

CORE COMPONENT 1C

Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Introduction

The period that began with the mid-nineties and followed the last accreditation visit has witnessed one of Greenville's most active periods in the arena of mission study and implementation. Under two different administrations, clarity has been achieved in wording, structure, and in process. This has required a significant amount of time both internally and externally. Those involved in the process up-close experienced the joys and frustrations of sweating over each individual word and its implications but, in the end, demonstrated strong commitment both to the process and the end-product. Working those missional commitments through to the various constituencies has proven laborious at times. The product, however, is a Mission received with a sense of clarity and ownership by all connected to the institution.

Finding 1c.1: Internal constituencies articulate the Mission consistently and attempt to inculcate it into all parts of the organization.

Steps have been taken during the past decade to begin to integrate the Mission more directly into the curriculum. In addition to the work that took place in the mid-nineties to rewrite and revise the foundational documents, faculty are instructed to integrate course objectives with the larger nine Institutional Objectives. The faculty also participate in a Common Day of Learning each spring during which the presentations by seniors in the COR 401 class are assessed by groups of faculty based on the Institutional Objectives and Philosophy of Education. The academic calendar has been revised to accommodate the Common Day of Learning so that the entire student body has the opportunity to participate.

Both the core curriculum and the general education courses come under review, not only by the Academic Affairs Committee, but by a General Education Council. These groups seek to assure that the larger mission permeates the general education portion of the curriculum. In addition, as departments go through departmental review they are encouraged to develop departmental mission statements which flow out of the larger institutional Mission and assess their record in inculcating that departmental mission into the lives of students through both internal and external feedback.

Chapel is considered to be the largest classroom on campus. The Chapel Mission (Greenville College, n.d.) reflects the Institutional Mission of developing students of character:

Chapel is the cornerstone of the Spiritual Formation program at Greenville College. A place of corporate worship, prayer, education, and growth, Chapel exists to encourage the formation of Christian community and to foster the development of a vibrant, life-changing relationship with Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for each individual within the community.

Further, the Chapel Educational Objectives are tied directly to the Institutional Goals and Objectives (Exhibit 1c.1). Freshmen discuss the Greenville College Mission in New Student Orientation and COR courses. The Mission Statement and Institutional Goals and Objectives are also printed in almost all course syllabi and serve as a departure point for faculty/student discussion at the beginning of each semester.

Finding 1c.2: Greenville College’s external constituencies (Parents, Church Leaders, Alumni, Community Representatives) both understand and support the organization’s Mission.

Many parents, students and church leaders understand the College’s mission as one with two components: higher learning and faith development. Various paths are taken to nurture faith and integrate it with learning. In some cases, debate arises, not about the mission, but how it is enacted. Definition and debate on how the College should educate for Christian character and service provides much formative guidance. A number of advisory groups provide an important link for further discussion.

The President, members of Cabinet, and faculty leaders regularly take time to speak to external constituencies regarding the Mission and its outworking in the organization. President Mannoia typically addresses parents and prospective students regarding the Mission Statement at the Scholarship Award Day luncheons.

Each year at the New Student Orientation Retreat, in which all new students are taken away overnight for a service project, the president speaks to them about the four key elements of the mission statement, “Transformation,” “Character and Service,” “Christ-centered,” and “Liberating Arts & Sciences.” It is perhaps this occasion which explains why so many have committed it to memory.

Faculty members have been invited on occasion to address the Parents’ Cabinet and Alumni, and they also speak at Free Methodist camps and conferences. The Alumni Board and the President’s community group, Greenville College to Greenville Community (GC2GC), provide numerous opportunities for regular discussion of the Mission and its implementation.

Members of the Religion Department meet at least annually with the College Church Advisory Committee, made up of local church leaders, regional and national clergy in the Free Methodist Church, and coordinated by the Director of Church Relations. They continue to dialogue and discuss issues related to the College Mission as they arise.

WEB RESOURCE:

www.greenville.edu/community/communication.shtml#gc2gc

It is clear from the minutes of the meetings of these various groups and occasional phone calls from parents over the last several years that there are sometimes areas where there is misunderstanding or difference of opinion. Items for discussion in recent years have ranged from the meaning of the word “evangelical” and how best to identify the groups most naturally associated with the College’s Mission, to current research in the area of spiritual development, such as the Fowler Faith Initiative, and its integration into the College’s curriculum. In such cases, the College’s approach has usually been to address the issue through its various personnel and make sure that the institutional perspective is put forward. With the implementation of the new COR curriculum both formal and informal discussions have taken place regarding the parameters of faith and learning.

Throughout, members of the College community have used the Mission and the foundational documents as touchstones in furthering the conversation. It is clear that for some of the external constituency, however, these documents do not go far enough in hammering out faith commitments and some have perceived some of these documents, such as the statement on Academic Freedom, as being incompatible, at times, to certain ideological positions. Nevertheless, though the perception exists that among some elements of our external constituency support is not as high as the support of the internal constituency, there still is agreement that even this outside group is largely supportive of the larger Mission, if not always of the working out of its details. Continued attendance at meetings and engagement in discussions attest to a willingness to keep the dialogue open about how the details are resolved.

Despite some debate and discussion, a survey of alumni does reveal overall satisfaction with their Greenville College experience. The survey model and detailed results are in the appendix (survey model is in Appendix 1b.1 and the results are in Appendix 1b.2).

Finding 1c.3: Greenville College’s internal constituencies (Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students) both understand and support the organization’s mission.

The Mission Statement was reworked by the Faculty and Administration beginning in 1994, and further revised in 1999. During the process of revision, the Faculty shared responsibility for the initial outcome at various levels (see Faculty Meeting and Faculty Council Minutes in the Resource Room). In an effort to make the statement more concise, the second section was removed from the Mission: “... higher education grounded in both the liberal arts tradition and a Wesleyan heritage. We provide an education characterized by open inquiry into all creation, and are guided by the authority of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.” This section was viewed as more descriptive and not as central to the mission and was adopted by the Board of Trustees, along with some adjustments to the wording in the initial Mission Statement (i.e. “liberating arts and sciences”). Two statements (“Mission” and “Identity”) now replace the original Mission Statement.

WEB RESOURCE:

www.greenville.edu/campus/mission.shtml

The Mission Statement is supplemented by four important accompanying documents, all promulgated, with the exception of the Statement on Academic Freedom which has a longer history, and approved during the 1994-95 Academic year. (See pages 5-9 of the College Catalog, Exhibit 1a.2.1) These items are, respectively: the Theological Assumptions, the Philosophy of Education, the nine Institutional Goals and Objectives and the Statement on Academic Freedom. Since their initial acceptance, the Theological Assumptions were revisited in the spring of 2004 with a reaffirmation of their tenets by the entire faculty (refer to Exhibit 1c.3.1).

An attempt to assess perceptual understandings of the College's commitment to a mission-driven model was undertaken in 2005 through the use of a survey entitled Community Perception Profile sent to faculty, trustees, community leaders, students (both traditional and non-traditional), staff, administration, and alumni. The first question on the survey asked the respondents whether they understood and supported the Mission of the College (refer to Appendix 1c.3.1).

In January 2005, Greenville College faculty and administrators participated in a survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). Both the Community Perception Profile and the HERI survey revealed that the internal constituents both understand and support the Mission, with the Board of Trustees showing the strongest support, followed by faculty and administrators, then staff and students (refer to Appendix 1c.3.1 for detailed results of the 2005 *Community Perception Profile* and the 2005 *HERI* survey).

A 2004 survey "Best Christian Places to Work" sponsored by Best Christian Workplaces Institute and administered to 144 employees of Greenville College indicated that the mission and values are clear and help people understand the importance of their jobs. Eighty-eight percent of the employees surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they had a clear understanding of Greenville College's values. Eighty-two percent agreed or strongly agreed that "the mission and goals of the organization make me feel my job is important" (refer to Appendix 1c.3.2).

WEB RESOURCE:

www.greenville.edu/academics/aa/minutes/bcw/results.shtml

Faculty receive exposure to the Mission Statement, as well as the four other foundational documents both during interviews and New Faculty Orientation (refer to Exhibit 1c.3.2). The Dean's Council uses these documents as a template in the formulation of interview questions for prospective employees, and follow-up discussions are conducted during the faculty member's first year of employment. In addition, each new member of the faculty receives these when they begin employment in the form of the *Faculty Handbook*. Staff members also receive an orientation to the ethos of the College through the employment application process, the *Staff and Administrative Staff Handbook*, and the Personnel Director's office. Monthly Chapel times, led by the President, are held specifically for staff and faculty and serve as an opportunity for sharing of information and goals, community prayer, and mutual support.

Finding 1c.4: Greenville College's long-range planning and short-term strategic decisions are mission-driven.

WEB RESOURCE:

www.greenville.edu/campus/millennium/nmc2003/index.htm

WEB RESOURCE:

www.greenville.edu/campus/millennium/nmc2003/Initiatives.htm

The clearest evidence of the linkage between mission and planning is the work of the New Millennium Commission. Established first in 2000 by the incoming administration, the Commission sought to link achievable goals and a vision statement to the widely-accepted Mission. This Commission has continued to function through the gathering of data from smaller groups, identifying threats to the College's Mission, and developing strategies for responding to these threats, as well as implementing the more specific Vision Statement. Six major initiatives are currently underway for implementation through the year 2009.

Specific short-term strategic goals established by Cabinet members (see Cabinet goals for various years, Exhibit 1c.4.1) do not indicate specific connections to the College's Mission but show a connection to specific New Millennium initiatives which flow from the College's mid-range Vision Statement. New Board policy has been gradually developed (refer to Exhibit 1c.4.2 for copy of minutes from meetings ranging from 2000-2004). The Board of Trustees has made it clear under its "Guiding Principles" that the mission is to be developed and implemented at every level of the College's working systems.

Finding 1c.5: There is a perception among some faculty, staff, and students that Greenville College's short-term budgeting priorities are not always clearly rooted in the Mission.

It is clear that budget influences the extent to which the institution can carry out its Mission, particularly when income falls short of projections, as was the case in 2004-2005. This is supported by the recent Community Perception Profile (2005) which indicates a sense by internal constituents that the connection between Mission and budgeting is somewhat tenuous. While 46 percent of internal constituents strongly agreed or agreed that "the majority of the decisions that we make at G. C. are rooted in our Mission," 34 percent were undecided and 20 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Only 28 percent of internal respondents strongly agreed or agreed that "the College's budgeting priorities flow from and support the Mission of the College," while 40 percent were undecided and 32 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed (refer to Appendix 1c.3.1).

These concerns exist in the context of the financial adjustments made during the 2004-05 academic year, which have impacted the 2005-06 budget as well. As a result of not meeting recruitment and retention goals, faculty workloads, in particular, have shifted to include additional administrative work and larger class sizes. Faculty and adjunct positions were cut. Prioritization has been necessary even in areas in what some might perceive as traditionally essential.

Meeting the criteria of external agencies such as the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the concerns of students at times exacerbates the financial tension, though

in some cases these external criteria actually help to propel the institution in positive changes that might not have occurred quite so rapidly. This certainly took place in the summer of 2004 when technology upgrades in the classroom occurred in preparation for the ISBE visit in order to comply with new technological standards.

While there is a strong sense of commitment to the Mission, there appears to be some ambivalence regarding how it is at work in the day-to-day operation of the College in areas of decision-making and budget priorities. Some of this may be attributed to budgetary decisions which are rooted in short-term need, rather than long-term concerns as was the case in 2004. Nevertheless, in the Dean's Council deliberations regarding budget cuts for 2005-06, there was considerable discussion about how the College could trim the budget and still be true to its Mission. The lengthy memorandum entitled Budget Savings in the Academic Areas of the College dated December 2, 2004, and distributed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs to all College employees describes the decision-making process:

As the Dean's Council has worked with me in making the difficult choices required to cut more than \$600,000 for the academic side of the College for 2005-2006, a major goal was to be true to our mission and institutional objectives. Our catalog says this:

Our mission is clear: Greenville College transforms students for lives of character and service through a Christ-centered education in the liberating arts and sciences.

This mission makes Greenville College a vital place where students learn and grow. We are a Christian community committed to challenging and nurturing students. The College is dedicated to excellence in higher education grounded in both the liberal arts tradition and a Wesleyan heritage.

We have sought to preserve our vital community where students are simultaneously challenged and nurtured. Toward that end, we have worked to pursue options that we hope will foster a sense of community and enhance our focus on the liberating arts and sciences (See Memo, December 2, 2004; Refer to Exhibit 1c.5).

Summary

It is clear from the above discussion that there is a strong commitment to the Mission and underpinning documents by both internal and external constituents. The Faculty and Administration, in particular, understand and believe in the Mission and give themselves wholeheartedly to it, both in and out of the classroom. While connections to the Mission are clear in long-range planning, there is some concern among students and employees that immediate budgeting priorities can sometimes become captive to the needs of the moment and are less well-connected to the Mission.

Areas for Improvement

The professional faculty, administration, and staff who run Greenville College know and believe in the Mission. However, continued discussion and definition of the College's Vision and Mission and how it guides daily operations of the college are needed to bridge the gap that, according to some in the organization, adversely affects the College's recruitment and curriculum development.

ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID

Admissions policies regarding both the level of student academic preparation and also their ability to pay for their education have been studied and discussed often since the 1995-96 HLC visit (refer to Criterion 2, Core Component 2c, Finding 2c.2). From a Christian perspective, there is a desire that every applicant has an opportunity for a quality college education in a supportive Christian environment. This approach gives rise to large internal financial aid packages and students who need developmental assistance in academics.

When combined with our commitment to person-to-person education in small classes, the results are strained budgets and lower than desirable retention rates and graduation rates (refer to Exhibit Summary 1c.1 Freshman Retention-Graduation Study: 1984-present in Resource Room). While it is nowhere made explicit in our mission or goals, the faculty and administration continue to ask if the College admits the under prepared and lower economic groups because they bring in tuition, because the campus is located in a relatively poor rural geographical area, because it is a part of the history of the College, or because it is the College Mission. While no clear-cut solutions are evident, it is important that we continue to discuss this issue with our mission documents clearly before us.

While the strategic plan is clearly mission-driven, often the College's short term decisions are significantly influenced by complying with budget policy focused on current enrollment and limited financial resources. Financial independence would offer the opportunity to be more overtly mission-driven and less budget-driven in admissions policies.

DEBATING THE PEDAGOGY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Through the years, some constituents have questioned positions that members of the faculty or administration have taken regarding the relationship between faith and certain cultural issues. The resulting tension may be attributed to misunderstanding regarding the issues themselves and the role of faculty members in addressing them in the classroom. President Mannoia examines a point of contention in an address to the Faculty and Staff on April 4, 2003 entitled "How Does Greenville College Accomplish Our Mission?"

Some have asked whether our role should be deliberately to challenge our students' faith. The word "dissonance" or "disequibration" is sometimes

used. I prefer the word “stretching.” The idea is to push back intentionally on students’ beliefs, not just about their faith, but in intellectual, moral, and most other matters as well. By pushing back, it forces serious self-evaluation and reflection.

Faculty and Administration stress that this pushing back must always be done in the context of a nurturing environment. President Mannoia (2003) articulated more about this approach to accomplishing the College’s Mission in an article entitled *Following Christ at Greenville College*:

...But how does such a crucible function? What is the environment suited for such transformational forces to do their work? First and foremost, it must be a place full of the Holy Spirit. While no human community can be perfect, we pray frequently and fervently that Greenville College will be a place pervaded by His presence. Second, it must be comprised of individuals who minister in His name as vessels of His Spirit. This means they are called, shaped, and equipped to serve His purposes, regularly allowing themselves to be tempered, stressed, and softened by that Spirit rather than assuming their role is fixed once and for all. Third, it is a place that can be dangerous. The stretching, heating, and shaping forces at work are powerful, and the student raw material is vulnerable. So fourth, it must be a place of safety, protecting and containing those whose lives which are being tempered by hammering and molding into His glorious art or His glorious instruments; vessels purged of impurity, and thereby made capable of flexibility in the pressures of the world. (¶16).

WEB RESOURCE:

www.greenville.edu/publications/mannoiatexts/faithatgc.shtml

It is clear that the College must continue to dialogue with external constituents, especially parents and pastors. Mutual respect and open communication about matters of faith in an academic community is crucial in accomplishing the Mission and Goals of the College.

In a period of tight budgets, clear communication to students and employees regarding short-term budget decisions is in order. In order to maximize morale and support, intentional justification and connections between short-term decisions and long-term Mission must be made not only for budget cuts but also for new budget allocations.