Extending Our Heritage, Expanding Our Reach

Transitioning to Greenville University
Greenville College will soon mark its 125th Anniversary, and we have much to celebrate! For a century and a quarter, we have delivered a high quality, Christ-centered educational experience. Generations of our graduates have channeled the salt and light of the gospel across the United States and around the world. They have lived purposeful lives and carried out meaningful work in fields such as business, medicine, education, ministry, technology, financial services, science, and music.

For a century and a quarter, we have forged a history of innovation and academic excellence, faith and learning, worship and hope. Upcoming celebrations of this remarkable story have prompted us to consider how we can effectively extend the benefits of this rich heritage to future generations of students and expand our reach to even broader audiences.

In some ways, our world is similar to Wilson T. Hogue’s world in 1892 when he answered the call to serve as Greenville College’s first president. Hogue championed a Wesleyan message that addressed improving conditions for the poor and opposing slavery. People today still suffer the despair of poverty and succumb to slavery in its various forms. Many have neither heard the message of God’s saving love nor seen this message lived out convincingly. We must extend our heritage and prepare our students to be salt and light to this world.

People today are more globally aware, interconnected, and technologically driven than ever before. New channels for salt and light continue to emerge; we are compelled to explore them. New opportunities, many of them international, cross our path; we are compelled to expand our reach and embrace them.

After much prayer, consultation, and careful thought, we are convinced that Greenville College will more effectively extend its heritage and expand its reach if its name more accurately reflects our work today and the work we are poised to embrace tomorrow. At first glance and upon first hearing, “Greenville” recalls our clear footprint in history as an innovative institution that integrates faith with learning. At first glance and upon first hearing, “University” clarifies our expansion with strong graduate programs and a growing global reach. Greenville University provides clarity on both counts, and clarity, we learn from Abraham in the Old Testament, empowers.

Throughout his life, Abram proved to be a man of courage, faith, and worship. Yet, at age 99, he received a new name from the Lord — Abraham. The new name helped him to clearly focus on his mission. Every time he heard “Abraham,” he was reminded of his distinct call to be the “father of a multitude.”

In much the same way, our shift toward clarity from Greenville College to Greenville University will help us to focus on our mission and fulfill the great calling the Lord has placed on us as an institution, a calling that will take us into the future as surely as it has led us through the past. We will move forward as Greenville University, daily reminded of our strong heritage and daily reminded by our extended reach. We will also retain the name of Greenville College for our College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

On September 20, 2017, the 125th Anniversary of Greenville College’s first convocation, we will celebrate our formal identity as Greenville University. Countdown to this historic event begins Christmas Day, 2014. I can’t imagine a more providential day to launch our one thousand-day transition. Even this detail confirms the Lord’s watch over us.

We have divided this document into two broad sections. In the first section, we share our mission, vision, core values, historical identity, and faith commitments that we will preserve and further refine. In the second section, we introduce the three strategic priorities that will guide our transition to Greenville University.

Our agenda to extend our heritage and expand our reach is necessarily ambitious and particularly challenging against the backdrop of this fast changing world. Three realities, however, will not change:

• The transformational, Christ-centered educational experience that we offer – one that empowers, enriches, and endures
• Our steadfast determination to not merely sell degree programs, but to invite students into an experience of lifelong transformation, meaning, and purpose
• Our unique “generations-strong” community that welcomes participation from its members

I am confident that as you read about this faith adventure, you will think of ways to join us. In fact, whether you are a student, a parent, or family member; an alumnus, alumna, or friend of the College; a faculty member, employee, or financial champion; we invite you to come along. We welcome your words of advice, encouragement, and financial support. Most of all, we welcome your prayers.

Blessings,

Ivan L. Filby, President
Extending Our Heritage

On Christmas Day 2014, we begin a one thousand-day countdown to the celebration of our transition in identity to Greenville University. While there is much to celebrate, identity as a university is not our ultimate goal; our goal is to use that identity to extend our heritage to new generations of students. This echoes prior times in Greenville College’s history when clear identification of “who we are and what we do” paved the way for meeting emerging educational needs.

In 1947, for example, the North Central Association first fully accredited Greenville College and identified it as a “college of quality.” For persons unfamiliar with the College, the designation immediately clarified its capabilities and answered questions about Greenville College even before they were asked.

The College emerged from that rigorous accreditation process with a compelling mission statement that drew key elements like Christian service and blended faith and learning from its Wesleyan and Free Methodist backgrounds. In short order, two new groups of students benefited from the stamp of excellence and the well-defined mission – World War II veterans who returned from overseas with a host of unique educational needs, and public school teachers faced with new professional standards that included a bachelor’s degree.

The timeless themes that shaped our responsiveness to the needs of these students and others from generation to generation remain central to the mission, vision, and core values we hold today and take with us into the future.

EXTENDING OUR MISSION

Greenville College empowers students for lives of character and service through a transforming Christ-centered education in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies.

EXTENDING OUR VISION

Greenville College believes that God created each of our students to uniquely shape the world! Therefore, we

• Offer a transformational Christ-centered educational experience that empowers, enriches, and endures;
• Focus on the development of the whole person so that each student thrives spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, relationally, and physically;
• Inspire our students to embrace God’s Call; and,
• Give our work as worship and welcome the presence of the risen Christ to fill us, equip us, and send us.

This is Greenville College, and we invite you to join our community.

EXTENDING OUR INSTITUTIONAL CORE VALUES

A Christ-Centered Education

Greenville College’s roots lie in the Christian college movement of nineteenth-century America that was concerned to provide an education centered in the implications of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. This means that the backdrop of God’s work in Christ – through acts of creation, redemption and restoration – frames the educational process both in and out of the classroom. It also suggests that education is never for its own sake but is seen as part of the larger bending of the created order back
to God and to God’s purposes in and through Jesus Christ.

An Open-Minded and Welcoming Community

Greenville College recognizes and welcomes each person as a key part of the larger group – a group that loves, respects, and supports its members. While the community advocates certain standards for its members, it also values each individual’s identity and strives for openness regarding each one’s background and experiences. In cultivating an environment that welcomes diversity of opinion and tradition, Greenville College promotes open-mindedness and authentic actions of hospitality among its students, faculty, and staff.

Holistic Teaching

Greenville College aims to facilitate the transformation of students through teaching. By following the scriptural admonition to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, faculty take this mandate into the classroom as they teach from the heart to instill a Christ-like character in their students. They strive to impart authoritative and contemporary knowledge in the discipline of the mind as well as inspire passion in their students for a chosen vocation.

Global Awareness

Greenville College challenges students and faculty to demonstrate awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness to differences across cultures, social practices, and religions. This also means we keenly recognize the interconnectedness of God’s people. In addition, Greenville College stresses to its community the need for reaching out to other cultures and nations in order to address the world’s problems.

Creative and Critical Thinkers

Building on the foundation of the liberal arts, Greenville College models and fosters a creative and critical approach to ideas and challenges. Through an academically rigorous curriculum, faculty members encourage original and imaginative thinking while valuing disciplined and reasoned analysis.

Character and Service

Greenville College challenges students to know themselves, recognize their identity through self-discovery, and the development of the special talents they have been given by God. We strive to instill students with skills of introspection that allow them to constantly evaluate their character and develop a deep awareness of how they can look outside of themselves and meet the needs of others. Students best realize their potential through the lifelong practice of serving others.

EXTENDING OUR INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

When the Free Methodists of Central Illinois acquired Almira College in 1891, they gained a neglected, but useful, four-story building on a 10-acre campus. The Greenville site suited their plans to educate young men and women with a
blend of learning and religion that church leaders advocated.

The “Father of Free Methodism” B.T. Roberts believed deeply in the Christian liberal arts college. “Education and religion should by no means be separated,” he said. The new owners of Almira College believed the same. They soon renamed the school Greenville College and installed Wilson T. Hogue as its first president in 1892.

A pastor and accomplished scholar, Hogue had already helped build a Christian liberal arts college in New York. Over his 13-year tenure in Greenville, he proved masterful at bringing clarity and purpose to this fledgling school. His sound grasp of Christian culture, clear definition of policy, and skillful administration left such a mark that later, one observer proclaimed, “Greenville College stands as a living monument of Wilson T. Hogue.”

Today, that monument consists partly of a 50-acre campus with spaces that facilitate learning, computing, performance and practice, art exhibition, athletics, science, and research. It also encompasses study abroad on various continents and a “virtual” community that reaches far beyond campus and across the world to connect students with faculty and other students.

This global reach echoes the keen awareness of international influence that permeated campus during the College's first 50 years. Then, with many students preparing for missionary work, the college community stayed tuned to its graduates’ activities overseas. In 1924, for example, when an alumnus/physician arrived in Peking to serve with a medical college, a student reporting the news observed: “In this way, the influence of our institution for God and Righteousness is being extended from year to year to the far corners of the earth.”

The “living” parts of Hogue’s monument are today’s students who fully engage in pursuits that fulfill his vision for “true and thorough Christian education.” Their learning takes place on campus, online, and across the world in places like Rwanda, Costa Rica, Israel and Uganda. In recent years, these have also served as host sites for a Greenville College education.

EXTENDING OUR FAITH COMMITMENTS

Greenville College is strengthened through its connections to the Free Methodist Church, its rich Wesleyan theological heritage, and its call to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Centered on Christ, we are determined not to stray from this path. The following convictions briefly summarize our identity, shape our practices, and point to our destinations.

We embrace
- the Bible as the authoritative rule for faith and life;
- the historic forms and rituals of the church;
- the evangelical missionary impulse, which preaches the gospel of Jesus;
- the continuing search for truth in all arenas;
- the affirmation of the good;
- the preeminence of Jesus Christ;
- the active ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all people;
- the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty;
- the ministry of love through works of service and mercy as the goal of Christian practice;
- the struggle for freedom and justice in all parts of the earth; and
- the necessity of an individual encounter with and commitment to God in Christ.

EXTENDING OUR DISTINCTIVES

When we celebrate our transition in identity to Greenville University, we will celebrate our capacity to provide distinct opportunities for students to learn, grow, practice, perform, and excel. Recent distinctions include:

- admittance rate of applicants to medical schools: 90%
- successful completion rate in over 60 years for engineering students enrolled in University partnership programs: 98%
- first-time passage rate for graduate students taking the Illinois State Reading Specialist Test: 96%
- athletic conference league championships: 30
- conference tournament championships in the last 15 years: 4
Distinct Innovation and Agility

Greenville College was the first U.S. campus with fully wireless network capabilities and one of the first two strengths-based campuses in the U.S. It also offers

- three-year degree options for motivated students,
- early access for students to advanced instrumentation in chemistry and physics programs, and
- unique learning opportunities on and off campus throughout the year.

Distinct Community Engagement

Greenville College has gained recognition in the contemporary Christian music community for its acclaimed alumni musicians including Jars of Clay, Augustana, Paper Route, The Madison Letter, and Stephanie Smith. On campus, students enjoy the strengths of community through

- a low student-to-professor ratio;
- opportunities for collaboration with professors on research, research presentation, and publication;
- thirty-eight weekly student-led Bible studies;
- frequent opportunities for engaging dialogue with guest speakers, including nationally-acclaimed authors and leading figures in business and ministry; and
- community-wide focus on “character and service” that draws frequent conference recognition of athletes for sportsmanship.

Distinct Focus on the Future

Seventy-five percent of our faculty members have earned doctorate or terminal degrees, a continual march forward initiated by Greenville College’s longest serving president, Dr. H.J. Long. Future-focus has also proved rewarding in other areas:

- A new eight-lane track plus ten NCCAA national championships in 15 years for the men’s track program sets the stage for future championship runners.
- A building dedicated to digital media plus 35 American Advertising Award medals and four Best of Show honors since 2010 pave the way for further engagement in this popular field.
- Ninety-four percent of alumni reporting full-time employment or enrollment in graduate school within nine months of graduation affirms our focus on preparing students for life after college.
Expanding Our Reach as Greenville University

Expanding our reach to serve graduate and undergraduate students on campus, online, and abroad naturally flows from our heritage steeped in the education- and missionary-minded Free Methodist Church. By 1932, Greenville College had thoroughly embodied the integration of faith and learning envisioned by B.T. Roberts and nurtured by Wilson T. Hogue. That year, it had also registered four decades of expanding its global reach through missionary-graduates who, according to the College’s annual, held “the key of knowledge in their hands, the message of the gospel on their lips, and the destiny of souls in their keeping.”

At the same time, its graduates showed great interest in pursuing advanced studies. In 1935, about one third of its alumni had earned one or more degrees beyond the baccalaureate. In 2012, that number swelled to sixty-eight percent.

Today, global reach for Greenville College necessarily involves expanding its influence to broader audiences – undergraduate and graduate – on an international platform as we apply what we know to be true from 125 years experience delivering a transformational Christ-centered education.

International conversations always benefit from clarity. Clearly identified as Greenville University, we will immediately assure concerned prospective students of our qualifications and reach:

- Students in the Spanish-speaking world will know that we are not a high school.
- Students in the Far East will know that our offerings surpass those of a college.
- Chinese students studying the English language on our campus will know that the pursuit of an undergraduate degree with us does not jeopardize future employment prospects that require university credentials.

The following strategic priorities will guide our transition to Greenville University and the benefits clarity brings.

**CULTIVATE INNOVATION AND AGILITY**

In 125 years, Greenville College has filled a niche by delivering educational programs that meet select marketplace needs and packaging them to fit the “true and thorough Christian education” Wilson T. Hogue envisioned. From granting stenographic diplomas in 1924 to graduating audio engineers in 2014, the College has addressed areas of need that are a good fit for its offerings and resources and built programs accordingly.

**Over the next five years we will cultivate innovation and agility by:**

Developing compelling new academic programs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects; health studies, business, and digital technology.

Facilitating more efficient and shorter degree completion times by offering individualized academic coaching, prior learning assessment, and improved student information systems.

Emphasizing learning beyond the classroom by enhancing the educational experience with service learning, mission trips, international experiences, chapel and worship activities, athletics, and major-focused internships that help students develop their minds, bodies and spirits.

**STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In 125 years, Greenville College has intentionally applied the strengths of community to shape students’ lives. From Wilson T. Hogue’s early
pronouncement that “all students residing in the college building will be regarded as members of the college family” to the “bond and brotherhood” intentionally fostered among today’s residents of Joy Hall, generations of students have known Greenville College to be synonymous with “community.”

Over the next five years we will strengthen community engagement by:

**Delivering a transformational first year experience** by connecting students to our core values and helping them connect learning to their career aspirations.

**Establishing discipline-specific learning communities** by connecting faculty, students, alumni, donors, and prospective students in discipline-specific learning hubs that stimulate thoughtful scholarship and transformational service.

**Recognizing great employee performance** by implementing a human resource development system that motivates and measures high performance, includes clearly defined roles and goals, features regular feedback, and rewards teamwork.

**Increasing our percentage of domestically diverse and international students from 22 percent to 25 percent** by developing the necessary recruitment and support structures to attract and retain students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

**Telling our story effectively** by communicating our shared vision and core values through a coherent messaging plan that excites our people and resonates across our external audiences.

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

In 125 years, Greenville College has coupled carrying out the business of “now” with assessing what lies ahead. From the construction of residence halls, a library addition, and student union in the post-World War II era to the recent addition of a digital media building and classrooms for our University Pathways language program, preparation for the future has served students well.

Over the next five years we will focus on the future by:

**Imagining learning in the future** by launching our Imagine Project scholarship program that invites high school students to imagine what the world will be like in ten years. We will use the ideas they generate to “future proof” our curriculum.

**Connecting planning throughout the college** by developing data-driven planning systems linking strategic priorities to outcomes and budgets.

**Building a campus for today and tomorrow** by designing, funding, and beginning to build new flexible-use facilities that promote creativity and collaboration and allow for future repurposing and redesign.

**Connecting our curriculum to career and life calling** by guiding students to develop compelling portfolios, implementing a 4-credit career curriculum, developing a center for entrepreneurship, and aligning learning outcomes with the national Degree Qualification Profile (DQP).
Come Join Us

Already a quarter of the way into our second century of delivering a unique Christ-centered education, we know that our work builds on the great foundation laid by our predecessors, visionaries like President Eldon Grant Burritt, who observed in 1926:

“When the records are all in, the records of the men and women and movements which have added real wealth and beauty to this world, and lifted it nearer to God’s throne, who can tell how long the annals may be of that small but influential college, which in its poverty aspired to make many rich.”

This is our community, our plan, and our work. Come join us.

greenville.edu/plan