



TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES AND TRANSFORMING LIVES

A Strategic Vision for Goucher

Enthusiastically approved by the Goucher Board of Trustees at its October 2011 meeting, "Transcending Boundaries and Transforming Lives" represents a transparent and collaborative effort of the Goucher community to articulate our core purpose and values, and to identify 10 strategic challenges and opportunities for the future.



ENRICHING AND STRENGTHENING THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The life of the mind and the world of ideas are at the heart of a liberal arts education. A breadth of disciplinary knowledge provides a crucial intellectual foundation and allows for meaningful interactions across academic boundaries. Critical thinking and respect for diverse perspectives are essential educational principles. The faculty of Goucher College has affirmed these goals with its new Liberal Education Requirements, and the college will ensure that all of its courses succeed as transformative experiences.

Goucher will renew an emphasis on the highest-quality education within each program and major field of study offered at the college. It will provide opportunities to collaborate across disciplines and to apply interdisciplinary knowledge to a broad range of issues. The college will assess the quality of programs and make adjustments as needed, and it will continue to maintain a class size appropriate to ensure the level of engagement needed for transformative education. Goucher will develop additional graduate and professional programs of distinction. The college will intensify its workshops, lectures, online resources, and technologies to promote best practices in teaching methodology and will develop a wide array of print and digital collections, tools, and services to support the research needs of its students and faculty.

Goucher will also provide the facilities and infrastructure necessary to support its educational mission. A first step will be to renovate the Julia Rogers building and turn it into a true 21st-century academic center: a place where natural science, humanities, and social science disciplines can collaborate.



*BUILDING
INTERNATIONAL
KNOWLEDGE
AND
CITIZENSHIP*

Since approving its last strategic plan in 2002, Goucher College has developed a global signature, a commitment to prepare students for life in the greater world, where their multiple endeavors and careers will inevitably have an international character. In a groundbreaking manifestation of that effort, the college established a requirement in 2006 that every undergraduate study abroad at least once before graduation, a distinction that has attracted worldwide attention and helped Goucher stand apart from other institutions. With this new plan, Goucher commits itself to taking its international vision to the next level.

To enhance the global character of Goucher's community, the college will consistently increase the percentage of international students enrolled; shape the curriculum to reflect the international dimension of all disciplines; examine the feasibility of developing more of its own semester-abroad programs, in which students from other institutions would be welcome; explore the interrelationship of environmental sustainability and global citizenship; and build the college's understanding of and refine its unique place in the nexus between the international and the local.

Over time, this profound and intensified global consciousness will become an important consideration in every major decision the college makes, and one of the metrics against which its success is measured.



FOSTERING STUDENT SUCCESS

The success of Goucher's graduates is related not only to the quality of their coursework, but also to the guidance they receive from caring and engaged faculty and staff who lead all students toward independence. Face-to-face interaction and the modeling of professional standards, in both classroom and co-curricular settings, distinguish Goucher's personal approach. Students who are successfully mentored feel more confident, pursue graduate and professional school in higher numbers, and become mentors to others. To sustain and strengthen this important attribute, the college will assess the number and quality of these experiences available on- and off-campus to students at each level of their college career. Goucher will enhance the number of opportunities for students (especially those in their first and second years) to receive guidance from faculty, staff, alumnae/i, and peers. The college will expand the availability of summer mentorship through student-faculty research, internship experiences, and intensive courses abroad.

Goucher will also pay particular attention to the lives of students as part of its vibrant campus community, encouraging them to express themselves through athletics, performance, service, and other fulfilling experiences. The college aspires to have all constituents of the Goucher community work cooperatively to prepare students for rich and varied lives, whatever their career choices may be.



CULTIVATING AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

To enhance its intercultural character, Goucher will be diverse in every respect and at all levels, effectively mirroring the world into which its students will graduate. To understand the complexity of the issues faced by the region, the country, and the world, Goucher College must be complex. It must deploy original thinking grounded in academic rigor and practical approaches to constantly evolving problems. The entire community – students, faculty, and staff – must reflect the richness of the American mosaic and the larger world. The college will continue to welcome and accommodate a vast range of points of view, lifestyles, creeds, and perspectives within the community and among outside visitors; it will give every student an opportunity to broaden his or her thinking by introducing new ideas and fostering a lively exchange.

ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Having met or exceeded several significant goals in the area of environmental sustainability in recent years – including the construction of the Athenaeum , which is LEED-certified at the Gold level – Goucher will now vigorously approach other environmental ambitions, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing a progressive, forward-looking climate action plan. It will ensure that the new Academic Center at Julia Rogers, along with any other renovations on campus, be LEED-certified at least at the Silver level. It will continue to encourage and welcome co-curricular student initiatives in the environmental domain, even as it grows and enhances its new, interdisciplinary Environmental Studies Program as a major attraction of the college.



*ENCOURAGING
CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT*

In Baltimore City and County, in Maryland, in Washington, DC, and at the national and international levels, Goucher will reaffirm and intensify its commitment to civic engagement. Grounded in the conviction that educational institutions must take the lead in restoring civility and comity to the public dialogue, the college will build on its own community principles and model thoughtful conversation and responsible action on the vital issues of the day. Through intensified community-based learning efforts and involvement in local institutions, the college will demonstrate its commitment to social justice. It will encourage students to take leadership roles in the public sphere, in private associations, and in the professions, with a view toward enhancing the performance and accountability of all.

*BUILDING
A COMMUNITY
COMMITTED TO
“GOUCHER
FOR LIFE”*

The value of building and sustaining lifelong relationships with Goucher College is immeasurable. As an institution of higher education spanning three centuries and multiple generations, and as a community comprising more than 16,000 living alumnae/i, students, parents, faculty, staff, trustees, and friends, Goucher must engage with all of its constituents for the long term: as dedicated participants in the life of the campus, as supporters of the academic program, as career resources, and as philanthropists committed to the continued success of the college.



LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

Goucher will explore and exploit existing and emerging technologies to enhance its academic programs and the life of its community, while maintaining its essential character as a residential liberal arts college. The college will work with other, similarly situated colleges to share teaching and learning resources through technology. Goucher will leverage technology to enhance the connections among constituent groups within its community—students, faculty, staff, and alumnae/i—and among other communities in the United States and around the world.

INCREASING ENROLLMENT AND IMPROVING RETENTION

Goucher will increase the size of its undergraduate student body to 1,600 students, and include among them more students who will thrive in this college's unique environment and graduate in four years. As it markets the value of a Goucher education and experience, the college will draw upon the successes and accomplishments of recent alumnae and alumni. The college will leverage financial resources in its admissions and financial aid operations. At the same time, it will continue to gather data and carefully evaluate the information available on factors affecting the retention of students, making adjustments where necessary as it implements an evidence-based program. Goucher will also intensify its recruitment of transfer students, whom the college seems to serve especially well.



*ADDRESSING
THE FINANCIAL
CHALLENGES
OF A
LIBERAL ARTS
EDUCATION*

With the traditional financial model of liberal arts education increasingly placed under stress and called into question, and in view of challenging demographic trends and the need to maintain and upgrade facilities, the management of institutions such as Goucher College will require imagination and ingenuity. As families approach limits on the amount of tuition and fees they are able and willing to pay, the college will come under pressure to make more efficient and productive use of its human resources and physical facilities, to leverage technology, and to find new sources of revenue. The college will steadfastly protect and build its endowment to ensure intergenerational equity while providing annual income to the operating budget. Sound financial management will be paramount. Through prudent increases in the size of the student body, close monitoring of the student/faculty ratio, improvements in selectivity and yield, and cautious reexamination of financial aid policies and practices, Goucher will work to establish a new paradigm that focuses on attainment of the net tuition revenue necessary to balance each year's budget. An ongoing evaluation of factors affecting the college's retention and graduation rates will also play a major role in assuring financial stability. To guarantee the college's long-term well-being, all of the initiatives contemplated in this plan will be weighed against one another and in the context of the college's overall budget.




STRATEGIC VISION

In the next five years, Goucher College will enrich and strengthen its distinctive academic program. It will continue to transcend the boundaries of international knowledge and citizenship, intercultural perspectives, environmental sustainability, and civic engagement, all while building a community that is committed to “Goucher for Life.” In its new strategic plan, the college will also take steps to leverage technology and online resources to enhance teaching, learning, and the operations of the college.

Liberal arts education in America faces new challenges and constant re-evaluation, especially in light of the slow recovery from the most recent economic recession. But surveys and studies indicate that employers and leaders at every level in the private and public sectors continue to value a richly varied education that teaches young people to think critically and adapt to challenges, while launching them on a path of lifelong learning. A consensus is building that in light of political, social, and economic challenges worldwide, this uniquely American style of education is more important and significant than ever—that it is, indeed, the ultimate career education. Goucher reaffirms its commitment—for the next ten years and beyond—to the principles, practices, and ideals of liberal education, which have characterized the institution during its 125-year history. True to its motto, Goucher will always strive to “prove all things” and “hold fast to that which is good.” It will uphold the mission of preparing students within a broad, humane perspective for a life of inquiry, creativity, and critical and analytical thinking. This foundation transforms how students perceive and understand the world and prepares them for a rapidly changing and unpredictable future.

Goucher will continue to distinguish itself by reaching beyond a traditional curriculum, engaging students outside the campus community and preparing them for the experience of global citizenship. Goucher’s transformative education will be found in the classroom, as faculty experts guide students through coursework. It will be found throughout the campus community, as faculty and highly trained staff mentor students engaged in projects and performances, research and independent studies, teamwork and leadership. And it will be found beyond the boundaries of Goucher’s campus through internship, volunteer, and study-abroad experiences, as well as networking opportunities with the college’s alumnae/i.

In the years ahead, Goucher will intensify its efforts to recruit a slightly larger and more diverse student body to come together in a magnificent natural setting with faculty and staff as a mutually supportive and introspective community, concerned equally with the well-being of those we know and those we have not met. The life of the college will reflect intellectual curiosity, integrity, and engagement in a rapidly changing world.



The new strategic plan will be guided by Goucher’s distinguished history, the achievements and dedication of its alumnae/i, and the implementation of core values that define its aspiration for leadership in the world of higher education. It will adhere to sound financial management of its precious resources and facilities, renovating historic buildings and creating new ones as appropriate. It will honor its traditions of social justice, free expression of ideas, and the understanding that the most successful communities invariably comprise people with myriad differences. It will demonstrate and showcase excellence in every intellectual domain, as well as in a broad range of co-curricular programs, building a Gouche.r experience that will inspire student success, pride, loyalty, and persistence. It will conduct all of its endeavors in a spirit of innovation and compassion, pausing frequently to measure its effectiveness and calculate how to improve its performance. The college will not shy away from idealism and, through its unique community principles, will aspire to be better than the imperfect environment in which it finds itself. Goucher will never settle for mediocrity or conventional thinking. Every constituency of the college—students, faculty, staff, alumnae/i, parents, and trustees—will contribute to the success of this new plan.

Goucher College has always been successful at teaching its students to think for themselves and to act for the good of the people and communities around them. Now the college will broaden the sphere of influence in which they do so. Goucher will expand its community to transcend its boundaries, to transform lives, and to carve out a unique space in the higher education landscape that reflects the distinction Goucher has enjoyed in the past and strives to enhance today. Goucher will attract outstanding students and transform them into true citizens of the world who embody and communicate the values and ideals of this institution far beyond its campus. Goucher will be a leader, rather than a follower, in these matters, searching for new ways to leverage its strengths to enhance its future.