

Despite Pushback, Pentecostal Lee University Stands Strong on Biblical Gender

A leaked draft of school policy at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, has revealed the school's intention to uphold its biblical worldview and standards on gender and sexuality—and the private Pentecostal institution is receiving strong pushback from the LGBT community.

The Church of God, which helps fund the school and provides its theological foundation, “unequivocally affirms that marriage is a covenant relationship between a man and woman and rejects all attempts to redefine marriage in terms of same-sex unions and behavior,” per a 2004 denominational resolution on the family.

University spokesperson Kendra Mann released a statement to both WTVC-TV in Chattanooga and the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* affirming that the policy is in line with long-standing beliefs.

The school had planned to get more feedback before publishing its “Statement of Beliefs Concerning Human Sexuality and Gender” Aug. 1, the statement said. The draft policy, available here, affirms the school's belief that “God created humans in His image as male and female” and “humans do not have an ability, or observed right, to choose a gender.”

“No member of the Lee University community may publicly identify or behave as a gender that does not correspond to his or her biological sex,” the policy states.

“No member of the Lee University community may promote or advocate, in person, in writing, or online, for sexual acts, behaviors or lifestyles that are contrary to Scripture, this

statement of belief, or any other university policy,” it says. The policy also forbids sex between unmarried heterosexuals.

The statement also affirms the school’s care for those who may experience same-sex attraction, saying Lee University will:

- “Commit to treating each person with respect and dignity regardless of any difference of beliefs on this subject.”
- “Commit to supporting one another in grace and truth while also respecting and upholding the biblical design for gender and sexuality.”
- “Commit to engaging in discussion of topics such as sexuality, same-sex sexual behavior, same-sex attraction, sexual orientation, sexual identity, and gender identity with grace and humility, always directing each other toward God’s truth in this fallen world.” The statement also affirms the offering of counseling and ministry options for those who need resources.
- “Commit to hold students accountable for disregarding the sexual limits of Scripture, yet we will also work with them to support repentance as well as restoration in their relationship with Christ and others.”
- Ask students to “adhere to the Community Covenant and policies as set forth in this Statement of Belief and the Student Handbook in order to benefit the entire institution.”