

Mission

The Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association (CMSSA) is dedicated to providing an academic and social support structure for students, researchers, and professionals with an interest in the academic study of Mormonism. As an extracurricular extension of and support to Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University's School of Religion, its main objective is to enrich, enliven, and engender intellectual conversations among students and with scholars. To this end, CMSSA hopes to assist the School of Religion in preparing young scholars by regularly sponsoring student and scholar research presentations, hosting critical topical discussions that will highlight issues especially relevant to the contemporary religious community, and sponsoring graduate-student conferences. Additionally, in harmony with one of the main objectives of the School of Religion, CMSSA will work with The Council for the Study of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when appropriate to foster constructively critical dialogue, and build bridges of understanding, between the religious community and the academy.

Vision

In a set of ever-widening concentric circles, CMSSA is concerned with contributing to the success of the following: students as emerging scholars first, Mormon Studies at CGU second, the School of Religion third, and finally, the overall landscape of Mormon Studies. Thus, while its immediate concern is local, and is primarily a student-centered organization for those studying and researching in the Claremont area, CMSSA envisions itself as being situated within the horizon of a much larger community. Most succinctly stated, CMSSA seeks to be one component in the establishment of Claremont as a center and hive of activity in the research of and scholarship on the thought, practice, history, and culture of Mormonism.

Social Interactions

In addition to its commitment to offering a support-structure for individuals engaging in scholarly pursuits, CMSSA desires to foster a social dynamic whereby members of the group can assist one another in facing the shared challenges in their respective fields of study, and managing the tension that is often experienced by those committed to a life of the mind and a life of faith. As such, the association will host regular activities for student-participants that will provide a forum to address such issues. In addition, it will sponsor non-academic social events for friends and family members. Through these interactions, CMSSA hopes to contribute to a stronger sense of comradery, community, and solidarity both as students with shared interests, and as members of the Claremont academic community.

Participation Requirements

CMSSA welcomes individuals with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Its single expectation is that participants have a genuine respect for and interest in Mormon Studies, and approach any topic in a manner conducive to rigorous, fair-minded, and balanced scholarship. Activities will typically be open to any interested persons, but involvement in decisions related to organizational matters requires that one be a member. Any undergraduate or a graduate student actively studying in the Claremont area is eligible for membership.