

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Presented for Affirmation by the Brite Divinity School Board of Trustees

WHEREAS, Brite Divinity School affirms its unwavering commitment to scholarship, justice, and practice-and to the full flourishing of all creation-as central to its mission of educating and inspiring people who are leaders in the academy, the church, and public life;

WHEREAS, our community is enriched by the diverse gifts, perspectives, and experiences of students, faculty, staff, alumni/ae, and partners representing a wide range of races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, denominations, abilities, genders, sexualities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and life journeys;

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that historic and systemic inequities have marginalized and excluded many individuals and communities from full participation and holistic belonging in theological education and religious leadership;

WHEREAS, we name and reckon with the complex and complicated history of Brite Divinity School;

WHEREAS, Brite Divinity School admitted students of any gender as early as 1914;

WHEREAS, Brite Divinity School integrated with the admission of John Claiborne and Vada Phillips Felder in 1952, two years prior to the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision;

WHEREAS, Vada Phillips Felder became the first Black graduate of Texas Christian University, earning a Master of Religious Education from Brite Divinity School in 1954;

WHEREAS, Brite Divinity School has long welcomed the contributions of LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff, and has maintained an inclusive housing policy since the opening of Leibrock Village in 2001;

WHEREAS, Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are under increasing threat, facing forms of erasure and ideological resistance;

WHEREAS, we affirm that the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility reflect the glory of God and are integral to the gospel's fundamental call to love-not just some, but all people;

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the denomination of which we are a part, has from its inception taught that God's table is open to all;

WHEREAS, we affirm the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady, President of Brite Divinity School, and his commitment to act with prophetic conviction, pastoral compassion, and courageous integrity on behalf of the institution;

WHEREAS, we honor the enduring wisdom of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who declared, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice;"

WHEREAS, Brite Divinity School aspires to embody inclusive excellence across its curriculum, policies, pedagogy, institutional practices, and communal and spiritual life;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Brite Divinity School affirms and commits to upholding the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as foundational to our shared mission and work;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board endorses the development and ongoing evaluation of institutional goals, strategies, and accountability measures that promote these values, including but not limited to:

- Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student body;
- Ensuring equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support systems;
- Promoting inclusive curricula and learning environments;
- Addressing physical, technological, social, and systemic barriers to full participation; and
- Fostering a culture of dignity, belonging, and mutual respect across the community;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this affirmation shall guide the policies and practices of Brite Divinity School, and that the Board of Trustees shall receive regular updates on institutional progress toward these commitments.

Adopted this 24th day of April 2025 by the Brite Divinity School Board of Trustees.