


# Chapter 5

## Establishing a Character Education and Development Program

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Hallmark University has a longstanding commitment to character development. At the highest level, the University prioritizes character development as a fundamental component of its educational philosophy, guided by the University's mission to transform individual lives through the cultivation of superior skills, knowledge, and character. Recognizing the critical role of character education in meeting the demands of employers and communities, the University implemented a comprehensive, compulsory Character Education Program in 2014 to integrate character education as part of our curricula in every academic course. Through extensive research and collaboration with employers, the University identified seven key character traits which serve as the foundation for professional leadership behaviors.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Through employer research, Department of Labor soft skills material, and writings on the subject, seven-character traits (Hallmarks of Character) have been identified that capture a broad range of highly desired professional leadership behaviors. Employers state that the greatest benefit to them, our graduates, and the community is character development and leadership skills. Our compulsory character education program began in 2014 with our “Hallmarks of Character” six-hour workshop. Today, across all four schools, character education is integrated into every academic course.

## **HALLMARK UNIVERSITY**

### **Model of Higher Education**

#### **Our Mission**

Hallmark University lives by the mission statement, “We change individual lives by developing superior skills, knowledge and character.” We know the ultimate customer of our students is the employer and employers and communities are desperate for university graduates with character education and ethical leadership skills. Employers consistently provide us with feedback that reinforces our mission, particularly our commitment to character development. They uniquely understand that skills and knowledge will help a person be hired, but often, it is a person’s lack of character that may prevent them from advancing in their career or even cause the company to separate with the employee.

The University’s culture is supported by the Character Education Program not only in our faith-based identity, but in the product (quality graduates) for our customers (employers). Employer partners informed Hallmark they appreciate the quality of education, the skills, knowledge, experiential learning, and certifications that Hallmark graduates earn. Employers have also communicated they hold character in even higher regard when hiring and advancement opportunities arise.

Hallmark University’s main objective is to increase higher education attainment by enhancing its effectiveness and efficiency, while upholding standards of excellence and integrity. Hallmark produces graduates in recession-proof industries with exceptional character, industry certifications and/or licensures, superior experience, and exceptional work ethic. The CEP helps students understand important traits like Integrity, Leadership, and Dependability. Every degree program integrates the attaining of industry certifications into the curriculum. So, whether it is Information Systems or Aeronautics, graduates have the credentials to get started at an organiza-

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