimension. The optional London study program is designed to broaden the student's perspective of God's kingdom by giving him a first hand look at the



historical, cultural, and social traditions of English Christianity and its influence on America. The tour includes monuments of both secular and sacred history, world-famous art and natural history museums, ornate churches, classical concerts, libraries, lectures by both Chambers College professors and outside lecturers, and often includes day trips to Cambridge University and Hampton Court. The goal of the trip is to visit the monuments of our forefathers, which stand as a testimony of God's hand in all of history.

Chambers College also supports the student's involvement in a variety of international missions practicums, giving credit hours for the student's active participation.

Employing both Traditional and Avant-Garde Educational Methods

Traditional Methods

Many education professionals use the oldest teaching philosophies they can find because they assume that a teaching is worthy because it is ancient. For this reason, late 18th century colleges were heavy-laden with classical Greek philosophy and



literature courses, but had little that was consistent with a Biblically-centered approach. However, there are also many books, curricula, and lectures that are both time-tested and Biblically-based. When Luther revised the curriculum at Wittenberg University, he also rejected the Greek philosophers, choosing instead to begin with Biblical principles and to structure his teachings around Biblical truth.¹⁰ For much of the teaching at Chambers College, the faculty has gleaned from writers of the Reformation period, like Luther, who are erudite and Biblical, and have taken little from the classical Greek writers and philosophers who seem to have had no founding in Biblical truth. Therefore Chambers College offers only a cursory review of Greek philosophy so students will understand how it bears on history and theology, but the majority of historical teachings used at Chambers come from Puritans, Reformers, and other thinkers whose educational philosophies were rooted in the Bible. One great theologian, Richard Baxter, summarized this position well:

Let all that we speak be spiritual from the Holy Scriptures, with a cautious use of the fathers and other writers- avoiding the authorities of men, such as Aristotle and others. The wisdom of the world must not be magnified so that it appears to be above or equal to the wisdom of God. Philosophy must be taught to stoop and to serve, while faith bears the crown away. Let the great scholars in Aristotle's school beware lest they glory too much in their master and despise those who are servants of a Greater-than-Aristotle. For while they seek to be great in the eyes of men, they will be least in the Kingdom of God. A wise man will glory in nothing but the cross of Christ, desiring to know nothing but him crucified. As Gregory said "God first called the unlearned, then some philosophers- he did not teach fishermen using orators but he taught orators using fishermen." Let the learned study this.

All writers have their due esteem but do not compare any of them with the word of God. Their service is not to be refused, but they must be hated as competitors to God. It is a sign of distempered heart if we lose our relish for Scripture excellence and to find ourselves always digging in the rubbish that came only from the mind of men. There is a connaturality in a spiritual heart with the word of God, because it was that word which regenerated it.¹¹

Avant Garde Methods

Tradition gives ballast and direction, but newness keeps the vision fresh. Newness does not necessarily bring in a decline or deterioration of established values; rather, innovation can often be the means of applying foundational truths to the needs of contemporary society. And Jesus said to

them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old." (Matthew 13:52)

Therefore, Chambers College both uses and trains in the use of modern media methods. The communications department is being developed to include film production since it has become an area of much potential and influence in the field of new media. We are also striving to produce godly music with new arrangements and compositions, and encouraging student writers and faculty to take the lead in many new communication outlets.

A subsidiary of the College is Chambers College Press which publishes new works regularly.

The Outcome of Your Studies

You will discover what you believe and why you believe it.

Chambers College challenges students to take personal ownership of their beliefs. Most young people undergo a transition from believing because they have been told to believe (by parents, church, or mentors) to actually making these beliefs a part of their lives because they know beyond any doubt that they are true. We want to help all students come into a more directly dependent walk with Christ as they personally confirm the promises of God. A statement from an Oxford University orientation booklet captures this goal:

Many of us spend a lot of time recycling ideas that are only in the thinnest sense our own; they are ideas we have never thought through, never examined for their credibility or coherence, never tried to integrate with the rest of our mental and emotional stock.

In relation to them, we are not much more than pieces of blank paper on which someone has scribbled a few thoughts, and off which other people can read those same thoughts. Nothing has happened to those thoughts as they have been passed to us and passed on from us. They are very much not our thoughts.... it is only when we take some responsibility for the thought that is happening that we can properly say that 'we think.'¹²

You will develop analytical Biblical discernment that complements your faith.

The function of the mind in conjunction with faith can be a confusing role to understand. Christians know they are to please God by living by faith, and faith is hope that is based upon an often minimal knowledge of facts. The mind operates by faith upon these known facts through the direction and supervision of the Holy Spirit. It is the Christian's responsibility to develop more strength and capability in understanding the facts of God's truth. By practice, the mind's logic, agility, and endurance can increase just as frequent exercise strengthens bodily functions.



Living by faith does not preclude using thinking skills; rather, sound faith is based on sound thinking about God's revealed truths, and sound thinking is honed and sharpened by practice to be fit for the Holy Spirit's work. Chambers College desires to help each student develop the faculty of his mind to think accurately, precisely, and logically, as well as to be able to endure the strain of mental exertion.

Students should already know how to memorize information by the time they arrive at Chambers College, where the focus is on teaching how to analyze and survey data and how to evaluate criteria and arguments rather than to accumulate facts. We are training students to be able not only to answer hard questions, but to analyze whether the right questions are being asked.

Student's minds will be challenged as they learn discernment, Biblical discrimination, categorization of arguments, and classification of data through the challenging intellectual program at Chambers College.

You will discover Biblical foundations of major academic disciplines.

The essence of training at Chambers College is establishing God's Word as a guide for every avenue of thought. Every academic discipline and every sphere of business, government, culture, family, and church is under the dominion and control of God. The purpose of all studies at Chambers College is simply to discover how God operates in His creation so His people

can be in concert with His will and bring glory to Him. We are to engage our minds in this process, yet our minds are only successful to the degree that we think divinely-- that is, in harmony with God's thoughts.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

The program of study at Chambers College may force students to “re-invent the wheel,” as they discover and develop the Biblical foundational principles for economic systems, law, literature, science, communication, fine art, family life, and the church.

You will be trained in the skill of researching.

It has been documented that during the 1600s, students were complaining about how much time had to be spent in lecture when books with the information they wanted to learn were becoming more widely available. These students realized that the more economical way to gain factual content was by reading.

Students at Chambers College will gain some content by lectures and reading textbooks, but the bulk of content acquired will come by reading trusted sources outside of traditional textbooks and personally interacting with the tutor.¹³

Students at Chambers College:

- a. will learn how to research.
- b. will learn to read broadly.
- c. will learn to read critically.

When researching, Chambers College students know confidently that the Bible is truth, and they seek to interpret it within context. When students read human authors, however, they know they are reading fallible human opinions and analyses. Students



will learn how to be certain the authors have accurately summarized the data, and that they have honestly portrayed what took place. Students are taught to analyze the questions that others have asked to determine if those questions really addressed foundational issues. Students will find that a writer might answer a particular question satisfactorily but miss the questions key to discerning the truth. Scholars can easily become preoccupied with the wrong issues, and, in a figurative sense, tithe on intellectual mint and cumin and miss the weightier matters of the law. Paul urges us to concentrate on the proper things:

As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion. (1 Timothy 1:3-7)

While studying, Chambers College students will learn how to find valid sources, extract the most important details, and sift through the minor matters in order to come to the heart of the issue quickly.

In Summary

Methods employed at Chambers College, based on core Biblical principles, are designed to effectively train Christian scholars to become followers of Jesus Christ, capable of doing good works. Knowing some of the rationale for the structure and approach at Chambers College may help each incoming student fulfill this goal.

Nothing of value comes easily. The greatest gift, our salvation, cost the Living God his life as he experienced eternal punishment on the cross in order to provide redemption.

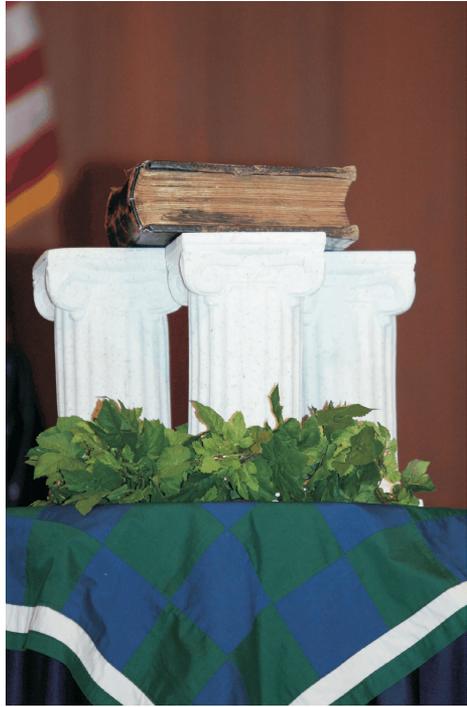
The tutors at Chambers College count on the student's desire to increase in knowledge and effectiveness for Christ to motivate him to persevere. Students who only have a diploma or a good career in view will miss many of the key spiritual elements at Chambers College.

We hope to inspire student to develop a long lasting love for Christ and to become life long learners and scholars.

The Reputation of Chambers College

The primary factor that forms the reputation of a college is the effectiveness of the students who graduate from it. The performance record of Chambers College students has proven that the college consistently reaches its stated goals.

Many colleges have sought to build their reputation upon accreditation, which is a governmental program that gives certification to a college by requiring certain structures and methods: techniques which have not necessarily proven to produce good students. Accreditation only insures the bare minimum of what is necessary for an education and



neglects the methods that never fail to create exceptional results. There are other ways of confirming a college's success in student's lives than through a system involving governmental oversight which uses the same stamp of approval on both the worst junior college in America as well as the best academic college in America. We have not yet discovered one study that shows that governmental accreditation correlates to an institution producing better students.

Chambers College has chosen not to seek accreditation, not because it falls short of the standards of accreditation, but because the benefits are not commensurate with the costs. The highest cost would be relinquishing the college's freedom to innovate. Additionally, accreditation has no ability to measure spiritual progress or pursuits, and therefore has no value in helping reach the college's main goal.

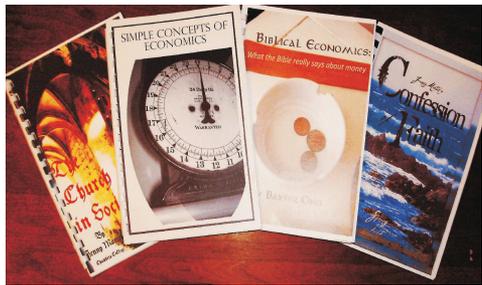
Yes, students could possibly transfer more credits to a broader spectrum of secular colleges if Chambers College had accreditation. Yes, Chambers College could receive many financial perks associated with governmental accreditation. However, these benefits are simply not worth the potential danger of compromising the mission of Chambers College to gain political correctness.



Continual external checks are completed to verify that Chambers College students are performing as well or better than graduates of other schools. Student papers are sent to leaders of specific academic fields for grading to insure that Chambers College is meeting expected standards. Community leaders are often brought to the college so they can interact with the students. The Chambers College internship programs also guarantee a high level of interaction and accountability with experts in a variety of fields.

Chambers College has concentrated on providing the best and most efficient training program it can find to maximize each student's time here; merely making the student work hard is not the key. Any professor can increase the work load and challenge the student's endurance. However, the essential factor is that the student learns to work hard in the right areas and in the right way, with the right guidance.

When employers and other colleges see the excellence in character and skill level of our graduates, they have no difficulty overlooking the fact that Chambers College was not accredited. So far the reports have been gratifying, and Chambers College students have not only met, but exceeded expected standards.



Books written for classroom assignments

Part II

The Nuts and Bolts of the Educational Process

The Use of the Tutorial Method

A relatively unique feature of the eclectic approach at Chambers College is its use of the tutorial method, briefly mentioned before in relation to the Oxford and Cambridge University systems. A “tutorial” is structurally defined as the meeting between an individual or small group of students and a tutor. However, a tutorial is more accurately understood by the objective than the structure. The objective is to help the scholar develop thinking, researching, and communication skills through one-on-one dialogue with an instructor. The student not only writes his thoughts in an essay or thesis paper, but also orally presents them in class to the tutor. He therefore learns to communicate both in writing and in speaking.

The importance and effectiveness of the tutorial approach is firmly established in England, but this is a novel idea to the American educational system. Some seminar style courses in the American system resemble the concept, but they are rarely used outside of graduate level classes. Chambers College is

convinced that students will thrive under this mode of education at an earlier educational level and with sufficient motivation. The benefits of the tutorial approach are explained in this quotation from an Oxford publication.



'At its heart is a theory of teaching young men and women to think for themselves. The undergraduate is sent off to forage for himself. ... and to produce a coherent exposition of his ideas on the subject set... In [the tutorial] discussion the undergraduate should benefit by struggling to defend the positions he has taken up...' (pp 101-2)¹⁴

Similarly, the 1997 North Report repeated the concept:

'...[the tutorial system] encourages the student to take an active rather than passive role in learning and develops skills in self-directed study and working independently, as well as analytical and critical skills', and, moreover, it provides the undergraduate with 'the opportunity to discuss particular topics in considerable detail with the tutor, who may well be a leading expert in the subject or a young active researcher at the forefront of the discipline.' (pp 163-4; on twentieth century Oxford generally see Harrison, 1994.)

The tutorial system provides great training for the real world, as the following analysis shows:

For a thoughtful and motivated student the tutorial system can be an excellent vehicle for picking up learning and general professional skills; concentration during passive learning beforehand (staying awake in lectures) ... research skills when going through a reading list ("Is what I'm reading really relevant?"), analytical skills ("What are the key points, what's the answer?"), critical skills ("These authors think they know the answer but do they?"), writing skills in preparing essays, and verbal discussion and 'thinking on one's feet' skills in the tutorial itself... but to my mind that is an impressive set of capabilities for later professional life.¹⁵

Chambers College's use of the tutorial approach is a compliment to the student, for he is enrolled on the assumption that he is ready to actively participate in the educational process instead of being a mere empty vessel waiting to be filled by the professor.

Writing Papers: The Role of a Thesis

Christ's kingdom needs scholars who can write and speak eloquently on the truth of God while proving a point with firmness, frankness, and clarity. Chambers College has found an effective method for honing this skill: writing a paper centered around a thesis statement. A thesis states a proposition about a topic and launches a writer into a higher level of cognitive skills through directing study, requiring analysis on and organization of the facts, and challenging the writer to prove his point.

Developing good writing skills is also a benefit of writing a thesis paper, for the thesis requires the writer to omit all elements that do not support the premise of the paper. The thesis also gives direction and structure to the progression of thought that goes into the paper, as well as challenging research skills by making the student pursue a certain line of thought to its conclusion. A paper on Oliver Cromwell could easily become another synthesized encyclopedia article—a mindless re-statement of facts. But writing a paper addressing the thesis, “Oliver Cromwell was good for the Puritan cause,” requires focus and a higher level of preparation for the task.

Professors will continually challenge students to think in “thesis” terms when writing papers. Sometimes the tutor will supply the thesis in order to specifically guide the student’s research; at other times, the student will be required to formulate a thesis based on his own reading on a subject.

The Importance of Good Research

Proper research is accomplished best when it is pursued thoughtfully, as a Swedish study in 1976 showed. Researchers discovered that students who were asked to read an academic article, and afterwards answer questions on it, approached the task in two very different ways.

Some students perceived the text as an assemblage of separate items of information that should be memorized in order to answer the anticipated questions. The researchers called this a ‘surface approach’. Other students treated the text as something that contained a structure of meaning. They searched for its underlying concerns, its implications, and its meaning to themselves. This, the researchers called the ‘deep approach’. Students who approached the task using a deep approach understood more of the article, were better able to answer a range of questions about it, and were also able to remember it more effectively.¹⁶

As well as learning to research “deeply,” Chambers College students will learn to read broadly to discern if the author is summarizing situations and information accurately. Whenever human opinion and a synthesis of ideas are active, such as in history, literature, and theology, the discerning scholar must do the work of



surveying more than one writer, bringing human opinions under the judgment of Scripture.

Proper and thorough research also involves consulting several sources, and the closer each source is to the original sources of seminal thought, the better. This will involve learning to look carefully at the bibliographies in books, and observing which are standard works of those fields: able to give insight into the typical lines of thought and writings that peers and trained students respect. Though these works may not necessarily be truthful or accurate, they will always provide insight into the key concepts of their given fields and will help the student find the parameters and foundations essential to a discussion of his topic. Just as there are standard pieces of music written for each instrument which every musician can play, there are standard works of scholarship for each discipline of thought.

If students can research properly, they will be well prepared to venture into unknown frontiers. When presented with the challenge of a new endeavor, the Chambers graduate will be able to humbly say, “I have learned to research and find answers; I know how to find and discern the basics of any arena. With research, time, and experience, I hope to be up to speed soon and make a positive contribution.”

Your Degree

Upon completion of the program, students will receive a bona fide State of Colorado authorized Bachelor of Arts of Christian Ministry degree (four year program), or an Associate of Arts of Christian Ministry (two year program). Chambers College majors are all “Christian Liberal Arts” in scope and focus.

Students completing the four year course of instruction should be well prepared for service for the Kingdom of Christ. The student’s work ethic and skills will be highly demanded by the secular as well as the Christian world.



1. The four earliest American colleges, Harvard (1636), William and Mary (1693), Yale (1701), Princeton (1727), were profoundly evangelically religious in their founding and had statements much like the vision of Chambers College. Two excellent references are *Never Before in History*, by Gary Amos and Richard Gardiner, Foundation for Thought and Ethics, Richardson, Texas, 2006, pp. 73-85; and *The Soul of the American University* by George Marsden, Oxford University Press, 1994 pp. 38-44, 61-64.
2. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, MA, 1974.
3. Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1986, p. 164.
4. Alan Ryan, "A Liberal Education: and that includes the Sciences!" *OxCHEPS Occasional Paper* No. 1, May 2002.
5. Jan Morris, *The Oxford Book of Oxford*, quoting "The Statutes of Merton," Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978, pp. 20-1
6. J.W. Ashley Smith, *The Birth of Modern Education, The Contribution of the Dissenting Academies 1660-1800*, Independent Press LTD. London 1954. Pp. 1-17 gives a good introduction to these academies.
7. Ibid.
8. Ashbel Ryken, *The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon, IX*, Sprinkle Publications, Harrisonburg, VA, 2007, p. 123-4.
9. David McCasland, *Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God*, Discovery House Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1993, p. 180-181
10. Earnest G. Schwiebert, *The Reformation*, Volume II, *The Reformation as a University Movement*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1996, pp. 455, 470-471.
11. Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, edited by Jay Green, Sovereign Grace Publishers, Grand Rapids, 1971.
12. Alan Ryan, "A Liberal Education: and that includes the Sciences!" *OxCHEPS Occasional Paper* No. 1, May 2002.
13. It is much more efficient to acquire information by reading rather than listening to a lecture. Lectures are helpful because personal presentation helps data to stick in the memory, and to hear and see the person presenting the

thoughts can give more fullness to the message. But it has been proven that one can gain information much faster by reading. At Oxford and Cambridge it is no accident that instead of saying they majored in British Literature, students will say they read British Literature. Reading was the main avenue of acquiring the information. Suzanne Shale, "The Oxford Tutorial in the Context of Theory on Student Learning: 'Knowledge is a wild thing, and must be hunted before it can be tamed,'" *OxCHEPS Occasional Paper* No. 1, May 2002.

14. Ibid

15. David Palfreyman, "The Oxford Tutorial: Sacred Cow or Pedagogical Gem?" *OxCHEPS Occasional Paper* No. 1, May 2002.

16. Suzanne Shale, "The Oxford Tutorial in the Context of Theory on Student Learning: 'Knowledge is a wild thing, and must be hunted before it can be tamed,'" *OxCHEPS Occasional Paper* No. 1, May 2002.