EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK
The mission of Calvin University is to equip students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ’s agents of renewal in the world.

Calvin’s educational framework is derived from that mission. It articulates a frame that ensures integrated, coherent, holistic programs and practices in which students learn and develop. The framework names university-wide goals that ground the institution’s curricular and co-curricular activities. It attempts to answer the question, “What are the enduring characteristics or qualities of thinking, doing, and being that mark a Calvin University graduate?”
FACULTY GREETINGS
Representatives from various departments provide greetings from across campus

WELCOME
Cheryl Brandsen, PhD, provost

EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK
Brian Bolt, PhD, dean of education
Won Lee, PhD, professor of religion
Maria Rodriguez, PhD, professor of Spanish
Kevin den Dulk, PhD, associate provost for Calvin’s global campus

OPENING SONG
Rejoice in All Your Works

Wendell Kimbrough
Rejoice in All Your Works

1 Every mouth that cries for food, every lung that yearns for breath,
   every eye that searches through the dark for light,
every creation looks to you, for its breath and for its food;
from the goodness of your hand they’re satisfied.

2 Every tree that thirsts for rain, every bird that seeks its nest,
every heart that waits in hope to be made glad,
every creation looks to you, for its breath and for its food;
from the goodness of your hand they’re satisfied.

3 May the pond’rings of my heart and the song upon my lips
   with the chorus of creation join in praise
to the God who made all things, to the Spirit who sustains,
to the Son who over all creation reigns.

4 Oh rejoice in all your works, King of heaven, King of earth! Every creature you have made declares your praise.
   We rejoice in all you’ve made, God of all sustaining grace; with the mountain, sky, and sea we sing your praise.

Words and Music: Psalm 104, Wendell Kimbrough © 2014 Wendell Kimbrough
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Incoming students join a history of formal education stretching back to the training of scribes in Sumeria more than 5,500 years ago. And they are participating in a Calvin history that points back to 1876, the year the institution welcomed its first class of students. Today, students are invited to join more than 65,000 alumni in adding their names to Calvin’s rich history by signing a paper that will be bound in book form and placed in the university’s historical archives.

Students are also receiving a commemorative coin during the ceremony that will serve as the front bookend to their Calvin journey. We ask students to keep this coin and bring it with them to their graduation ceremony, where they will receive the other bookend: their diploma.
PRAYER OF BLESSING
Mary Hulst, PhD, university pastor

We will be praying for each other this afternoon. When you are being prayed for, please hold your hands in front of you as a gesture of reception.

For these new students, Lord, we pray for courage. Bless them with a willingness to try new things, explore new subjects, and expand their worlds. Give them the freedom to fail, and then build up in them the resilience to try again.

For the students’ families and friends, Lord, we ask that you turn their hearts away from worry and toward gratitude, away from regret and toward contentment, away from holding on and toward letting go. Give them the courage to leave this campus today knowing that their children are in the palm of your hand. We are grateful for how you have used parents and step-parents, relatives and friends to shape these students, and we pray that you give them wisdom as they continue to invest in these students’ lives.

For the returning students, Lord, we pray that you empower them to be people of integrity: may the lives that they live and the choices that they make mark them as followers of Jesus Christ. As they choose areas of focus for their studies, guide them to places in which they can find you already at work.

For the faculty and staff, Lord, we pray for joy as they enter into a new academic year. May those who teach be empowered by your Holy Spirit to teach with boldness and compassion, with warmth and fairness, with justice and mercy. May those on our staff be satisfied with the work they have done this summer to prepare the campus for this unusual fall. We pray that all employees of Calvin University will be blessed with a longing to serve those around them wisely and well, with patience toward those with whom they work, and with joy that pervades their lives at work and at home.

And today, we especially pray for all those who knew and loved Iris Jones and are perplexed and grieved by her death. Surround and comfort them and all of us as we mourn her loss, and point us to the great truth of the resurrection of Jesus in which we find our hope. We pray all of this in his name. Amen.

For all of us: May the Lord bless you and keep you. May he make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord let the light of his countenance shine upon you and give you peace. Amen!

VIDEO BLESSING
Calvin alumni, faculty, staff, and students recorded a song of blessing for the Calvin community.
ACADEMIC REGALIA

The ceremonial costumes worn by faculty and staff at Convocation have their roots in the Middle Ages, when European scholars wore robes, hoods, and caps to stay warm in unheated classrooms. Universities eventually adopted them as official everyday classroom uniforms to discourage “excess in apparel.” As the custom spread across Europe and into other areas, style differences emerged to designate each scholar’s institution, level of education, and (in the United States) field of study.

Today, the costume is reserved for ceremonial occasions. For convocation, faculty and staff wear regalia to honor the significance of this milestone in students’ lives. Gown and hood styles tell us something about each wearer's degree.

Though black is the traditional robe color and always appropriate for a doctoral gown, many professors wear the distinctive colors and styles of the universities that granted their degrees.

The longer the hood, the more advanced the degree. Master’s and doctor’s hoods have satin linings in the colors of the institution where the degree was earned. The velvet edging color represents the wearer’s discipline. Though blue signifies philosophy and is therefore appropriate for any PhD (doctor of philosophy), Universities in the United States also use these colors:

- Drab (tan) for business
- Purple for law and political science
- Red for theology
- Gold for sciences
- Pink for music
- Crimson for communications
- Copper for economics
- Orange for engineering
- Brown for fine arts
- Apricot for nursing
- Green for physical education
- Salmon for public health

LATIN SEAL

The Latin heart–in–hand seal became the official emblem of Calvin in 1933, but it emerged as early as 1910 in the college yearbook. However, the words prompte et sincere (promptly and sincerely) along with the image of an outstretched hand offering a heart surfaced four centuries earlier in the writings of the Reformer John Calvin. He used the image to seal his letters in the 1540s. The motto prompte et sincere appears on his portrait dated 1566. The adoption of the words Cor meum tibi offero Domine prompte et sincere (My heart I offer, Lord, promptly and sincerely) and image together stand as the insignia of the institution today, inspiring the Calvin community to practice the university’s mission of living wholeheartedly as Christ’s agents of renewal in the world.
Calvin College and Seminary is established.

1876

1896

1900

1900

1920

The first woman joins Calvin’s faculty and staff.

1920

Calvin awards its first four-year bachelor of arts degree.

1921

Calvin begins offering education and pre-professional programs.

1926

Calvin begins its first graduate-level degree program in education. Calvin has since added four more master’s programs: speech pathology and audiology (2011), accounting (2017), geographic information science (2020) and media and strategic communication (2020).

1957

Calvin’s Knollcrest Campus is purchased from industrialist J.C. Miller. The move from the Franklin Campus in downtown Grand Rapids is completed in 1973.

1967

1974

The first standard Calvin-Hope basketball game kicks off a nearly century-long athletics rivalry.

The 4-1-4 curriculum is implemented. The initiation of interim allows students to use the month of January to explore an area of interest on or off campus. This also marks the start of off-campus programs.
It started simply, as great things often do. But what began in 1876 as a school of ministry training with just seven white Dutch male students has emerged as a world-class Christian liberal arts university of 3,300 students representing many cultures, 66 countries, 46 U.S. states, and four Canadian provinces.

Embracing the biblical view of the kingdom of God, and in seeking to play a prophetic role in bearing witness to that kingdom, Calvin adopts *From Every Nation* — a document articulating a vision as well as goals and strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion.

Tenure awarded to an African American professor at Calvin for the first time.

Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary become distinct institutions.

Calvin College becomes Calvin University.

Enrollment hits a record of 4,505 students.

Furthering its commitment to a flourishing multicultural Christian academic community, Calvin creates a cabinet-level position focused on diversity and inclusion.

Michael K. Le Roy is inaugurated as Calvin’s 10th president.

In partnership with Calvin Theological Seminary and the Michigan Department of Corrections, Calvin receives accreditation for the Calvin Prison Initiative, becoming the first institution in the state to offer a full bachelor’s degree to inmates.

The women’s volleyball team claims Calvin’s 11th NCAA Division III national championship.