

## **Leadership Covenant** **Wesley Foundation at SFASU**

**Introduction:** All students involved in leadership at the Wesley Foundation at SFASU enter into a covenant with each other.

Differences between a Contract and a Covenant.

1. A contract is between two people whose relationship is built on distrust. A covenant is between two people whose relationship is built on trust. (hence a marriage covenant, not a marriage contract).

2. A contract protects each individual from harm (from the other). A covenant protects the relationship from harm.

3. A contract seeks recompense/compensation when it is broken. A covenant seeks forgiveness and reconciliation when it is broken.

4. A contract releases an individual from his or her commitments if the other person breaks their part. A covenant does not.

“Leadership” includes student council members; paid staff; anyone who leads in worship on a regular basis; small group leaders of any kind; student board members; or any student who directs, leads, or instructs other students on a regular basis for any Wesley function or activity.

It should be clear that these expectations are held for all Christians; there is not one standard for leaders and one for “everyone else.” Influence, after all, comes in many other forms than elected, appointed, or volunteer leadership. However, it is the leadership that the rest of the body follows, and it is the leadership that grants permission to be held accountable.

If a leader resigns because they do not want to participate in this covenant, he or she is not “gaining permission” to behave in a particular way, but is choosing not to be held accountable in this way. Not everyone is ready for this kind of covenantal relationship. We all walk in our spiritual journeys at different paces.

Although this specifically pertains only to the leadership, it is a deep hope that by living out this covenant everyone at Wesley will be moved to do the same.

### **The intent of this covenant is not:**

1. To make each other feel guilty about our failures and sins.
2. To compare or categorized each other in terms of being “mature” or “baby” Christians.
3. To police one another as if we are looking for faults.
4. To expect spiritual perfection.
5. To be a list of unattainable expectations that leads to guilt, shame or indifference.

### **The intent of this covenant is:**

1. To lovingly remind each other of our desire to live lives reflective of Jesus Christ,
2. To encourage honesty and openness with each other,
3. To help each other in times of personal, emotional, and spiritual struggles,
4. To provide a safe place where we can confess our failures and sins and receive forgiveness without fear,
5. To constantly show each other by word and deed that we are valued children of God,
6. To help one another lead lives that are genuinely Christian and biblical regardless of our location or company,

7. To honestly and humbly approach one another if there is a question regarding our conduct,
8. To receive those who approach us with a question regarding our conduct with open minds and open hearts, even when the “approach” may seem blunt, harsh, or badly-timed,
9. To be gracious and understanding to others who struggle in areas that we do not,
10. To uphold the integrity of The Wesley Foundation, its ministry, and its witness to other students, the community, and the world.

Any covenant includes clear expectations of those involved. I understand that I am to make every effort to follow this covenant in the spirit in which it is offered. However, I also understand that I am human and will inevitably sin and fail to live up to any expectations that are put upon me, given enough time and opportunity. God desires community for me because to we find strength in community.

When I fail I will confide in another leader who is not struggling with the same issue to receive encouragement and forgiveness without fear of punishment. Forgiveness always follows confession and repentance in Christ’s community.

*“There is no fear in Love. But perfect Love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” 1 John 4:18*

*“If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:6-8*

### **1. Local, State, and Federal laws:**

I will follow the laws set forth by the city, state, and federal governments, including the use of all controlled substances.

### **2. Sexual Purity:**

Pornographic material in all its forms (video, pictures, audio, text, animation, etc.) is very accessible over the internet. Only 3% of males haven’t seen pornography by age 18 (and 17% of females). However, intentionally seeking out pornography is not healthy. For example, one study in 2015 of 483 college men discovered that viewing pornography shaped their interactions with women in destructive ways, even to the point where the college students began to prefer the pornography over real relationships (Dr. Jennifer Johnson at Virginia Commonwealth University). From a strictly health and wholeness issue, consuming pornography is inappropriate Christian behavior.

Engaging in premarital sex or other sexually intimate activities are not appropriate for me as a leader. I understand that *being* and *appearing* to be morally upstanding is important. My boyfriend or girlfriend will not spend the night at my house, apartment, or dorm. This helps reduce misunderstandings and temptations that may follow from such overnight stays. The spirit of these expectations is just as important as the letter and I will use them as a guide in situations that are not specifically mentioned. For example, this is a good guide to apply to camping or another person with whom I am physically attracted, even if I am not “dating” them. I will ask the pastor if I am unsure.

### 3. Alcohol use:

If I am under the age of 21, I will not purchase, consume, or possess any alcoholic beverages. I will also not ask for or accept alcohol from another person. If I am 21 or older, I will not provide alcohol to those under 21. (i.e., I'm expected to follow the law). I understand that if I'm under 21 and with a person who is legally drinking, I could still get a Minor In Possession citation, which may affect college or graduate school applications, scholarships and future employment opportunities, even if I drink no alcohol (called "constructional possession").

Drunkenness is not appropriate for me as a leader. I understand that abstinence is strongly advised, and that any problems, misunderstandings, or misperceptions arising from my alcohol use will be my responsibility to bear. In such a case, I may be asked to stop drinking alcohol for the sake of the gospel, not as a punishment, but as a willing gesture of peace and love for my friends.

Although there is nothing inherently wrong with drinking alcohol, there are times, places, and situations where it should not occur. As a leader, my influence is important. Because the college campus is a place where so many students receive the message that it's OK to abuse alcohol, I will make Wesley a place where the message is clear that the risks of alcohol are recognized as an unacceptable substitute for fun and relaxation.

*1 Corinthians 14:13-15, 19-21: <sup>13</sup> Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. <sup>14</sup> As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food<sup>b</sup> is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. <sup>15</sup> If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. <sup>19</sup> Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. <sup>20</sup> Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. <sup>21</sup> It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. <sup>1</sup>*

### 4. Internet Presence:

I understand that my presence on the internet and social media is also a reflection of my relationship with Christ, and I will make an intentional effort not to affiliate myself with groups, applications, pictures, etc. that are hateful, vulgar, or offensive. I understand that these types of affiliations could damage Wesley's ability to reach out to the campus in the name of Christ.

### 5. Small Groups:

I will actively participate in at least two Wesley small groups each week. The small groups I choose for this purpose will have a significant spiritual element to it. I will make attending a priority because being intentional about building relationships with my friends and peers is an important part of Christian community.

### 6. Worship Attendance:

I understand that worship is an important part of the Christian community at Wesley, and I will make it a priority to attend every week. I will do my best to make time to be in breakout groups after worship.

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<sup>b</sup> Or *that nothing*

<sup>1</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984. Ro 14:19.

**7. Respectful & Welcoming Atmosphere:**

I understand that the Wesley Foundation is intended to be a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all people—visitors, new students, and returning students. My speech will be respectful and sensitive to others. In addition, movies, videos, and video games that I might watch or play privately may not be appropriate at Wesley. As a general rule, no Mature or R-rated movies should be watched without approval by a full-time staff person. Excessive language may make even lesser-rated programming inappropriate for Wesley viewing. Mature rated video games need approval by a full-time staff person as well, some of which may require headphones to play at Wesley. Even if approval is given, if a student appears uncomfortable, the movie, video, or game should be halted out of respect.

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I realize that I may eventually fail to live up to my entire covenant. Instead of continually and intentionally ignoring my covenant, I will seek out another leader or the campus pastor with which to confide without fear of consequences. I understand, however, that if I openly rebel or continually and intentionally ignore my covenant, I will need to pass my responsibilities as a leader to someone else.

I understand that this covenant remains in effect as long as I am a leader in any capacity at Wesley. If this covenant changes, I will be given the opportunity to prayerfully consider the new covenant. I may then choose to pass my responsibilities to someone else or enter into the new covenant.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_