

Chapter 4: Mission

Criterion One

The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

The Mission of Cedarville College

Cedarville College is a mission-driven institution. The mission of Cedarville College is “to offer an education consistent with biblical truth” and, while the objectives for accomplishing this mission have been updated over the years, the essence of the mission has remained unchanged since the College began in 1887. The mission statement provides the foundation for sustaining educational excellence and the focus for positioning the institution for the 21st century.

Cedarville College was founded as a liberal arts institution in 1887 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The mission was three-fold:

1. To train young men for the ministry.
2. To prepare young men and women for service on a mission field or in a local church.
3. To develop the Christian life and character of those who would pursue other professional goals.

This mission was linked with a liberal arts curriculum to provide educational breadth. After more than 60 years of Presbyterian direction, ownership and governance of Cedarville College were transferred to the Baptist Bible Institute of Cleveland, Ohio in 1953. The current statement of mission was the result of the substantially expanded scope of the College. Since 1953, numerous vocational and professional programs have been added to complement the traditional liberal arts curriculum. Therefore, while the focus of the mission remained constant, the wording of the mission statement changed to reflect a broader constituency.

A primary part of the mission of Cedarville College is the integration of biblical truth into the educational experience. Biblical truth acknowledges God as the giver of knowledge, the central reference point for wisdom and understanding, and the ultimate standard by which truth is measured. The founders of Cedarville College envisioned an institution that would provide Christian young people with an education that recognized these concepts. Biblical truth promotes values, service, and development of individual potential and character. These outcomes are achieved in several ways.

Curricular Activities

Faculty members are expected to demonstrate the effects of biblical truth in every curricular area, starting with appropriate presuppositions and continuing through the entire learning process. Faculty members are also given several development opportunities specifically devoted to strengthening their understanding of biblical integration. The integration of biblical truth also plays an important role in faculty advising of students.

Curriculum

Every student at Cedarville College is required to complete a core of six Bible courses as part of the General Education curriculum. This requirement provides each student with an academic minor in Bible.

Chapel

Daily chapel services provide a major opportunity to integrate biblical truth into the academic experience. Chapel services include encouragement, training, and challenge. Chapel is required of all students and faculty and is vital to the success of the mission of Cedarville College.

Christian Ministry

Students at Cedarville College are involved in Christian service opportunities that take them literally around the world. Student ministry opportunities include community, regional, national, and international outreaches in areas such as music, teaching, nursing, and engineering.

Student Life

Cedarville students are offered numerous opportunities for group and one-on-one interaction. Some of the current programs include **Fit To Be Tied**, a mentoring program for engaged couples and **Thursdays Live**, a student-produced program that encourages students to interact with current issues such as purity, diversity, and biblical lifestyles.

Institutional Objectives (Purposes)

The success of the Cedarville College mission is dependent on the accomplishment of several key institutional objectives. The objectives are designed to address the education of the whole student including values, service, and development of potential and character.

Cedarville College’s institutional objectives include:

1. To undergird the student in the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and to stimulate him to evaluate knowledge in the light of scriptural truth.
2. To encourage growth in Christian character in each student, and to help the student accept his responsibility in faithful Christian service.
3. To increase the student’s awareness of the world of ideas and events which are influencing our contemporary culture, and to prepare the student to knowledgeably participate in our society.
4. To enable the student to develop sound critical and analytical reasoning.
5. To provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice the skills of communication.
6. To offer opportunities for academic specialization and preparation for graduate study, and to assist the student in selecting and preparing for a vocation.
7. To foster the student’s appreciation of, and participation in, wholesome avocational and cultural activities.

These institutional objectives form the basis for the development of divisional and departmental objectives throughout the institution. The following paragraphs explain this connection in two important areas.

General Education

The General Education core curriculum is undergoing significant restructuring in an effort to address contemporary issues and to redefine the significance of the core to a liberal arts education. All these changes were developed to meet the requirements of the General Education objectives which are dynamically linked to the institutional objectives.

Departments

The use of objectives varies from one department to another. All academic departments and many student support services departments have developed objectives as a result of the recently implemented assessment program. Each

department was asked to develop departmental outcome objectives and to identify the connection of these objectives to the institutional mission and objectives. Completion of non-academic department objectives is an on-going process.

Publication of the Objectives

The College mission and objectives carry tremendous significance. All college constituencies receive ample exposure to the objectives. Several key groups are highlighted below.

Faculty/Staff

Prior to employment at Cedarville College, all prospective faculty members participate in an interview with the college president. The President devotes a portion of each interview to a point-by-point review of the institutional objectives to familiarize prospective faculty members with the objectives and the important role the objectives play in accomplishing the mission of the institution. The objectives are also reviewed during faculty/staff in-service sessions prior to each academic year and are reiterated at strategic faculty/staff presentations throughout the year. Statements of the institutional objectives are included in the faculty and staff handbooks.

Students

Students are initially made aware of the institutional objectives through the college catalog and other admission materials. Once they arrive on campus, students are again exposed to the objectives through various student handouts. The annual State of the College address provides an opportunity for the President to review the mission and objectives of the College with students as well.

External Constituencies

The College seeks to publicize its mission and objectives far beyond the immediate campus family. Some of the external constituencies affected by these efforts include alumni, donors, and other individuals with a general interest in the College. Reaching these constituents is accomplished in several ways. The Public Relations Office publishes two quarterly magazines which frequently include content connected with the objectives. Many Alumni Office publications remind alumni of the importance of sustaining the academic and spiritual excellence of the College, and donors are apprised of the institutional objectives to assist them in making sound financial decisions.

Electronic Formats

The mission of Cedarville College is transmitted around the world through its well-developed Internet Home Page. The data includes a discussion of the College mission and the goals and objectives which accomplish the mission.

Evidences of the Objectives

Although the presence of a mission statement and objectives in college literature is good for public relations, it is also vitally important that the mission and objectives actually affect the educational practices of the institution. The mission and objectives of Cedarville College serve as a point of reference for the decision-making processes of the entire institution. This position does not preclude flexibility and change; rather, it provides clear parameters for proper decisions and a strong sense of stability within the institution. The following are some key areas where the effect of institutional objectives is apparent.

Institutional Benchmarks

The imminent beginning of the 21st century has given rise to various forms of institutional evaluation. Change and progress can inadvertently lead to loss of mission. In an effort to avoid this potentiality, the Administrative Council developed the document “Benchmarks for the 21st Century” in 1992. For the purposes of this document, a benchmark is defined as a characteristic or quality from which the institution does not wish to waver. The document is a list of 20 characteristics that flow from the institutional objectives and help to define Cedarville College. The benchmarks are designed to serve as checkpoints for the institution as it approaches the 21st century with the goal of sustaining excellence through a period of development and changing expectations. A complete list of the Benchmarks is included in Chapter 10.

Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning Process annually outlines long- and short-range plans for the institution. The planning process provides the administration with divisional

priorities, educational trends, and continuing challenges. Funding and approval decisions are based on whether the priorities and goals of each division match up with the mission and objectives of the institution. Refer to Chapter 9 for specifics on planning at Cedarville College.

Assessment

The Cedarville College Assessment Plan was submitted to North Central in June of 1995. The goal of the plan is to establish a system whereby the institution can assess the achievement of its objectives at a departmental and institutional level. The development of departmental objectives was closely tied to the institutional objectives. Since the acceptance of the College Assessment Plan, the institutional assessment program has been fully established and the processing of initial data has begun. Refer to Chapter 8 for a complete evaluation of the assessment program.

Budget

The budget process at Cedarville College is closely linked to the institutional objectives through the outcomes of planning and prioritizing. Funding decisions are the result of careful justification of need by the departments and rationale for the ways in which filling the need helps the institution fulfill its mission.

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This chapter has demonstrated that Cedarville College has a clear mission statement and that it has clear and publicly stated objectives that flow from that mission statement. The objectives are appropriate for the stated mission and for an institution of higher education. The mission and objectives have a significant effect on the decisions and operation of the institution. These evidences provide the basis for the assertion that Cedarville College meets the requirements of the first NCA accreditation criterion.