

Strategic Priorities

Wheaton College remains rooted in its historic mission. Our perennial and fundamental commitments continue—love for Christ, faith in the gospel, confidence in God’s Word, adherence to our evangelical Statement of Faith, promise to keep our Community Covenant, calling to integrate learning with faith, and desire to develop students who live for Christ and His Kingdom.

Yet we also recognize that seizing the opportunities presented by each new season in life and ministry calls for strategic thinking. At the present moment in our history and mission, we recommend equally the following strategic priorities. The time has come to:

Globalize a Wheaton Education (page 2)

Through expanding scholarships, revising the curriculum, and doubling the number of students who receive academic credit through off-campus cross-cultural experiences.

Deepen Ethnic Diversity (page 3)

Through implementing a comprehensive plan to communicate the biblical imperative for ethnic diversity and foster a truly welcoming environment for people of color.

Promote Liberal Arts Excellence (page 5)

Through investing resources to renew our liberal arts identity and clarifying our definition of educational excellence.

Enhance Music and the Performing Arts (page 6)

Through initiating a formal process to plan and construct a new Conservatory building.

Complementary Priorities (page 7)

- Refresh Wheaton’s Mission Statement
- Nurture Vibrant Christian Community
- Maintain Affordability
- Strengthen Graduate Education

Globalize a Wheaton Education

The Trustees will accelerate Wheaton's development as a global college through encouraging a revision of the curriculum, expanding scholarships, and doubling the number of students who receive academic credit through off-campus cross-cultural experiences.

We belong to a global church and want better to reflect the Kingdom of God. We want our students to experience and recognize God's presence and work in the world in new ways through academic engagement in globally-connected communities—to change perspective and not simply location, to gain understanding and not simply to collect experiences. We want to hear and understand the voices of Christians in the church worldwide, as well as speak with our own distinctive voices. We want to equip our students to work faithfully and fruitfully in the world.

Key steps toward globalizing a Wheaton education include:

- Developing a theological statement that values globalization and initiates a shift in how our community understands itself and engages others.
- Encouraging additional coursework on world religions and an intercultural competency requirement (with an assessment component) in the General Education revision.
- Enhancing courses and expanding offerings to reflect more fully global perspectives.
- Empowering a cross-divisional advisory committee to assist the Dean of Global and Experiential Learning in developing financial models, evaluating strategic partnerships, and directing academic credit assessments in order to facilitate implementation of the Global and Experiential Learning initiative.
- Expanding foreign language offerings, adding Arabic and other options.

In order to double the number of students who participate in off-campus cross-cultural academic experiences by 2020:

- Each major should establish or identify an off-campus cross-cultural option in which students could participate and for which coursework would be accepted.
- Advancement will pursue funding to allow greater access to cross-cultural programs, including programmatic development funds and endowed scholarships for international students at Wheaton and domestic students who study in cross-cultural programs.
- Admissions will increase undergraduate enrollment (proportionate to off-campus full semester enrollment) in order to maintain tuition revenue.

Deepen Ethnic Diversity

The Trustees will direct the Administration to implement a comprehensive plan to communicate the biblical imperative for ethnic diversity and foster a truly welcoming environment for people of color.

Living in a diverse learning community that values cultural differences enriches the Wheaton experience for everyone and honors God's intention for the body of Christ. Yet despite the breadth of the body of Christ, many members of the Wheaton community continue to express a lack of understanding concerning issues of ethnicity and culture, as well as the theology behind current initiatives to promote diversity among students, faculty, staff, and administration on campus. A sincere commitment to diversity should extend to all levels of leadership. Our Savior designed our diversity, and Wheaton College must seek to honor his lordship by diligently pursuing reconciliation and celebrating our unity in Christ.

Key steps toward deepening ethnic diversity include:

- Revising the Community Covenant to make more explicit reference to the biblical imperative for ethnic diversity.
- Continuing to broaden the range of speakers and worship traditions represented in Chapel services.
- Developing training programs for student leaders.
- Incorporating topics into the curriculum and classroom environment that engage students with a biblical understanding of culture and diversity in the church and society.
- Providing sufficient human and financial resources for Admissions to grow relationships with churches within Spanish-speaking and other communities of color to make Wheaton a school of choice for students of color.
- Increasing our ability to offer full and partial diversity-focused scholarships through additional efforts by Advancement.

Increasing the presence of African-American, Latino, and other underrepresented communities of color on campus will require the College to establish relationships in feeder areas and increase financial incentives, including full tuition room and board scholarships such as the Don and Ann Church and Alvaro L. Nieves Scholarships. While Wheaton already seeks to actively recruit highly qualified students of color, we compete with other schools that are proactive in recruiting the same students by offering full scholarships.

In addition to increasing the number of ethnic minority students on campus, increasing the presence of people of color in faculty and administrative roles will demonstrate Wheaton's commitment to diversity at every level and strengthen the College's ability to provide a diversity of mentors for all students.

Yet deepening ethnic diversity is not simply a matter of increasing the number of people of color in the Wheaton College community. It also involves improving the quality of their experience. It is crucial to create safe and positive experiences for students, faculty, staff, and visitors of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. This necessitates intentionality and expertise on campus and through outside review.

In addition to enacting existing proposals like “A Faculty Resolution Regarding Diversity Issues,” we recommend actions to foster a campus community that is increasingly informed about and supportive of Christ-centered diversity, including:

- Expanding and relocating the Office of Multicultural Development in order to enhance its ability to serve the entire student body.
- Providing official avenues for feedback from students and alumni of color through the Student Development division.
- Periodically inviting an externally chaired Diversity Review Panel to evaluate progress.
- Actively recruiting individuals from underrepresented groups for service on boards and advisory councils and in upper administrative positions.
- Increasing support and accountability for Human Resources in efforts to recruit and hire people of color.

Promote Liberal Arts Excellence

The Trustees, Administration and Faculty will partner in efforts to renew our liberal arts identity and improve educational excellence.

Wheaton embraces the enduring value of the liberal arts and strives to improve the learning experience the College provides for students. The unique intellectual benefits of liberal arts learning are deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. Yet this form of education faces increasing pressure from forces that push higher education to provide narrow training for a specific profession. The challenge for Wheaton is to clearly and persuasively articulate—both inside the classroom and beyond the College—the value of the liberal arts as vocational preparation, with the understanding that “vocation” refers not only to one’s career, but more broadly to the multiple callings of a Christian life that takes the lead in serving God and others.

Key steps toward renewing our liberal arts identity include:

- The Trustees will seek to raise the resources needed to execute the new General Education requirements in the liberal arts curriculum, once it is approved. This may require investing in additional faculty, possibly in the form of a reconfigured Mentoring Initiative.
- The President will foster the development of a framework to help students articulate how liberal arts education addresses Christian vocation and a comprehensive plan to improve the College’s internal and external communication about liberal arts education. Components of this plan may include faculty development events and resources; promotional materials (including for parents) that convey this specific commitment; and greater collaboration among faculty, staff, and alumni (e.g., inviting Chapel and classroom testimonials about liberal arts education). There should also be renewed attention to the inclusion of experiential components and appropriate professional development within academic departments, in conjunction with and drawing upon co-curricular resources such as Career Services and Alumni Relations.

Key steps toward improving educational excellence include:

- The College will promote faculty development by allocating additional funds for conference-related travel in support of disciplinary and professional paper presentation, governance responsibilities, and for strategic professional enrichment and growth; for discretionary support of professional association memberships, journal subscriptions, and conference expenses; and for pursuing liberal arts and/or interdisciplinary development, including collaborative projects that have experiential and/or interdisciplinary components as an expression of the institution’s liberal arts identity.
- The Trustees will gather perspectives from representative faculty and the academic administration on key benchmarks of academic excellence at top-tier national liberal arts colleges. Where appropriate, the Trustees will seek to ascertain the educational aspirations which God has uniquely positioned Wheaton to pursue, and set measurable, strategic goals for improving educational excellence.

Enhance Music and the Performing Arts

In addition to advancing programmatic initiatives, the Trustees will seek to address Wheaton's most pressing facility need by initiating the formal planning process for a new Conservatory building to serve as a home for music education and performance in the arts.

The Wheaton College Conservatory of Music has been gathering strength in recent years and is poised to reach new levels of artistic excellence and cultural influence. Yet our facilities lag far behind the caliber of our program and in some cases are unacceptable in size and quality for our current program. Improvements made through the Promise of Wheaton have bridged the gap to what is truly needed: a major new facility for music and the performing arts. This building will enhance the education of our musicians—not only our Conservatory students, but also many others who take lessons or participate in our main ensembles—and improve the experience of those attending hundreds of concerts and recitals each year. Initial planning will:

- Conduct a cost and feasibility study.
- Determine the location of the new Conservatory building and campus center for the performing arts.
- Determine the scope of the project in connection with requirements for the possible future use of McAlister and/or Pierce Chapel by the Conservatory or others.
- Enable the Trustees to proceed with next steps during the 2012-2013 academic year.

Complementary Priorities

The following considerations address important matters that came up frequently in response to the President’s Green Paper and must be part of our planning.

Refresh Wheaton’s Mission Statement

The Board of Trustees will lead a formal review of the current mission statement in appropriate consultation with leaders of the campus community. Attention should be given to more clearly emphasizing our educational mission and its relationship to the liberal arts; to determining if “whole and effective” are the best, most biblical terms to describe the graduates we hope to send out into the world; to considering whether more explicit mention should be made of the Community Covenant; and to clarifying the relationship between graduate and undergraduate programs.

Nurture Vibrant Christian Community

The President will devise means of identifying our core values for life together as a learning, living, working community of grace; of regularly assessing progress in honoring those values; and of working collaboratively to improve the quality of Christ-centered community campuswide.

Extend Affordability

Wheaton remains committed to keeping its education affordable for students from the broadest range of economic backgrounds. In part, we will achieve this goal through securing scholarship funding, including funding that advances our strategic priorities for global education and ethnic diversity. In addition, as a principle for sound financial management, the College will fund strategic initiatives through tuition-neutral gifts, endowments, reallocations, and budget reductions.

Strengthen Graduate Education

As part of a larger strategy for improving and expanding facilities for graduate education, the Biblical and Theological Studies department is moving to the fifth floor of the Billy Graham Center. Further, the Provost is working with the Academic Affairs Committee to provide the Trustees with a regular report and review of graduate education.

The administration is also moving forward with a comprehensive plan to strengthen faculty governance for graduate education, as drafted by the Graduate Restructuring Task Force. Such a plan is needed before any further consideration could be given to expanding the Graduate School. To ensure that it coheres with the mission of the College and clarifies the vision of graduate education, the plan must:

- Go through an approval process that includes broad collaboration with the full graduate faculty.
- Provide strong leadership through a dean whose primary responsibility is to oversee graduate education.

- Remain grounded in Wheaton's strengths as a liberal arts institution, yet affirm advanced degree programs as a legitimate complement to a liberal arts program.
- Place primary attention for vision-setting and marketing at the level of individual or thematic clusters of programs.
- Provide sufficient horizontal integration to maintain academic excellence across programs and foster the spiritual and material welfare of our students. Improving these elements of the graduate student experience may include addressing tuition costs; increasing financial aid opportunities in order to decrease student debt load; and enhancing and developing programs that take into consideration the unique needs of graduate students (health care, career services, parking, housing, meal plans).

Green Paper Task Force Process

During the summer of 2011, Dr. Philip Ryken drafted “The President’s Green Paper on the Mission, Context, and Direction of Wheaton College.” After reviewing this 14-page document with his Senior Administrative Cabinet, he released it to the wider Wheaton College community at the beginning of September. The purpose of the Green Paper was to share the President’s best thinking about the total work of the College and to initiate a campus-wide discussion that would inform Wheaton’s strategic priorities going forward.

The Green Paper Task Force was formed in September with membership drawn from faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Through forums, discussion groups, surveys, and personal conversations, the Task Force gathered hundreds of responses to the Green Paper throughout the fall semester. In February of 2012 this feedback was reported to the Board of Trustees and then back to the entire College community in an eight-page Executive Summary.

The Task Force continued to meet during spring semester to discuss, draft, and finalize their recommendations to the Board of Trustees. These Strategic Priorities were subsequently reviewed by the Senior Administrative Cabinet before being presented to the Board of Trustees for approval in May 2012. They are published here as revised and approved.

Green Paper Task Force

Faculty

Dr. Sandra Joireman, *Professor of Politics & International Relations*

Dr. Daniel Treier, *Associate Professor of Theology*

Dr. Peter Walhout '91, *Associate Professor/Chair of Chemistry*

Staff

Mrs. Karen Belling '83, *Director of Financial Aid*

Mr. Dave Haidle, *Assistant Director of Facilities Management*

Ms. LaTonya Taylor, *Director of Media Relations*

Students

Ms. Charity Fort '12, *Christian Service Council Chair*

Mr. Isaac Miller '12, *Student Government Executive VP for Educational Policies*

Mr. Ryan Hovis '11, *Graduate School Representative to the Faculty Council*

Alumni

Dr. Judith Briscoe Golz '83, *Former Board of Visitors member*

Mr. Kurt Tillman '78, *President-elect of Alumni Association*

Co-Chairs

Dr. Mark Dillon, *Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations*

Dr. Philip Ryken, *President*