

CRITERION ONE –

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

CHAPTER 3 –

Mission and Purpose

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MISSION

Since its founding in 1986, St. Charles Community College has been guided by the concepts and principles delineated in its mission statement and by its goals and objectives. They are presented in formal documents such as the *College Catalog* and appear in other publications as appropriate.

The current mission statement is as follows:

St. Charles Community College is an open-admission institution dedicated to providing accessible post-secondary educational programs and community services at a reasonable cost. By incorporating excellence and technological advancements, we will prepare our students to achieve their academic, educational, professional, and personal goals and enhance their cultural experiences. The College will respond to the community it serves by establishing and maintaining business, civic, and educational partnerships.

Changes made to the mission statement since 1996 include:

- The incorporation of the words “technological advancements,” since rapid changes in technology require that students have up-to-date technological skills.
- The addition of the phrase “prepare our students to achieve their educational, professional, and personal goals and enhance their cultural experiences” as a reflection of commitment to general education.

Although the mission statement does not include “higher education” or “learning” in its narrative, the intent is present through use of “post-secondary educational programs.” The mission statement was reviewed and revised in January 1998. A task force is reviewing the mission, vision, and values statements during fall 2001 with the goal of presenting them for campus review and approval during spring 2002.

VISION

With the arrival of a new College President in November 1996, a review occurred of the existing mission and objectives statement. Coupled with this review was the deletion of the then-current objectives statement in favor of the newly articulated vision and values statements. These new statements were printed in the *Catalog* and accompany the mission statement.

The current vision statement is as follows:

We will be a community college recognized for leadership in academic excellence, student success, instructional and technological innovation, and community responsiveness.

VALUES

The current values statements are as follows:

- **Communication, Trust and Respect:**
We value mutual trust and respect and encourage open communication within the College community.
- **Student Success:**
We are committed to providing the finest instruction, resources, and support services to enhance the growth and development of our students.
- **Life-Long Learning**
We recognize learning as a continuous process.
- **Decentralized and Democratic Decision-Making**
We value informed decisions made by people closest to the issue.
- **Instructional Innovation:**
We encourage the highest quality instructional programs, using the best of current and emerging instructional methods and technology.
- **Cooperation:**
We value teamwork.
- **Service:**
We value service to students, the community, and one another.

The values statements were developed as part of a new planning model to support the mission statement. These values represent the standard by which members of the college community strive to interact.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, AND GOAL AND BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

The College recognized the need for more effective planning in its institutional culture and activities. With the appointment of a new College President in November 1996, a change soon was made to a strategic priorities model that would serve the institution more effectively than the previous model of five-year strategic plans. The change serves to inform the development of annual goals and objectives based on strategic priorities that guide the allocation of new fiscal and human resources.

Each fall, the College initiates the strategic priority and budget development process. The process was redefined in fall 2000. Each unit [program and discipline] formulated a preliminary plan that was shared with the area [division] office and the Core Committee. A review of these preliminary plans helped the Core Committee to discern the emerging priorities of the College while retaining the larger institutional view. The approach for FY 2002 was to use student success/student learning as the umbrella for the strategic priorities. From that approach, the four emerging priorities were

- 1] technology
- 2] teaching and learning environment
- 3] community connections
- 4] institutional effectiveness

The intent of the annual planning process is to engage all employees directly. This is, of course, an ambitious goal—one that requires an appreciation of the complicated group dynamics involved in establishing institutional priorities. The College continues to move toward this goal. The individual unit plans, which are presented in the annual *College Plan*, can be implemented insofar as feasible by each respective program and discipline. Further detail is presented in Chapter 14.

EXTENDING THE MISSION OF THE COLLEGE TO THE COMMUNITY

The College mission and purpose are extended to the community through operations and engagement with its constituencies in St. Charles County and the larger service area that includes neighboring Pike, Lincoln, Montgomery, and Callaway counties. Advisory committees regularly review curriculum, course content, and future development in career-technical programs. Numerous articulation agreements with transfer institutions are in place and active. Courses approved for transfer credit are honored through the statewide transfer agreement with other Missouri public colleges and universities. Many Missouri independent colleges and universities honor the transfer agreement as well. A number of high school students enroll in college courses as dual-enrollment students, and articulated credit is available to high school students in many career-technical programs. Graduate and employer surveys demonstrate consistent satisfaction with college programs and services. More information is presented in Chapter 10.

STRENGTHS

- The College’s mission, vision, and values statements have been revised in response to changing needs within the district and to the growth and maturation of the institution.
- The process for developing institutional strategic priorities coupled with the allocation of new fiscal and human resources has begun to engage faculty and staff in strategic planning.
- Institutional strategic priorities now are more specific, measurable, and clearly defined. Their implementation is evaluated at the end of each academic year to determine their status.
- The College maintains positive relationships and connections with its constituencies through advisory committees, articulation and transfer agreements, dual-enrollment and articulated credit, and graduate and employer surveys. (See Chapter 15, “Institutional Integrity.”)

CHALLENGES

- Although an allusion to “general education” is made, no direct usage of those words is present in the current mission statement.
- Full engagement in the planning process by all employee groups continues to present a challenge.
- The link ages between the College’s Mission, Vision, and Values and the daily operations of the institution remain unclear to many employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- The College should publish and make available to the entire College community an annual report about how the mission, vision, and values are addressed and reflected in the daily operations of the College.
- The relevance of the College’s mission, vision, and values statements should be reviewed regularly in light of rapidly changing community needs and the relationship of those needs to student learning.
- The cross-divisional aspect of the planning process was revised in 2000-01 for more effective engagement with programs, offices, and departments throughout the institution. This approach places the Core Committee in a critical position to keep employees informed and to monitor the annual College planning activities. (See Chapter 14, “Operational and Strategic Planning.”)
- The College is committed to engaging all faculty and staff in gaining greater expertise and more confidence in the annual planning process and must continue to explore ways of increasing this engagement.