

The Strategic Planning Process at Cedar Crest College

As we begin our strategic planning process in September 2008, we recognize the significance of this moment for Cedar Crest College. It is critical that we craft a plan that considers the rich history and tradition of the College, builds on our many strengths and accomplishments and is responsive to the issues that are important today and will continue to be important in the changing environment of women’s education.

Broad inclusion of all constituencies will be central to the planning process, as demonstrated by the following elements:

- During the 16-month planning timeframe, there will be multiple and varied opportunities for trustees, faculty, staff, students and alumnae to become informed and to contribute ideas.
- All of these constituencies will have representatives on the President’s Cabinet for Strategic Planning.
- A website will enable the community to mark progress and products and to offer input.

The Strategic Planning Process will be divided into three major phases:

Phase 1: Draw the Blueprint	September 2008 – January 2010	Reiterate and reinforce our Mission and Vision State our Core Focus Areas and Broad Principles Develop the Key Initiatives and Action Plans to realize them Cost out the Master Action Plan Write, vet and revise the draft Strategic Plan Publish the final Strategic Plan
Phase 2: Build the Structure	February 2010 -	
Phase 3: Refine and re-engineer	February 2012 -	

Announcement

President Ambar will officially announce the beginning of the Strategic Planning process in early September in an all-college address. This event will inform trustees, faculty, students, staff and alumnae that their participation in this process is critical to the success of the College.

The President's Cabinet for Strategic Planning

The President will then convene her Cabinet for Strategic Planning. This group will be charged with guiding the planning process, examining all relevant documents and materials, considering input from all member of the campus community, and representing the interests of their constituency.

Membership is prescribed by the Faculty Handbook (Book II, Article G) and consists of faculty committee representatives, senior staff, a student, a trustee, an alumna and others as the President deems appropriate. They will meet approximately eight times over the next year.

Mission and Vision

The first step will be to clarify and refine the Mission. There has been much thought and discussion about the Mission in the past few years and we are now ready to solidify those ideas into a strong statement of the reasons that Cedar Crest College exists.

Inspired and informed by our Mission statement, we will create our Vision statement. As the Mission statement is the foundation of the College, the Vision statement is the foundation of the Strategic Plan. The Vision expresses our aspirations for the future.

Discussions and agreement among all constituencies as to our Mission and Vision will ensure that we will be approaching the planning process with unity of purpose. Thus October will be an important time for all constituencies to participate. Students will come together in a focus group in October, as will alumnae. Senior staff will hold several extended meetings in September and October. Some time will be set

aside in the October faculty meeting for a discussion of the Mission and Vision and trustees will spend part of the October Board Meeting looking at these elements.

Core Focus Areas and Broad Principles

Early in the process, we will do an internal scan of current activities to get a sense of the ways in which faculty and staff engage students outside of the classroom. All academic departments and administrative units will be asked to submit an inventory of their current programs/initiatives/events. We will compile a comprehensive list and use it to identify Focus Areas that already exist on campus.

We will then be prepared to view our current Focus Areas collectively, to see what efforts should be combined and expanded and to identify, based on our Mission and Vision, additional Focus Areas, places where we want to invest our time, energy and resources. We will articulate these Focus Areas and then use them to define a set of Broad Principles that will guide our strategic thinking in both the short and long term. The Broad Principles will be grounded in the tradition and current activities of the College, but will be forward-thinking, imagining new possibilities and enabling us to position Cedar Crest in a strong and enduring place for the future.

Key Initiatives

Our Broad Principles will describe a framework for the development of new initiatives that will be the heart of our Strategic Plan. A planning template will be constructed using these Principles as well as issues that the College is facing. Academic Departments will be invited to submit Departmental Plans containing new initiatives that are consistent with the Principles and have potential and promise for the future of the College.

Initiatives submitted will be vetted by the Cabinet and then by the community and prioritized based on a number of factors. From this process will come a list of Key Initiatives, programs that will be actualized in the next five years.

Action Plans

The Cabinet will work in subcommittees to develop Action Plans for the Key Initiatives. An Action Plan will set out the work, in phases, that needs to be done to successfully achieve the Initiative. The timeline for each Plan should be specified, and each phase should clearly state what should be accomplished and how success will be measured.

As we look ahead to the implementation of the Strategic Plan, these Action Plans will lay out the benchmarks for assessment. They are dynamic elements, simultaneously serving as a way to measure our success as well as a guide to refining and adjusting our goals.

Individual Action Plans will be compiled into a Master Action Plan, and the priority of Key Initiatives will be reexamined. All constituencies, including the Board, will weigh in again to achieve consensus on our Plan.

Master Action Plan

The Master Action Plan will then be analyzed for economic feasibility. This analysis will become part of the draft Strategic Plan, scheduled to be written during Summer 2009.

The Strategic Plan

The draft Plan will be vetted and refined over the Fall 09 semester, including preliminary Board approval in October 2009. The final Strategic Plan will be published in January 2010.

Review and Assessment

The Strategic Planning Process is not an event but rather an ongoing project. Although the Strategic Plan will be formally announced and published, it will not be a static document. We will periodically revisit the Plan, evaluate progress in each of the Key Initiatives, revise elements in areas that have changed, and assess our overall success in meeting our goals.