

TUSCULUM COLLEGE

A COLLEGE WITH A PROUD HISTORY,
A RICH TRADITION, AND A PROMISING FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2010-2015

SUMMARY

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NOTE: This summary version of the Strategic Plan omits much of the details in relation to the planning process and data used to determine final goals and prioritized objectives. For additional information, please refer to the detailed report.

Tusculum College Mission, Vision and Purposes

Founded in 1794, Tusculum College is the oldest college in Tennessee, the twenty-eighth oldest college in the nation, and the oldest coeducational institution affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA). Among the College's many distinctions are its inclusion in the Templeton Foundation's *Guide to Character Building Colleges*; its selection by the Carnegie Foundation as a model institution for education that encourages effective citizenship; and its uniqueness as one of four institutions of higher education in the country to operate on a focused calendar.

Ours is a 216-year-old tradition of education grounded in the belief that we best realize the potential of each individual when faculty members and students work closely together with the ultimate aim of enriching the lives of our students and preparing them to contribute positively to their communities.

Every academic program and administrative decision is guided by our institutional mission, vision and purpose.

Mission Statement: *Tusculum College provides a liberal arts education in a Judeo-Christian and civic arts environment.*

Vision: *Tusculum College will be known throughout the mid-South for its adherence to Judeo-Christian values, its allegiance to the liberal arts, and its avenues for career preparation and civic engagement, all delivered through innovative course structures and personal attention from outstanding faculty.*

Purposes Statement: *Mindful of our Presbyterian heritage and commitment to the civic republican tradition, we seek to educate men and women to act morally, think reflectively, write and speak articulately, and serve honorably. We strive to perpetuate the free societies of the world by teaching the tenets of the civic arts, including the role of not-for-profit service, the history and foundations of democratic governance, and the fundamentals of a virtuous free enterprise system.*

Tusculum College Core Values

Tusculum College is a private, independent institution with a unique approach to educating and engaging students with an emphasis on civic traditions. In pursuit of continued growth and sustained relevance, we remain firmly grounded by the following set of core values.

1. **Personal Integrity**, encompassing honesty, trustworthiness, and high moral conduct. All members of the Tusculum College community are expected to display and value personal and community virtue at all times.
2. **Liberal Arts**, a curriculum suited for a timeless education and preparation for the unknown future. Through exposure to the sciences, the arts and humanities, and the social sciences, students are encouraged to appreciate the history of human endeavor and to thirst for life-long learning.
3. **Civic Responsibility**, a commitment to and experience in serving our communities. The virtue of generosity is encouraged in all Tusculum College citizens, a generosity displayed through community service, shared financial means, and benevolence with personal talents to help make this a better world.
4. **Career Readiness**, grounded in the awareness of career options and the skills to succeed. With the understanding that personal success complements the virtue of civic benevolence, Tusculum College students are encouraged to explore professions and callings that serve both personal goals and community interests without sacrifice of either.
5. **Strong Sense of College Community**, demonstrated by close student-faculty relationships, vibrant student interactions, multiple cultural enrichment activities, and a safe living environment. A hallmark of the Tusculum College experience, in residential life and in graduate and professional studies, will be the personal attention and care devoted to others by every constituency. Tusculum College students, faculty, and staff will take care of one another.

6. **Respect for Our Domestic Heritage and Global Interests/Responsibilities.** Tusculum College students and faculty will explore the ideas, cultures, and opportunities in other countries while sustaining a deep appreciation of our own local, regional, and national history and mores.
7. **Appreciation for Critical Thinking and Reflective Judgment.** Tusculum College students will become adept at analyzing the critical elements of an argument, critiquing the important issues of a proposal, and developing the ability to defend either side of a dilemma. By honing these critical thinking skills, students will be expected to make responsible personal and professional judgments based on sound logic and moral principles.
8. **Commitment to Continual Improvement,** individually and collectively. All members of the Tusculum College community--from faculty to staff to students--will strive for continual improvement in personal work and in collective achievements. Such devotion to improvement will manifest itself in a clear set of goals, precise strategies for achieving them, openness to suggestions, collective review of methods and means, and thorough assessment of outcomes, with assessment results guiding new plans and strategies.

Overview of the Planning Process

In spring 2009, Tusculum College began implementation of a new five-year strategic plan. The initiation of the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan coincided with the hiring of a new President, Dr. Nancy B. Moody. The ambitious plan contained 46 goals and initiatives, which successfully directed institutional activity during the 2009-10 academic year.

A five-phase Strategic Plan review and revision process, summarized below, was initiated in June 2010.

- **Phase 1: Initial Review and Revision by President and Cabinet**
President Moody and her Cabinet, with the assistance of the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, began a critical review of the strategic plan, progress toward goals, and potential plan revisions in June 2010. While honoring the intent of the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan, the President's Cabinet attempted to focus on core areas of a results-based accountability system reflective of Tusculum College's mission and current internal and external environments. Through a great deal of dialogue and retro- and introspection, the result was four preliminary strategic goals:
 - To Enhance Academic Quality
 - To Prepare Students for Success
 - To Sustain Optimal Institutional Resources
 - To Monitor and Manage Risk and Compliance
- **Phase 2: Strategic Planning Retreat, July 19-20, 2010**
A total of 51 faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees members participated in a two-day Strategic Planning Retreat. The Retreat agenda included a review of progress toward the 2009-14 strategic goals during the previous academic year, an introduction of the revised strategic goals, a presentation and discussion of an environmental scan of higher education and Tusculum College strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (S.W.O.T.), and development of specific, measurable, and prioritized strategic objectives by breakout groups focused on each of the new strategic goals.

- **Phase 3: Review and Refinement of Proposed Objectives by President and Cabinet, July 21-30, 2010**

After the Strategic Planning Retreat, the President, the Cabinet, and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs assessed the proposed strategic objectives to determine which, if any, were implausible given known constraints and if any were more operational or tactical in character and, therefore, better suited for inclusion in departmental annual operations planning. Remaining objectives were edited, in some cases, to ensure specificity and measurability.

- **Phase 4: Stakeholder Importance-Achievability Survey, August 2-September 8, 2010**

To further aid in prioritization and the need to effectively allocate resources across goal areas, the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs created a web-based survey designed to collect feedback from Tusculum College faculty, staff, administration, Board of Trustees members, and alumni. The survey design is a modified version of “Importance-Performance” analyses, which measures items across two-dimensions and results in a descriptive means of characterizing items relative to each other. During Phase 4, a total of 217 stakeholders completed the Importance-Achievability survey.

- **Phase 5: Review and Affirmation of Strategic Priorities by President and Cabinet, September 9 -10, 2010**

The President and her Cabinet concluded the Strategic Planning process with thoughtful review of the data and other input received throughout the process, and affirmed those objectives determined to be of greatest strategic importance coupled with reasonable plausibility in relation to the College’s resources. The result was three overarching strategic goals and 15 prioritized associated objectives. Other objectives, though worthwhile, were determined to be of either secondary importance and/or better suited to implementation at the departmental or unit level through Annual Operating Plans (AOPs).

Tusculum College Strategic Goals and Objectives

2010 - 2015

Goal 1: To Enhance Academic Quality

Tusculum College is obligated to achieving nothing short of excellence in the education of her students. Furthermore, ours is a highly tuition-dependent institution which must fully satisfy the needs and expectations of our market. As such, it is in the strategic interests of Tusculum College to ensure continued effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of our academic programming. In this continuous pursuit of academic quality, Tusculum College has established the following objectives related to our goal of enhancing academic quality.

Prioritized Objectives—In the strategic planning process, the following objectives emerged as the most significant initiatives to be undertaken in support of Goal 1.

- 1.1 **By June 30, 2011, the Office for Institutional Effectiveness, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Enrollment Management, and selected others, will develop a new GPS mission statement and strategic plan for Board of Trustees approval in October, 2011.**
- 1.2 **By June 30, 2011, the Office of the Provost will establish or update articulation agreements with a minimum of three local community colleges.**
- 1.3 **By June 30, 2011, the Office of the Provost will establish a minimum of two affiliation agreements with professional schools.**
- 1.4 **By June 30, 2011, the Office for Institutional Effectiveness will complete a minimum of four prioritized preliminary new academic program feasibility analyses resulting in a minimum of two comprehensive feasibility analyses, in collaboration with the President, Provost, and School Directors.**
- 1.5 **By June 30, 2014, the General Education Director and Provost will conduct a needs assessment addressing demand for a foreign language presence in the curriculum.**

Goal 2: To Prepare Students for Success

Tusculum College is committed to supporting student growth in and outside the classroom. As reflected in our purposes statement, our intention is to promote intellectual and social growth along with full preparation for professional life. Our commitment is to providing all necessary resources for authentic learning, persistence to graduation, and readiness of our graduates to participate in their professional and civic spheres. To achieve the goal of preparing students for success, Tusculum College has established the following objectives.

Prioritized Objectives—In the strategic planning process, the following objectives emerged as the most significant initiatives to be undertaken in support of Goal 2.

- 2.1 **Enrollment Management and others will annually improve First-Time/Full-Time Freshman retention by 1% or more. (Tracking, analyses and reporting by the Office for Institutional Effectiveness).**
- 2.2 **Prior to June 30, 2012, the Office for Institutional Effectiveness and others as identified will develop and implement a data-driven system for identifying at-risk Residential College and GPS students and for tracking and monitoring retention and graduation rates.**
- 2.3 **GPS Student Services and other supporting programs will annually increase the incoming student retention rate by a minimum of 2%.**

Goal 3: To Sustain Optimal Institutional Resources

The goal of sustaining optimal resources recognizes the inherent opportunity costs of maximizing any particular category of resources, such as financial, human, physical, or technological. In this strategic planning process, we differentiated among financial, physical, human and technological resources to ensure that each receives due attention and then prioritized across categories. In this section, prioritized objectives related to ensuring optimal resources are presented.

Prioritized Objectives—In the strategic planning process, the following objectives emerged as the most significant initiatives to be undertaken in support of Goal 3.

- 3.1 **By May 31, 2012, the Cabinet will propose a five-year plan to achieve faculty and staff salary competitiveness upon review of a peer institution-referenced salary analysis.**

- 3.2 Tusculum College will semi-annually monitor and manage the DOE composite score to ensure an annual value of 1.5 or greater.**
- 3.3 By May 1, 2011, an ad hoc task force will deliver a technology improvement plan with prioritized funding initiatives and sources.**
- 3.4 By June 30, 2011, the Office for Institutional Effectiveness will conduct a grants capacity and needs assessment, and propose a support strategy.**
- 3.5 By May 31, 2011, the Cabinet will present data to the Board of Trustees to determine optimal Residential College enrollment goals based upon current capacity (technology, residence halls, classroom, library, dining room, etc.), enrollment trends, demographic data, etc. A preliminary analysis to be presented in February, 2011.**
- 3.6 By June 30, 2012, Tusculum College will centralize and integrate the management of risk and compliance.**
- 3.7 By June 30, 2013, Enrollment Management and Institutional Advancement will propose a strategy for centralized branding.**