Disciples related colleges and universities represent a broad range of opportunities for students to experience the richness of a liberal arts education infused in the Disciples’ tradition of faith, reason, and wholeness. There are fifteen colleges and universities that are in covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) across the United States. While they are diverse in their settings and academic offerings, all have a commitment to academic excellence, a passion for social justice and inclusiveness…. thereby promoting a campus community that respects all people and cultures.

The covenant affiliated colleges and universities are listed below:

- Barton College
- Bethany College
- Chapman University
- Columbia College
- Culver-Stockton College
- Drury University
- Eureka College
- Hiram College
- Jarvis Christian University
- University of Lynchburg
- Midway University
- Texas Christian University
- Tougaloo College
- Transylvania University
- William Woods University

Disciples’ schools focus on character, service, and leadership; providing many opportunities for students to get involved in the community, explore faith and values, and connect to new ideas and perspectives. All institutions offer Disciples scholarships and financial aid to help make higher education affordable. Each offers a wide range of undergraduate and/or graduate degree opportunities with a unique scope of majors and programs of study.

Established in connection with the church, through Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, the primary purpose of the Council of Colleges and Universities is to provide an avenue for discussion of common concerns and issues and for the sharing of its members' expertise. Additionally, the Council also exists as a forum at which the institutions may discuss strategies for denominational understanding and for the development of denominational fiscal support. The Council also serves as a venue to provide advice and recommendations to HELM and is a means by which institutions can explore appropriate ways of working with HELM and the wider church. In addition to providing a forum, the Council is a means for fellowship of the chief executive officers of the institutions holding membership in the Council.

Since the last in person General Assembly, the biggest challenge for the colleges and universities has been the global pandemic. This significantly disrupted the ability to
provide consistent in person education to student populations across the country. Several of our schools were negatively affected by the pandemic, by decreased student enrollment levels, increased costs due to covid protocols, increased cost to dramatically increase technology for the provisioning of on-line courses, and many other issues. Funding available from the federal government helped, but the challenges left many of our schools struggling to ensure they were providing quality education, engaging in innovative research, and helping to advance increase knowledge and contribute to societal advancement.

Highlights of the work of the council include:

Over the past several months, many of our DOC institutions have developed strong connections to the regions where they are located and have also worked to improve relationships with the wider Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

HELM’s Council of Colleges and Universities (CCU) continues to promote and encourage Disciples’ students to consider Disciples’ colleges and universities as vital options for them to pursue their educational endeavors. The council’s primary focus is to support these students during their undergraduate career through financial assistance, leadership development programs, and other resources. HELM’s CCU also focuses on providing opportunities for adult and continuing education, both in person and through online access.

The HELM Leadership Fellows Program (LPF) received ten (10) new students, of which five are currently attending one of the DOC related colleges/universities. Through involvement in their churches, schools, and communities the new Fellows have already demonstrated their character and leadership skills. As this is a four-year Leadership Fellows Program, HELM will continue to nurture and support each Fellow’s undergraduate studies and their on-going leadership development so that they can make a positive impact in our communities and beyond. Applications for the 2023 LFP cohort were due April 15, 2023.

Additionally, HELM awarded the William Gilbert and Florence Leonard Jones Ph.D. Scholarships to six Disciple students, two of whom attended a DOC institution during the 2022-2023 academic year. HELM awarded the Ann E. Dickerson Scholarship to two Disciple students who also attended a DOC institution during this academic year as well.

Accomplishments of a few of the DOC affiliated institutions:

- In 2021, Barton College was recognized for its honorable commitment to engaged, hands-on education by Colleges of Distinction, a one-of-a-kind guide for college-bound students. Barton was also named as a North Carolina College of Distinction.
- Eureka College has received a $1.25 million lead gift for a $2.5 million project to create a 27,000 square foot Student Success Center inside the Melick Library.
- Jarvis Christian College became Jarvis Christian University, now offering graduate degrees in Business Administration and Criminal Justice. Jarvis was ranked #20
among the top 25 Hidden Gems in the Online Schools Guide in Texas. Additionally, Jarvis was one of nineteen HBCUs recognized as a Fulbright Institutional Leaders for 2022.

- Midway University received and accepted a $5 million pledge from Trustee Jan Hunter and her husband Richard, earmarked for renovation and conversion of the top floor of the existing Little Memorial Library into a student residential living area.
- Transylvania University received a $25 million grant to help keep and attract top educators.
- The University of Lynchburg received a $300,000 Ceasefire grant to curb gun violence.