Bridgewater College

Institutional Purpose

And

Strategic Plan
FOREWORD

In our literature, we promote Bridgewater College as a College of Character and a Community of Excellence. To be a College of Character we must educate with integrity and stress character development as a basic part of our educational program. To educate with integrity means that the College will be responsible, disciplined, and effective in its academic program.

As a Community of Excellence, we must set our standards high across the entire spectrum of our operations. Together, we (students, faculty and staff) must pursue excellence in all our endeavors. We shall pull together in the pursuit of excellence in academics, administration, athletics, fiscal management, advancement, enrollment management and student development.

Recently, the Board of Trustees amended the College Mission Statement to provide that our mission (to educate and develop the whole person) “is carried out in a learning community, with Christian values, high standards of integrity and excellence, affirming and challenging each member.” It is not enough that some, even most of our students find the campus to be a good environment. We intend that all students as well as all faculty and staff members find fulfillment and affirmation.

The Strategic Plan contains the Affirmations agreed upon by the Board of Trustees and published in the Long-Range Plan of 1990. In addition, it contains 49 Strategic Goals linked to the Institutional Statement of Purpose and deemed necessary to make the Mission a reality. From departmental planning each year, specific and measurable objectives/outcomes are constructed that support the Strategic Goals in this Plan. These objectives/outcomes are assessed annually and actions are taken to achieve the program excellence required by the Mission. This Plan is to be viewed as a living document, continually evolving as planning, assessing and budgeting continuously act upon it.

We are mindful of the need to constantly look to the future. We must ask ourselves frequently: “What is required to become educated?” The skills and attitudes necessary for our students to achieve personal and professional success are ever changing. Our planning must be responsive to those changes.

Phillip C. Stone
President
The mission of Bridgewater College is to educate and develop the whole person. Our graduates will be equipped to become leaders, living ethical, healthy, useful and fulfilling lives with a strong sense of personal accountability and civic responsibility. This mission is carried out in a learning community, with Christian values, high standards of integrity and excellence, affirming and challenging each member.

Bridgewater College strives to be an academic community with a distinctively Christian atmosphere and with a wholesome balance of learning, service, and leisure. The College endeavors to be a community in which each person is treated with respect, there is mutual concern and support, and each person can develop a sense of responsibility to others--both near and far. Bridgewater promotes breadth of intellectual experience as well as proficiency in specific subject fields. Broadly speaking, its primary academic objective is a comprehensive appreciation of the social sciences, the humanities, and the natural sciences.

Bridgewater endeavors to give its graduates a sound foundation as they choose and prepare for their careers. It is interested in their occupational competence and success and intends that they become both humane and effective professionals and practitioners. Bridgewater concentrates on developing the total person, serving the student planning to go directly from undergraduate studies into a career, as well as the one planning to pursue graduate or professional education. The Bridgewater graduate should be able to participate in life with resilience of mind and good judgment, with imagination in dealing with unexpected emergencies, with a sharpened ability to reason and communicate, and with disciplined taste and enjoyment. This concentration on the total person and general education differentiates the liberal arts college from technical and professional schools.

Developing the total person is taken seriously at Bridgewater. On the premise that a recognition of one's capabilities is the beginning of wisdom, Bridgewater offers a liberal arts education designed to help the student gain as complete a self-understanding as knowledge makes possible. As a liberal arts college, it devotes itself to helping students find out how they think, what they feel, why they act, and who they are. Life at Bridgewater College can become a journey of exploration and discovery to the student who is committed unreservedly to the process of a liberal arts education.

In an age of rapid social and scientific change, it is more important than ever that a Christian liberal arts college invite its students to develop an appreciation of the complex bonds which relate persons to each other and to God. The student may discover his or her orientation for
life in the library, the classroom, the laboratory, the rehearsal hall, the residence hall, or on the playing field. Believing that religion can be the integrating force in the lives of men and women, Bridgewater emphasizes the freedom and obligation of each individual to develop a personal faith and to find a meaningful place in the world.

**SUMMARY**

The education offered at Bridgewater is broad, deep, and liberating. It can emancipate one from narrow provincialism and from the distortion of subjective bias; it can free individual creativity and promote the art of the examined life; it can develop the realization that the gift of life demands service to humanity. It helps to conserve basic values while recognizing the need for change. It leads one, while acknowledging that truth is not fully known, to submit to the best and fullest truth that can be known.
AFFIRMATIONS

(1) The College should continue its strong academic tradition and orientation;

(2) The College should continue its tradition of small classes and low student/faculty ratio of approximately 15 to 1;

(3) The NCAA Division III athletic philosophy should continue as Bridgewater’s inter-collegiate athletic guideline;

(4) The international aspect of the College program should be continued, strengthened, and expanded;

(5) The College should continue its strong support for the Brethren Colleges Abroad Program;

(6) The College should continue its traditional relationship with the Church of the Brethren;

(7) The College should continue its emphasis on the need to develop a personal faith and to provide activities for religious expression;

(8) The College should continue to have social rules and personal rules of conduct which reflect its value system and its intention to require students to be responsible and accountable;

(9) The College should continue to provide extensive and diverse co-curricular activities for its students;

(10) The College should work continuously in promoting good relationships in the community;

(11) The Board of Trustees should continue at approximately its same size and should continue to have the variety and depth of skills, particularly in areas of finance, institutional organization, and public relations. Board members should continue to be recruited, not just with reference to those skills, but as to their interest in the academic program, their commitment to the College’s purpose, and their good standing within the College’s constituency;

(12) The College should continue to foster strong loyalty on the part of its alumni;

(13) The internship program should be continued and expanded;

(14) The College should continue as a private institution;

(15) The College should continue as a co-educational institution.
INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

I. STUDENT. To live up to its educational commitment as a liberal arts college, Bridgewater provides resources and encouragement for the student to

1. acquire the ability to speak and write the English language with clarity and effectiveness;
2. understand how people, events, and ideas of the past have shaped the world in which we live;
3. develop an understanding of the diverse cultures that comprise the global community;
4. understand the natural world and the method and philosophy of science;
5. appreciate art, music and literature with sensitivity and critical judgment;
6. understand the economic, political and social structure of our society;
7. develop competence in critical and creative thinking which will facilitate exploration of new areas of knowledge;
8. seek knowledge in depth in a particular field;
9. focus on a career choice which integrates interests, abilities, values, and commitments;
10. strive for physical well-being, emotional maturity, and ethical and spiritual awareness;
11. acquire an awareness of the need for accomplished leaders and develop personal skills in the art of leadership; and
12. demonstrate knowledge and skill in the use and applications of information technology media.

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM. The faculty at Bridgewater College is dedicated to the provision of an academic program designed to satisfy the necessary requirements of a liberal arts education as reflected in comprehensive scores, graduate school entrance examinations, student portfolios and job preparedness. Carrying the primary responsibility for the development of a sound academic program, the faculty will

1. strengthen and expand substantially the international aspects of the College program;
2. increase the number of foreign language opportunities available for Bridgewater students, particularly in Asian and Russian languages;
3. better blend the foreign language and international studies programs with the other areas of study;
4. develop further a strong forensic and public speaking program;
5. integrate communications into the curriculum so that students read with comprehension, write with clarity and listen and speak effectively;

6. continually evaluate present academic programs/majors and assess the need to initiate new programs/majors;

7. actively integrate ethical issues and values into curricular and co-curricular offerings, in order to serve current students and other persons residing in the area;

8. make the honor code more effective;

9. ensure an integrated curriculum that offers coherence in general education through the major disciplines;

10. affirm the centrality of teaching as its primary focus followed closely by service and research;

11. mentor and encourage qualified students to seek graduate education or professional education in their discipline of choice; and

12. pursue effective and innovative teaching techniques and applications.

III. PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS. The Director of Planning will schedule, conduct and oversee outcomes assessment in order to obtain formative data across the spectrum of College operations. It is the intent of the leadership of the College to

1. develop and maintain a planning and institutional research and analysis program that supports effective decision-making and facilitates the fulfillment of the President’s vision for the future; and

2. take those steps necessary to become an outcomes-based, performance-driven institution.

IV. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT. In order to promote continuous improvement and support to the educational program, the administration will

1. at a minimum, increase faculty salaries to the average of our Little Six cohorts and eventually to a level equal to or above our top three Virginia cohort institutions and our benchmark institutions;

2. continue to emphasize undergraduate education, and to give on-going consideration and review of the possibility of adding graduate programs;

3. continue to increase the percentage of faculty with the Ph.D. degree or equivalent;

4. create a financial policy with equilibrium such that increased expenditures are offset by increased revenues, maintenance of buildings and facilities is planned and funded, and real growth in endowment is sustained;

5. maintain a balanced operating budget and a budget process that includes effective systems of monitoring and control;

6. maintain a first-rate physical plant characterized by timely preventive maintenance and effective corrective maintenance;
7. develop and implement a strategy to expand the base of financial support for the College;
8. encourage the faculty to increase the number of its publications and research projects;
9. enhance the esthetic value of the campus with continuous improvement in grounds maintenance and housekeeping;
10. expand the capacity, holdings and service area of the Alexander Mack Memorial Library;
11. maintain an on-line accessible, undergraduate library staffed to provide superior service responsive to technological advancements;
12. give attention to minority representation and to having additional trustees from a broader geographic area;
13. recruit additional qualified minority faculty;
14. give immediate and aggressive attention to increasing Bridgewater College’s name recognition;
15. highlight the relationship of the College with the Church of the Brethren and the heritage of the Church of the Brethren;
16. improve the visibility and image of the College in regional, state and national markets through improved public information;
17. make continuing efforts to examine and evaluate the most recent technological advancements in terms of their relationships both to academic programs and administrative processes;
18. plan and construct a new building for the fine arts;
19. recruit, appoint and retain faculty who are not only highly qualified in their fields, but who are also effective leaders, advisors and role models for our students;
20. review the present tenure policy;
21. seek a broader representation of graduate schools in the recruitment of members of the faculty;
22. acquire additional equipment for the McKinney Center; and
23. upgrade the facilities of Memorial Hall.

V. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT. Student development at Bridgewater College is founded on the premise that one who has been educated in the liberal arts tradition should have attained a demonstrable level of maturation in at least eight personal dimensions. These dimensions include academics, citizenship, cultural awareness, esthetics, ethical development, leadership, social proficiency and wellness. At Bridgewater, we see these dimensions as the principal ingredients of holistic development. It means education is more than academics and intellectual growth. Education also involves emotional and spiritual growth, social proficiency, health awareness, service learning, a cultural
dimension, an ethical approach to life and leadership competence. To this end, the faculty and staff will

1. expand the College’s personal counseling resources;
2. encourage all faculty and staff members to support student organizations and activities;
3. continually seek ways to improve resident housing and campus life;
4. develop and maintain a program of student development that ensures each aspect of College life is integrated to the degree that together they build life-skills and character;
5. develop and maintain a distinctive leadership culture that permeates the development of students; offers ample opportunities for students to study, discuss and practice the art of leadership; provides for supervision, consultation and assessment by the faculty; and instills in students the civic responsibility to provide leadership throughout life;
6. develop an improved program of career services that enhances the marketability of Bridgewater graduates; and
7. consider the need of student organizations for office and activity space as the College plans for space requirements in the future.

VI. ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT. At Bridgewater College, the enrollment management system is concerned with both attracting and retaining quality students. The faculty and staff recognize that the level of retention is one important measure of the perception of the College’s educational excellence and an acknowledgment that the student is our primary customer. Our success will be measured in terms of our ability to continuously recruit quality students and then provide for their success and satisfaction. In doing so, we will

1. attempt to recruit additional students from the Church of the Brethren;
2. expand enrollment to a level commensurate with our human and physical resources - 1200 by the year 2000, with special attention on improving the retention and graduation rates for all students;
3. recruit a larger number of qualified student applicants while upgrading the academic and testing profile of entering freshmen;
4. expand efforts to recruit minority and transfer students; and
5. expand the geographic base of students.

VII. INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS. Athletics are an integral part of the holistic development of students. A distinct advantage of enrolling in a small, liberal arts college is the enhanced opportunity to participate in intercollegiate athletics. The intention at Bridgewater is to provide a wide range of intercollegiate sports which satisfy the needs of male and female athletes. The sports will be adequately funded and coached by men and women who are selected based on their professional knowledge, demonstrated leadership
ability, and ethical reputation. Bridgewater College will strive to be competitive in every sport in which it participates. In addition, we will

1. plan and construct a new wellness and fitness center to relieve the over-crowded conditions in Nininger Hall;
2. recruit student-athletes whose academic prowess is equal to the remainder of the entering class;
3. achieve a student-athlete graduation rate which is equal to that of his/her respective class;
4. expand minority representation within the athletics department;
5. actively pursue funding resources that can offset and supplement College support to the athletic program; and
6. actively pursue gender equity in all athletic endeavors.

VIII. COMMUNITY BUILDING. Our college community is a place where students, faculty and staff live and work in a collegial and civil environment which acknowledges and affirms each member. The academic program, the co-curricular activities, the intramural program, the support functions and life in the residence halls will facilitate and further this sense of community. To achieve a strong sense of community that will enable the development of each person, we will

1. promote a campus environment that recognizes individual student differences and is responsive to the needs of our students regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, or physical disabilities;
2. maintain a varied social program that appeals to all races, interests and student populations;
3. maintain a system of co-curricular activities responsive to the needs and interests of our students; and
4. promote an active and varied intramural program that appeals to a wide spectrum of student and faculty interests.

IX. ADVANCEMENT. Institutional Advancement is critical to the achievement of Institutional Goals I through VII. Therefore, the President, faculty and staff will

1. continue to expand the endowment fund of the College with the goal of $35,000 in endowment per student (assuming an enrollment approaching 1,200); and
2. maintain a program of institutional advancement which achieves the goals of the Projection 21 Campaign while fulfilling the resource needs of the College for day-to-day operations.