

Endorsed by the Board of Trustees, May 8, 2015

Our Motto:

“Not Self, But Others”



STRATEGIC PLAN

2015 ~ 2020

The Ferrum College Ethos

Achieving Excellence Through Student Success and Service

A Message from the President

Speaking before the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1910, a Virginia Annual Conference representative made a plea for the education of young people in the Blue Ridge foothills. There were 9,400 school-aged children in a three-county area but only 1,400 were enrolled in school. The women of Virginia's Methodist churches accepted the challenge and worked with Conference personnel to make Ferrum Training School a reality. This missionary zeal has been the bedrock of Ferrum's ethos since the training school opened in 1913, and has continued through its history as a high school, junior College, and four-year baccalaureate institution.

In this updated version of the Strategic Plan we will focus on the next evolutionary steps on the Ferrum journey. The Plan is a working, actionable document, and I encourage everyone in our community to continue to support each part of our wonderful campus as we implement, review, assess and improve our goals. In these pages, you will find evidence of our staunch commitment to improving the academic and social success of our students; read about the sense of mission, vision, and aspiration for the growth of the College; and learn of the College's dedication to working with others to achieve vibrant health through community and economic development in the Village of Ferrum and throughout western Franklin County.

I am grateful to all of you who exemplify Ferrum's motto, *Not Self But Others*, and who help create the vision and high standards that so define Ferrum College.

Jennifer L. Braaten
President

The Ferrum College Community

Converging Mission, Vision and Aspiration

Convergence between the historic mission of the College and the vision of our future is based upon certain Aspirations, Basic Assumptions, and Core Values that have been articulated by the Ferrum College Board of Trustees.

Statement of Mission

Ferrum College is a liberal arts institution founded on Christian principles and related to the United Methodist Church. It is our mission to educate students in the disciplines of higher learning and to help them be thoughtful and perceptive, to be articulate and professionally capable, and to be caring and concerned citizens in their community, nation, and world. We therefore commit ourselves to developing the whole student, both in openness to a wide range of intellectual discovery, and in the physical, spiritual, and social aspects of life.

Our campus environment supports service to others and the development of a personal code of values. Toward these ends, we expect all members of the campus community to treat each other with compassion, to respect each other's diverse qualities and backgrounds, and to support each other in the common pursuit of insight and discovery. In all these endeavors, we encourage students, faculty, and staff to appreciate excellence and to dedicate themselves to achieving it.

Vision Statement

Ferrum College's unparalleled setting in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains forms an inspiring backdrop for a unique and multifaceted educational experience that will focus on leading-edge learning opportunities, diverse outdoor, cultural, and service activities, and spiritual enrichment.

Statement of Aspiration

As it seeks to uphold its historic mission and continue on its journey toward excellence as a comprehensive, residential, applied liberal arts and professional studies institution, Ferrum College aspires to grow in stature, size, and strength.

The Ferrum College Community

Defining Characteristics

Aspirations

- I. Ferrum College will become nationally acclaimed for its approach to academic and co-curricular learning, demonstrating its motto in both word and deed: “Not Self, But Others.”
 - a. The academic program will be known for blending together the perspectives of the liberal arts and sciences with disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs of study. The curricular and co-curricular programs will be anchored in disciplinary theory, made accessible through concepts and principles, and enlivened through purposeful, relevant, integrated and principled connections to the community. The academic program will aim to assist students in their pursuit of careers and/or graduate and professional education.
 - b. Student life will be known for its intentional development in academics, athletics, service, leadership, and life skills.
- II. As an institution affiliated with the United Methodist Church, the integrated College experience will reflect the ideals of spiritual development and value formation.
- III. Ferrum College graduates will be successful global citizens who are prepared academically, physically and spiritually to assume roles of influence and leadership in their chosen endeavors.

Basic Academic/Co-curricular Assumptions

- I. Ferrum College will remain a primarily residential institution serving traditional College-age students.
- II. Ferrum College will provide access to students who demonstrate the capability and motivation to persist and succeed in attaining a College degree.
- III. Ferrum College will continue to focus on student success and increased retention and graduation rates.
- IV. Ferrum College will deliver online learning opportunities for traditional and new student populations.

- V. Ferrum College will express its community partnership through educational offerings and participation in civic activities, organizations, and economic development efforts.
- VI. Ferrum College will develop effective and sustainable curricular and co-curricular programs of study and learning support services.
- VII. Ferrum College's curricular and co-curricular programs will include civic engagement, service learning, experiential and cross-cultural components.
- VIII. Ferrum College will be committed to environmental issues in its teaching, planning and operations and will seek to pursue sustainable development practices in all ways appropriate for our campus.

Core Values

- I. Prepare each student for life, career and graduate/professional school.
- II. Build each student's capacity for critical thinking, communication skills and problem solving
- III. Provide character education through living, learning and leadership experiences
- IV. Assure opportunities for spiritual development
- V. Promote experiences that emphasize civic engagement and global citizenship.
- VI. Practice the ethic of sustainable development and environmental stewardship.

Student Learning Outcomes

The Ferrum College graduate develops integrated knowledge in the applied liberal arts and depth of knowledge in a chosen program of study. Learning experiences span across the five broad domains enumerated below.

- I. Liberal Arts
Through experiences in the Core Requirements, the Ferrum College graduate will:
 - Demonstrate integrated knowledge in the liberal arts.
 - Demonstrate information literacy, using available technology when appropriate.
 - Demonstrate competency in quantitative skills and reading.
- II. Critical Thinking
Through opportunities to engage in critical thinking, both curricular and co-curricular, the Ferrum College graduate will:
 - Think critically and solve problems through analysis, evaluation, and inference.

- III. Communication Skills
Through experiences in both the Core Requirements and a program of study, the Ferrum College graduate will:
 - Communicate with unity of purpose and coherent organization consistent with standard rules and recognized conventions using appropriate methodologies.

- IV. Competence in Academic Discipline
Through experiences in a chosen program of study, the Ferrum College graduate will:
 - Demonstrate a depth of knowledge, capability and ethical reasoning in a chosen field.

- V. Citizenship
Through opportunities, both curricular and co-curricular, the Ferrum College graduate will:
 - Demonstrate awareness of local, national and global issues.
 - Demonstrate personal responsibility.
 - Collaborate with people of diverse cultural attitudes, beliefs and values.

Achieving Institutional Effectiveness

To fulfill its historic mission and achieve its vision and aspirations, Ferrum College programs and personnel are focused on the accomplishment of seven campus-wide goals that are measured in terms of three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- I. *Student success*, which measures success in terms of students' academic standing and persistence to graduation.
- II. *Full-time enrollment*, which measures success on the basis of recruitment and retention of the students.
- III. *Financial health*, which measures success in terms of comparable salaries, competitive facilities, and the Composite Financial Index.

Campus-Wide Goals

- I. Recruit and retain an appropriate student population.
- II. Provide a distinctive and robust academic program.
- III. Offer a safe, integrated and robust student life experience that includes emphasis on community, diversity and inclusivity.

- IV. Recruit and retain excellent faculty and staff at competitive salaries.
- V. Create and market excellence as we continually seek a more effective position in our sphere of influence.
- VI. Develop, maintain, and manage competitive and environmentally sensitive facilities and services while strengthening financial assets.
- VII. Assess all aspects of the College's operations to determine the level of success in fulfilling the mission of the College.

Achieving the Goals

The remainder of this document records the objectives that have been identified and agreed upon as we accomplish the seven campus-wide goals. The Administrative Council of the College is ultimately responsible for making these goals and objectives operational in meaningful ways. Different schools, units and departments of the College will add specificity and alignment with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Goals for the institution.

*****Denotes strategic emphasis areas across goals and objectives as we integrate and coordinate the work within and across the units of the College to strengthen student retention and graduation rates.***

Goal I: Recruit and Retain an Appropriate Student Population

Ferrum College will develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to recruiting and retaining an appropriate student population through integrated enrollment management practices and policies.

Objective 1.a

Ferrum College will achieve a yearly applicant pool of 3500 by the year 2015, a full time enrollment (FTE) of 1300-1500, and a possible FTE of 1500-1600 by the year 2020. The FTE will include traditional-aged, mostly residential students, as well as 200-300 non-traditional, online degree completion, certification, and/or graduate students.

*Objective 1.b***

Ferrum College will integrate enrollment management and retention practices and strategies across all departments of the College in order to recruit, retain and graduate its students.

*Objective 1.c***

Ferrum College will improve student retention and graduation rates by focusing strategically on admissions selectivity managing residential enrollment growth, and implementing a non-residential

online program of study as it aims to achieve a 40-percent or higher six-year graduation rate by 2020 and a 50-percent or higher six-year graduation rate by 2025.

*Objective 1.d***

Ferrum College will determine the market for and plan to implement a graduate program in at least one program of study, and will, if appropriate, become a Level IV Master's Degree-granting institution by 2020.

Goal II: Provide a Distinctive and Robust Academic Program

Ferrum College will develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to student learning that includes a coherent academic and co-curricular program coupled with a coordinated advising and academic support program that provides assistance to students.

*Objective 2.a***

Ferrum College will continue to develop its *Pathways to Success* (including LeadershipPlenty) program by aligning its programs to integrate freshman/sophomore initiatives and junior/senior+ initiatives.

*Objective 2.b***

Through the use of assessment results, Ferrum College will continue to expand and strengthen its academic and learning support programs including Scholars in Residence, S4S (Sisters 4 Sisters), B4B (Brothers for Brothers) and AskMeIst, in order to retain and graduate students (OAAS, LOP, FOCUS, Learning Communities).

*Objective 2.c***

Ferrum College will continue to expand and strengthen its academic and co-curricular learning programs, further embedding hands-on and experiential opportunities into all appropriate programs, (e.g., internships, FUSE!, E-Term, study away/study abroad, leadership programs, student engagement, career services, professional studies, certificates, community service, athletics) including between-term and summer programming, where appropriate.

*Objective 2.d***

Ferrum College will continue to refine the core student learning experience (General Education), its majors, minors, certificates, and other programs of study (e.g., Honors; Stanley Library programs; student life educational programs; athletics) as conceptualized and assessed through the Student Learning Outcomes.

*Objective 2.e***

Ferrum College will execute a faculty and staff development program that enables the College's employees to support our strategic student learning initiatives and Strategic Plan components through the implementation of best practices across all units of the College.

*Objective 2.f***

Ferrum College will research opportunities for creating new programs (traditional undergraduate majors, minors, certificate, online, dual enrollment, home school, associate level, graduate). Based on market analyses and trends, strategically selected programs will be planned and implemented as institutional capacity allows.

*Objective 2.g***

Ferrum College will implement a comprehensive assessment process to improve its programs for student learning, including the implementation of the College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – Critical Thinking for Success!

*Objective 2.h.***

Ferrum College will continue to enhance the campus environment to foster students' intellectual, social, ethical, personal, and principled leadership development through the creation of a living/learning environment, through continued leadership development, and by strengthening the role of athletics in teaching and modeling a culture of study/discipline and academic achievement.

*Objective 2.i***

Ferrum College will continue to strengthen its community of learners through a comprehensive new student program as well as focused leadership and co-curricular programs that enhance and support the academic experience.

Goal III: Offer a Safe, Integrated and Robust Student Life Experience that Includes Emphasis on Community, Diversity and Inclusivity

Objective 3.a

Ferrum College will comply with state and federal guidelines in its operations and business practices. (Title IV, VII, IX, etc.)

Objective 3.b

Ferrum College will follow best practices with regard to campus safety and security on residential college campuses.

Objective 3.c

Ferrum College will emphasize through programs, policies and procedures the importance of a diverse and inclusive community and will create a culture of mutual respect.

Goal IV: Recruit and Retain Excellent Faculty and Staff at Competitive Salaries

Ferrum College will develop and implement a strategy for achieving competitive faculty and staff compensation using appropriate comparison peer institutions from across the Appalachian College Association, Yes We Must Coalition, and the region, state and nation (Carnegie II b-Church-related).

Objective 4.a

Ferrum College will incorporate into its five-year budget planning a projected increase for competitive faculty and staff salaries and cost of living increases, as well as incentives to recognize excellence.

*Objective 4.b***

Ferrum College will continue to model a five-year projection of faculty and staff needs for meeting the human resource capacity necessary to serve our students and continuously improve the College. The plan will include internal considerations such as curriculum development (including General Education), program review, market trends, collaborative and consortial ventures, student enrollment, and external considerations.

*Objective 4.c***

Ferrum College will continue to enhance the faculty and staff development program by placing emphasis on the College strategic initiatives, the practical liberal arts, integrated and experiential learning, innovative pedagogies, use of assessment for continuous improvement, and curricular/co-curricular integration through proven high impact practices.

Goal V: Position, Market and Develop the Financial Capacity as the College Continues to Establish Itself as a Progressive, 4-year Academic Institution

Objective 5.a

Ferrum College will continuously review a comprehensive and integrated financial plan in order to position the institution as a progressive academic institution and communicate its excellence as well as strengthen its ties community-wide, regionally, statewide and nationally.

Objective 5.b

Ferrum College will provide ongoing fundraising support for all strategic initiatives while developing and implementing future campaigns necessary to fund institutional priorities.

Objective 5.c

Ferrum College will increase its efforts in donor cultivation and development, particularly focusing on donor retention, strengthening alumni giving percentages and continuing a bold and strong planned giving program to ensure sustainability.

Objective 5.d

Ferrum College will focus on building its endowment through gifts and returns in order to strengthen the institution's current and future financial health.

Objective 5.e

Ferrum College will continue to use best practices in internal controls, investment and audit practices to enhance the financial health of the institution.

Objective 5.f

Ferrum College will develop more articulation agreements, partnerships and outreach programs as it strengthens its ties to the community and its constituents, including public schools, other public and private colleges and universities, health and social services, and will seek additional community business partnerships and economic development opportunities.

Goal VI: Develop, Maintain, and Manage Competitive and Environmentally Sensitive Facilities and Services, While Strengthening Our Financial Assets

Ferrum College will develop a comprehensive and integrated program to enhance its physical plant, improve its technological services, and strengthen its financial resources.

Objective 6.a

Ferrum College will strengthen its financial capacity and expand its revenue sources and assets to ensure the long-term excellence of programs, services and facilities.

*Objective 6.b***

Ferrum College will continue to engage in master facilities planning and community development to ensure the adequacy of its physical plant in support of student learning and those who live and work in this setting.

Objective 6.c

Ferrum College will engage in environmentally responsible practices and will continually monitor progress the College has made towards fulfilling the President's Climate Commitment recommendations.

Objective 6.d

Ferrum College will monitor its Composite Financial Index (CFI) so it meets or exceeds the advisable range of the CFI and its component ratios as defined through the annual audit process.

Objective 6.e

Ferrum College will work with the Blue Ridge Foundation and other entities to seek additional funding for community development and revitalization projects.

*Objective 6.f***

Ferrum College will provide reliable and secure Internet access from every classroom, dormitory room, and office on campus. The College will provide reliable and secure wireless Internet access in living, learning, and working spaces on campus.

*Objective 6.g***

Ferrum College will maintain and support an administrative computing system which meets the College's current and anticipated future needs for administrative computing.

Objective 6.h

Ferrum College will develop a comprehensive analysis of the current administrative computing system, including the development and maintenance of a 5-year technology plan for meeting current and future needs for technology and infrastructure.

Objective 6.i

Ferrum College will develop and implement data security and privacy policies, practices, and audits that are consistent with current best-practices for institutions of higher education.

Goal VII: Assess All Aspects of the College's Operations to Determine its Level of Success in Fulfilling the Mission of the College

Ferrum College will assess its strategic initiatives and routine operations processes to determine the effectiveness and success in fulfilling the mission of the College.

Objective 7.a

Ferrum College will engage in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide data- and research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

*Objective 7.b***

Ferrum College will implement its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – Critical Thinking for Success! -- and demonstrate that the QEP is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process, and will prepare for the 5th and 10th year SACS Review with particular focus in the 5th year on the QEP (2015-2016).

*Objective 7.c***

Ferrum College will identify expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assess whether it achieves these outcomes; and provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results, including annual and cyclical program review as customary for best practices in each department of the College.

*Objective 7.d ***

Ferrum College will integrate its planning, assessment, and budgeting processes within and across units of the College to accomplish the College's goals as measured by progress on the KPIs, student learning outcomes, and other measures of institutional effectiveness.

Objective 7.e

Ferrum College will align its Institutional Research and Effectiveness processes and procedures with a best practices model for an institution of our size.