



College of Our Lady of the Elms
Strategic Positioning and Assessment
2007-2010
For the Academic year 2007-2008

Mission Statement

- The College of Our Lady of the Elms, founded in 1928 by the Sisters of St. Joseph, is a Catholic, liberal arts, co-educational college. The college affirms its original, comprehensive goal of combining education for life with education for a career. Founded to educate women and aware of the importance of this tradition, the college now opens all its programs and services to both men and women.
- The mission of the Elms proclaims the intellectual tradition of the Catholic Church, and in a spirit of ecumenism, it welcomes students, faculty and staff of other traditions. The Judaeo-Christian heritage enunciated in theological studies and celebrated in liturgical worship inspires, develops, and fosters an understanding of scholarship through the liberal arts. Also from the common vision of the centrality of Christ and His Gospel teaching come value systems which are characterized by a commitment to the service of others, a service that seeks just solutions to the many problems of today's world.
- Education for life is accomplished through efforts to develop the capacity for critical thinking, the ability to communicate effectively, an appreciation of the arts and humanities, and an understanding of the technological basis of modern society. It encompasses a recognition of the need to deal with the rapid pace of change and such global concerns as those related to technology, environment, population, justice, and peace. As an educational community committed to academic freedom, administration, faculty, and students of the Elms interact in the common exploration of truth and the pursuit of academic excellence.
- Reaffirming its initial goal of integrating liberal learning with career preparation, the Elms aims to provide education for a career in courses of study designed to meet objective criteria of quality and excellence. It assists students in the choice of, and preparation for, careers; encourages performance to meet the highest standards, with emphasis on the potential for original contributions; provides students with opportunities for continuing education and professional enrichment.
- The college exists for the pursuit of truth; the accurate transmission of knowledge; the general well being of society; and the personal, spiritual, and intellectual development of its students. The College of Our Lady of the Elms aims to assist in the development of students rooted in faith, educated in mind, compassionate in heart, responsive to civic and social obligations, capable of adjusting to change without compromising principle, and able to respond creatively to the demands of their chosen careers.

Adopted October 1977. Revised March 1998.

Elms Vision 2012

- a program in the forefront of Catholic liberal arts and sciences education.
- a liberal arts and sciences program that is relevant and bridges the classroom, the campus, the community and the world.
- a curriculum that takes advantage of the most advanced technology – including but not limited to teaching and research laboratories, language laboratories, video conferencing, music studios and art gallery/studio spaces.
- a new health, science and technology center that is a state of the art teaching and learning facility.
- a powerful sense of welcome in our residence halls – facilities that offer innovative spaces for study, conversation and co-curricular programming.
- NCAA tournament quality athletic fields for use by our athletes, our full student body and our community.
- a program that attracts and supports students from across the United States as well as from other nations, welcoming them to a diverse multi-cultural campus environment.
- a strong, innovative continuing education and lifelong learning program that extends across generations from early childhood to retirement.
- partnerships that extend our reach into the community – from continuing education programs at satellite centers, to new programmatic collaboration with the Diocese of Springfield, to the possibility of an Elms presence in downtown Chicopee and/or Springfield.
- a partnership with Holy Name of Jesus School that provides opportunities for internships, volunteerism and practicum experiences for our students.
- a comprehensive social justice focus that celebrates and lives the charism of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.
- academic programming and campus ministry initiatives that continue to reflect our Catholic identity and our commitment to inter-faith understanding. This focus should include a vibrant center for Theology and Pastoral Studies.

Strategic Positioning and Assessment Process

1. Develop the procedures to institutionalize and systematize the Strategic Positioning and Assessment process at Elms College.
 - a. The Three-year plan will be evaluated annually during the spring budget process.
 - b. The current planning year will be closed out as a new year is added. For example, the 2007-2010 planning cycle will become the 2008-2011 planning cycle.
 - c. Priorities, benchmark criteria, budget considerations and assessment models will be reviewed each year during the evaluation process.
 - d. The Steering committee, composed of sub-committee chairs, will be responsible for completion of the yearly evaluation process. Representatives from all campus constituents will be involved in the yearly evaluation.
 - e. The updated plan will be reported to the President and Board of Trustees at the May meeting.
2. Evaluate the process of determining cohort groups of like institutions based on a variety of criteria, such as size, classification and annual budget.
 - a. Develop several cohort groups using varying criteria, such as IPEDS grouping information, U.S. News and World Report, Carnegie classification, in particular with New England colleges, Catholic liberal arts colleges, AAUP grouping information, etc.
 - b. Determine criteria that will be benchmarked for each cohort group.
3. Develop strategic plan for ideal growth and appropriate service of students.

Internal Relations and Communications

1. Systematically review and evaluate internal communication procedures within and between departments and with students.
2. Review web and network-based methods of internal communication.

Mission and Catholic Identity

1. Enhance the Deanery Scholarship program by incorporating an interdisciplinary seminar and service components, encouraging the Deanery Scholars to a deeper exploration and understanding of their faith.
2. Encourage interdisciplinary electives that incorporate Catholic social teaching and the wider Catholic intellectual tradition into classroom readings and discussions.
3. Continue to explore models of Catholic Studies Programs that exist throughout the country.
4. Ensure the College's commitment to service, in the tradition of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, as a cornerstone of co-curricular life.
5. Develop a process to ensure periodic evaluation of the mission statement.
Examine how the Elms college mission statement and Catholic identity guides us as we move toward having a program in the forefront of Catholic liberal arts and sciences education.

Financial Resources

1. Increase the financial stability of the college.
 - a. Evaluate discount rates on a yearly basis benchmarked against a cohort group of like colleges.
 - b. Implement the three-year rolling budget process
 - c. Evaluate benchmarking tools to be used for yearly comparison.
2. Increase philanthropy with the goal of strengthening our endowment, increasing our annual fund giving, and raising funds for college projects.
3. Reallocate present financial resources to meet the identified needs of the college.
 - a. Quantify the identified needs of students, faculty and staff.
 - b. Implement a human resources information management system.
 - c. Review and update the performance evaluation system for non-academic staff.
4. Systematically review and revise investment management strategies to maintain reasonable level of endowment earnings.
5. Explore and evaluate new sources of funding additional debt.
6. Systematically review and revise policies and procedures to ensure prudent financial management.
 - a. Update the colleges policies and procedures handbook and publish online.

The Academic Program

1. Design a process to review the core curriculum periodically and systematically, college-wide and within departments, using adequate and reliable reporting mechanisms and committee structures.
2. Each year, explore one of the specific themes of Catholic social teaching in depth, working collaboratively with community partners on programming open to the public. Ensure that discourse on social justice be a unifying theme in educational programming.
3. Develop courses that feature connections within the liberal arts as well as between the liberal arts and professional studies.
4. Perform a comprehensive evaluation of academic advising and non-academic mentoring.
5. Plan academic and co-curricular programs that incorporate experiential and service learning in local and global communities.
6. Develop a process to prioritize academic programs for allocation of college resources.
7. Reevaluate learning outcomes and outcomes assessment methods for all academic programs. Program review includes an external perspective.
8. Provide library services that are user-centered, seamless and available at all times.
9. The library should collaborate with the academic divisions to prepare information competent graduates.
10. Provide additional online information resources and services to the college community.
11. Evaluate the processes of recruitment, admission, enrollment and registration for part-time and graduate students from admission through commencement.
12. Evaluate the development, implementation and evaluation of non-credit continuing education and professional development opportunities.
13. Create and promote a campus-wide climate of multicultural inclusion.
14. Systematize data collection and analysis and strengthen the ties with outcomes assessment.
15. Evaluate the faculty tenure and promotion, and faculty development processes, so as to incorporate valid assessment mechanisms.

Students

1. Increase collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.
2. Establish a campus-wide planning board to standardize the process of campus event planning i.e. to include master calendar.
3. Develop formal student leadership training program.
4. Establish forum for students to voice concerns and new ideas.
For example, radio show, student newspaper, regularly scheduled "town" meetings with online options for feedback, an online suggestion box has been established at Reslife@elms.edu.
5. Improve and enhance student space on campus.

External Relations/Community Partners

1. Explore opportunities to develop satellite programming in new geographic markets that are in need of our programming or void of competition.
2. Create opportunities based on the national trend of students electing to attend community colleges.
3. Develop a strategic plan for business, professional, community, and civic memberships that extends our service and outreach to the community.
4. Explore partnerships and programming opportunities that target the Latino community.
5. Create an Office of Special Programming.
6. Continue to develop marketing plans and tools that help position Elms College as a leader in Catholic liberal arts education.
7. Strengthen communication with alumni and increase alumni participation in the life of the college.

Physical and Technological Resources

1. Design and build a multi-functional facility on campus that will meet current and future needs of academic programming in health, science and technology.
2. Perform a comprehensive review of conditions and complete renovations of the O'Leary Residence Hall.
3. Ensure that all campus facilities are accessible and adequate for the entire campus population. Considerations to include expanding enrollment, new programs, emerging instructional innovations and increased external events.
4. Develop a new campus master plan to determine strategies for space needs (current and projected) accessibility, circulation and student support.
5. Establish an asset protection plan to insure that capital investment strategies and deferred maintenance schedules are reviewed and priorities established on an annual basis.
6. Review and develop policies and protocols to insure that all campus safety procedures are at a point to provide the highest levels of protection for the entire college community.
7. Continually evaluate and update classroom and lab technology.
8. Manage and distribute information more effectively.
9. Provide technology training and support to staff, faculty and students.
10. Provide students, staff and faculty with centralized web-based storage space.